

Christ Church CoE Primary School

Attendance Policy

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This policy was formulated to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Governing Body recognises its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. This policy will ensure equality and fairness regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, disability or age.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements, and the Nottinghamshire Improving School Attendance Toolkit.

1. Aims and rationale

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

Promoting good attendance.
Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
Acting early to address patterns of absence.
Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

An effective whole-school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations of parents/carers/families, robust procedures and clearly understood responsibilities of school staff.

Christ Church C of E Primary School promotes the view that regular attendance is essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for our children. We are committed to working with parents and other agencies to achieve this. We believe that the whole school community has a responsibility for good attendance.

The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. Attendance improvement is therefore linked to safeguarding, curriculum, behaviour, bullying prevention, SEND support, pastoral support, mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of school resources.

Introduction

We expect all children to attend school every day when school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We are committed to doing all we can to encourage our children to attend regularly, and have put in place appropriate procedures to support this.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

We recognise and celebrate children whose attendance is good. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school regularly.

Attendance targets

Our attendance targets are challenging yet realistic, and take into account attendance data for previous years. We expect whole-school attendance to be at least 95%, and our school target remains 96%, because we want all pupils to have good or better attendance while they are at Christ Church.

Attendance band	What this means
Above 97%	Excellent attendance. Less than 6 days absence a year. Pupils with this attendance are well placed to achieve their potential.
95%+	Satisfactory attendance. Less than 10 days absence in a year.
Below 90%	Persistent absence. A pupil is missing 10% or more of school.
Below 50%	Severe absence. This is a significant safeguarding and educational concern and will require intensified support and, where appropriate, multi-agency involvement.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been updated to reflect the current statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance* (Department for Education, August 2024), and the national framework for penalty notices.

It draws on the following legislation and guidance:

The Education Act 1996, including sections 7, 19, 434, 444, 444A and 444B as relevant.
The Education Act 2002.
The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the 2024 amendments.
Keeping Children Safe in Education.
Children Missing Education statutory guidance.
Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.
Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.
Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.
Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance.
Nottinghamshire Improving School Attendance Toolkit and Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.
Nottinghamshire Educational Psychology Service and Health Related Education Team guidance on Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA).
The Nottinghamshire Improving School Attendance Toolkit is incorporated into this policy.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
Taking an active role in attendance improvement and supporting the school to prioritise attendance.
Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
Working with school leaders to set goals and outline areas for support and challenge.
Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data, including trends and patterns over time.
Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and benchmarking against local, regional and national data.
Paying particular attention to pupil groups who face entrenched barriers to attendance.
Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
The Pupils and Curriculum Committee oversee this duty for the Governing Body.

3.2 The headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion

The Headteacher, Mr Lee Harrison, is the school's Senior Attendance Champion and has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure these are followed by staff.
Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
Monitoring the impact of attendance strategies and interventions.
Ensuring the school works with pupils, parents, the local authority and wider partners to remove barriers to attendance.

Considering whether a penalty notice is appropriate and, where appropriate, making a request to Nottinghamshire County Council for a penalty notice to be issued in line with the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct.

3.3 Family Worker / operational attendance lead

At Christ Church, day-to-day attendance support is led by the Family Worker, Mrs Justine Watts, working closely with the Headteacher.

The Family Worker is responsible for:

Promoting good attendance across the school.
Supporting the Senior Attendance Champion with attendance improvement work.
Evaluating and monitoring attendance expectations and processes.
Having oversight of day-to-day attendance concerns and family support work.
Analysing attendance data with the Headteacher to identify patterns and pupils who need support.
Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
Creating support, intervention and reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and families.
Delivering or coordinating targeted intervention and support.
Working with external agencies when appropriate, including early help, health, SEND, social care and local authority attendance services.

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes on registers or checking when they are unsure, and submitting this information via ScholarPack at morning and afternoon registration.

Class teachers must also record or pass on any messages from parents/carers, for example messages sent via Class Dojo or shared verbally, to the admin team, Family Worker or Headteacher, as appropriate.

