

Attendance Policy

CAMPFIRE EDUCATION TRUST

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1. Aims & Rationale

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 9 July 2026), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all children
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure children have the support in place to attend school

Moorland staff are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children and endeavour to provide an environment where all children feel valued and welcome. Parents and children play an important part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents, carers leaders and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. This will be through strategies such as weekly bulletins containing attendance data and celebrating classes with high attendance in weekly assemblies.

Moorland has high expectations for the attendance of all pupils and aims for whole-school attendance of 96% or above. We monitor attendance closely and act early where attendance begins to decline, rather than waiting for a pupil to become persistently absent.

A pupil is considered persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions and severely absent when they miss 50% or more. Moorland may intervene before these thresholds are reached where patterns of absence or emerging barriers give cause for concern.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High progress rates, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. We will work with parents to ensure our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance are clear.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular news bulletin and on our website
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 9 July 2026) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, children and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific children, where appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual children or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance, providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting children needs
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher, with support from the Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Building a culture of community and belonging for children which supports school attendance
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it at Campfire Education Trust (CET) Head Teacher fortnightly briefings and to the Local Governing Body (LGB)
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Considering and requesting penalty notices, where appropriate, in accordance with the National Framework and MKCC Code of Conduct.
- Improving universal provision for all children, supporting improvements with attendance where cohorts or classes are identified as needing leadership action
- Working with the parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), alongside our SENDCOs to develop specific support approaches for attendance for children with SEND and where children with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating, alongside our SENDCOs with the local authority when a child with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the child's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to children and parents through all available channels

3.3 The attendance lead

The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Effectively implementing and regularly reviewing the attendance policy at all levels
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children through SIMs, Insight and INSIGHT data systems
- Building a holistic understanding of children and families, supporting the diagnosis of specific needs
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the impact of approaches
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with children, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Communicating effectively with families, building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance barriers
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with children and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families to supplement universal provision

3.4 The office and admin mentor

The office and admin mentor is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7) for DfE groups and percentages
- Issuing attendance letters in line with the school policy and recording actions taken on SIMs
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Booking attendance meetings for SLT

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headteacher
- Working with outside agencies to tackle persistent absence, in agreement with SLT
- Advising the Headteacher and Attendance Lead when to consider penalty notice referrals in accordance with the National Framework and MKCC Code of Conduct.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information promptly to the school office once the register is closed. If parents attempt to report absence via class teachers, they are responsible for re-directing them to the school office so that the correct attendance procedures are followed.

- Input either a present code or N in the register only
- Build positive relationships with parents/carers of children who have been identified by the attendance lead as either severely absent or persistently absent, communicating via CPOMs relevant holistic information which identifies barriers to attendance
- Communicate pro-actively with the school office where there is an absence concern

3.6 School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school SIMs system, following the attendance call flow chart
- Follow up on unexplained absences and update SIMs accordingly, prioritising the vulnerable children and flagging with SLT where concerns remain
- Check and add the relevant late information from inventory to SIMs
- Communicate daily attendance data to the Headteacher & SLT
- Promptly process arrival and departure child information ensuring registers are correct and the relevant information has been ascertained
- Keep the Child Missing in Education log up-to-date, raising any new concerns with the Attendance Lead and Headteacher (September 2025 statutory Children Missing Education guidance - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education/children-missing-education-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-schools)

3.7 Parents and carers

Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Ensure their child arrives on time for registration, gates open between 8.40am and close at 8.50am
- Register their child at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours
- By 8.30am, ensure that any absence is clearly accounted for on the phone (or email if the phone is unavailable) on the first and subsequent days of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, non-urgent medical or dental appointments for their child are made outside of the school day, if this is not possible, parents must ensure a medical appointment form is completed for the appointment
- Support the school with their child's attendance aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- Keep to any attendance contracts they make with the school
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We keep an electronic attendance register for all child; we take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the start of the second session in the afternoon. Marks use the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

We will also record for children of compulsory school age:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Punctuality & Lateness

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others. These are just a few reasons that could then lead to possible further absence.

The school day begins at 8:45 am with morning learning (gates open at 8:30am and close at 8.45am) and all children are expected to be in school at this time. Morning registration closes at 8:50am.

