



# Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust

## Trust Attendance Policy

Presented & Approved by Trust Board	08/04/2025
Name of Chair of Trust Board	Malcolm Maclean
Version	1.0
Date of Next Review	



## 1. Scope

1.1. This policy relates to all schools and settings across Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust. It may be augmented by local policies in each school that reflect their specific approach and processes in managing attendance.

## 2. Aims

2.1. Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust aims for all of its schools (academies) to have an ethos which enables and encourages excellent attendance by all pupils.

2.2. Promoting good school attendance is everyone's business and the foundation of securing good attendance is intertwined with establishing a strong curriculum, culture of positive behaviour and support for mental health and wellbeing.

The culture within all SCEAT schools should be one where children want to be included, and are keen and ready to learn and good attendance is an integral part of this ethos.

2.3. For children to reach their full potential it is vital that they attend and be on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child or young person's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

2.4. All children have a right to an education but fulfilling this right for children with SEND may be more complex. The attendance ambition for children with SEND must be the same for any other child but additional support and reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure good attendance is achieved.

2.5. We recognise that for some of our children with significant medical needs, it can be very challenging to secure attendance rates above 90%. However, our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful learning. We work very closely with families whose child has complex medical needs to ensure that learning continues, as appropriate. Children with complex medical needs will be reported by exception in order to acknowledge their attempts to comply with regular attendance.

2.6. As a continuous cycle, school leaders and governors monitor absences and punctuality to show where improvements need and can be made.

## 3. Legal

3.1. Part 6 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that children and young people of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.



3.2. For pupils registered at a school, this means that pupils must attend regularly and punctually; failure to do so may result in their parents/carers committing a criminal offence.

3.3. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child or young person is no longer compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Although children in Early Years Foundation Stage are not compulsory school age, the Trust places a high value on the need for good attendance throughout school so will therefore treat absences in this phase the same as compulsory age pupils in terms of register marks and follow up procedures.

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

3.5. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

3.6. Data regarding the codes that have been recorded against each pupil's name in the school's attendance register must be shared with the DfE in line with the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

3.7. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## **4. Promoting Good Attendance**

4.1. All schools within the Trust have a responsibility to proactively manage and improve school attendance. This includes working in partnership with parents/carers to remove any barriers which may cause poor attendance.

4.2. Key strategies that schools use include:

- Promoting the importance of good attendance as part of the school's culture and ethos so that children feel a sense of belonging and want to come to school.
- Communicating expectations to parents/carers, making it clear to that they are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school every day.
- Communicating expectations to children through building positive relationships so children feel safe and want to come to school.
- Working with parents/carers and children to identify what the barriers are to attending school and being flexible in the support offered to address these barriers.



- Rigorously monitor patterns and trends in attendance so that poor attendance can be addressed through early intervention.
- Having the 'right people' in place to support children to attend school regularly and ensure that these people receive training to be able to be effective in their role.

4.3. Each school within the Trust has a named attendance lead (usually the HoS or EHT) who takes the lead in promoting the culture of good attendance.

## 5. Types of Absence

5.1. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

5.2. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, non-routine medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absence can only be authorised by the school not by parents/carers.

5.3. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'approval' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never properly been explained;
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their present mark;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed;

5.4. If a parent feels their child is too ill to attend school, they can be signposted to the NHS guidance to support them in making the decision to keep their child off school. Is my child too ill for school? - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

5.5. For those children and young people who are struggling to attend school full time due to their complex medical needs, school and their parents/carers may discuss reduced hours. When a parent/carer seeks a reduction in hours or days, the school and health professionals will look at the individual child or young person and their needs and work with the parents/carers to provide appropriate education for their child. Where required, the information will be included in the child's EHCP.

## 6. Registration

6.1. The timings of the school day will be published by each academy and include details of when the morning and afternoon sessions start and end and when registers will be taken. Registers are taken by class and monitored by a member of each schools' senior leadership team.



6.2. The register should only be amended where, at the time of registration, the reason for non-attendance was not established. Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

6.3. A child can only be deleted from the register as set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. If a child is removed for any other reason, this can be defined as 'off-rolling'.

## **7. Absence Procedures**

7.1. Parents/carers should advise school that their child will be absent by contacting the school office no later than the scheduled start of the school day. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform school directly. Messages via transport staff, other parents/carers or social media will not be accepted and will be followed up by a phone call. Office staff will then inform the class teacher that the pupil is absent.