3.5 School admin staff

School office staff will:

Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
Contact the parent/carer when a child does not arrive at school and no absence notification has been given.
Alert the Family Worker and/or Headteacher if they are concerned about the absence of a child or cannot contact a family when a child has not arrived at school.
Check registers have been completed by teaching staff and that the correct codes have been used.
Signpost parents/carers to the Family Worker if more detailed support on attendance is needed.
Print or prepare attendance reports for the Headteacher and Family Worker, when requested.
Ensure attendance records and amendments are maintained in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

3.6 Parents/carers

We expect all parents and carers to support our efforts to improve pupil attendance and to make every effort to ensure their child attends school when they can.

If you have any home issues which may affect your child's attendance, please arrange a meeting to discuss this. We will always try to support families in these circumstances.

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends school every day and arrives on time, before 8.55am. In the line, before five to nine.
Call the school office to report their child's absence before 8.55am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return. Parents should not use Class Dojo to report absences as it is the admin team who need to be informed.
Provide a full and honest explanation for every absence.

Work with the school and local authority to help understand and remove barriers to attendance.
Proactively engage with support offered to prevent the need for formal or legal intervention.
Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
Request any leave of absence in advance and only in exceptional circumstances.
Avoid taking holidays during term time.

3.7 Attendance contacts

Attendance matter	School contact
Reporting daily absence	School Office - 01636 680051 / office@christchurch.notts.sch.uk
Attendance support / family support	Family Worker - Mrs Justine Watts, via the school office
Senior Attendance Champion	Headteacher - Mr Lee Harrison, via the school office
Safeguarding concern linked to absence	Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy DSL, via the school office

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We keep an electronic admission register and attendance register and include all pupils on the relevant registers.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Morning registration is at 8.55am and afternoon registration is at 1.00pm.

The register will indicate whether every pupil is:

Present.
Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
Absent.
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
Any amendment to the attendance or admission register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date of the amendment and the name of the person who made the amendment.

We will keep every entry on the attendance and admission registers for six years from the date on which the entry was made. Back-up copies will also be retained in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day. Pupils arriving after 8.55am must enter through the main entrance and report to the school office.

The morning register is taken at 8.55am and closes at 9.30am. Pupils arriving after 8.55am but before the register closes will receive a late mark using Code L. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be recorded using Code U, which is an unauthorised absence unless another code applies.

The afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm.

All attendance coding will be in line with the national attendance and absence codes in force from September 2024, including Codes C1, C2, J1 and Y1-Y7 where relevant. Deleted codes, including H and the former J and Y codes, will not be used.

4.2 Unplanned absence, including illness

We are aware that children sometimes become ill, and we do not expect children who are seriously unwell or contagious to come to school. We follow NHS and public health guidance when advising parents about when a pupil should remain away from school.

Children with mild respiratory symptoms such as a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat can usually attend school if they are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature. Children should not attend school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above, or if they are not well enough to take part in normal school activities.

In the case of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, pupils should not return to school until 48 hours after the last episode of illness. This reduces the risk of more children becoming ill.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised where it is not possible for the pupil to attend school. In most cases, a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern.

Where illness absence is repeated, prolonged, follows a pattern, or there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for appropriate evidence. This could include an appointment card, prescription, hospital letter, text message confirmation or other relevant evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Where we have concerns about repeated school absences for health reasons, we may consider a referral or signposting to appropriate health or family support services, such as the Healthy Family Team, school nurse or other relevant service.

4.3 Absence reported as illness where a holiday is suspected

Where school has reason to believe that an absence reported as illness may in fact be for the purpose of a holiday or other unauthorised leave during term time, the school may write to parents/carers asking for further information or evidence. If reasonable evidence is not provided by the date requested, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Where this results in 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school-week period, the school will consider requesting that Nottinghamshire County Council issue a penalty notice in line with the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct.

4.4 Planned absence, including medical and dental appointments

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised where the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school office in advance of the appointment. Where possible, parents should share evidence of the appointment, such as an appointment card, text message confirmation or letter.

If a pupil is present for registration and then leaves school to attend a medical or dental appointment during that session, no absence needs to be recorded for that session.

Parents/carers must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible and using the school's leave of absence request form. Section 5 explains which term-time absences may be authorised.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Any family arriving at school after the gates are closed, for example after 8.55am, must enter school through the main entrance and report to the school office. The reason for lateness will be logged on our electronic register.

A pupil who arrives late before the register has closed will be marked as late using Code L. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent using Code U, unless another code applies.

Ongoing concerns about punctuality will be addressed by the Family Worker directly with parents and appropriate support will be offered to help punctuality improve.

