Pupil Attendance

Model Policy

Version	2.6
Approving Body	Trust Board
Date ratified	September 2026
Date issued	September 2026
Review date	September 2027
Owner	Director of Education
Applies to	All Trust Schools, all Trust staff

Version	Date	Reason
1.0	April 2018	To establish a Trust wide policy
1.1	December 2020	Change ownership to DSI and review cycle from 3 yearly to annual.
1.2	March 2021	To include reduced timetables; study leave; Local Authority changes and updated government guidance
1.3	March 2022	To remove appendices. To include: professional judgement for welfare checks; procedures for tracking alternative provision; carers.
2.0	September 2022	To ensure legal compliance with new DfE guidance.
2.1	September 2023	To encompass all relevant medical and governmental advice
2.2	January 2024	Minor amendments to sample letters 2, 3 & 4 at appendix B
2.3	March 2024	To include local authority penalty notice procedures

2.4	September 2024	To include changes to Working Together to Improve School Attendance, August 2024
2.5	September 2025	Annual Review, including updating any necessary hyperlinks
2.6	September 2026	Annual review to include statutory guidance from DfE Working together to improve school attendance.

Summary of Changes: Alignment with 2026 Statutory Guidance

Section	Description of Change
Punctuality	Added specific requirement stating that registers must be taken at the same time for all pupils to ensure consistency across the school.
Monitoring attendance / punctuality and responding to concerns	Inserted an operational list mandating tracking of specific cohorts (LAC, young carers, FSM), benchmarking data, and weekly analysis of trends.
Pupils with medical needs and/ or SEND	Strengthened proactive identification of barriers, requiring documented reasonable adjustments in IHCPs/MAPs, and prohibiting blanket policies.
Penalty Notices	Updated to reflect the £160/£80 fine structure, the cap of two penalty notices per parent/child in a rolling three-year period, and emphasized fines as a last resort.

Throughout this policy, the term 'parent' means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Relevant legislation:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Relevant government guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance
- School attendance and absence - legal action to enforce school attendance
- Children missing education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working together to safeguard children
- Elective home education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance Effective practice examples
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance

The Senior Attendance Champion for St Mary's First School is :

Mr Mick Homer - Headteacher: 01305 263880

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving attendance across the school community, building a culture of good attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining rigorous systems for tackling absence that are consistently applied by all staff
- Maintaining a robust grasp of attendance data to focus collective efforts where they are most needed.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the progress of attendance strategies to ensure they are meeting the needs of evolving pupil barriers.

Introduction

Punctuality and regular attendance are crucial to a pupil's achievement at school and therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. However, any barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Schools within Initio Learning Trust are committed to work in collaboration with parents and children to ensure that all pupils benefit from regular attendance.

Good attendance is celebrated as part of our Trust wide values - collaboration, ambition and respect. All staff in Trust schools communicate to pupils that their contribution to the school community is valued and respected; furthermore staff endeavour to make school a fruitful and enjoyable place to be so that a positive attitude to school and learning is fostered: through this, we aim to ensure that pupils want to attend school regularly in the first place. However, some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools will work collaboratively with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Attendance and safeguarding

The safeguarding of all pupils is of utmost importance. School provides a protective environment for those who attend. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extrafamilial harms, including crime. Schools are well placed to identify safeguarding issues early and regular attendance is vital for this. For those who don't attend regularly, and where all avenues of support have been facilitated, and the appropriate educational support has been provided but the unauthorised absence continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, request that a full children's social care assessment is conducted. When a pupil is absent and no reason has been given for the absence, the school will prioritise the safety of these pupils. See *'Where the school is not notified of an absence'* below.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

Where parents have registered their child at school to receive their education, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attendance at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attainment over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attendance.

Working with families and partners

All Initio Trust Schools are committed to successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly. This requires local partners to work collaboratively with families.

