Nerrols Primary & Nursery School

Attendance and Absence Policy

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Signature	*Wendy Devereux*	Chair of Governors	Date:	November 2026

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Across all Huish schools, we recognise the importance of improving attendance for all our pupils. We aspire to secure high standards of attendance by building a culture where all pupils can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn.

Outcomes for pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stages 2 and 4 demonstrate that they have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment, whilst children who attend school regularly get the most out of their school experience, including their wellbeing and wider life chances.

We recognise regular attendance for our most vulnerable pupils is an important protective factor and best allows needs to be identified and support provided.

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Statement of intent

We believe to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand barriers to attendance are complex, and some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment, as well as a trusting relational approach with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with agencies to ensure pupil health and safety.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, by regular attendance.
- Ensuring our policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Our School's Attendance Officer and Senior Attendance Champion, Nick Arnold, is also the Headteacher who can be contacted via the office email address.

Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance.'

- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education.'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when deciding to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing in Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Day-to-day management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents regarding attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from role.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with **two or more** emergency contact numbers.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or absconding during the school day

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Having less than 90% attendance.

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school gates open at 8:30am and the day starts at 8:45am. Pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9.15am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1.30pm (Or 1pm in EYFS). Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1.40pm (Or 1.10pm in EYFS). Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, support staff will contact the parent by telephone as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

School will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

School will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 92%, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance register

School uses Bromcom to keep attendance registers and ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

School will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- B = Off-site education activity
- C = Authorised leave of absence granted by the school in exceptional circumstances
  - C - Leave for other circumstances
  - C1 – Leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
  - C2 – Leave for a child on a part-time timetable
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- I = Illness – must state specifics on Bromcom, not just ill.
- K = Attending provision arranged by LA
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- **N = Reason not yet provided**

- O = Unauthorised absence
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- R = Religious observance
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- V = Educational visit or trip
- X = Not required to be in school
- Y = Unavoidable Cause
    - Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
    - Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
    - Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
    - Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
    - Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
    - Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
    - Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason, date and name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved online on Bromcom.

Fortnightly, or more if there is a concern with a child, the Senior Attendance Champion and Senior Mental Health and Pastoral Lead will monitor whole school attendance data. During this analysis, systems will be used as required.

Fortnightly, the class with the highest attendance for that period of time will receive the attendance cup for 2 weeks.

At the end of each term, certificates will be presented to each child who has an attendance of 95%+. From last year, children are eager to receive these. For children who may be on temporary timetables, adjustments will be made so they may be able to receive a certificate as long as they have 96%+ of the times they are due in school.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be submitted to the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

School will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

School will ensure all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day they would be required to attend school maintained by the LA. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education of all aspects:

- For not less than six hours a week

- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents - expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

School will only accept requests from parents for absence on religious grounds observance for days exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. School will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

School may seek advice from the religious body where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

School recognises pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCP (Early Health Care Plan) or ILPs (Individual Learning Plan) implemented. School may secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance.

Where school has concerns a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and

Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, school will:

- Inform LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for 15+ school days.
- Provide LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

School will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the headteacher will ensure a photo lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher/ SLT/ DSL immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a search of the premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - The library
    - Outbuildings
    - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found within 10 minutes, the pupil's parents will be called.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

11. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters to parents.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Creating attendance surgeries.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge and celebrate good weekly class attendance.

12. Working with parents to improve and celebrate attendance

School will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

We celebrate good attendance and give rewards to those with good attendance. Newsletters celebrate and update how class and cohorts are progressing to encourage some competition. Termly certificates and class attendance cups all incentivise attendance.

School will ensure there are 2+ sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

School will ensure parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware this means their child must attend school every day it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences authorised by the headteacher in advance. School will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure parents are aware of the benefits regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer and ELSA will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. School will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL, the ELSA and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

13. Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.

- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly ELSA check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

School will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

14. Legal intervention

School will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put in a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the latest LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Information for Parents about Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School

Following the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absences recorded after 19 August 2024.