Late arrival to school has an impact on pupil learning and wellbeing, and is also disruptive to staff and other learners.

4.6 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect at school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts and staff are concerned about the welfare of the pupil or family, complete an unannounced home visit and/or alert other professionals working with the family.
Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
Identify the correct attendance code and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained, and no later than 5 working days after the session.
Continue to call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation so that proper safeguarding action can be taken where necessary.
Consider escalation where absence continues, including referral to children's social care, police welfare check, local authority attendance services or children missing education procedures, depending on the circumstances.
If a child is absent for three or more days because of illness, school staff will telephone parents for an update and to check whether appropriate advice has been sought.

All communication with parents/carers, including reasons for absence, will be recorded on our electronic registration system.

In all circumstances, school expects a full and honest explanation from parents for any absence from school. If we subsequently have reason to believe a parent/carer has not been truthful about the reason for an absence, we will request a meeting to discuss this. Any absence considered not to be justified will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels and alert them if there are concerns. This will usually be done on a half-termly basis.

The school will share attendance data with the Department for Education and local authority in line with current statutory requirements and local arrangements.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has authorised the absence. For example, this may include genuine illness where the pupil is too unwell to attend and the school has received appropriate notification.

Authorised absences may include:

Genuine illness, including mental health-related illness where the pupil is unable to attend.
Medical or dental appointments where they cannot reasonably be made outside school hours.
Days set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs.
Leave of absence agreed by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances.
Temporary part-time timetable sessions agreed in line with statutory guidance and recorded using Code C2 where applicable.

5.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Unauthorised absences include:

Illness of a sibling or parent where no other exceptional reason applies.
Birthday or birthday outing.
Shopping trip.
Hair appointment.
Visiting friends or relatives.

Term-time holiday, preparing or travelling for a holiday, or resting after a holiday.
Cheaper holidays, availability of flights or accommodation, or parental work patterns where these do not amount to exceptional circumstances.
Over-sleeping or being tired.
Arrival after the register has closed, unless another code applies.
Absence where no reason is provided or where the reason given is not accepted by the school.

5.3 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. It is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday; these will normally be recorded as unauthorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and using the school's leave of absence request form, which is available from the school office.

The Headteacher may request evidence to support any application for leave of absence.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents and carers cannot authorise absence themselves. Not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised.

A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not generally constitute an exceptional circumstance.

5.4 Service families and exceptional leave

The school recognises that service families may face unique challenges linked to mobility and deployment. The Headteacher will consider service-related circumstances when deciding whether a leave of absence request is exceptional. This may include evidence that a parent is preparing for or returning from an operational tour, shift patterns only allow leave during term time, injury or bereavement. The decision remains with the Headteacher and each request will be considered individually.

5.5 Pupils with medical conditions, SEND and/or mental health needs

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Where absence is linked to physical health, mental health, SEND, disability or other vulnerabilities, the school will work with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand barriers to attendance and put the right support in place.

School staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions or provide clinical intervention. However, staff are expected to work with families to support regular attendance, make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, and seek or signpost to wider support when needed.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, a social worker, early help practitioner, youth offending team worker or other lead practitioner, the school will work with those professionals so that attendance is a key part of the existing plan.

5.6 Part-time / reduced timetables

All children of statutory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

There is no statutory basis on which to implement a reduced timetable as a long-term arrangement. A reduced timetable may only be used in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupil's best interests, and where all other appropriate interventions have been considered.

A reduced timetable must:

Be agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil.
Be for a short, fixed and agreed period.

Have clear objectives and a plan for swift reintegration to full-time provision.
Be reviewed regularly with parents/carers and relevant professionals.
Include safeguarding consideration for the time the pupil is not in school.
Be recorded accurately, using Code C2 for compulsory school age pupils where applicable.
Be supported by advice from relevant services where needed, for example EPS, HRET, SFSS, CAMHS, social care or the local authority.

A reduced timetable will not be used to manage behaviour, to exclude unofficially, or as a long-term solution. If it is not effective in meeting its objectives, it should not simply continue; alternative interventions should be explored with relevant support services.

6. Working together to improve attendance

The school adopts the DfE and Nottinghamshire support-first approach. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance requires school, families, the local authority and wider partners to work collaboratively with, not against, families.

