Minerva
Learning Trust

School Attendance Policy

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Changes to this edition

Changes for Sep 2025

- Medical evidence to only be requested where it is reasonable to do so
- Staff responsibility in welcoming children back and helping them to catch up with learning and any work missed
- Safeguarding staff to inform social workers or youth justice workers of absence for any children open to those services
- Expectation for Senior Attendance Champions to have an attendance action plan
- Clarity on home visits being completed after three consecutive days absence
- Clarity on register closure times
- Liason with sibling schools when children are CME

Minor changes to wording

1. Purpose

Minerva Learning Trust believes that attendance and punctuality is the key to success of our students and their ability to benefit from all the opportunities available to them in school. This policy clearly sets out our expectations regarding attendance and punctuality and the actions and interventions we will take to support good attendance.

2. Aims

At Minerva Learning Trust, we aim to safeguard, include, and support all our students. We want to raise the aspirations and expectations for all students and so we take our responsibility to support good attendance for all very seriously. We want to enable our students to be the best that they can be through identifying and removing their individual barriers to success, whilst developing their independence and ensuring that they are included in all aspects of school life.

We aim to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and should be at school, on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

There is a clear link between good attendance and achievement as well as the development of social, emotional, and personal skills. As such, we believe in the impact of good attendance for the following key reasons:

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and progress. Student absence also disrupts teaching routines which may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for each child will encompass:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti – bullying

3. Links to other documents

Failing to attend school on a regular basis must be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability, and aptitude and
(b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday and ceases compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year which they reach the age of 16. However, because of Raising the Participation Age (RPA) which was introduced in September 2013, the law now requires that young people continue in education, employment, or training until the age of 18. Students must then do one of the following until they are 18:

- Stay in full-time education, for example at a college.
- Start an apprenticeship or traineeship
- Spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

As such, this policy complies with the statutory requirements laid out in the documents and statutory guidance, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DFE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

4. Attendance Staff

Ensuring we have a trained and experienced attendance team in school and across the Trust is essential to ensure a strategic and operational focus is placed on attendance and that timely and appropriate support is provided for our students and families. The table below provides key contact information for all staff with a responsibility for attendance within the school and across Minerva Learning Trust.

Job Role	Member of staff	Telephone and extension number	Email address
Attendance and Safeguarding Officer	**Mrs Jeanette Saville**	01246 472494	**info@barrowhill-mlt.co.uk**
SENCo	Mrs Keeley Leather	01246 472494	**info@barrowhill-mlt.co.uk**
Safeguarding Officer	Mr David Smith	01246 472494	**info@barrowhill-mlt.co.uk**
Senior Leader of Attendance	Mr David Smith	01246 472494	**info@barrowhill-mlt.co.uk**
Head Teacher	Mr David Smith	01246 472494	**info@barrowhill-mlt.co.uk**
Chair of Governors	Michelle Madders	01246 472494	**info@barrowhill-mlt.co.uk**
Trust Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager	Mrs Lucy McGann	0114 2838438	Lmcgann@central-mlt.co.uk
Trust Chief Executive Officer	Ms Bev Matthews	0114 283 8438	enquires@central-mlt.co.uk

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of everyone who has a responsibility to secure good attendance of students are set out in the table below:

	Roles and Responsibilities
Pupil	• To attend every day and own their attendance on a regular basis. • Arrive on time and be punctual to timetabled registration time and lessons. • Arrival after the first bell should sign in using Entrysign. • Leaving during teaching hours must sign out using Entrysign • Follow any support provided by the school to improve attendance
Parents and Carers	• Fulfil statutory duty to ensure their child is in school every day and on time. • To ensure their child attends every day and on time. • Read Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Contact staff if there is an issue which is preventing your child from attending. • Provide a reason for each day's absence before 8.30am • Book routine appointments after school and at weekends • Provide medical evidence where available for absences and only miss the part of the day for which the appointment is taking place • Work in partnership with school staff to arrange a reintegration package when returning after a long-term absence. • Ensure that no holidays are booked during term time. • Any request for leave is requested by completing Notification of Term Time Leave form at least 20 schools' days in advance. • Where an absence from school is likely to be long term parents and carers should contact school staff to discuss ways to minimise disruption to teaching and learning. • Ensure children are equipped and ready to learn. • Pro-actively engage with any attendance support offered by the school and the local authority
Class Teacher (Secondary/FE)	• Keep accurate attendance and punctuality records. • Report attendance concerns to relevant school staff • Promote the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Take official electronic register within the first 5 minutes of the lesson starting. • Maintain accurate attendance records by recording students late to lesson on arrival. • Alert relevant staff of students absent from lesson but marked present on previous registers. • Promote the importance of attendance • Welcome students on return to school following an absence and support them to catch up with any missed learning • Provide a positive learning environment that ensures equality of access for all. • Put strategies in place, as advised by the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and pastoral teams to ensure specific needs are met. • Promote and get involved with attendance competitions. • Identify emerging patterns of attendance issues within own class groups and work to remove any barriers identified. • Encourage students to come to school daily. • Discuss attendance at parental events. • Refer attendance concerns to Curriculum Leaders/Phase leaders

	Roles and Responsibilities
Form tutor / Primary Class Teacher	• Keep accurate attendance and punctuality records. • Report attendance concerns to relevant school staff • Promote the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Take official electronic register within the first 5 minutes of form time. • Maintain accurate attendance records by recording students late to lesson on arrival. • Promote the importance of attendance • Welcome students on return to school following absence and support them to catch up with any missed learning • Provide a positive learning environment. • Promote and get involved with attendance competitions. • Identify emerging patterns of attendance issues within own form groups. • Encourage students and parents/carers to come to school daily. • Have an early 1st contact/discussion with the student and parent/carers about the attendance concerns. • Discuss any absences with students. • Work in partnership with parents/carers. • Refer concerns to Pastoral Manager/Head of Year/SLT
Receptionist, Administration Assistants	• Keep accurate attendance and punctuality records. • Report attendance concerns to relevant school staff • Promote the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Promote importance of attendance • Promote and get involved with attendance competitions. • Welcome Parent, Carers and Students when arriving to reception. • Welcome students on return to school following absence. • Refer concerns to Pastoral Manager/Head of Year • Challenge absences reported by parents or carers with the aid of the telephone script.
Inclusion/Pastoral Leader/Head of Year	• Have an oversight of attendance across their year group/phase. • Promote the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Follow the Minerva Learning Trust Graduated Response to student absence. • Have an overview of all student attendance. • Conduct student pickups and safe and well home visits. • Work with the Attendance Team to coordinate strategies that promotes excellent attendance. • Ensure all members of the team including Form Tutors are fully aware of the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy, documentation and procedures relating to attendance and punctuality. • Maintain accurate attendance records • Challenge absences reported by parents or carers with the aid of the telephone script. • Contacting parents/carers who have not notified their child reason for absence. • Liaise with Attendance Officer/EWO and Attendance Lead on all aspects of attendance data and management. • Liaise with Safeguarding Team of absences where they are a safeguarding concern. • Ensure attendance and punctuality is a standing item on all team meetings. • Welcome students on return to school following absence and ensure appropriate support plans are in place. • Checking the whereabouts of students thought out the day. • Get involved with attendance competitions.