School will work collaboratively to:

- identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual, cohort and school level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
- Ensure aspiration to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents by building a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
- Listen to families to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- Remove barriers in school where practically able and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school.
- Provide a clear, tailored support plan for any pupil identified as at risk of persistent absence, ensuring that support is offered before any punitive measures (such as penalty notices) are considered, and escalate concerns where voluntary support is not having an impact by explaining the consequences of non-attendance clearly while ensuring support is in place to enable families to respond.
- Enforce attendance through statutory interventions or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education where support is not having an impact or not being engaged with

Initio Learning Trust schools overall approach takes these six graduated stages:

1	**Expect**	High expectations that all children will attend well
2	**Monitor**	Closely monitor the attendance of all pupils to spot problems early
3	**Listen / Understand**	Work with pupils and parents to understand any barriers to good attendance and agree how all partners can work to resolve them
4	**Facilitate support**	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents overcome the barriers outside of school
5	**Formalise support**	Formalise support where informal, voluntary approaches are not working
6	**Enforce**	If all else fails, enforce attendance through statutory intervention and prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education

Why regular attendance is so vital

There is a clear and proven link between attendance and achievement. The pupils with the highest attainment have higher rates of attendance than those achieving lower grades. Pupils who miss a substantial amount of school, fall behind their peers, and struggle to catch up as most of the work they miss is never made up, which can lead to big gaps in their learning.

Poor attendance often starts at first/ primary school, and children who fall into this pattern are likely to underachieve at upper / secondary school.

Friendships can be negatively affected by absence, too: it can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their peers.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).
The statutory definitions of absence are:

- **Persistent absence:**10% or more missed (1 day per fortnight)
- **Severe absence**: 50% or more missed

These tables show the impact of absence on a child's education

Number of days lost each year (the full school year for Initio has 187 days or 37.4 weeks)	**Overall attendance level**	**Impact on child's education**
5 days **(1 full week)** or less	97%+	These children have every chance to make really strong progress at school.
10 days (**2 full weeks of absence**)	95%	These children benefit from strong overall attendance and are well placed to make good progress at school. We aim for every child to have at least 96% attendance overall.
19 days (**similar to 1 month of absence**)	90%	Children in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best
29 days (**similar to a whole half term of absence**)	85%	Children in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; there is a real risk that this lower attendance will hinder children's progress. Absence below 90% is considered to be persistent absenteeism.
38 days (**similar to 8 weeks of absence**)	80%	Children in this group are missing a year of school over five years of education. They are not benefitting from their right to be educated. Parents / carers of young people in this group could be issued with a penalty notice.

Minutes late per day =	**days of learning lost per year**
5	3.2 **(over half a week of absence)**
10	6.5 **(over one week of absence)**
15	9.5 **(almost two weeks of absence)**
20	12.5 **(over two weeks of absence)**

30	19 **(similar to one month of absence)**

Monitoring attendance / punctuality and responding to concerns

All staff have a duty to informally monitor the children's attendance / punctuality and to report any concerns that they may have about a pupil. In this way, pupil attendance is being monitored in the schools at **all** times. Concerns can then be triangulated with any other information held about the pupil such as child protection issues, mental health difficulties, SEND, caring responsibilities etc. and appropriate support can be put in place.

Best practice is that attendance is dealt with proactively using strong links with the families. For those pupils where a pattern of lateness or non attendance has been identified, pre-emptive phone calls can be a powerful tool to encourage attendance.

All Initio Learning Trust schools will follow more formal procedures for the regular and systematic monitoring of pupil attendance with particular emphasis on those who are classed as vulnerable.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored formally using data from registers and from the information held on MIS for the purpose of providing effective interventions to improve the whole school, specific cohort and individual attendance and punctuality. This includes regular, granular analysis of attendance patterns by cohort (including SEN, FSM, and Looked-After Children) and benchmarking against national and local data, as mandated by the 2026 guidance. We also share daily attendance data with the Department for Education. Our school attendance monitoring procedures are:

- *Track attendance of specific cohorts as distinct groups: Looked after children (via Virtual School Head liaison), young carers, pupils with a social worker, year groups, those who have free school meals comparing them to the whole cohort and inverse demographic.*
- *Benchmark attendance data against local, regional and national levels and similar schools.*
- *Amylase specific patterns with attendance codes.*
- *Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families*
- *Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders*
- *Undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.*
- *Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends.*
- *Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.*
- *Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.*
- *Monitor, in the data, the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented.*
- *Provide data and reports to support the work of the Local School Committee and the Trust Board.*

Expectations for punctuality and attendance

Punctuality

Schools will actively discourage late arrivals and will be alert to any patterns of late arrival in order to start an early discussion with the family to provide appropriate support. All pupils are expected to be in school and present when registers are taken. Registers must be taken at the same time for all pupils to ensure consistency across the school and prevent variations in how attendance is recorded. It is the expectation that all pupils will arrive in time for morning and afternoon registration. If a pupil arrives after registers open but before they close, they will be marked as *'late arrival before registers close'* (L). If a pupil arrives after registers close, they will be marked as *'unauthorised absence'* (U) or another more appropriate attendance code. (no more than ½ hour after they are open or the length of the form time where registration happens) Registers start at 8.55am and close at 9.15am for morning sessions and 1.00pm and close at 1.15pm for afternoon sessions.
The school day ends at 3.00pm and all pupils are expected to remain in school until they are dismissed. Any pupil leaving before this time MUST sign out at the school office and leave with an appropriate adult. Reasons for leaving early will be recorded on the attendance register.

Attendance

All pupils will be expected to attend school on every day that it is open. If an unexpected absence occurs, there are expectations that relate to pupil safety. A parent MUST notify the school on **01305 263880** by 08.45am on the first day of the absence detailing the pupil's name, class and nature of absence. If the absence is prolonged, there is an expectation that the parent will notify the school by 8.45am at the latest on each day of absence.

Appointments during the day

Parents must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parents must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for their own appointment, not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a family member can attend an appointment.

Pupils with medical needs and/ or SEND

Initio Learning Trust understands that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. However, their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore our attendance ambition for these pupils will be the same as they are for any other pupil.

Although our ambitions are the same for all pupils, we are mindful of the unique barriers that these pupils may face and we are committed to putting support in place where necessary to help them access full time education.

Parents of pupils with medical needs and / or SEND who are struggling to attend school should contact the school as soon as they can in order for the school to understand the support required. For pupils with medical conditions or SEND, schools must proactively identify and remove barriers to attendance, ensuring reasonable adjustments are documented in Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs) or Medical Absence Plans (MAPs). Schools must work with external partners to avoid blanket policies and ensure

tailored support is provided. In some cases, advice and support may be sought from external partners such as health services. Our work with families in these instances is crucial to ensuring specific support approaches, including supporting home routines and encouraging external professionals to schedule appointments outside of the school day.

Schools will complete sickness returns to the Local Authority for pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help the school and local authority to agree to any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance.

For families suggesting part time attendance, please see the section on part-time timetables.

Where the school is not notified of an absence

Pupil safety is the priority for the systems in place to follow up on non notified absences.

Schools will use their knowledge of families to identify pupils who may be more vulnerable when absent and these families will be contacted first. These pupils will be communicated to staff so that all can be aware of their additional vulnerability pertaining to absence / punctuality.
Process for following up on unexplained absence:

- Parents will be informed of their child's absence and asked to contact the school using a text message.
- If no contact is received by the school by 9.00am, a phone call will be made to the primary contact detailed on the pupil's files.
- If there is no answer, contact will be attempted with other contacts detailed on the pupil's file.
- If no contact can be made by 9.15am, the school will take every reasonable step to satisfy themselves that the pupil is safe.
  This may include: **list not exhaustive*
  -contacting sibling's schools
  -contacting Social Care / Early Help if a worker is involved with the family,
  -making a home visit,
  -in some cases, informing the police.
- The school should be satisfied with every absent child's safety by **10.00am a**t the latest.