Stage	What this means at Christ Church
Expect	We set and communicate high expectations for attendance and punctuality.
Monitor	We use attendance data to identify patterns and concerns as early as possible.
Listen and understand	We speak with pupils and parents to understand the barriers to attendance.
Facilitate support	We remove in-school barriers and help families access wider support where needed.
Formalise support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not engaged with, support may be formalised through an attendance contract, Notice to Improve, education supervision order or other plan.
Enforce	Where all other appropriate avenues have been exhausted, or where support is not appropriate such as an unauthorised holiday, the school may request legal intervention in line with the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct.

6.1 Attendance support and early help

Where a pupil is at risk of becoming persistently absent, the school will work with the pupil and their parents/carers to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers. Where out-of-school barriers are identified, the school will signpost and support access to required services in the first instance.

If needs and barriers are wider and a whole-family response is more appropriate, this may include a voluntary early help assessment or other multi-agency support. Where another lead practitioner is already involved, the school will work alongside them.

6.2 Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
Hold regular meetings with parents/carers of pupils who are vulnerable or persistently/severely absent.
Provide access to wider support services to remove barriers to attendance.
Pay particular attention to pupils with SEND, a social worker, early help involvement, medical needs, mental health needs, free school meal eligibility, or other vulnerabilities.
Intensify support where absence becomes severe, including considering safeguarding and children's social care involvement where appropriate.

6.3 Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) / Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA)

The school recognises the Nottinghamshire umbrella term Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), which includes Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA). EBSA is used to describe pupils who may be experiencing difficulty attending school consistently because of emotional factors. It is important to understand the function of non-attendance rather than assuming there is a single cause.

Where absence is attributed to anxiety or mental health, the school will consider appropriate support mechanisms, which may include the Nottinghamshire ATTEND Framework, EBSA/ARNA resources, support from the Family Worker, reasonable adjustments, trusted-adult support, gradual reintegration, referrals to relevant services, and regular plan-do-review meetings.

Support will be planned with the pupil and family wherever possible. The school will keep expectations for attendance high while recognising that some pupils need carefully planned, graduated and reviewed support to return to full attendance.

6.4 Attendance contracts and Notices to Improve

Where absence persists and voluntary support has not been effective or has not been engaged with, the school may work with the family and local authority to formalise support. This may include an attendance contract or a Notice to Improve.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between the parent/carer and the school and/or local authority to improve attendance. It will identify barriers, agreed actions, support and review arrangements.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice may be issued. A Notice to Improve will usually be considered where support is appropriate, but will not normally be used before a penalty notice request for an unauthorised term-time holiday because support is not usually appropriate in the same way.

7. Legal sanctions and penalty notices

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude.

For the purposes of attendance law, a parent includes natural parents, whether married or not, anyone with parental responsibility, and any person who has day-to-day care of the child.

The school will always consider whether support is appropriate before legal intervention, except in circumstances where support is not appropriate, for example an unauthorised term-time holiday.

7.1 National threshold for penalty notices

The national threshold is met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions, usually equivalent to 5 school days, within a rolling 10 school-week period, with one or a combination of the relevant unauthorised absence codes. The 10 school-week period can span different terms or school years.

The relevant codes include unauthorised holiday absence, absence where the reason has not yet been established, absence where no authorised code applies, and late arrival after the register has closed where no other code applies.

7.2 Requesting penalty notices

Where the penalty notice threshold is met, the Headteacher will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. If it is considered appropriate, the school will make a request to Nottinghamshire County Council for a penalty notice to be issued in line with the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct.

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent/carer for each child. In Nottinghamshire, penalty notices are primarily issued by the Local Authority at the request of a named referrer, usually the school.

7.3 Penalty notice amounts and escalation

A penalty notice is £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. For a first offence, this is reduced to £80 if paid in full within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, it is charged at the full rate of £160. There is no reduction for early payment for a second penalty notice.

A maximum of two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period. If the national threshold is met for a third time within that period, Nottinghamshire County Council may escalate to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court instead of issuing another penalty notice.

If a penalty notice is not paid within the required timescale, the local authority may decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7.4 Term-time holidays from September 2026

The Governing Body has reviewed the school's approach to term-time holidays. From the start of the Autumn Term in September 2026, where a child is taken out of school for an unauthorised term-time holiday and the penalty notice threshold is met, the school will normally request that Nottinghamshire County Council issue a penalty notice, unless there are specific circumstances which mean this would not be appropriate.

