Attendance Policy

Meole Brace School

Learning – Respect – Success

Policy type	Statutory
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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to working together to ensure that Meole Brace School encourages, recognises, rewards and supports pupils with strong attendance to school. This policy covers the following principles:

- We work under statutory obligations, and the law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

- It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.
- We will develop and maintain a whole school culture and ethos that promotes the benefits of high attendance. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages children to enjoy and succeed in their education.
- We have high expectations for all attendance and encourage all students to achieve a full attendance record and to meet, or exceed, our attendance target of 96%.
- We know that pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the Key Stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.
- We recognise that some children find it harder than others to attend school, therefore the school will build strong and trusting relationships with children and families to promote good attendance and reasonably remove barriers to attendance using a collaborative approach.
- We will monitor attendance records regularly so that identification and response to attendance barriers can be addressed in a timely manner.
- We enforce attendance through statutory intervention only when all other avenues have been exhausted.

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 - GOV.UK (applies from 19 August 2024).

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
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England)
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

For the full list of legislation and guidance, please see Appendix C

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Holding the Headteacher to account for this policy
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils 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 pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and 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 pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with
  SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

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- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
  Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. **The Senior Leader responsible for attendance** Senior leaders in this area are responsible for:
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
  Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance officer

- The school attendance officer is responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- 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 education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices The attendance officer is Jade Green.

The tutor

- Take an accurate register each morning in tutor time.
- Form relationships with children and families so that communication of any issues pertaining to attendance can be dealt with quickly.
- Be curious about absence of children.
- Support children who are struggling to attend school.
- Report safeguarding concerns to the safeguarding lead.

The Head of Year

- Monitor patterns of attendance for their cohort and at individual level.
- Work in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance using reasonable means.
- Liaise with professionals both in and outside of school and the Educational Welfare Officer as appropriate.

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Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
  Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Parents are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day 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, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the relevant head of year who can be contacted via telephone or email
  Proactively engage in support (voluntary and formal) offered where attendance is identified as a concern
- Work with the school to understand barriers to attendance and work to find solutions to these barriers

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school on time
- Attend timetabled lessons on time

Please see Appendix D for DFE summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.

4. The school day

The school gates open at 8.38am and close at 8.48am.
School starts at 8:50am. All pupils must be in their tutor room at this time. The school day ends at 3.20pm.

5. Attendance procedures

i. Arrival to school and registration

Our three pupil entrances are open at 8.38. Pupils need to be in their tutor rooms by 8.50am at the latest. A register is a legal document, and it is part of staff duty to complete these. It is therefore important that they are taken promptly and accurately.

ii. Lateness to school

Good punctuality is expected of all pupils attending Meole Brace School. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. It does not mirror the expectations of pupils in their wider lives, and it means that pupils

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have an unsettled start to the day. Late arrivals to tutor time or lessons disrupt the flow of learning for others. Some pupils also find it difficult to walk into a classroom late, and this can lead to avoidance behaviours.

The gates are locked at 8:48am and any pupil arriving after this time is late to school.

Late pupils must go to the main gates and then to reception to sign-in.

Lateness is sanctioned under our behaviour policy. If improvement is not seen, the school will direct concerns to the Educational Welfare Officer.

If there are exceptional circumstances or particular barriers around punctuality and lateness to school, we ask parents/carers to contact the school.

6. Reporting absence from school

How to report an absence

If a pupil cannot attend school for any reason, a parent or carer must notify the school by emailing **attendancembs@meole.co.uk** or by **calling 01743 235961** by **8am** (or as close to this time as possible) on the first day of absence ***and for all subsequent days of absence***.

We ask for parents and carers to continue to notify us of absence for safeguarding purposes.

If we are not notified of a pupil absence, we will do all we reasonably can to establish contact with parents or carers. If we have safeguarding concerns, or a child has had multiple subsequent days of absence, we will conduct a home visit.