This information refers to penalty notices that are considered for irregular attendance and unauthorised term-time leave.

All penalty notices are issued within the Somerset Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Who can be fined?

Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer of each child whose unauthorised absence meets the national threshold.

For example, in a family with two parents and three children taking unauthorised term-time leave, each parent could receive a penalty notice for each child absent from school, resulting in six penalty notices being issued.

The National Threshold

Schools are required to consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. 10 sessions would typically be the equivalent of five days.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be a combination of any unauthorised absence codes (G, O, N or U)*.

The rolling ten school week period can span terms, school years and schools.

The First Offence

The first time a parent is issued with a penalty notice for a child's absence, they will be able to pay the reduced amount of £80 if they pay within 21 days, otherwise the full amount of £160 is payable within 28 days.

The Second Offence

If a parent is issued with a second penalty notice within three years, the amount payable will be £160 within 28 days. The reduced amount will not be available.

The Third Offence

If a parent becomes eligible for a third (or more) penalty notice within three years of the first being issued, a penalty notice cannot be issued, and the Local Authority will consider other measures to address attendance concerns. This may include prosecution, which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and the parent having a criminal record.

If convicted, the offence will also show on any future DBS checks.

Not Paying a Penalty Notice

Penalty notices are only issued to parents when they have committed the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

A penalty notice gives the parent the chance to write the offence off without needing to go to court.

It is not an offence not to pay a penalty notice, but the Local Authority may then prosecute the parent for the original offence.

The Law

Penalty notices are issued in line with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 when a parent has failed to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Penalty notices can only be issued when:

- ✓ A child's absence meets the national threshold
- ✓ Support has been attempted (if appropriate)
- ✓ Issuing a penalty notice is compliant with the Somerset Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

15. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

School will collect data regarding attendance and absences:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.
- Vulnerable pupils.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus.

School will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional, and national data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

16. Training staff

School will recognise early intervention can prevent poor attendance. Staff will receive training in identifying at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances.
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers.
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

17. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

18. Penalty Notices

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement, and essential in order for students to maximise the opportunities available to them. The Somerset Education Welfare Service will continue to investigate cases of regular non-attendance from school and, following appropriate casework, instigate legal action if applicable. Penalty Notices offer a means for swift intervention which the

The LA will use to combat truancy problems before they become entrenched. This code provides that the power to use Penalty Notices is applied consistently and fairly and that suitable administrative arrangements are in place.

Following the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine, currently £80.00 if paid within 21 days or £160.00 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid, the matter is then referred to the Magistrates Court for a prosecution for nonattendance.

A Penalty Notice can be issued if a child's unauthorised absences total **ten sessions** (five days) **or more over a ten-week period**. It does **not** need to be five consecutive days anymore. (Each day consists of two sessions)

£80 fine if paid within 21 days, increasing to **£160 if not paid within 21 days**.

Example: Family of 2 adults and 2 children:

- £80 per child and per parent = **£320** in paid within 21 days.
- This will increase to **£640 if not paid within 21 days.**

For a second offence

- If a parent is issued with a second penalty notice within three years, the amount payable will be £160 within 28 days. The reduced amount will not be available.

Over three years, only two Penalty Notices can be issued, so if there is a need for a third, then the LA will consider prosecution.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as:

- The biological parent
- Not a biological parent of the child but has parental responsibility for them
- Adult who has care of the child

Working with the Local Authority:
Schools have a mandatory data sharing duty to report daily attendance to the DfE and work with the LA to highlight poor attendance, long term sickness, and issuing fixed penalties.

Schools must consider this if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence which can include lateness.

Appendix A

Importance of Attendance Document

Appendix B

We operate a supportive-first approach for parents and children. In terms of rewards and incentives, we:

- ✓ Give praise on the school gate in the mornings when children, who have attendance concerns, come in at the correct times. We also give praise to the parents and commend them. The personal and positive touch.