This approach will not apply retrospectively and will not affect any holiday request form that had already been submitted to school before the parent notice letter was issued.

Where a leave of absence request for a holiday is not authorised and the child is still taken out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If the unauthorised absence reaches 10 sessions within a rolling 10 school-week period, the school will consider whether a penalty notice request is appropriate.

7.5 Appeals and withdrawal

There is no appeal process to the Local Authority once a penalty notice has been issued. If a parent/carer believes the absence should have been authorised because the circumstances were exceptional, they should contact the school directly to discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

Penalty notices can only be withdrawn in very specific circumstances, for example if it ought not to have been issued, it was issued to the wrong person, it contains material errors, or it interferes with existing intervention strategies or legal proceedings. Parents cannot request withdrawal directly. If the school believes the criteria for withdrawal are met, the school can ask the Local Authority to consider withdrawal.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

We recognise that raising the profile of the importance of good attendance can be effective when trying to improve pupil attendance.

We will promote good attendance through:

Recognising and celebrating the best weekly class attendance.
Regularly sharing information about pupil attendance with parents/carers.
Recognising children whose attendance is strong or improving.
Using attendance data to celebrate success while remaining sensitive to pupils with medical, SEND, disability or other legitimate reasons for absence.
Having regular attendance improvement challenges to encourage attendance.
Ensuring attendance messages are balanced, supportive and linked to our school vision: Together, we flourish.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at individual pupil level.

The school will identify whether there are individual pupils, cohorts or groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
Use this analysis to provide targeted support to pupils and families.
Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
Pay particular attention to groups that face entrenched barriers to attendance, including pupils with a social worker, long-term medical condition, SEND or disability, eligibility for free school meals, or other vulnerability.
Use attendance data to facilitate discussions about attendance and punctuality with pupils and families.
Work with identified pupils and their families to understand and address reasons for absence, including in-school barriers.
Signpost and support access to required services when out-of-school barriers are identified.
Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions.

10. Children absent from education / children missing education

Where a child is absent from school for a prolonged period, or where the school has reason to believe the pupil may be missing from education, the school will follow statutory and Nottinghamshire local authority procedures. All efforts to locate the child and understand the circumstances of absence will be recorded.

This may include telephone calls, emails, home visits, contact with emergency contacts, contact with other professionals, and liaison with the local authority attendance or children missing education services. If there are safeguarding concerns, the school will take appropriate safeguarding action, which may include contacting children's social care or the police.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

The next scheduled review is June 2027, or sooner if statutory guidance, local authority guidance or school practice changes.

12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and documents:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
Behaviour Policy.
SEND Policy.
Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements.
Equality information and objectives.

Children Missing Education procedures.
Pupil Holiday / Leave of Absence Application Form.
Term-time holidays and penalty notices parent letter and FAQ appendix.

Appendix 1: Improving Attendance Checklist for Schools

This checklist supports staff to follow a support-first approach before formal or legal intervention, except where support is not appropriate, such as an unauthorised term-time holiday.

First day telephone calls to query reason for absence and offer advice/supportive challenge.
Home visits to check pupil/family welfare if there are concerns during a period of non-attendance.
Letters sent to parents to share attendance concerns.
Known/trusted adult to speak to the child to hear their voice, age and ability dependent.
Meetings with parents/carers to discuss reasons why the child is not attending.
Consideration of family circumstances and appropriate support/referrals.
Where punctuality is an issue, consider practical support such as reminders, alarm clock, breakfast club, reward system or meet-and-greet.
Contact schools where siblings attend to check whether there are linked patterns of absence.
Consider whether the child is a young carer.
Consider whether there are unmet learning, communication, emotional, health or SEND needs.
Consider whether letters and meetings need translation or adaptation so parents have fair access to school concerns.
If an EHCP is in place, consider whether outcomes and provision are being supported and whether a review is needed.
If external services are involved, hold or attend relevant multi-agency meetings, for example TAF, CIN or professional network meetings.
If there is a lead professional from early help, YOS, CAMHS, social care or another service, consult them before an enforcement referral is made.
Where absence is attributed to anxiety or mental health, consider support mechanisms such as ATTEND, EBSA/ARNA support, MHST, reasonable adjustments or specialist advice.