	Roles and Responsibilities
	• Track attendance and identify emerging trends and patterns of absence. • Identify the underlying cause for absence and ensure appropriate intervention and support is put in place. • Keep student records up to date with reasons for absence, details of phone called home, interventions, and additional support – including monitoring the impact of such support. • Mentor students at risk of becoming PA and ensure appropriate Attendance Support Plans are put in place. • Arrange and conduct attendance individual and group work sessions. • Ensure reduced timetable and elective home education protocols are adhered to and followed. • Work with external agencies where necessary to support the child/family and liaise with partner primary schools of siblings
School Attendance Team	• Promote the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Maintain accurate attendance records. • Recoding attendance intervention on the Minera Learning Trust Attendance Tracker • Promote importance of attendance • Promotion and delivery of rewards for 100% or improvement in attendance • Collation and distribution of daily and weekly attendance data • Welcome students on return to school following absence. • Conduct student pickups and safe and well home visits. • Make home visits to persistently absent students or those at risk of PA. • Recording lates on SIMs, circulating detention list and management of the detention • Contacting parents/carers who have not notified their child reason for absence. • Challenge absences reported by parents or carers with the aid of the telephone script. • Working with Pastoral Leaders to follow intervention steps when trigger points are reached. • Working with Pastoral Leaders on interventions, sanctions, and rewards. • Running individual student reports to monitor attendance. • Arrange and conduct parental and student attendance meetings. • Arrange and conduct attendance individual and group work sessions. • Follow graduated response to update daily the SIMs attendance registers for those students who are on Managed Moves or at Alternative Provision • Processing Term Time Leave requests. • Processing and referring penalty notice documentation to Local Authority • Working with Attendance Teams in the Trust and feeder primary schools • Attend Minerva Learning Trust Networking Sessions • Reporting Children Missing in Education • Support the gathering of evidence to support legal proceedings • Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance • Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not been successful • Inform the local authority if a student is absent from school due to medical reasons for more than 15 days
Safeguarding Officers	• Promote the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Follow the Minerva Learning Trust Graduated Response to student absence. • Have an overview of all student attendance. • Conduct student pickups and safe and well home visits.

	Roles and Responsibilities
	• Challenge absences reported by parents or carers with the aid of the telephone script. • Supporting the Heads of Year and Attendance Team with all attendance issues. • Assisting with parent carer attendance meetings when safeguarding is a factor. • Assisting with home visits and student pick-ups. • Dealing with escalated attendance issues. • Running individual student reports to monitor attendance for students who have an allocated Social Worker or students who are vulnerable. • Working with Attendance Team to follow intervention steps when trigger points are reached. • Working with Attendance Officer on interventions, sanctions, and rewards. • Promotion of attendance to parents, carers, students, and external agencies • Reporting Children Missing in Education. • Where students are open to social care or youth justice ensure that absence data is shared with the key professional each day
Senior Attendance Champion **(Senior Leader)**	• Consistently implement the attendance policy and strategy • Lead and promote whole school attendance. • Implement the rewards for attendance. • Implement attendance policy and statement of strategy of attendance. • Monitor whole school attendance. • Link with key members of staff to ensure attendance interventions are appropriate. • Provide a positive learning environment. • Attendance is a standing item on any staff meeting agenda. • To arrange line management meetings with attendance team to improve and drive attendance and punctuality. • Regularly QA attendance processes using the MLT audit tool • Ensure there is a clear attendance action plan in place to continually drive the agenda around attendance
Headteacher	• Ensure consistent implementation of the Trust attendance policy and develop a school level attendance strategy. • Ensure accurate maintenance of the school roll. • Lead and promote whole school attendance. • Appointing a member of the SLT to strategically oversee attendance • Provide rewards for attendance. • Implement attendance policy and statement of strategy of attendance. • Monitor whole school attendance. • Oversee attendance intervention. • Provide a positive learning environment. • Attendance is a standing item on staff meeting agenda. • Ensure systems for effective home-school liaison are in place
Trust Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager	• To develop and deliver an attendance strategy and strategically lead improvements in attendance across Minerva Learning Trust. • To coordinate and provide Continuing Professional Development for Attendance Team • To develop, lead and implementation of a Trust wide attendance strategy to include a common graduated response across the Trust for children and young people up to 19-year-olds, taking particular account of vulnerable students. • To produce, develop and update the Minerva Learning Trust Student Attendance Policy regularly in accordance with DfE (Department for Education) and Local Authority guidance.