We request that all pupils have at least two, preferably three, contacts so that we can contact all trusted adults in the case of an emergency.

ii. Medical appointments

We ask for appointments to be made outside of school hours but understand that this is not always possible. In order for absence for medical appointments to be coded accurately on registers, please provide medical evidence. This can be a screenshot of a text, a letter, etc. Any medical appointments taken without evidence will be marked as unauthorised absence.

7. Types of absence

i. Authorised absence

Absence where the school has either given permission in advance of absence or where explanation of absence is accepted as justified.

Examples of which as follows:

- Illness
- Medical appointments which could not be made outside of the school day
- Days of religious or cultural observance
- Unavoidable cause and exceptional circumstance
- Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher (i.e. weddings, funerals)

To achieve a consistent and fair approach to exceptional circumstance in line with national guidance, we refer to the Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve Attendance* which states (para. 349): "Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance."

ii. Unauthorised absence

Absence where no reason has been given or where explanation given is not considered acceptable.

This includes:

- Keeping a child off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Children who arrive to school after 9.30 without reasonable explanation
- Day trips and holidays which have not been agreed
- Days off for birthdays or other such events
- Leaving the school during the school day (absconding)
- Pupils with persistent absence (under 90%) or severe absence (under 50%) with unsatisfactory explanation, or lack of medical or professional evidence to support continuing absence
- When a pupil is on a local authority final warning, the school will mark all absence without as unauthorised unless there is medical evidence or exceptional circumstance

iii. Leave in term time

- There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence. Therefore, we ask all parents/carers to pay careful attention to our academic calendar.
- All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance to the headteacher. Leave will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Each case for leave will be considered individually. It is highly unlikely that leave will be authorised.
- Taking leave in term time will impact a child's learning.
- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be unauthorised.

8. Promoting good attendance

The school will promote good attendance through:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Using the Go4Schools app to provide pupils, parents and carers with individual and daily attendance records.
- Reporting attendance through progress reports.
- Educating pupils of the importance of good attendance through assemblies and tutor times.
- Communicating with parents and carers regularly.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

i. Supporting pupil attendance

The school will always seek to support pupils who find attending school difficult. We recognise that barriers are often bespoke to individuals and that they can be wide and complex.
We monitor the attendance of all pupils, at cohort and individual level, so that any patterns can be quickly identified and resolved.

We aim to build strong, trusting relationships with pupils so that communication is open.

In the first instance, appropriate and reasonable support will be put in place to address identified barriers. This might include voluntary referrals to outside agencies and services, such as targeted early help.

Where absence persists or further declines, the school will work with the Educational Welfare Officer to formalise support.

Where support is not having the desired impact, or support is not being engaged with, local authority action is the next part of process. This may be a fixed penalty notice, Shropshire Attendance Panel or prosecution in the most severe cases where all reasonable routes have failed. These measures are taken to protect all children's right to receive a full education.

ii. Rewards and incentives

We seek to reward pupils who attend well, or who have made improvements to their attendance as part of our Behaviour and Attitudes policy, for example, through house points, certificates and attendance raffles.

iii. Sanctions

Lateness to school, or to lesson, is sanctioned through our Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

Internal truancy is sanctioned through after-school detention. Truancy is when a pupil does not arrive at a lesson in good time, without valid reason. Pupils who do not arrive at lessons in a timely way will be on-called, located and returned to lesson. This will be recorded on Go4Schools and the afterschool detention will typically be arranged for the next school day.

9. Penalty notices and notices to improve

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send a copy of any penalty notice issued. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.
The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school. They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

10. Safeguarding and Vulnerable children

The safeguarding of young people is everyone's responsibility.

Absence and lateness may be signs that something is worrying a child and that they, or their wider family, need support.

Persistent absence or children missing education are safeguarding concerns and must act as a warning sign to a range of concerns, including neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual or child criminal exploitation, and serious violence. They may also be an indication of child-on-child abuse including bullying and sexual harassment or significant mental ill health concerns. They must not be seen as purely isolated attendance concerns.

