



IPAT Pupil Attendance Policy

The Board of Trustees reviewed and adopted this policy: Spring 2026
To be reviewed (Annually): Spring 2027

1. Purpose and Vision

The Trust is committed to ensuring that every child attends school regularly, feels safe, supported and valued, and receives their full entitlement to education. Attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, achievement, wellbeing and life chances.

This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)* and establishes a support-first, relational, and data-informed approach that is ambitious, compliant and practical for every school in the Trust.

We believe:

- Attendance is everyone's responsibility.
 - Absence is usually a symptom, not a cause.
 - Strong relationships with families are central to improvement.
 - Early help prevents entrenched absence.
 - Legal intervention is a last resort, used to protect a child's right to education.
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2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by, and must be read alongside:

- Education Act 1996 (Section 444)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. Schools and the Trust have a statutory duty to promote attendance, keep accurate registers, follow up absence and work collaboratively with partners.

3. Trust Attendance Principles

Across all schools, attendance practice will be underpinned by the following principles:

1. **High expectations for all** – including pupils with SEND, medical needs or social workers.
 2. **Support first** – understanding barriers before considering formal or legal action.
 3. **Early intervention** – acting before patterns become persistent.
 4. **Whole-family approach** – recognising wider contextual challenges.
 5. **Consistency with flexibility** – fair, transparent processes applied with professional judgement.
 6. **Safeguarding at the core** – absence is a safeguarding indicator.
 7. **Culture and belonging** – strong relationships, a sense of belonging and positive school culture underpin good attendance and engagement.
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4. Attendance Expectations

4.1 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day it is open
- Arrive on time and ready to learn
- Engage positively with support offered
- Speak to a trusted adult if something makes attendance difficult

4.2 Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure regular and punctual attendance
- Notify school on the first day of absence
- Provide reasons for absence promptly
- Avoid term-time holidays
- Engage with support and meetings

- Ensure up-to-date contact details are held

4.3 Schools

All schools must:

- Promote a positive attendance culture where pupils feel safe, valued and connected to learning.
 - Maintain accurate electronic registers.
 - Follow robust first-day response procedures.
 - Analyse attendance data weekly, including patterns and trends by cohort, year group and key pupil groups, to inform targeted support.
 - Identify pupils at risk early.
 - Provide timely support.
 - Work collaboratively with the local authority.
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5. Roles and Responsibilities

Clear, consistent operational roles are essential to improving attendance across the Trust. While each school retains responsibility for day-to-day practice, the Trust sets minimum expectations to ensure equity, compliance and impact.

5.1 Trust Board

The Trust Board will:

- Champion attendance as a strategic safeguarding and standards priority.
- Receive Trust-level attendance reports at least termly via the Trust Standards Dashboard.
- Use live and historical attendance data to challenge and support executive leaders and schools.
- Ensure statutory compliance with attendance guidance and legislation.

5.2 Trust Executive Team

The Executive Team will:

- Set and review the Trust-wide attendance strategy and policy.

- Monitor attendance trends across all schools using the Trust Standards Dashboard.
- Identify Trust-wide patterns, risks and effective practice.
- Deploy central capacity, including Family Support Workers, to schools where attendance concerns are most acute.
- Ensure training, guidance and quality assurance for attendance practice.

5.3 Headteacher / Head of School (Senior Attendance Champion)

In every Trust school, the Headteacher or Head of School is the **Senior Attendance Champion**. They are accountable for attendance outcomes and for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently.

They will:

- Set a clear vision and high expectations for attendance.
- Ensure attendance is prioritised within safeguarding, behaviour, SEND, wellbeing and improvement planning.
- Lead on attendance strategy, escalation and decision-making.
- Chair formal attendance meetings with families where concerns persist.
- Ensure timely engagement with the local authority and other agencies.
- Use live attendance data to evaluate impact and adapt approaches.
- Report attendance performance to governors and the Trust.

5.4 Family Support Workers (Trust-wide)

Family Support Workers are deployed across the Trust to provide targeted, relational support to pupils and families facing barriers to attendance.

Their role includes:

- Building trusting, consistent relationships with families.
- Undertaking home visits and outreach work where appropriate.
- Identifying and addressing practical, emotional and contextual barriers to attendance.
- Supporting early help, whole-family and multi-agency plans.
- Acting as a bridge between home and school.

- Supporting reintegration following prolonged absence.
- Keeping clear records of engagement and impact.

Family Support Workers work under the direction of school leaders and in partnership with local authorities and external services.

5.5 Attendance and Pastoral Staff

Attendance officers, pastoral leads and administrative staff will:

- Monitor daily attendance and punctuality.
- Implement first-day response and follow-up procedures.
- Maintain accurate registers and coding.
- Produce regular attendance reports for leaders.
- Escalate concerns promptly to senior leaders.