	Roles and Responsibilities
	• Plan, develop and implement the Trust Attendance strategic development plan. • To provide support, guidance and current legislation to the Senior Leadership Teams and governing bodies within the Trust. • Contribute to the Attendance Link meetings between Senior Leadership and Attendance staff. • To develop a consistent procedure for the attendance legal process and oversee the process across all of the Trust schools. • Develop, review and implement an agreed attendance tracker to record interventions across the Trust. • Guide schools in data analysis and identifying trends and support the development of individual school's strategic plans for safeguarding and attendance in liaison with the relevant leads in the school. • Ensure the recruitment, induction and training for any new safeguarding and attendance staff is consistent is across the schools.
Director of School Improvement - Inclusion	• To ensure Trust wide strategic leadership of attendance • To develop and deliver an attendance strategy and strategically lead improvements in attendance across Minerva Learning Trust. • Review and update the Minerva Learning Trust Attendance Policy • Monitor the attendance data and related issues of the Trust and ensure swift and efficient action is taken by school and Trust staff to address any issues. • Ensure sufficient allocation of resources to support good attendance. • Ensure proficient staff training and development.
CEO and Executive Director of Education	• To have Trust wide strategic oversight of attendance and strategic support and challenge • To ensure that national school attendance regulations, guidelines and other legislation are fully and properly complied with • Undertake an annual review of the Attendance Policy • Monitor the attendance data and related issues of the Trust. • Ensure sufficient allocation of resources to support good attendance • Ensure the Headteacher provides the governing body a half termly attendance report which is broken down into vulnerable groups which is compared to National attendance figures.
Governors and Trustees	• To provide strategic challenge and support to school leaders • To ensure that national school attendance regulations, guidelines and other legislation is fully and properly complied with • Monitor implementation of the Trust's Attendance Policy • Monitor school attendance data and related issues through a standing item on the governing body agenda. • Ensure the Headteacher provides the governing body a half termly attendance report which is broken down into vulnerable groups which is compared to National attendance figures. • Ensure systems for effective home-school liaison are in place. • Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance

5. Attendance Expectations

As a result of this policy, Parent/Carers and Students can expect any school within Minerva Learning Trust to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- Reward good attendance and punctuality.
- Make contact following the Minerva Learning Trust First Day Absence Gradual Response when a student fails to attend School.
- Ensure accurate recording of attendance and to keep parents regularly informed about their child's attendance.
- Act promptly and keep Parents/Carers informed when issues affecting attendance arise.
- Involve appropriate outside agencies where necessary when issues arise that are impacting on attendance and learning.

Minerva Learning Trust expects Parent/Carers to:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility to encourage their children to attend school regularly and punctually. The Law relating to attendance Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: - (a) to age, ability, and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'
- Contact the school on each day of absence to explain the reasons which will be added as a comment on the child individual register and ensure that medical evidence is sent into school.
- Ensure their child arrives in uniform or ensuring their child is adhering to the dress code and has all the essential equipment for learning.
- Avoid taking family holidays during term time and making non-urgent medical/dental appointments during school hours where possible.
- There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have up to date contact numbers at all times. So, Parents/Carers should make sure school always has an up to date number for at least two contacts.

Minerva Learning Trust expects all students including students in Post-16 education to:

- To attend all lessons and sessions as determined on their timetable and by the school
- Arrive equipped and ready to learn
- Follow registration procedure
- Inform the Attendance Team of known absences in advance (appointment card or letter)
- Sign in/out should they arrive and/or leave outside of registration times (only with an authorised note). This includes sixth form students arriving before timetabled lessons and leaving early due to home study

6. Registration

Times of the Day

Session	Time
Gates open	8:40am
Registration	8:45am
Morning Session	8:45am till 12pm
Lunch	12pm-1pm
Afternoon Session	1pm-3:15pm
End of the school day	3:15pm

Admissions Register

The admission register contains specific personal details of every student in every school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. Students will be placed on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day that is agreed by the school, or when the school has been notified that the pupil will first be attending. A student name can only lawfully be deleted form the admissions register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Registering students

The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. This will be an electronic register (paragraph 31, Working together to improve school attendance, 2024)

The register must record whether the student was:

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

All teaching staff are responsible for registering students within the first 5 minutes of a lesson. Failure to do so on a regular basis may lead to disciplinary action.