Afternoon registration closes at 12:45pm for EYFS, Y1, Y2 and at 1pm for Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6 (due to staggered lunchtimes).

All lateness is recorded electronically using the inventory system held in our school reception. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

- If a child arrives late before the register closes (8:50am), they will be marked as late (L); if the child arrives after the register closes they will be marked as late (U – any time after 8:50am)
- If a child is late due to a medical appointment, and school has been notified in advance through the medical appointment form, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that, where possible, doctor and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- If a child arrives late and/or after the close of the register, in exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher can, at their discretion, authorise this.

Parents or carers of children who have patterns of lateness will be contacted through a punctuality letter to discuss the importance of good timekeeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists within the specified monitoring timeframe (typically 4 school weeks), parents or carers will receive a second punctuality letter and be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with support offered. If lateness continues to affect school attendance, then a third letter will invite parents in to a formal meeting with either the Attendance lead or Headteacher. A punctuality agreement will be documented and time frame specified for improvement, with barriers addressed.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected child to a place of safety and share concerns as

necessary with other agencies, if deemed necessary. If no alternative is available, the school will place a child into the after school club, which will need to be paid for by the parent/carer.

4.3 Unplanned absence

Parents or carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or in exceptional circumstances, as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff.

- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Evidence can be sought where there is **genuine and reasonable doubt**, or prolonged/repeated illness where evidence helps the school understand need and provision.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.4 Following up unexplained absence

Moorland Primary School & Nursery recognises that unexplained absence may be an indicator of a safeguarding or welfare concern. The school will take prompt and proportionate action to establish the whereabouts and safety of any pupil who is unexpectedly absent.

Parental responsibility

Parents and carers are expected to notify the school of their child's absence, providing a reason, by no later than 8:30am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the school.

First-day response to unexplained absence

Where a pupil is absent without an explanation, the following procedure will be implemented:

1. Attendance check: School office staff will review the morning registers, absence messages and any known arrangements to identify pupils whose absence remains unexplained.

2. Telephone contact: Where no explanation has been received by 8:30am, the school will telephone the parent/carer using the contact details held on SIMS.

3. Email notification: If telephone contact is unsuccessful, the school will send an email requesting that the parent/carer contacts the school within 15 minutes to confirm the child's whereabouts and reason for absence.

4. Emergency contacts: If no response is received within 15 minutes, the school will attempt to contact the child's listed emergency contacts to establish their whereabouts and wellbeing.

5. Home visit: Where the school remains unable to establish the child's whereabouts or confirm their safety, a same-day welfare visit will be arranged, subject to safeguarding risk assessment and the school's home-visiting procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or deputy, will be informed.

6. Safeguarding escalation: If the child's whereabouts or safety cannot be established following these enquiries, the DSL will assess the available information and seek appropriate advice or support from Children's Social Care, the Local Authority and/or the police, according to the level of concern. Where immediate danger is suspected, emergency services will be contacted without delay.

Vulnerable pupils and immediate safeguarding concerns

The above process represents the school's standard response. It must not delay necessary safeguarding action.

Where there are known vulnerabilities, existing safeguarding concerns or information indicating that a pupil may be at risk, the DSL may initiate welfare checks, contact other professionals or escalate to statutory services immediately, without waiting for the usual sequence or timeframes to be completed.

Recording and monitoring

All contact attempts, responses, home visits, professional advice and decisions will be recorded promptly on the school's appropriate systems. Safeguarding concerns and actions will also be recorded on CPOMS.

The correct attendance code will be entered once the reason for absence is established. Where Code N is initially used because the reason is not yet known, reasonable enquiries will be undertaken and the code amended within five school days, in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Where unexplained absence continues, the school will undertake further enquiries each school day and involve the Attendance Lead, DSL and relevant Local Authority services as appropriate.