5.6 Teaching and Support Staff

All staff will:

- Promote positive attendance messages.
- Build strong relationships with pupils.
- Identify early signs of disengagement.
- Support pupils returning from absence.

6. Recording Attendance and First-Day Response

6.1 Recording Attendance

- Attendance registers will be taken **twice daily**.
- Registers will close no later than **30 minutes after session start**.
- National attendance codes (2024) will be used correctly.
- Amendments will be auditable and time-limited.
- Registers will be retained for **6 years**.

6.2 First-Day Response and Safeguarding Actions

The Trust expects a robust, consistent first-day response across all schools. Unexplained absence is treated as a safeguarding concern until proven otherwise.

Operational expectations:

- Same-day contact attempts must be made for all unexplained absences. This will normally include phone calls, messages and/or emails to parents/carers and emergency contacts.
- Where no contact is made, staff must assess risk, taking account of:
 - the pupil's age
 - vulnerability (e.g. SEND, social worker, CP/CIN, previously looked after)
 - previous attendance patterns

Safeguarding escalation:

- Where a pupil is considered vulnerable and contact cannot be established, a safeguarding home visit must be considered and undertaken where appropriate.
- If no contact is made following reasonable attempts and concern remains:
 - concerns must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
 - escalation to children's social care, the local authority attendance team or the police must be considered in line with safeguarding thresholds

Extended unexplained absence:

- Where a pupil is absent for two consecutive days without contact, safeguarding actions must be escalated and recorded.
- Where a pupil is absent for five or more consecutive days without contact, this must trigger:
 - formal safeguarding escalation
 - notification to the local authority
 - consideration of Children Missing Education procedures

All contact attempts, decisions and actions must be clearly recorded.

6.3 Punctuality and Late Arrivals (Trust Expectations)

Punctuality is a key aspect of good attendance and safeguarding. All Trust schools are expected to apply consistent principles while publishing clear local arrangements.

- Pupils who arrive after the start of the school day but before the register closes will be recorded as late and admitted to school.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed will be recorded as absent for that session in line with national attendance codes.
- Each school must publish its start times and register close times clearly for parents and carers (for example on the school website and in parent information).

Safeguarding and late arrivals

- Late arrival may indicate emerging attendance or safeguarding concerns.
- Schools must ensure that pupils arriving late are checked in by a member of staff and that any welfare or safeguarding concerns are followed up.
- Where lateness is persistent, unexplained, or linked to wider vulnerability, this must trigger early support and safeguarding consideration, rather than being treated solely as a behaviour issue.

Persistent lateness will be monitored as part of the school's attendance strategy and addressed through the graduated response outlined in this policy.

7. Absence and Leave of Absence

7.1 Illness

- Parents must notify school on day one.
- Medical evidence may be requested where attendance is a concern.
- Support will be provided for pupils with health needs.
- Where illness-related absence becomes frequent, prolonged or cumulative (for example, around 15 days or more), schools will work with families, health professionals and the local authority as appropriate to ensure the pupil continues to access suitable education and safeguarding oversight is maintained.

7.2 Medical and Dental Appointments

- Should be arranged outside school hours where possible.
- Evidence may be requested.

7.3 Leave of Absence

- Only granted in exceptional circumstances.
 - Holidays in term time are not exceptional.
 - Requests must be made in advance.
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8. Attendance Monitoring, Data and Accountability

8.1 Attendance Thresholds

The Trust adopts national attendance thresholds:

- **Good attendance:** 96% and above
- **At risk:** Below 95%
- **Persistent absence:** Below 90%
- **Severe absence:** Below 50%

Thresholds are used to trigger support, not labels.

8.2 Live Attendance Data

All schools input attendance data daily into their management information system. Live attendance data is available via the **Trust Standards Dashboard** to:

- School leaders
- Local Governing Bodies
- Trust executive leaders
- Trustees

This enables:

- Timely challenge and support
- Early identification of risk
- Transparent accountability at all governance tiers

8.3 Monitoring Expectations

- **Daily:** Identification and follow-up of absence and lateness

- **Weekly:** Analysis of individual and cohort attendance, including **patterns by pupil group, year group, key stage and trends over time**
- **Half-termly:** Review of persistent and at-risk pupils
- **Termly:** Reporting to governors and the Trust Board

Schools will also ensure that attendance data is submitted and shared in line with statutory local authority and Department for Education requirements.

Attendance data must be triangulated with safeguarding, SEND and pastoral information.

9. Graduated and Operational Response to Attendance

The Trust uses a graduated response that escalates support in line with need, while remaining flexible and relational.

9.1 Universal – All Pupils

Operational expectations:

- Clear attendance messaging to families.
- Regular celebration of attendance and improvement.
- High-quality curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support.
- Daily attendance monitoring.