Red flags in SIMs registers are used a method of communication staff and used in following situations:

- Record information from parents and carers as to a student's whereabouts
- To enable staff to locate a student that is not in their timetabled lesson.

Data will be preserved for every entry in the attendance registers for 6 years from the date the data was entered (paragraph 36, Working together to improve school attendance, 2024). Registers will use the revised attendance and absence codes (paragraphs 283 to 407, Working together to improve school attendance, 2024). Schools will share their daily attendance data directly from their management information system which can be accessed by the DFE. (paragraph 51, Working together to improve school attendance, 2024)

7. Absence Procedures

If a child is absent or late to school, Parents/Carers must:

- Contact the school every day their child is absent before 8.30am either by telephone call, email or through parental apps
- Provide medical evidence for any days' absences. Medical evidence can be appointment cards, appointment text messages or emails, receipt of prescriptions or medication sticker which identifies the child's name and date prescribed.

If a child is absent school-based attendance teams will:

- Make contact following the Minerva Learning Trust First Day Absence Gradual Response when a student fails to attend School.
- Text, call, or conduct a home visit on the day of absence if we have not heard from home.
- Make contact with any named outside agencies when appropriate.

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. We will always try to resolve the attendance issues by agreement, however if efforts to improve the child's attendance fail and unauthorised absences persist, sanctions such as fixed Penalty Notices and or prosecutions will have to be pursued.

9. Recording Absence

Morning and afternoon attendance and absences are recorded electronically using the school's Management Information System. Attendance Officers will use the attendance codes relevant to the absence, as set out by Department for Education in the table below.

Code	Classified As	Reason for Recording
/ \	Present	Students who are in attendance at school
B	Present	Students attending other approved educational activity
C	Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable
D	Not expected to attend	Students who are dual registered at another school
E	Authorised Absence	Suspended or permentantly excluded and no alternative provision made
G	Unauthorised Absence	Holiday not granted by the school
I	Authorised Absence	Illness (not a medical or dental appoitnment)
J1	Present	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Present	Students who are attending educational provision arranged by the local authority
L	Present	Students who arrive to school after the closure of registration register
M	Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
N	Unauthorised Absence	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Unauthorised Absence	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P	Present	Students who are participating in a supervised sporting activity
Q	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend school due to the lack of access arrangements
R	Authorised Absence	Religious observance
S	Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Authorised Absence	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
U	Unauthorised Absence	Arrived in school after registration closed
V	Present	Students who are on an educational visit or trip
W	Present	Students who are on approved work experience
X	Not expected to attend	Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school

Y1	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Z	Not expected to attend	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Not expected to attend	Planned whole school closure

10. Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by each school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school with an evidenced reason for example, some illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.

Authorised absence includes (in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024):

- Attending education provision arranged by the LA (Code K)
- Attending an education visit or trip (Code V)
- Participating in a sporting activity (Code P)
- Attending work experience (Code W)
- Attending an other approved educational activity (Code B)
- Dual registered at another school (Code D)
- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission for another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non compulsory school aged student not required to attend school (Code X)
- Students subject to a part time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (Code C)
- Pregnant or on maternity leave (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes (Code T)
- Religious observance (Code R)

- Illness both physical and mental health related. (Medical evidence may be requested) (Code I)
- Suspended or permanently excluded (Code E)
- Unable to attend due to the transport usually provided by school or the local authority being unavailable. (Code Y1)
- Unable to attend due to wide spread disruption-eg-local, national or international emergency. (Code Y2)
- Part of the school premises being closed. (Code Y3).
- The whole school site being unexpectedly closed. (Code Y4)
- Detained by the criminal justice system. (Code Y5)
- Unable to attend in line with Public Health Guidance or Law. (Code Y6)
- Unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause (something that is unavoidable for the pupil) (Code Y7)

Unauthorised absences are those which are not evidenced and for which no "leave of absence" has been granted by the school. Unauthorised absence can lead to issuing of fixed penalty notices and/or prosecution.