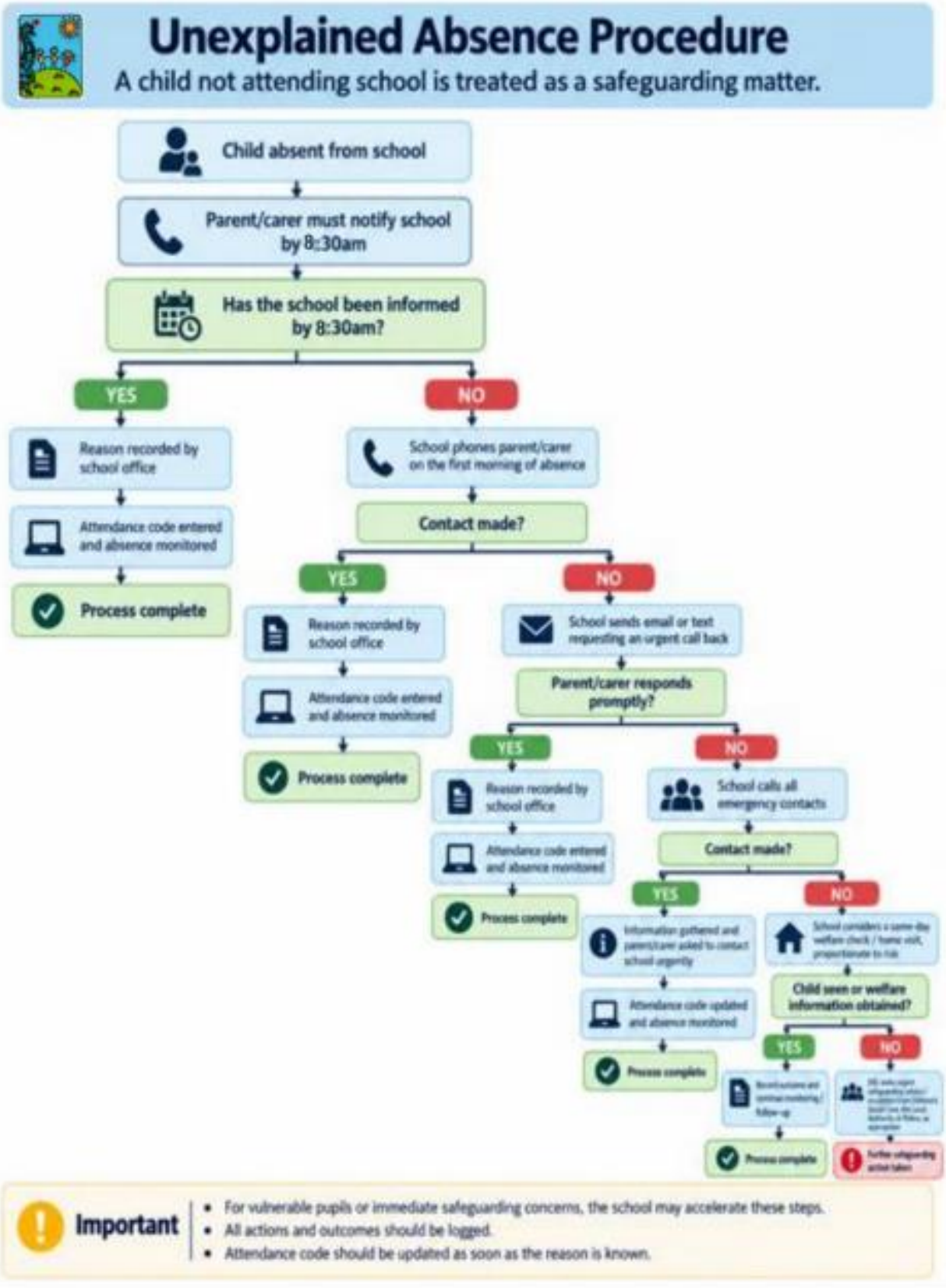
Absence where a reason has been provided

Where a pupil is absent for three consecutive school days, even where a parent/carer has provided a reason, the Senior Leadership Team may consider a welfare call or visit, based on the child's individual circumstances and any known vulnerabilities.

The school will work with families to understand barriers to attendance, provide appropriate support and make referrals to other services where necessary.

Where persistent or unauthorised absence continues, the school's attendance intervention procedures, including consideration of Local Authority involvement and statutory attendance measures, will be followed as appropriate.

All actions will be guided by the child's welfare, individual circumstances and the school's safeguarding responsibilities.


