



Attendance Policy/Guidance

Approved by the Board of Trustees, 9 July 2024

Date of Next Review: Summer 2026

Responsible Person: Principal, Westlands Academy

Summary

About this guidance

This guidance has been produced by Horizons Specialist Academy Trust (HSAT) and reflects the updated guidance provided by the DfE.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- All academies across the HSAT, academy trust staff, Principals, Governors, academy Trustees, and associated alternative provision providers
- This guidance may also be useful for parents and carers

Guidance and Regulations from Department for Education (DfE)

Working together to improve attendance (19th August 2024) has been introduced to replace *Working together to improve attendance (20th September 2022)*. The guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) is statutory, and has been produced to help schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance.

The guidance should be read alongside the statutory guidance and regulatory documents on parental responsibility measures, children missing education, supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and safeguarding (including Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Key referenced legislation includes (but is not limited to):

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education Act 1996
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1933
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Children Act 1989
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

Section 1: The importance of school attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. 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.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work 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. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners. That said it is important that all academies across HSAT have an Attendance Champion. This individual should be a designated member of the senior leadership team who is the main points of contact regarding attendance based issues.

Below is a list of Attendance Champions for each HSAT Academy and nominated Local Authority Attendance contact.

Academy	Senior Attendance Champion	Local Authority Attendance Lead
Abbey Hill	Bill Dingwall	Carly Lupton
Abbey Hill 6 th Form	Steve Cropper	N/A (Post-16 above statutory age)
Archways	Andy Wilson	Michelle Smith
Green Gates	Melanie Lyons	Craig McCorrisken
Hollis	Tom Maitland	Leanne Barker
Mo Mowlam	Rachel Glover	Amanda Fowell
Westlands	Adam Harewood	Carly Lupton
Woodlands	Joanne Hampshire	TBC

Section 2: Statement of intent

The aim of the Trust is to facilitate our pupils or students regular and sustained attendance by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils or students.

Parents and carers have a vital role to play and there is a strong emphasis on maintaining home-school links and good communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

The roles

The role of the Academy:

At each Academy, we believe that good attendance is key to student success. We are committed to supporting students and families to ensure that every student attends regularly and on time. Here's how we support good attendance:

1. **Friendly Reminders:** We send out regular reminders to students and parents about the importance of attending school every day.
2. **Attendance Team:** Our dedicated attendance team monitors attendance daily and reaches out to parents if there are any concerns. They are here to help with any issues that might affect your child's attendance.
3. **Supportive Environment:** We provide a welcoming and supportive environment, making sure every student feels safe and happy to come to school.
4. **Incentives and Rewards:** We recognise and celebrate good attendance with awards and incentives to motivate students to come to school every day.
5. **Parental Communication:** We maintain open lines of communication with parents, offering meetings and support to address any barriers to good attendance.
6. **Resources and Assistance:** For families facing challenges that might affect attendance, we offer resources and assistance to help overcome these obstacles.

We expect all parents, carers and students to understand the importance of regular attendance and to work with us to ensure that every student has the best chance to succeed. Cooperation and support are crucial in helping us maintain a high standard of attendance for all our students.

The role of the parent/carer:

As parents and carers, you play a vital role in supporting your child's attendance and ensuring they make the most of their education. Here's how you can help:

1. **Set a Routine:** Establish a daily routine that includes a regular bedtime and morning schedule. This helps your child be well-rested and ready for school.
2. **Prepare in Advance:** Help your child prepare for school the night before by organizing their uniform, school bag, and any necessary materials or homework.
3. **Communicate Importance:** Talk to your child about the importance of attending school regularly and how it benefits their learning and future opportunities.
4. **Stay Informed:** Keep in touch with the school regarding your child's attendance. Read school newsletters, attend parent meetings, and be aware of the school's attendance policies.
5. **Support and Encourage:** Encourage your child to participate in school activities and be engaged in their learning. Show interest in their school day and celebrate their achievements.
6. **Address Barriers:** If your child faces any issues that affect their attendance, such as bullying or learning difficulties, work with the school to find solutions and support.
7. **Set an Example:** Model the importance of punctuality and responsibility by ensuring your child arrives at school on time every day.