Unauthorised absence includes (but not limited to):

- Holiday not granted by the school (Code G)
- Reason for absence not established (Code N)
- Absent for an unauthorised circumstance (e.g. birthday, shopping, day out etc) (Code O)
- Arrived in school after registration closed (Code U)

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure the attendance of a child. Any child may be off school because they are ill; sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents, and the child.

If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Where applicable, schools are also expected to report unexplained absences to the pupil's social worker/and or youth offending team worker.(paragraph 52 Working together to improve school attendance 2024).

Religious Observance

Minerva Learning Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. Schools should be informed using the Minerva Learning Term Time Leave Request form following which the Headteacher will decide whether to authorise the leave for religious observance.

Performances and activities, including paid work

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

Additional arrangements will be made by each school for students engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching.

These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the student.

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

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

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

Students with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues (in line with paragraph 53-68, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024)

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

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy, each school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for SEND students to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any Education Health and Care plans, Individual Health Care Plan, MyPlan, Support Plans and student profile that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They should also work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). 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 it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

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

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

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

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

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

- Holding half termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying students' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a student to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a student can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.

- Implementing a system whereby students can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Missing Students

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

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform a senior leader immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the senior leader.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms
  - The library
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the student has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the student will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The Safeguarding Officer should log the incident on CPOMS, describing all circumstances leading up to the student going missing.
- If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the student has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the student to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located.

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

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

11. Responding to Poor Attendance and Punctuality

In line with Attendance Policy, school staff will follow the first day absence graduated response. The school's Attendance Officer will raise the cases of individual/groups of students with poor attendance/punctuality at regular meetings where the most appropriate intervention and strategies will be discussed, and individual action plans agreed.

Home Visits:

The aim of a home visit is:

- To establish a partnership between home and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parent and carers for the best interests of the child.

Reasons for home visits:

Home visits are important in helping the school to make contact with parents and carers. They are particularly useful as they enable the parent or carers to still have contact with the school, but in their own environment.

Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance issues or concerns or where a student has had 3 or more consecutive days absence
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with parent or carers to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interest of the child to have that discussion in their own home rather than at school *or* where it would be difficult for a parent or carer to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parent or carer have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support parent or carer in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.
- To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue.
- To investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).

Punctuality:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If students are late for school, then they are late for learning. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can cause embarrassment that can also encourage absence.

Lateness:

We expect all pupils/students to be in registration/period one at the designated start time. Arrival after this time will be marked as a late mark (L). Registers will close after 30 minutes.

In accordance with the regulations, if a child arrives after registers have closed they will receive the U code that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that Parents/Carers could face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists.

When the school day begins students are expected to be present in school sat in their timetabled classroom ready to learn. A warning bell may sound to indicate the time to move. The school may issue a detention for students who are late to school without a reported valid reason. All schools will provide details of detentions to students of when, and for how long. Students that do not attend this detention may receive additional consequences. Schools will inform parents/carers of any detentions.

If a child has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the School's Attendance Officer(s) to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

12. Request for Leave of Absences

Legally there is no entitlement for parents to take their child out of school during term time. Parents can be fined for taking their children out of state funded school during term time without agreement from the school. There is no right of appeal to the fine being issued.

Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence to students in exceptional circumstances. Department for Education guidelines are clear that taking term-time holidays will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

If leave of absence is declined by the school yet parents or carers still remove their child, then this would be classed as unauthorised absence for which a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution will be pursued. Any savings that Parents/Carers think they will make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In deciding the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually. Parents/carers who do not request term time leave and take their child on 'unauthorised leave,' could be liable for a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution and even potentially lose their place at their school.

Requests for exceptional term time leave must be made at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangement being made. This will allow sufficient time for the request to be considered by the school. The request must be made in writing (letter or email) by the parent/carer using Minerva Learning Trust Term Time Leave Request. One form per child per request should be completed.

If the Headteacher feels that the individual circumstance is exceptional enough to authorise the leave parents will be informed of this within 10 school days of the request. If parents haven't been made aware that the request has been authorised within 10 school days this means that the request hasn't been authorised.