The school will hold a record of pupils that they deem to be additionally vulnerable when not in school, which could include knowledge of mental health difficulties either for the pupil or their family, child protection concerns or medical needs, amongst others. The school will also produce a flow chart that details the process, including timings, for following up on unexplained absences to ensure every pupil's safety.

Absence thresholds

All families will receive a letter at the beginning of the school year summarising the school's expectations for attendance and punctuality; how the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance and punctuality and the process for reporting absence and requesting leaves or absence. This policy will also be available on the school's website as well as being sent home at least annually or on update.

There is a tiered system to respond to low and/or falling attendance levels. These figures expressed as % attendance levels are intended as a guide. However, a decision may be made to intervene earlier at any stage if there is particular concern about a child's attendance. These letters are sent as a pupil hits a threshold and will detail how many days the pupil has already lost from their education.

Attendance below 95%:	A standard letter is typically sent to any parent whose child's attendance has dropped just below 95%. This letter is for information – it notifies the parent of this attendance level and explains that the school will continue to monitor the child's attendance. Where the cause for a child's attendance dropping below 95% is very specific and clearly known and evidenced to the school, we may decide that such a letter is not required or appropriate. For example, where a child has had a known and confirmed medical issue and where this is the only substantial cause for the lower attendance. In such circumstances, the child's attendance will be closely monitored – further reduction in attendance may prompt this initial letter, without the need to wait for the next formal half- termly audit.
Attendance between 90% and 94%	The standard letter described above may be used again where a child's attendance sits at this level. This letter may be used twice in succession but if attendance remains at this level for a third time, it will be treated as for attendance which is below 90%.
Attendance which is below 90%	Attendance at 90% equates to 19 days absence through a year and is therefore a cause for concern. In such circumstances, parents will receive a specific letter which very clearly identifies that the attendance level is a significant cause for concern (except for in exceptional circumstances where the attendance is not a cause for concern, such as known medical conditions). Parents are usually requested to attend a meeting, the purpose of which is to explore the reasons for the child's low attendance and agree appropriate support. The content of this meeting will be used to draw up an attendance improvement plan which will be shared with the parents and a review date will be agreed. Participants in that meeting may vary according to the circumstances but may often involve staff such as the allocated lead within the school, class Teacher / tutor, SENCo and pastoral staff. The school may also invite a representative from the local authority. At this stage, school should make it known and confirm in writing that further absences may not be authorised and further evidence may be sought so that the absence is correctly coded on the attendance register.
Attendance which continues to decline from below 90%	Unless there are specific circumstances, the school will not be authorising absences at this stage because attendance at 90% equates to 19 days absence through a year. If attendance is not showing reasonable improvement within three weeks of the last communication to parents, then schools will take further action which will involve further meetings with the parents. It is likely that a referral for intervention by the local authority will be appropriate; certainly advice from the local authority attendance team will be sought.
Absence that is classed as severe (50% attendance or lower)	Support will be intensified including **consideration** of an EHCP or use of appropriate alternative provision. A joint approach with the local authority will be used for every pupil in this category. Please note that severe absence *can* constitute neglect which would require a full social care assessment

<u>Leaves of absence</u>

Headteachers have no discretion to grant a leave of absence during term time unless there are **genuinely exceptional** circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare,

significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the headteacher has all the information in writing to be able to determine whether the request is truly exceptional.**

Any request for absence which might be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' should be put in writing to the headteacher as far in advance as possible.

The decision whether to authorise leave, and if so, how much, remains with the headteacher. Parents will be notified of the headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the leave is not authorised and the leave of absence is still taken, a penalty notice may be requested (see 'Penalty Notices' below for more information).

The following situations will be considered examples of 'exceptional circumstances'.

Please note that this is dependent on context and is not an exhaustive list:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA)
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Other exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other genuinely exceptional circumstances at their discretion.

Please note that, generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

<u>Notices to Improve</u>

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve would usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. An authorised officer can choose not to use one in any individual case.