8. **Communicate with School:** Inform the school promptly if your child is unwell or if there are any circumstances that may affect their attendance.
9. **Seek Assistance:** If you need help with any challenges related to your child's attendance, don't hesitate to reach out to the school's attendance team. They are there to support you and your child.

Your involvement and support are crucial in helping your child attend school regularly and succeed in their education. Working together, we can ensure that your child has the best possible opportunities for learning and growth.

The role of the student / pupil:

As a student at our Academy, your attendance is very important for your success and learning. Here's what you can do to make sure you attend school regularly and get the most out of your education:

1. **Be Punctual:** Make sure you arrive on time every day. Being punctual shows that you are responsible and ready to learn.
2. **Prepare the Night Before:** Get everything you need for school ready the night before, such as your uniform, school bag, and homework. This helps you start your day smoothly.
3. **Stay Healthy:** Take care of your health by eating well, getting enough sleep, and exercising. If you're feeling unwell, let your parents and teachers know.
4. **Set Goals:** Set personal attendance goals for yourself and strive to meet them. Challenge yourself to have perfect attendance each term.
5. **Be Engaged:** Participate actively in your classes and extracurricular activities. The more involved you are, the more you'll enjoy coming to school.
6. **Seek Help:** If you're facing any problems that make it hard to attend school, talk to your teachers or the attendance team. They are there to support you.
7. **Be Responsible:** Take responsibility for your attendance. Remember, coming to school regularly is your first step toward success.
8. **Encourage Friends:** Support your friends in attending school regularly too. A positive and encouraging attitude helps everyone succeed.

By attending school every day and on time, you're giving yourself the best chance to learn, grow, and achieve your goals. Your commitment to good attendance is a crucial part of your journey toward success.