If parents/carers choose to take their children out of school during term time for 5 or more consecutive school days (spanning over holiday periods, inset days or weekends would constitute consecutive school days, and this is not authorised by the School, the School are expected to request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £160 (if paid between 21 and 28 days) this is reduced to £80 (if paid within 21 days). Each parent/carer will be issued with a penalty notice, for each child, one per parent per child, issued separately.

For example: 2 parents/carers 2 children. Each parent/carer will be issued 2 fines, one for each child. The overall cost to each parent would be £320 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £160 if paid within 21 days for a **first offence.** For a **second offence** amount would be £320 per parent as there will be no opportunity to pay at the reduced amount.

13. Persistent Absenteeism

A student is classified as a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more schooling for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. The school will monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold, or is at risk of moving towards it, is given priority, and parent/carers will be informed of this immediately.

Students with attendance below 50% are classified as a 'severe absentee' and may be referred to Children Social Care from which the family will receive intensive statutory support.

14. Children Missing from Education

When a student has been marked absent for more than 5 school days, a nominated member of school staff will liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later on in life.

The designated school staff will take reasonable steps to locate the missing student examples of which are taken.

- Check with agencies known to be involved with family.
- Check with Local Authority from which child moved originally, if known.
- Check with any Local Authority to which a child may have moved.
- Check with any sibling schools
- Home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s).

This procedure will include any student who is missing education due to an unauthorised leave of absence. The designated school staff will inform the Local Authority of the removal from roll of any missing student or students leaving the area who have given a forwarding address.

If no further information is received from the Local Authority or any other Agency, the child will be removed from our roll in accordance with the Department of Education advice on School attendance.

Nursery age children

For nursery students that leave at the end of the summer term and have not been offered a place in the school's reception class a Removal from Roll form is required, and the school should send a CTF to the students' new school.

Post 16 Students and School Sixth Forms

Under Department for Education statutory guidance, a Sixth Form student who has not attended classes for four continuous weeks (unless there are exceptional, authorised, circumstances and the student then return) must be considered withdrawn from the study programmes and therefore their place in Sixth Form.

With the introduction of Raising the Participation Age (RPA) in 2013 Local authorities have a duty to make arrangements to identify students that are not participating in education or training. If a student leaves a post 16 provision before completion a CME form should be completed and return to the CME at the Local Authority as early as possible. This will enable the local authority to take swift action to encourage the young person to re-engage.

15. Children Looked After

The Safeguarding Lead and the Designated Teacher within each school will liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Looked After Team. Children Looked After will be identified as a discrete attendance group on the school motoring system and individual attendance will be shared with the Virtual School and the child's social worker.

16. Using Attendance Data

Students' attendance will be monitored and shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student attendance is a cause of concern.

Each week the school's Attendance Team will provide all Form Tutors/ class teachers with attendance data for each student within their form group or class. This data will also be shared with Senior Leadership Team and Pastoral Teams.

The attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Attendance data will be shared with the Department for Education and the Local Authority as required.

17. Support Systems

The Minerva Learning Trust recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a student's life. This may be related to problems in school or at home. Parent or carers should contact the school as this will help identify additional support that maybe required. All Attendance Officers within Minerva Learning Trust receive regular Safeguarding training.

The support offered by each school will be student centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents or carers and students.

Each school will implement the following strategies to support improved attendance.

- Attendance Action Plan
- Referral to schools Pastoral Team
- Additional Learning Support
- Reintegration support packages
- Referral to School Nurse Team
- Referrals to Early Help services
- Attendance Report cards
- Attendance panels

When parents and carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absences occurs legal sanctions maybe initiated.

Part Time Timetables

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part time timetable to meet their individual needs. A part time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not treated as a long-term solution.

The Senior Leader of Inclusion is the nominated person in each school who is to be informed of any reduced timetable.

All schools within the Minerva Learning Trust must follow the Part Time Timetable Standard Operating Procedure. Any part time timetables must be reviewed every 4 weeks.