For pupils who are severely absent (under 50%), and all avenues of support have been attempted and unauthorised attendance continues, it is likely to result in a referral to children's social care.

Safe and well checks are carried out weekly to children who are not in school attendance. The frequency and criteria of these are determined by the school's own risk assessment. Children who are severely absent will be visited weekly. Children who have unexplained absence will be seen either on the first or second day of unexplained absence, depending on the outcome of our risk assessment. Home visits are not done by appointments; they are done at any point during the school day. This will be a 'doorstep' visit in which we would expect to see that children are safe and well and we would expect to see the adult who is supervising the child.

If contact cannot be established, this may lead to a children's social care referral if we have safeguarding concerns about the whereabouts of a child or if we do not feel that they are being adequately supervised.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and children under the age of 18.

Please see our safeguarding policy for more information.

11. Elective Home Education (EHE)

Please see: Elective home education: guide for parents

Elective home education is when parents or carers have made the decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them into full-time schooling.

The DfE guidance sets out the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in this process. The school will follow all local authority guidance and protocols for all children who are home educated. It is important that parents/carers read the guidance so that decisions are fully informed.

The school will endeavour to undertake the following process where a parent or pupil is considering Elective Home Education:

1. If a parent or pupil raises that EHE is being considered, the school will seek to arrange a supportive meeting to discuss this. The aim of the meeting is to understand why EHE is being considered, to explore if there is anything the school can reasonably do to allow the pupil to overcome any barriers, and to signpost parents to Shropshire and DfE guidance so that all information is known.
2. The DSL will confirm if there are any safeguarding concerns that need to be considered and if any other professional agencies need to be informed, such as a child's social worker.
3. If the decision for EHE remains, a parent/carer must notify the school in writing of their decision to EHE.
4. The school will notify the Education Welfare Officer and Local Authority. The school will highlight, through the completion of local authority notification paperwork, any concerns we have around a pupil moving to EHE.

Information and contact details for EHE in Shropshire can be found on their website: Elective home education | Shropshire Council

12. Children Missing in Education (CME)

Please see Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016 (DfE website).

The named officer in Shropshire for CME is Adriana Coupe.

Children missing in education are children of a compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children who are already identified as vulnerable, are known to children's social care or are in the care of the local authority are additionally vulnerable and need robust protection. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Children at particular risk of missing education

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, so it is vital that local authorities make judgements on a case-by-case basis. Although not exhaustive, the list below presents some of the circumstances that local authorities should consider when establishing their CME policies and procedures:

- **Pupils at risk of harm/neglect** – Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow local child protection procedures. However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate). Local authority officers responsible for CME should check that a referral has been made and, if not, they should alert children's social care. The Department's statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education provides further advice for schools and colleges on safeguarding children.
- **Children of Service Personnel** – Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.
- **Missing children and runaways** – Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education. Further sources of information about missing children are listed at the back of this document.
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System – Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YOTs should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education.

Where a young person was registered at a school prior to custody, the school may be able to keep the place open for their return.

- **Children who cease to attend a school** – there are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the local authority should investigate the case and satisfy itself that the child is receiving suitable education.
- Children of new migrant families – children of new migrant families may not have yet settled into a fixed address or may have arrived into a local authority area without the authority becoming aware, therefore increasing the risk of the child missing education.

13. Suspensions and permanent exclusions

All incidents where a child is sent home due to poor behaviour, will be coded on the register as a suspension, even if pre-agreed with a parent, i.e., children being sent home during lunch times. If an exclusion is for part of the day (including lunchtime), it will be noted as a half day exclusion. All suspensions count as an authorised absence.

14. Children with medical conditions or special educational needs or disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

This should include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments. This might include referral to the wellbeing team, support from a pastoral support officer, a move of form/class if appropriate, access to quiet social time spaces, a medical/toilet pass, or through helping a family complete a voluntary early help assessment where a whole family response would be helpful. The school will also signpost parents/carers to external support where appropriate.

- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a timelimited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings.
- Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority.