Section 3: The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

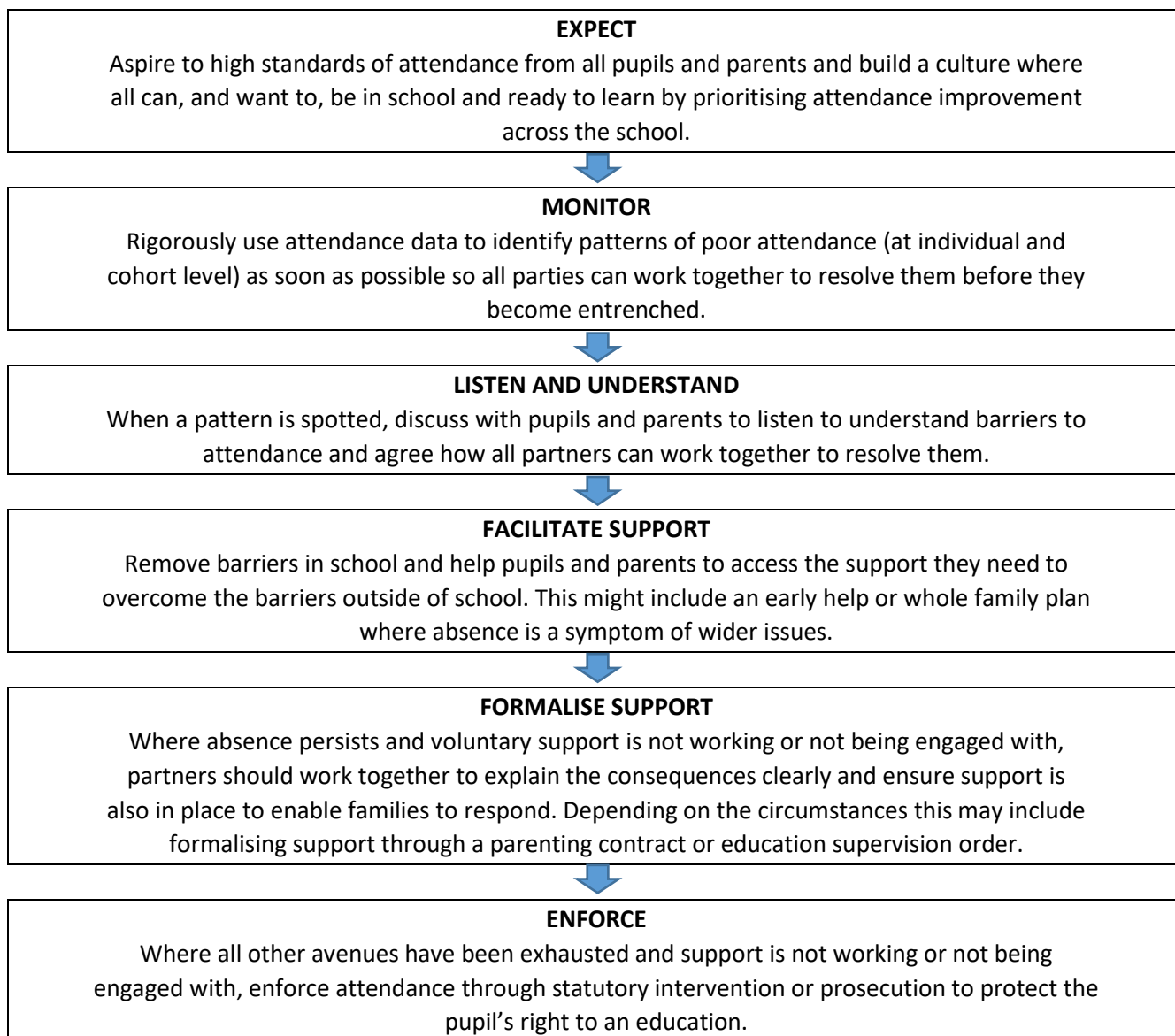
The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school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

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, 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.

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.

Section 4: Working together to improve attendance (Summary of Guidance)

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Section 5: Expectations of HSAT academies

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.

HSAT academies should aim to consistently promote the benefits of good attendance at school, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically analyse their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. They should also recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive. To manage and improve attendance effectively, all academies should:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other HSAT academies, other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

All HSAT academies should aim to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. Academies should recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the academies ethos and culture. In building a culture of good attendance, all academies should:

- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day-to-day life.
- Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Section 6: Admissions Register ('the school roll')

The Admission Register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

Section 7: Registration

All academies must keep an attendance register in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

Academies must take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity as defined in Regulation 6(4); or
- Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances as defined in Regulation 6(5).

Academies must record whether the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or not.

Academies must record the nature of the activity where a pupil of compulsory school age is attending an approved educational activity.

Academies must also record the nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Registration will be completed by the following times:

Abbey Hill by 9.10am and 1.00pm

Abbey Hill Sixth Form by 9:00am and 1.00pm

Archway Academy by 9:00am and 1.10pm

Green Gates Academy by 9.15am and 1.00pm

Hollis Academy by 9.15am and 1.00pm

Mo Mowlam Academy by 9:20am and 1:30pm

Westlands Academy by 9:20am and 1:35pm

Woodlands Academy by 9:30am and 1:30pm

For all students accessing alternate provision or part-time timetables, registration will close 30 minutes after agreed start time.

Retaining and amending registers

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance. Academies are expected to use an electronic management information system to keep their attendance and admission registers to improve accuracy, speed up the process of sharing and analysing information, and make returns to local authorities and DfE easier.