9.2 Early Support – At Risk (Below 95%)

Operational actions may include:

- Informal parent conversations.
- Attendance check-ins with pupils.
- Identification of in-school barriers.
- Short-term monitoring plans.
- Involvement of Family Support Workers where appropriate.

9.3 Targeted Support – Persistent Absence (Below 90%)

Operational actions include:

- Formal attendance meetings led by the Senior Attendance Champion.
- **Attendance Support Plans** which, as a minimum, will include:
 - identified barriers to attendance (including pupil and parent voice)
 - agreed actions for school and family
 - involvement of Family Support Workers where appropriate
 - safeguarding considerations
 - clear review dates and success measures
 - escalation criteria if attendance does not improve
- Regular involvement of Family Support Workers.
- Multi-agency working where barriers extend beyond school.
- Clear communication of expectations and potential escalation.

9.4 Intensive Support – Severe Absence (Below 50%)

Operational actions include:

- Joint planning with the local authority.
- Safeguarding escalation where appropriate.
- Whole-family or statutory plans.
- Consideration of alternative or interim provision where appropriate.
- Frequent review and oversight by senior leaders and the Trust.

10. Pupils with Additional Needs

The Trust maintains **the same ambition for attendance** for:

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with medical conditions
- Pupils with social workers

- Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Schools will:

- Make reasonable adjustments
 - Use healthcare plans and EHCPs
 - Work closely with external professionals
 - Avoid inappropriate part-time timetables
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11. Part-Time Timetables

Part-time timetables are a short-term, exceptional measure and must not be used as a long-term solution to manage attendance, behaviour or unmet need.

11.1 Principles

- Used only where it is in the pupil's best interests and supports reintegration to full-time education.
- Must be time-limited, with clear review points.
- Must never be used to avoid exclusions, manage capacity, or mask attendance issues.
- The ambition remains full-time education for all pupils.

11.2 Authorisation and Oversight

- Any part-time timetable must be authorised by the Headteacher / Head of School (Senior Attendance Champion).
- Written agreement must be in place with parents/carers, clearly setting out:
 - The rationale
 - Hours and sessions attended
 - Duration and review dates
 - Support in place to enable return to full-time provision

11.3 Safeguarding and Reporting

To ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met:

- All part-time timetables must be formally reported to the local authority in line with statutory expectations.
- The Trust Safeguarding Lead must be notified of all part-time timetables.
- The Trust Safeguarding Lead will:
 - Provide advice and challenge to schools
 - Ensure appropriate safeguarding oversight
 - Support schools to review arrangements and reintegration plans

11.4 Review and Monitoring

- Part-time timetables must be reviewed at least fortnightly.
 - Attendance, wellbeing and progress must be monitored closely.
 - Decisions and reviews must be clearly recorded.
 - Where a pupil has a social worker, SEND, or other vulnerabilities, agencies must be informed and involved as appropriate.
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12. Legal Intervention

Legal routes may be used **only when**:

- Support has been offered and not engaged with
- Absence is unauthorised
- It is proportionate and in the child's best interests

In line with the **National Framework for Penalty Notices (August 2024)**, schools must consider a penalty notice where a pupil has accrued **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school-week period**.

The Trust works in partnership with local authorities to ensure:

- consistent application of legal thresholds
- clear evidence of support offered

- proportionate decision-making

Legal routes may include:

- Notice to Improve
 - Attendance Contracts
 - Penalty Notices
 - Prosecution (last resort)
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13. Children Missing Education

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school, including pupils whose whereabouts are unknown or who are awaiting school placement.

Schools will:

- Follow Children Missing Education (CME) statutory guidance rigorously.
- Treat unknown or unconfirmed whereabouts as a potential safeguarding concern.
- Make reasonable enquiries to establish a pupil's location, in collaboration with the local authority and other relevant partners.
- Notify the local authority promptly where a pupil is not accessing education or where reasonable enquiries do not confirm a pupil's whereabouts.
- Notify the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point, in line with statutory requirements.
- Maintain safeguarding oversight at all times.
- Keep a clear, dated chronology of contact attempts, enquiries, actions taken and decisions made.
- Work jointly with the local authority to carry out enquiries where a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.
- Ensure pupils are not removed from roll without appropriate local authority notification and confirmation, in line with statutory guidance.

Where CME concerns arise, schools must ensure that attendance, safeguarding and pastoral systems work together to protect the pupil's welfare.

14. Training, Communication and Quality Assurance

The Trust will:

- Provide annual attendance training
- Share effective practice across schools
- Review policy implementation
- Use attendance data to drive improvement
- Provide a Trust Attendance Operational Toolkit, including guidance, templates and tools, to support consistent and effective practice across schools

Schools are expected to use evidence-informed communication with families, balancing clarity about expectations with empathy and support, and using appropriate channels to maintain regular, positive engagement.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to changes in statutory guidance.