Appendix 2: Attendance-focused structured conversation phone call

I am calling you today because, just like you, we want to do all we can to be sure your child is successful in school. One way we can help make this happen is to be sure they get to school each day.
When your child misses school they are missing valuable learning time and this can make them fall behind in their school work. Our attendance records show that your child has recently missed [x] days of school.
Sometimes these absences add up before we know it, so I thought I would call to see if you might be able to help us improve your child's attendance.
How can we work together to get your child to school each day and on time?
We would like to invite you to a meeting in school to discuss any barriers there are to good attendance and how we can help you as a school.
If there are wider issues impacting on attendance and you consent to support, we would like to discuss referring your family for Early Help support. This would include an assessment leading to a plan of support.
If you do not consent to support and unauthorised absences continue, we may need to make an enforcement referral to the Local Authority. This is because we have a statutory duty to work with the LA to enforce school attendance. We want to avoid this option and would prefer to work with you to improve your child's attendance.
Due to our ongoing concerns about your child's attendance, if in the future your child is absent due to illness, we may ask you to provide medical evidence or other appropriate evidence so that the absence can be considered by school.
School registers close at 9.30am. If your child arrives after the register has closed, this is recorded as an unauthorised absence unless another code applies.

My staff and I are here to help you improve your child's attendance. Please let me know what we can do to help make sure your child does not miss more school.

Thank you for taking time to talk today. I look forward to seeing you in school soon.

Give the parent time to talk. Summarise the conversation in writing and send an attendance certificate home with it.

Appendix 3: Attendance register codes - summary

The school will use the current statutory attendance and absence codes. The following summary is for staff reference and does not replace the full DfE guidance.

Code	Meaning	Notes
/ \	Present	Morning / afternoon present marks.
L	Late before register closes	Classified as attending.
U	Late after register closes	Unauthorised absence unless another code applies.
I	Illness	Authorised where the pupil is unable to attend due to illness.
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised where appropriate; pupils should attend before/after appointment where possible.
C	Exceptional circumstances	Authorised only where the Headteacher agrees exceptional circumstances.
C2	Part-time timetable	For compulsory school age pupils temporarily on an agreed part-time timetable.
G	Holiday not authorised	Unauthorised absence.
N	Reason not yet established	Must be followed up and changed within expected timescales.
O	Other unauthorised absence	Used where no other authorised code applies.
B/P/V/W/K	Approved educational activity	Use only where the relevant criteria for that code are met.
Y1-Y7	Unable to attend because of specific unavoidable causes	Use the correct Y sub-code where applicable.
#	Planned whole-school closure	For holidays, INSET days or other planned closure.

Appendix 4: Term-time holidays and penalty notices - parent information

Can I take my child out of school for a holiday during term time?

Parents should not normally take children out of school during term time for holidays. Headteachers are not permitted to agree a leave of absence during term time unless they determine that there are exceptional circumstances.

What counts as exceptional circumstances?

There is no automatic right to term-time leave. Each request will be considered individually by the Headteacher. Family holidays, cheaper holidays, availability of flights or accommodation, or the fact that a child's attendance is otherwise good will not normally be considered exceptional circumstances.

How do I request leave of absence during term time?

You must complete a leave of absence request form in advance. The Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances of the request and decide whether the absence can be authorised and, if so, for how long.

What happens if my request is declined but I still take my child out of school?

If the request is not authorised and your child is taken out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. From September 2026, where this results in the penalty notice threshold being met, the school will normally request that Nottinghamshire County Council issue a penalty notice.

What is the penalty notice threshold?

The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school-week period. This is usually equivalent to 5 school days. The 10 school-week period can span different terms or school years.

Who decides whether the absence is authorised?

The decision about whether an absence is authorised rests with the Headteacher. The Local Authority cannot change the school's decision about whether an absence is authorised.

How much is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice is £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. For a first offence, this is reduced to £80 if paid in full within 21 days.

What if my child is reported as ill but the school believes they may be on holiday?

If your child is genuinely too ill to attend school, you should contact school as soon as possible and follow the usual absence reporting procedures. However, where school has reason to believe that an absence reported as illness may in fact be for the purpose of a holiday or other unauthorised leave during term time, the school may write to you asking for further information or evidence. If reasonable evidence is not provided by the date requested, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.