A notice to improve is between three and six weeks. Notification of consideration being given to issuing a penalty notice would be sent before the end of this period if there is not sufficient improvement in the pupil's attendance.

Penalty Notices

We adhere to the National Framework for Penalty Notices which is based on the principles that penalty notices should only be used as a last resort in cases where support has been provided but not engaged with, or where support is inappropriate (such as an unauthorised term-time holiday), and where the penalty notice is the most appropriate tool to change parental behaviour and improve attendance for that particular pupil. Penalty notices must not be the default response for pupils with identified SEND or complex needs without first exhausting collaborative support options. The vast majority of fines for unauthorised absence (89%) are issued for term time holidays.

When a pupil is facing barriers to school attendance due to special education needs or disabilities (SEND), our school, the local authority and any relevant wider services will work together to provide the right support in the first instance. If this support isn't effective or the absence is for an unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine.

Under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) within ten weeks for unauthorised reasons:

- code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday)
- code N (the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established)
- code O (Unauthorised absence) (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies)
- code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)

The fine for school absences across the country will be:

- **The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.**
- **A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.**
- **Fines are capped at TWO penalty notices per parent, per child within a rolling three-year period. Once this limit is reached, out-of-court disposals are exhausted and there must be an escalation to alternative interventions that may include prosecution, parenting orders or education supervision orders.**

For more information on penalty notices for attendance, please see **para. 179 onwards** in Working together to improve school attendance.

Absence for performance

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence for approved public performances provided that clear evidence is issued of the approved nature of this activity. The following will also be taken into account in reaching a decision:

- The nature and purpose of the performance;
- The frequency of absence requested and the likely impact on the child's education and progress; and
- The child's attendance record

Where licences are issued by the local authority, absences will be monitored to ensure that they comply with the permissions given in the licence. Where the licence specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the headteacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the licence do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise leave of absence. Headteachers should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. Any concerns will be communicated to the senior attendance champion who may liaise with the local authority. .

Promoting and Incentivising good attendance and punctuality:

Promoting good attendance and punctuality is an integral part of the school's culture. School will visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life and the curriculum. School improvement strategies for attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students will also consider how to promote good attendance and punctuality.

Incentives for good attendance and punctuality may also be used.

Off-site education, alternative provision or specialist provision

Where a child's needs are recognised by the school, and specialist resources not available in school are required, the allocated lead within the school may authorise absence for specific times when such tuition or therapy may be given outside of school. For pupils using alternative provision or off site education, the allocated lead will ensure that the safeguarding and quality of education for the pupil is good or better by following Initio Learning Trust's procedures. All pupils placed in a more appropriate provision will have full time education and clearly defined outcomes agreed before the placement starts and attendance will be tracked by the provider and the school at which the pupil is on roll. Such pupils will be coded appropriately and, if in attendance at the agreed appropriate provision, will not be marked as absent. Stringent safeguarding checks will be carried out before and during the placement as well as checking safeguarding daily through the daily attendance phone call.

Remote education

Remote education should only ever be considered as a last resort where a decision has already been made that attendance at school is not possible, but pupils are able to continue learning.

Circumstances where it might not be possible for pupils to receive in person education fit into 2 broad categories:

- school closures or restrictions on attendance, where school access for pupils is restricted
- individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able to learn

There should only be limited circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able and well enough to continue their education remotely. These circumstances should only involve a short-term absence. This should be part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, and only when it is judged that providing remote education would not adversely affect the pupil's return to school.

Pupils absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be marked as absent in the register.

Part-time timetables

A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.
All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. Initio Learning Trust uses the advice from Government health officials when dealing with anxiety; a prolonged period of absence is likely to increase any anxiety. Because of this, part-time timetables are not usually appropriate to be used for those suffering with anxiety unless a medical professional recommends this. Where a part-time time table is considered in the pupil's best interests, there **MUST** be agreement from the family; if there is no agreement then it will be classed as an unofficial exclusion. If a pupil has a part-time timetable agreed, the Initio Learning Trust part-time timetable process must be followed which includes a thorough safeguarding risk assessment, desired outcomes for the child, expectations of work completed when not on school premises, regular review dates and a six week timetable that is gradually increased to maintain full time education by the end of week six.