Additional guidance:

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

15. Part time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary parttime timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a reintegration package.

A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or a registered alternative provision, under local authority direction where medical evidence recommends such education.
There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

There will be an identified lead for a part-time table.

Parents/carers will need to complete a risk assessment with the school and stipulate who is supervising the child when they are not in school attendance.

Part time timetables will be terminated if the agreed hours are not followed, or if a pupil is not adequately supervised.

Part-time timetables for pupils with an EHC plan will not be issued until consultation with the local authority SEND team has taken place and part-time arrangements agreed.

16. The school roll

Meole Brace School keeps an admission register and attendance register. This incudes the following information:

- All children on roll, including date of admission.
- All children's personal details.
- At least two contacts for trusted adults.
- Details of the school(s) last attended.

Pupils are entered on roll on the first day of their admission.

All register codes used are in line with national codes.

A child's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

Appendix A – register codes

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

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil 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	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil 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	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil 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 pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil 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	Pupil'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	Pupil 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	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil 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

Appendix B – examples of letters of concern

Letter of concern 1

Dear

Pupil Name:
DOB:
School: Meole Brace School

Our school's attendance registers are reviewed regularly with our Education Welfare Officer, so that we are able to contact you at the earliest opportunity if we notice that your child's attendance has started to dip.

When we looked at the registers on _____, _____'s attendance was at _____

We do recognise and appreciate that children have minor childhood illness and individually they are affected in different ways. However, it is known that even a few days absence can have an impact, and if this becomes a regular occurrence, a child's social, emotional interaction and academic attainment can all be affected.

Please be assured that we are here to support your child's school experience and to help them to be happy and fulfil their potential. If you think it would be helpful to talk in confidence to a member of school staff about any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact the school office.

We must draw to your attention that it is a legal responsibility for parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Therefore, if there is a further decline in your child's attendance the Education Welfare Officer will be contacting you. However, if you would prefer to talk to them directly at this stage, you can contact them on the number given below.

Yours sincerely

Emma Sanders
Education Welfare Officer
Education Access Service
Tel: 01743 251955
Email: emma.sanders:@shropshire.gov.uk

At risk of persistent absence letter

Dear

Pupil Name:
DOB:

School: Meole Brace School

I am writing to inform you about an important matter regarding your child's school attendance. **#name's** current attendance is between 90-92%. We are reaching out to bring this to your attention, as pupils with attendance in this range may be at risk of falling into the category of "persistent absence."

What is Persistent Absence?

Persistent absence is defined as missing 10% or more of school time, which equates to approximately 20 days (100 lessons) or more over the course of a school year. While it may seem like a small number of days, this level of absence is proven to have a significant impact on a student's learning and overall academic progress.

We understand that there can be legitimate reasons for occasional absences, such as illness or family emergencies. However, it is important to ensure that absence is minimised wherever possible, and that any extended or repeated absences are carefully managed.

What Can We Do Together?

We want to work together to ensure your child's attendance improves and they remain fully engaged in their education. If there are any barriers to regular attendance that you are facing, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support you and your child in overcoming these challenges.

In the coming weeks, we will continue to monitor attendance closely. If attendance remains below 92%, we may arrange a meeting to discuss ways to help improve this and prevent any further risk of falling into persistent absence.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix C – Legislation and guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education - statutory guidance for schools
- Working together to safeguard children – statutory guidance for safeguarding partners.

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 0-25 years
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations
- Working together to improve school attendance
- Looked After Children
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2013
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities Sept 2016 • Gypsy, Roma and Traveler Children: supporting access to education.
- General information and advice for academies can also be found in the Government's publication Missing Children and Adults – A Cross government strategy.
- Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care.
- Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation Department for Education
- NSPCC Protecting children from sexual exploitation.
- Elective home education guidance for local authorities April 2019 Attendance policy 8
- Elective home education – a guide for parents April 2019
- Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for local authorities

Appendix D – table summary of responsibilities

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for persistenly absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area. Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children. Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.