Unexplained Absence Procedure
A child not attending school is treated as a safeguarding matter.
Child absent from school
Parent/carer must notify school by 8:30am
Has the school been informed by 8:30am?
YES
NO
Reason recorded by school office
Attendance code entered and absence monitored
Process complete
School phones parent/carer on the first morning of absence
Contact made?
YES
NO
Reason recorded by school office
Attendance code entered and absence monitored
Process complete
School sends email or text requesting an urgent call back
Parent/carer responds promptly?
YES
NO
Reason recorded by school office
Attendance code entered and absence monitored
Process complete
School calls all emergency contacts
Contact made?
YES
NO
Information gathered and parent/carer asked to contact school urgently
Attendance code updated and absence monitored
Process complete
School considers a same-day welfare check / home visit, proportionate to risk
Child seen or welfare information obtained?
YES
NO
Process complete
Further safeguarding action taken
Important
For vulnerable pupils or immediate safeguarding concerns, the school may accelerate these steps.
All actions and outcomes should be logged.
Attendance code should be updated as soon as the reason is known.

4.5 Reporting to parents

Attendance Steps (Reception to Year 6)

The school will inform parents or carers about their child's attendance and absence levels where attendance drops below 93%. This is done through attendance letters and parent engagement meetings, following the attendance concern procedures set out below.

Stage 0 Monitoring Stage

All children sit in this stage and attendance is monitored daily.

Stage 1

- Child's attendance drops below 93%
- Child has had an absence (coded I, O, U, G) in the previous 10 school days.

Stage 2

- Child currently has an attendance percentage of 93% or below.
- Child has absence (coded I, O, U, G) in the previous 10 school days and has previously been issued Stage 1.

Stage 3

- Child currently has an attendance percentage of 93% or below.
- Student has unauthorised absences (O, U, G) in the previous 10 school days and has previously been issued Stage 2.

Stage 4

- Child currently has an attendance percentage of 93% or below.
- Student has unauthorised absences (O, U, G) in the previous 20 school days and has previously been issued Stage 3.

As we strive for all children to have good attendance, our escalation route is as follows:

Stage 1

Where the child has met the criteria for Stage 1; the child's attendance falling below 93% and having an absence in the previous 10 days. A letter will be sent home to parents/carers and the child's attendance will be monitored for the next 10 school days.

The child may be moved to Stage 2 if they have further absence and meet Stage 2 criteria. If deemed appropriate Stage 2 may be initiated before the end of the 10 day monitoring period.

Should the child attend every session and have no further absence, Stage 2 will not be initiated.

Stage 2

If the child's attendance continues to be below 93% and they have subsequent absences, a Stage 2 letter will be sent to parents/carers. Where a pupil is absent due to illness, the school will not routinely request medical evidence. Where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of an illness, or where absence due to illness is prolonged, complex or frequently recurring, the school may request reasonable evidence where this will help us understand the pupil's needs, consider appropriate support or reasonable adjustments and accurately record the absence. The child will be monitored for the next 10 school days. The child may be moved to Stage 3 if improvement criteria is not met. If deemed appropriate Stage 3 may be initiated before the end of the 10-day monitoring period.

Should the child attend every session and have no further absence, Stage 3 will not be initiated.

Stage 3

At Stage 3, parents/carers will be issued with a letter along with an Attendance Action Plan. The child's attendance will be monitored for 20 school days. However, if the child has further instances of unauthorised absence within the monitoring period, the child may be escalated to Stage 4.

If no further unauthorised absences are recorded within the monitoring period, the child will remain at Stage 3.

For a child that have not had unauthorised absences during the 20 school days monitoring period, the child will be de-escalated to Stage 1 and the above criteria for the suggested Stages will be followed.

Stage 4

If a child's attendance remains a concern and they continue to have unauthorised absences, they may be escalated to Stage 4. At Stage 4, a child may be referred to the Local Authority and legal proceedings may commence. The Local Authority could take action that could include, but not be limited to, issuing parental contracts, issuing fixed penalty notices, pursuing prosecution towards potential educational supervision orders or other court sanctions.

Attendance Steps (Nursery)

The school will inform parents or carers about their child's attendance and absence levels where attendance drops below 93%. This is done through attendance letters and parent engagement meetings, following the attendance concern procedures set out below.