Registers are legal records and all academies must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

Section 8: Attendance and Absence Codes

Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

All HSAT academies will apply the national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. These are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

A table of the codes to be utilised is found overleaf:

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework 	Present Mark
C	Authorised Circumstance (see next page for breakdown)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending Sheffield Inclusion Centre Attending Alternative Provision at another school site Chapel House / Becton Outreach / CAMHS Lodges Hospital education Education at a secure / residential site Off-site direction / managed move 	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Tutoring Approved Framework for Alternative Provision Blended Learning 	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend

The table explaining the breakdown of the sub-codes for Code C and Code Y can be found overleaf.

Code	Meaning	Type
The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes.	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating.	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.	Not expected to attend
The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised Absence

Further details of national codes and their appropriate application can be found in:

Working together to improve school attendance: Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (February 2024)

In terms of retaining and amending registers, all HSAT academies use an electronic management information system to keep their attendance and admission registers. This helps to improve accuracy, speed up the process of sharing and analysing information, and make returns to local authorities and DfE easier.

Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date of entry. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.

Section 9: Absence

It is the parent or carer's responsibility to inform the academy of the reason for a child or young person's absence. We would like to receive notification as soon as the child or young person is absent from school. We ask that the parent or carer telephones the academy before 9am each morning their child or young person is absent to discuss the reason for the absence.

It is a fact that parentally-condoned unjustified absence is a serious problem in some schools. This can be every bit as damaging as the more traditional forms of truancy.

Only the Principal of the academy or a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an "authorised person"), within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents or carers. The fact that a parent or carer has offered a note or other notification in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the academy to accept it if the academy does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.

If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or where no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil or student each academy will involve:

Abbey Hill Academy – Academy Attendance Officer

Abbey Hill Academy Sixth Form – Vice Principal for Pastoral and Attendance

Archway Academy – Academy Attendance Officer

Green Gates Academy – The Principal and the Parent Support Advisor

Hollis Academy – The Outreach Manager

Mo Mowlam Academy – The Principal

Westlands Academy - The Principal and the Parent Support Advisor

Woodlands Academy – Academy Attendance Officer

Section 10: Granting leaves of absence

All academies are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations. These circumstances are:

- 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). (For full details please see code C1)
- 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.

Academies should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Only the Principal of the academy or a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an "authorised person"), within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents or carers.

An authorised person may not give a pupil leave of absence to undertake employment (whether paid or unpaid) during school hours except employment to take part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.

The Trust will not authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday apart from in the most exceptional of circumstances. Any leave of absence request that is declined by the Principal or authorised person may result in the Academy issuing a warning letter and may result in a referral to the Local Authority for the issue of a Penalty Notice in line with the National Framework of Fixed Penalty Notices covered in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. This does not apply in the Sixth Form.

Parents and carers are strongly urged to avoid making requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time due to the disruption and impact of the missed education on the child or young person.

If parents or carers feel that exceptional circumstances apply then they should complete a Leave of Absence form and must state in full their reasons for the absence, why they feel it is essential that it takes place during term time and if appropriate accompanied by evidence. An example of evidence in the case of a family holiday being a letter from an employer on letter headed paper, which states the reason why the applicant is unable to take a Leave of Absence for a family holiday during school holidays.

The Leave of Absence form can be obtained from the Reception Office at each academy and in the case of Abbey Hill Academy, Stephenson, Walker, and Sheraton buildings, the main reception. It should be completed and returned to the office for the attention of the Principal for individual consideration no later than 4 weeks before the start of the requested period of leave. The Principal or authorised person will inform the parent or carer of their decision.

Across the Trust, exceptional circumstances have been determined as:

- In the case of the terminal illness of a close member of the family.
- Death of a close family member.
- Pupils with parents in the forces.
- Marriage of parent.
- Work commitments (not able to take a holiday other than at set times).
- Any other exceptional circumstance arising, at the Principals discretion.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Section 11: Categorising Absence

It will be necessary on occasion to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences.