When considering a part time timetable schools should:

- be satisfied that it is appropriate for the needs of the pupil, agreed with other professionals as required
- have signed parental permission, evidenced on the pupil file prior to implementation. If the parent does not agree, this cannot go ahead.
- complete an action plan, agreed with the parent/carer and pupil with planned reintegration to full time attendance.
- contact Virtual School, named Social Worker or Early Help practitioner or SEND officer before considering a part time timetable for a pupil known to any of those services. See further information below.

If a school is considering a part-time timetable for a pupil, consideration should be given to undertaking an Early Help Assessment as the child may have emerging needs and require early help support from the school.

Derbyshire Schools should consider that a timetable of less than 25 hours is part-time, Derbyshire LA must be notified of any students on a part time timetable.

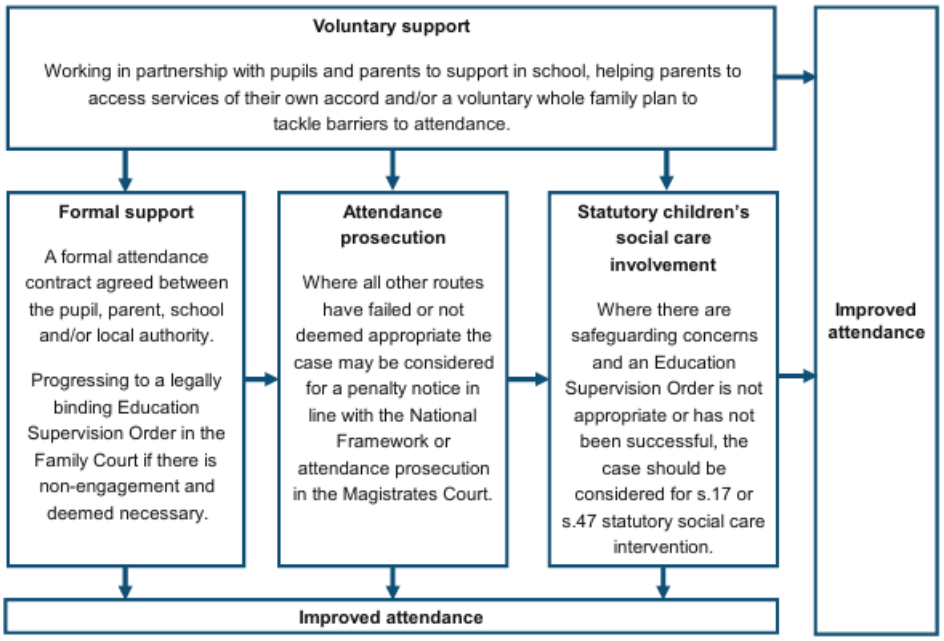
Any students engaging in a temporary part-time Timetable must be recorded on the register as Code C2.

18. Legal Sanctions

Attendance Legal Intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- **Attendance Contracts** (paragraph 139-151)
- **Educational Supervision Orders** (paragraph 152-159)
- **Attendance Prosecution** (paragraph 160-170)

- **Parenting Orders** (paragraph 171-174)
- **Penalty Notices** (paragraph 175-201)

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**.

This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other actions like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

19. Staff Training & Development

The Trust recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk students as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board of each school will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

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

The governing board will ensure dedicated and enhanced attendance training is provided for the Attendance Officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role which will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

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

20. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually as guidance from the Local Authority or Department for Education is updated around attendance. The policy will be available on the school and Trust website for reference.

21. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out to ensure that policies, procedures, and practices cater for individuals who share protected characteristics in relation to the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that policies, procedures, and practices within the organisation are fair to all. If unfairness is highlighted, the assessment will also seek to show how this can be changed and, where it cannot be changed, how it can be improved.

The Trust and school will monitor the impact of the policy to assess whether there is evidence of a detrimental impact on anyone with a protected characteristic as a result of the application of this policy. The assessment will include consideration of adaptations or changes which can be made to address any issues identified.