Stage 1

Child's attendance drops below 93% or has had an absence (coded I, O, U, G) in the previous 10 school days

A letter will be sent home to parents/carers and the child's attendance will be monitored for the next 10 school days.

Stage 2

Child currently has an attendance percentage of 93% or below and/or has absence (coded I, O, U, G) in the previous 10 school days and has previously been issued Stage 1.

Alongside the Stage 2 letter, parents/carers will also be issued with a feedback form.

Stage 3

Child currently has an attendance percentage of 93% or below and/or has unauthorised absences (O, U, G) in the previous 10 school days and has previously been issued Stage 2.

Parents/carers will be issued with a letter along with an Attendance Action Plan. The child's attendance will be monitored for 20 school days. However, if the child has further instances of unauthorised absence within the monitoring period, the child may be escalated to Stage 4.

Stage 4

A child whose attendance is 93% or below, and/or who has recorded unauthorised absences (O, U, G codes) within the previous 20 school days, and who has previously been placed on Stage 3, will progress to the next stage of the attendance process.

Parents/carers will receive a formal letter to explain that the child will be referred to the Local Authority for further support and intervention.

Funding Withdrawal

At any point during these stages, if a child is absent under the following thresholds, then the Local Authority may **withdraw funding** for their place. In these circumstances, parents/carers may become liable for the associated childcare costs

- **Two consecutive weeks**

  or

- **30 days of absence across the academic year**

Funding Withdrawal

In accordance with Local Authority funding requirements, nursery funding may be reviewed or withdrawn where a funded child is absent for two consecutive weeks or accumulates 30 days of absence across the academic year. Where funding is withdrawn, the nursery place may no longer be available and parents or carers may become responsible for associated childcare costs. The nursery will always seek to work in partnership with families to understand barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support wherever possible.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Children are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absence:

1. Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

2. Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

   - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, and holidays in term time
   - absences which have not been explained
   - For children on stage 2 or above (including Nursery), absence attributed to illness where, following consideration of the individual circumstances and any reasonable evidence available, the school has genuine and reasonable grounds not to accept illness as the reason for absence.
   - A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers.

An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher and/or Attendance Lead will allow children to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher and/or Attendance Lead will only grant a **leave of absence** to a child during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's and/or Attendance Lead's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, **it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday, or visiting family members.**

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the child is attending educational provision
- If the child is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a child to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the child is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the child not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in this policy, parent or carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code set out by the Local Authority.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Penalty notices

A penalty notice (PN) is an alternative to prosecution and requires the parent(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's irregular attendance at school. It is issued per parent, per child.

Milton Keynes City Council issue them through the Milton Keynes City Council's School Attendance Support Service, where appropriate, following notification from the school.

They are used when:

- a child has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period (a school day is 2 sessions - morning and afternoon) or
- a child has a series of unauthorised absences leading to irregular attendance

This includes:

- absence marked in the register as unauthorised
- persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence
- absence in term time which has not been authorised by the head teacher - the Government has directed that head teachers may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances

PNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

Notice to Improve

Following the release of the government's Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance. Milton Keynes City Council will be introducing the Notice to Improve document.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

The length of the period of improvement will be 6 school weeks, with possible action after 3 weeks where improvement is minimal. What sufficient improvement will look like will be decided on a case-by-case basis considering a child and family's circumstances.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes have come in to force:

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (a school day is 2 sessions - morning and afternoon) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Increasing to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000. Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Per parent, per child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

6. Supporting children who are absent or returning to school

6.1 Children absent due to complex barriers to attendance

In exceptional circumstances, there may be complex barriers to attendance. Our Senior Leadership Team aim to work closely with families, building positive relationships that enable them to understand the complex barriers faced and how best to implement strategies for removing them. Complexities vary, and we would take an individualised approach on a case by case basis.

6.2 Children absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil's attendance is affected by SEND, disability, physical health, mental health or emotional needs, Moorland will work in partnership with the pupil, parents/carers, the SENDCo and relevant professionals to understand and remove barriers to attendance. The school will actively consider appropriate reasonable adjustments and support.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may form part of a time-limited reintegration or support plan. It will not be used to manage behaviour, will be regularly reviewed and will have a clear plan for increasing attendance towards full-time education.