Some key points:

- Registered pupils or students of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school.
- Whilst it is right that academies should recognise that pupils or students and their families have problems and individual circumstances which, need to be considered, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance.
- Lateness should be actively discouraged.
- Where a pupil or student is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) it must be treated as unauthorised and the register recorded accordingly.
- Academies are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered.
- Explanations such as minding the house, birthdays, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence.
- Even when an absence is authorised, the academy should be alerted to emerging patterns of absence which, may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.
- In promoting regular attendance, the academy should work closely with appropriate local authority staff.

Section 12: Punctuality

It is expected that staff at all academies across the Trust actively discourage late arrival. A pupil or student arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils or students to arrive late. Particular attention should be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

When a pupil or student arrives late and misses registration, his or her presence on site must still be recorded. Anyone arriving late must report to:

Abbey Hill Academy – Reception Office in either the Stephenson or Walker building

Abbey Hill Academy Sixth Form – Reception Office

Archway Academy – Admin Office

Green Gates Academy – Reception Office

Hollis Academy – Admin Office

Mo Mowlam – Reception Office

Westlands Academy – Reception Office

Woodlands Academy - Reception Office

The office staff may challenge the lateness and will amend the pupil or student's presence on the electronic register, late book, 'strike book', and inform the Outreach Manager, Senior Leadership Team or Duty Lead.

In responding to lateness, academies will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquires may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. The Principal, Vice Principal, Parental Support Adviser, Pastoral Lead, Outreach Manager, Academy Attendance Officer or Form Team Lead may need to seek an early meeting with parents or carers of pupils or students who persistently fail to arrive on time without valid reason whilst keeping the Principal informed. If the parents or carers do not have any valid reason for the child or young person's persistent lateness the Principal, Vice Principal, Pastoral Lead, Outreach Manager or Academy Attendance Officer will consult with the Local Authority, and seek advice, offer an Early Help Assessment or referral to the LA Attendance Team.

Section 13: Day to day processes

Alongside accurate recording of attendance and absence, effective schools have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality which are rigorously applied across the school. All HSAT academies are expected to develop processes that meet the needs of their pupils and contexts. As a minimum this should include arrangements to:

- Proactively manage lateness and set out in their attendance policy / guidance the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session, and depending on the structure of the school day, not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. Details of the individual Academies registration closing times are listed in Section 7 of this document.
- Expect parents to contact the academy when their child is absent to explain the reason and put in place processes to contact parents on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents (and where appropriate foster carers and/or social workers) to understand why and when the pupil will return. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where reasonably possible, academies should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This is good practice to give the academy additional options to make contact with a responsible adult.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Academies should avoid headline percentages and instead make this understandable for parents (e.g. the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at the academy.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

Below is a flowchart of expected “day to day” actions that should be undertaken by the academy in relation to attendance:

On the first day of absence if a child is going to be absent then the parent / carer should contact the academy before 9am to discuss the reasons for absence.
Ideally a note, along with any other medical evidence such as appointment cards or prescriptions should be provided upon the child's return to the academy.

If parents haven't contacted the academy, then a phone call (text message - Abbey Hill) will be made by the office staff (designated attendance member of staff) to the parent / carer asking them for the reason for the absence. If no phone contact is possible after trying all available numbers then a text message (phone call - Abbey Hill) will be sent asking parents to contact the academy to explain why their child isn't present.

If there are existing safeguarding concerns with regards to the child in question (eg. active CP, attendance procedures in place, any other concerns raised about child well-being) then a home visit / welfare check should take place at the earliest opportunity, ideally on day one of the absence.

Vocational Education - If students are absent from a placement the provider will inform the academy reception of the absence within 30 minutes of agreed start time

On day two of absence, if no contact has been made with parents / carer, office staff will again attempt to make contact using all available numbers and if necessary a second text message will be sent.

On the third day of absence, if attempts to make parental contact have still been unsuccessful, then a home visit / welfare check will take place at the earliest opportunity, ideally before the end of that day.

After three consecutive days of absence, even if earlier contact has been made with parent / carer, a follow up phone call should be made by form teams to obtain an update on current situation.

If there are ten consecutive days or more of unauthorised absence from the academy and no contact is made, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education Attendance Service under Children Missing Education/attendance procedures.

Where it is suspected that a pupil may be at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, radicalisation, or is a runaway or young carer safeguarding procedures should be followed.

Even if there is legitimate reason for a pupils absence, staff from the academy must physically see the child (this can be either face to face or virtually but staff must have eyes on the student) at least once every ten days or confirm that they have been seen by another professional within that ten day period.

If the academy has made every reasonable effort to confirm professional sighting of a pupil following the ten day period and has been unsuccessful then CME reporting procedures should be followed and a Safer referral should be considered.

If the academy has reasonable grounds that suggest that a child may have moved out of the area then CME reporting procedures should be followed as soon as possible and there is no requirement to wait for 10 days.

Section 14: Attendance Team Meetings - Academies will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place

As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. The key to this is regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the academy and develop strategies to address them. To achieve this all HSAT academies are expected to:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the academy.
- When analysing patterns, HSAT academies (especially secondary), may wish to look further into patterns of attendance within a session to ensure all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons.
- Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any LAC designated staff, designated safeguarding leads, pupil premium leads and parent support advisors).
- 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. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels (where available) to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher than average absence or for pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the Trustees, Academy Council or Standards Committee.
- Academies should decide which cohorts of pupils should be included in their data analysis based on their context and school population. This may include: boys and girls, year groups, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, pupils with a social worker or who are looked-after by the local authority, pupils eligible for free school meals, and any pupils from backgrounds (including ethnicities, religions or beliefs, or sexual orientations where applicable) in the school community that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers.
- Careful monitoring of students considered as persistently absent and severely absent should be included in the regular analysis.

Regular (weekly or two weekly) meetings with standing agenda's, minutes and agreed actions are strongly recommended to take place in each academy with an identified attendance team.

Section 15: Overcoming Attendance Issues - Academies should build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them

HSAT academies should treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic schools should draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, schools should take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

In the first instance, all schools are expected to:

- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the academies control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, schools should hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance or a staff member appointed on behalf of the SLT and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. These meetings should clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but should also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

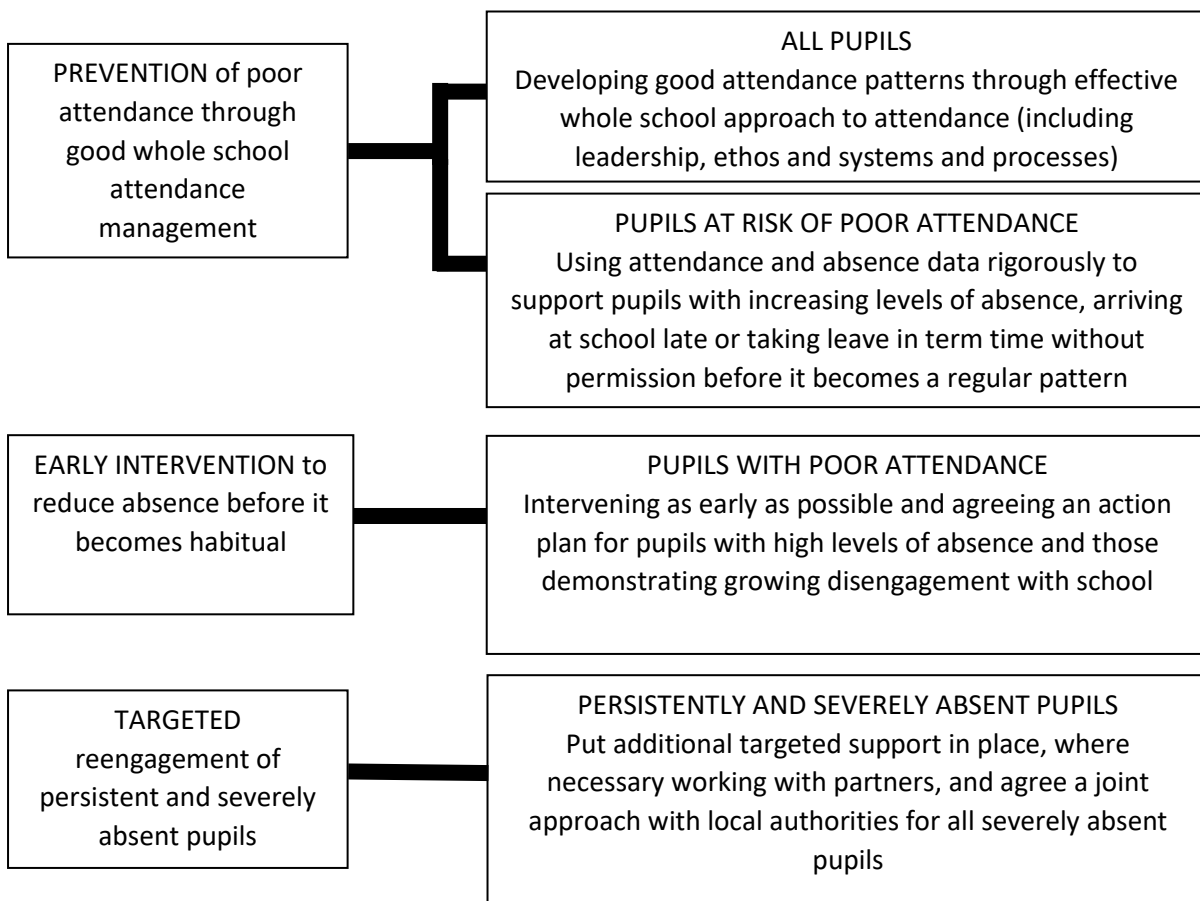
Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with all academies should work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.

- Intensify support through statutory children’s social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

In all cases, the academy should monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, all parties should work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

Section 16: Effective school attendance improvement and management



Section 17: Pupils with medical conditions, disabilities or special educational needs that may potentially impact on attendance.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions, disabilities or special educational needs that may potentially impact on attendance. 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 they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This should include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, schools should work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups including at attendance team meetings, SLT meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see further information on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school – DFE Sept 2014 and Pupils with Additional Health Needs - Horizons Trust Summer 2024).

In all cases, academies should be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and they should talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

Section 18: Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

All HSAT academies should work jointly with local authorities and other local partners and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms). Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- **New Pupil and Deletion returns:** notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
- **Attendance returns:** providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). Local authorities must agree the frequency that attendance returns are to be provided with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.
- **Sickness returns:** providing the local authority with the full name and address of all 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. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

Section 19: Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

Section 20: Alternative Provision

HSAT academies offer high quality education for students with a variety of special educational needs. The academy has highly skilled and experienced staff and often utilises bespoke facilities to provide the pupils with a comprehensive and often highly individualised educational package. However, in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a pupil to access alternative provision to meet their individual needs.

Any students accessing Alternative Provision should receive the same level of pastoral care, safeguarding support and high quality education as any other student at the academy. Close monitoring should be in place to ensure high standards are being met.

Academies must only employ the services of providers who have successfully completed the Trust quality assurance process. Ideally, OFSTED registered provisions should be sought in the first instance.

Local Authority attendance teams should be informed of all students accessing a part-time timetable and should also be aware of planned time frames involved.

First day response protocols must be adhered to by the providers.

Students attending alternative provision should be marked with the following attendance codes:

Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework	B code
Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority - Home Tutoring - Approved Framework for Alternative Provision - Blended Learning	K code

Section 21: Expectations of academy trust boards and governing bodies

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. Therefore it is expected that all trusts and governing bodies:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Multi-academy trust boards and governing bodies of federations are also expected to share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

Further comprehensive guidance relating to the expectations of academy trust boards and governing bodies can be found in *Working Together to Improve Attendance (September 2024)*