7.2. SCEAT schools use a first day response policy, therefore if a pupil does not attend school and no adequate reason has been provided then a telephone call will be made to the parent/carer by office staff. The member of staff making the first day response call will update the school register as necessary.

7.3. Parents/carers are expected to keep in contact with school when a pupil is absent for a long period to keep school informed of the situation and any expected return date.

7.4. Parents/carers are requested to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend for part of the day. Parents/carers should contact the office to inform school of such appointments as early as possible. Pupils may only leave school premises if they are accompanied by a parent/carer. Proof of the appointment may be requested; this could be an appointment card or a letter from hospital.

7.5 Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision



- Approved exceptional circumstances

7.6. If a pupil arrives after the registers closes with no prior explanation, then they will receive a late mark. If a pupil has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Executive Headteacher and/or Head of School to resolve the problem, but parents can approach school at any time if there are problems getting pupils to school.

## 8. Reduced Timetables

8.1 Children of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education and reduced timetables are only used in exceptional circumstances such as if:

- It's in the child's best interest to support the reintegration into full time provision.
- There is a specific need of the child, such as a medical condition, which prevents them from attending full-time, and a reduced timetable is part of a reintegration plan.

8.2 Within each SCEAT school, Executive Headteachers are responsible for the decision why a reduced timetable is in place and must be able to explain their decision. The child's parents/carers must also agree a reduced timetable. Without their agreement, schools cannot proceed as this could be an unlawful exclusion. Any child who is accessing education in a reduced capacity must have a plan which outlines the reasons for the reduction, which also includes any actions to be taken during the period to increase attendance and the dates of the review period.

Schools wishing to put in place a reduced timetable for a pupil need to be aware of the following:

- Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils.
- However, in the most exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs.
- A reduced timetable should be in place for no longer than 6 weeks. Review periods must be no longer than every two weeks during the period of reduced provision and include a proposed end date.
- The Executive Headteacher must agree a reduced timetable.
- All professionals involved should be consulted.
- The LA SEND team must agree a reduced timetable for children with SEN who have an EHC Plan.
- The Virtual School of the placing authority must agree a reduced timetable for looked-after children.
- The arrangement for pupils with medical needs must follow Shropshire's Medical Needs guidance.
- A reduced timetable should not be implemented where there are safeguarding concerns such as a risk of Child Exploitation, a child is subject to CP planning or subject to a multi-agency strategy.
- A risk assessment must be completed in every case.
- A clear action plan for improving education and addressing any identified issues for the child must be in place.



- The Education Access Service must be notified of any pupil on a reduced educational provision.

Schools are required to complete the new online ['reduced timetable proforma'](#) within **24 hours** of the decision.

8.3 During the decision-making process, it needs to be clear what are the school, and the parent/carer responsibilities are to support the child and what support the child will receive when in school and what they will be expected to do when they are at home.

8.4 Reduced timetables should not be used to manage behaviour or used as a prerequisite to exclusion or off-rolling.

8.5 When the child is not in school at the agreed time, their absence should be marked on the register as 'C2', authorised absence.

## **9. Leave of Absence Taken in Term Time**

9.1. As of 1st September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed the option for Headteachers to grant leave of absence during the term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten days in a year. Leave of absence in term time is strongly discouraged. Parents are not automatically allowed to take their child out of school on holiday. Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an "exceptional circumstance".

9.2. SCEAT acknowledges the multi-faith nature of some school communities and recognises that on some occasions religious festivals may fall outside of school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

9.3. In-line with Government guidelines, SCEAT schools will not authorise absences for holidays in term-time unless there are exceptional reasons. All requests will be considered individually by the Executive Headteacher/Head of School.

9.4. Parents/carers will be required to submit any request for absence in term-time in advance of the proposed absence using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form available from the school administrator on request.

9.5. Parents/carers will be expected to give a full explanation as to why the leave of absence request is exceptional. A child's current school attendance and previous absence will be considered before a decision is made. School will respond to all requests in writing, however, parents/carers should not automatically expect the request to be authorised.



9.6. All requests for leave of absence and the responses will be kept on the pupil's school record. If permission to take leave is not granted and a pupil still takes the leave, then the absence will be unauthorised. This may result in referral to the Local Authority for them to consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice fine, per parent per child. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school. Each Local Authority must set the criteria for issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. No SCEAT school receives any form of financial payment or benefit as a result of a Fixed Penalty Notice being incurred.

9.7. SCEAT schools recognise that the issuing of FPNs are to be a deterrent to prevent children being taken out of school for holidays / family trips / special occasions repeatedly in their school career. However, in line with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 guidance, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three-year rolling period. A third penalty notice cannot be issued in the same period, but alternative action may be taken by the local authority, which may include prosecution.