In exceptional circumstances and with significant evidence that it is in the pupil's best interest, a part-time timetable may be extended for a further period of time. Weekly reviews of the part-time timetable must occur with the family and school and stringent records kept of how successful the timetable has been.
If the pupil has a social worker, they will be involved in the process. If the pupil is in receipt of an EHCP, the local authority will be involved.

Study Leave

Study leave, where used, will only be granted to pupils in year 11. Study leave will not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete. If a school does decide to grant study leave, provision will still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. All pupils are different and have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations and this will be catered for.

Staffing for monitoring and promoting good attendance

Schools will identify appropriate key staff to undertake attendance monitoring and adhere to the following key principles:

- There will be a school attendance officer, usually within the administration team, who will ensure that careful records of attendance are maintained which conform to the codes set out by the Department for Education and provide information as requested by staff, the local authority and the Department for Education. This includes when a pupil misses 15 days (consecutive or cumulative) due to illness, and informing the DfE within 5 days when a new pupil's name is added to the register or when a pupil's name is deleted from the register.
- The school will have an allocated Senior Attendance Champion who will have a close link with the school attendance officer;

- Schools will work in close partnership with the local authority through the local authority attendance teams;
- All staff will have training in attendance including how to complete registers, how to spot patterns of absence / punctuality, how to use other information about a pupil to see the wider context, how to report concerns and how to build relationships and offer support for families that struggle to maintain good attendance.

Contacting staff about attendance

The Senior Attendance Champion with responsibility for attendance is:	**Mick Homer** **office@stmarysfirstschool.org**
The attendance administration officer is:	**Bev Hayes** **office@stmarysfirstschool.org**
To tell the school that a pupil is going to be absent, parents should:	**Please tell us by 8.45 am at the latest.** **Telephone the school on 01305 263880 and leave a message giving your child's name, tutor group / class and reason for absence.**
If a parent is concerned about their child's attendance, they should:	**Speak with the child's teacher in the first instance. You can arrange that by contacting the school office** **If you have already done that and remain concerned, you can speak to Mick Homer You can arrange that by contacting the school office.**
Other key staff involved in supporting attendance are:	**Rox Crabb - Deputy Headteacher** **You can contact them through the school office**

If you wish to request a leave of absence for your child, you should:	**Email the school office as early as possible before the requested absence is due to happen**

Wider support

Wider support is available, please see links below for more information:

- West Sussex website for resources to help Emotionally Based School Avoidance
- Dorset SENDIASS
- BCP SENDIASS
- Dorset Education Advice Line
- Is my child too ill for school?

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Appendices:

- ***Summary of expectations***

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

	championing and improving attendance		
For pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (95-90% attendance):			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**The Local School Committee and Trust Board is expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold

	partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.		is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to
For persistently absent pupils (below 90% attendance):			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**The Local School Committee and Trust Board is expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social

	in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings		care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).
For severely absent pupils (less than 50% attendance):			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**The Local School Committee and Trust Board is expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.

intervention.			Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.
Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**The Local School Committee and Trust Board is expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
Not applicable.	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools
For pupils with medical conditions and / or SEND with poor attendance (below 95%)			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**The Local School Committee and Trust Board is expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**

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

Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered	Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are. Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort. Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes. Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their nam	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it	Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it. Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should: • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.
Looked after and previously looked after children			

Parents / pupils are expected to:	School is expected to:	The Local School Committee and Trust Board is expected to:	The Local Authority is expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance. Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.	Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance	Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care. (LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will: • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school - wherever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in

			partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.
Monitoring			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**The Local School Committee and Trust Board is expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance. (If parents feel the school and/or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to, they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)	The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures. The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction. Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.

	improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils. Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint		Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.