Appendix A: Parent Attendance Quick Guide

Our Shared Commitment

Regular school attendance is one of the most important factors in your child's success, wellbeing and safety. We work in partnership with families to ensure every child attends school regularly and feels supported to do so.

Why Attendance Matters

- Children who attend school regularly make better progress academically.
- Good attendance supports friendships, wellbeing and confidence.
- Absence can be a safeguarding concern – schools need to know children are safe.

We aim for **100% attendance** for every child, unless absence is unavoidable.

Attendance at a Glance

Attendance Level	What it Means
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96–100%	Excellent – your child is accessing almost all learning
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95%	At risk – learning time is starting to be lost
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90%	Persistent absence – urgent support needed
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Below 50%	Severe absence – safeguarding and intensive support required
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What Parents and Carers Must Do

You have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly.

You must:

- Ensure your child attends school every day it is open
- Make sure your child arrives on time
- Contact the school **on the first day of absence** and every day thereafter

- Provide a clear reason for absence
 - Avoid term-time holidays
 - Attend meetings arranged to support your child's attendance
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If Your Child Is Absent

Please:

- Contact the school **before the start of the school day**
- Tell us your child's full name, class and the specific reason for absence
- Contact us again each day your child is absent

If we do not hear from you:

- The school will attempt to contact you the same day
 - We may contact emergency contacts
 - A home visit may be made if we are concerned
 - Absence may be escalated as a safeguarding concern
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Medical Appointments and Illness

- Book appointments outside school hours wherever possible
 - If this is unavoidable, inform the school in advance
 - Your child should miss the minimum time necessary
 - Evidence may be requested where attendance is a concern
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Leave of Absence and Holidays

- Term-time holidays are **not authorised**
 - Leave of absence is granted only in **exceptional circumstances**
 - Requests must be made in advance
 - Taking leave without permission may result in a penalty notice
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How We Support Families

If attendance becomes a concern, we will:

- Talk with you early to understand barriers
- Offer practical and emotional support
- Involve Family Support Workers where helpful
- Agree clear attendance support plans
- Work with other services if needed

Legal action is always a **last resort**.

Need Help?

If your child is struggling to attend school, please contact us as early as possible. We are here to help.

School contact: [School contact details]

Attendance lead: [Name / role]

Together, we can give every child the best chance to succeed.

Appendix B: Supporting Attendance for Children from Traveller Communities

Purpose

The Trust recognises that children from Traveller communities are an important and valued part of our school communities. This appendix sets out how schools will support good attendance for Traveller pupils **while respecting cultural traditions**, ensuring **equity, safeguarding and access to education**.

This appendix should be read alongside:

- Children Missing Education guidance
 - School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations
 - The Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
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Legal Expectations

Children from Traveller communities of compulsory school age are required by law to receive full-time education. Attendance expectations apply **equally to all pupils**, with appropriate flexibility where travel is required for genuine work or cultural reasons, in line with statutory guidance.

Principles

Schools will:

- Maintain **high expectations** for Traveller pupils' attendance and achievement.
 - Take a **supportive, culturally aware approach** to engagement with families.
 - Work proactively to prevent absence becoming prolonged or unsafe.
 - Treat unexplained absence as a **safeguarding concern**.
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Coding of Attendance

- The appropriate national attendance codes must be used accurately and consistently.
- Traveller-related absence must only be coded as authorised where it meets statutory criteria.

- Schools will seek advice from the local authority where there is uncertainty.
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Communication and Planning

To support attendance and safeguarding:

- Schools will encourage families to **share travel plans in advance** wherever possible.
 - Key contact details will be kept up to date.
 - Where a pupil is expected to travel, schools will agree:
 - expected dates of absence and return
 - arrangements for maintaining contact
 - plans for reintegration on return
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Safeguarding and CME

- Where a Traveller pupil's whereabouts become unknown, CME procedures must be followed without delay.
 - Schools will keep a clear chronology of contact attempts and actions.
 - Joint enquiries with the local authority will be undertaken where required.
 - Pupils will not be removed from roll without local authority confirmation.
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Support and Reintegration

On return to school, pupils will be supported through:

- welcoming reintegration meetings
 - catch-up and curriculum support
 - pastoral and wellbeing support
 - Family Support Workers involvement where appropriate
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Trust Oversight

- Attendance patterns for Traveller pupils will be monitored through the Trust Standards Dashboard.
- The Trust will support schools with guidance, challenge and training to ensure consistent, equitable practice.

Equality Statement

The Trust is committed to ensuring that Traveller pupils are **not disadvantaged** and that attendance practice balances **legal compliance, safeguarding and cultural understanding**.