9.8. The Local Authority can only issue a Penalty Notice in cases of unauthorised absence or where a child - who has been excluded from school - is seen in a public place in the first five days of exclusion.

## **10. Persistent and Severely Absent Pupils**

10.1. Where a child misses 10% or more of school, they will be defined as "persistent absence" and schools must identify any barriers to attendance and put in place additional targeted support. Some Local Authorities continue to have an Education Welfare Service whereas other Local Authorities have integrated this function into a wider Early Help offer.

10.2. Severely absent pupils, missing 50% or more of school, are likely to need more intensive support and where severe absence is unauthorised, this may be an indicator of neglect and potential safeguarding issues.

10.3. School leaders will work within the parameters of the local procedures for responding to persistent and severe absence and will keep local governing bodies informed of any barriers to effective multi agency working to address these issues.

10.4. When a child is identified as persistent or severely absent, an 'Attendance Contract' may be appropriate to target support and expectations to improve attendance; however, a contract may not be appropriate in some instances. The Attendance Contract should be developed with the parent/carer and child (where appropriate) and include their views and outline the support/interventions to be taken. If a parent/carer does not adhere to the 'Attendance Contract' then the school may take further action and refer to the local authority, which may include steps towards prosecution.



10.5. When a child or young person stops attending school for 10 days and no contact can be made to establish the child or young person's whereabouts school will complete a (CME) 'Child Missing Education' and submit this to the Local Authority. Prior to this point, the school will take the necessary actions to assure themselves that a child is safe and secure if they have not attended school, and this may involve referring to children's social care. The child will not be removed from roll until confirmation has been received and the child's information will be added to the Lost Pupil Database.

## **11. Emotional Based School Avoidance**

11.1. The Trust recognises that the Education Act 1996 places a legal duty on all parents/carers to ensure that their child has an education and attends school regularly. If a parent/carer deems that their child is not attending school due to 'ill health', the parent/carer must provide medical evidence to prove this to be the case if the illness is prolonged or the child is persistently absent.

11.2. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), also known as School Refusal, School Avoidance or School Reluctance, is a term used to categorise children who do not attend school due to emotional factors or experiences. Increased anxiety can be displayed as significant distress causing extended periods of absence from school, thus impacting on a child's attendance.

11.3. SCEAT schools aim to work with families whose children are displaying symptoms of EBSA, as opposed to truancy, so that progress can be made towards the child's successful integration back into school. It is essential that key staff within the school understand the causes of the EBSA through gaining the views of the child, parents and associated professionals and that the feelings and anxieties of the child are acknowledged and any worries expressed are not dismissed.

## **12. Roles and responsibilities**

### **12.1 The local governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy



## **12.2 The Executive Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Advising the Head of School with regards to their monitoring of the school's attendance
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Determining whether leave of absence in term time (LATT) is to be authorised or unauthorised and reporting unauthorised LATT to the EWO.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## **12.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The **Head of School** is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

## **12.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing day-to-day attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- Providing administrative support to the Executive Headteacher and EWO in respect of the issuing of fixed-penalty notices

## **12.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day



via SIMS. This MUST be done at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session.

### **3.6 School Administrative staff**

School Administrative staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Class Teacher/Head of School/Support staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Make 'first-day calls' to the parent of any absent pupil where a reason for absence has not been provided by a parent/carer by the close of that session's register.
- Maintain a record of all pupils arriving late via the school office and the reason given for the lateness
- Maintain a record of pupils leaving the school premises other than at the usual end of the school day, through the parent/carer signing in/out book.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Avoid holidays in term time
- Call the school to report their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, routine medical/dental appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Attend attendance related meetings in school;
- Ensure their child goes to bed at a reasonable time;
- Ensure their child is ready for school transport in a morning (where applicable);
- Discuss any issues affecting absence or lateness with school

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Be appropriately dressed



- Have the necessary items to be prepared for the school day (i.e. PE kit, school reading scheme book)
- Talk to a trusted adult at school or at home if they have any worries about coming to school or getting to school on time.

#### **12.6 The SCEAT Board of Trustees should:**

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the ethos and culture of all schools within the Trust;
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- Set high expectations for school leaders when promoting the importance of attendance for all pupils;
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders to focus on improvement
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.



## Appendix 1

Attendance Codes Summary As stated in the DfE guidance – ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance - 2024’

### School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/\	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)