Remote education will only be considered as a last resort where appropriate and will not replace the expectation that pupils should receive face-to-face education. A pupil receiving remote education while absent from school will continue to be recorded as absent using the appropriate attendance code.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan and their attendance falls, or barriers to attendance relate to their identified needs, the school will work with and inform the local authority as appropriate.

6.3 Children returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

We aim to support children back into school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence through identifying the gaps to learning they have experienced and addressing these through home/school engagement and where applicable, booster intervention.

7. Attendance monitoring

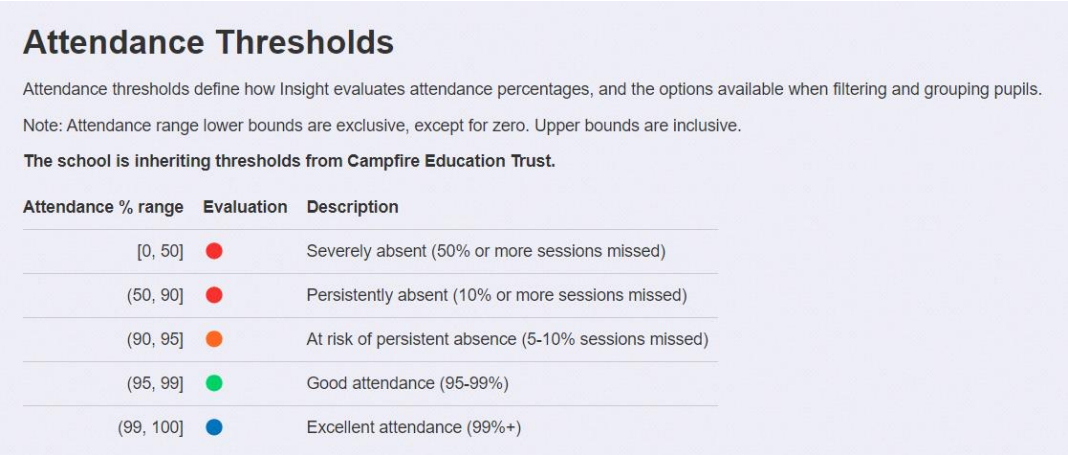
Attendance is monitored through SIMs and Insight attendance. Insight attendance is a data system (linked to SIMs) in which every child has an individual tab which displays key attendance information:

This informs our attendance letters. Each registration code is tracked so that we can closely monitor every child's attendance:

Children falling below the 90% dotted line, are classed as 'Persistent Absentees'. Children who fall below 93% move through the stages and are issued attendance letters. This is to support parents in avoiding falling into the persistent absence category. Moorland uses 93% as an internal early-intervention threshold so that support can be offered before pupils reach the DfE definition of persistent absence.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, half-termly, termly and annually across the school and at an individual child, class and cohort level.



Attendance Thresholds

Attendance thresholds define how Insight evaluates attendance percentages, and the options available when filtering and grouping pupils.

Note: Attendance range lower bounds are exclusive, except for zero. Upper bounds are inclusive.

The school is inheriting thresholds from Campfire Education Trust.

Attendance % range	Evaluation	Description
[0, 50]		Severely absent (50% or more sessions missed)
(50, 90]		Persistently absent (10% or more sessions missed)
(90, 95]		At risk of persistent absence (5-10% sessions missed)
(95, 99]		Good attendance (95-99%)
(99, 100]		Excellent attendance (99%+)

Specific child information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly, including for key pupil groups such as pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, pupils with SEND, young carers and other vulnerable groups, to identify any patterns, inequalities or pupils who may require additional support with their attendance.
- Identify children whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual children, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the children it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports through parents evenings, to facilitate discussions with children and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and child premium lead). Where appropriate, this analysis will include consideration of young carers and other vulnerable groups to ensure that barriers to attendance are identified and appropriate support is put in place.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other Campfire Education Trust schools, local authorities and other partners where a child's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific children, where appropriate

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026)
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of children who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these children. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Headteacher and Executive Head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Child is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Child arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Child is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Child is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Child is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Child is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Child is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Child is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Child is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Child has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Child has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Child of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Child is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Child is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Child is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Child has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Child is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Child is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Child is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Child is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every child absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Child is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention

		• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Child's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Child is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Child has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective child not on admission register	Child has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays