



# Attendance, Absence & Punctuality Policy

Audience:	Children Parents REACH2 Staff Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards Trustees
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Other related policies:	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Complaints Procedures Policy Behavioural Policy Children Missing Education Policy Home Visit Policy Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Policy owner:	Gill Ellyard, Director of Education
Review:	Every 3 years

At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.



## Leadership

Finding the leader in all of us.



## Inclusion

Realising the greatness in our difference.



## Learning

Creating exceptional opportunities for learning.



## Enjoyment

Loving what we do.



## Inspiration

Feeling the power of the possible.



## Integrity

Being courageously true to our purpose.



## Responsibility

Unwavering commitment to seeing things through.

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**Policy Overview:**

Phoenix St. Peter Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance and punctuality is essential. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school, on time. **We are committed to:**

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance and punctuality behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.
- Rewarding regular attendance and good punctuality.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

**Relevant legislation:**

- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013 The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- The Equality Act 2010

**Relevant government guidance:**

- Working together to improve attendance – August 2024 and Summary table of Responsibilities for school attendance – August 2024
- Children missing education
- Keeping children safe in education and Working together to safeguard children
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- 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
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Providing remote education

### **Relevant Local Authority guidance (Suffolk County Council):**

- School Attendance information leaflet
- School Fixed Penalty Notice information leaflet
- School Fixed Penalty Notice threshold matrix
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 – School Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (for schools)
- 'School Attendance Notice to Improve' letter

### **This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust and / or School policies:**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (updated annually)
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Positive Relationships & Behaviour Policy
- Flexi-Schooling Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- First Aid & Medical Needs Policy

### **Definitions:**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

#### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency for which the school has granted leave.

#### **Unauthorised and Persistent absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

#### **Lateness:**

- Arrival at school after the beginning of the school day but before the register has closed

## **Policy In Detail - Roles and Responsibilities:**

### **The governing board has overall responsibility for:**

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' and Working together to improve attendance'.
- When making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### **The headteacher is responsible for:**

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance and punctuality expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every child has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Sharing daily attendance data with the Department for Education.
- Appointing a designated Senior Attendance Champion.
- Ensuring electronic registers are kept for six years.

### **Staff are responsible for:**

- Following this policy and ensuring children do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance and punctuality behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual children to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.
- Ensuring that the name the pupil uses at school is recorded on the register.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress regularly, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- Holding formal conversations with parents, and pupils if age-appropriate, where engagement in support is proving challenging.

### **The Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that the LA are informed of any child being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:**

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note, or recorded with code I (illness) for 15 consecutive days.
- Have been permanently excluded.

**The Administration / Attendance Assistant is responsible for:**

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance with families.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence.
- Ensuring systems are followed by all staff and all staff have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.

**Children are responsible for:**

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

**Parents are responsible for:**

- The attendance and punctuality of their children at school.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children.

**For the purpose of this policy, a 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 a legal duty of care of a child or young person

**Training of staff:**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance and/or punctuality. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk children as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

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

**Child expectations:**

Children are expected to attend school every day and need to be ready for school, helping parents/carers to ensure that they arrive at school punctually.

### **Children at risk of persistent absence (PA):**

The school will ensure it provides support to children at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

#### **The SLT will:**

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Creating a culture of good regular attendance.
  - Sending letters of concern to parents and attendance meetings with parents.
  - Having regular attendance reviews as part of the school's Attendance & Vulnerable Pupil meetings.
  - Engaging with the LA Education Welfare Officer as part of regular attendance meetings.
  - Use of School Attendance Notice to Improve letters.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a child at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the child in line with the school's duty of care.

#### **Where a child becomes at risk of PA, the school will:**

- Welcome children back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with children and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss and celebrate progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within vulnerable groups, including:

- Children with a social worker
- LAC
- Children who are eligible for FSM
- Children with EAL
- Children with SEND

### **Children Missing in Education (CME):**

We understand the risks posed to children who are not receiving a full-time education, both in terms of their safety and their academic achievement. We are aware of both DfE guidance (Children missing education - Statutory guidance for local authorities, [2016]) and our Local Authority procedures concerning Children Missing in Education.

We will work in full accordance with these expectations, including working jointly with the Local Authority to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child who has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or following twenty consecutive days of unauthorised absence. We will share information from our admissions and attendance registers as requested with the Local Authority, and with other schools when a child transitions to or from our school, to support with effective implementation of the authority's policies relating to these statutory duties. In the event of any safeguarding concern regarding a child who is missing in education, we will follow our safeguarding policy.

After 20 consecutive days of absence, and if there are no reasonable grounds to believe the child will return to the school, even with reasonable support and enforcement to try to secure their return to school, a joint decision will be required between the school and the LA about removing the child from the school roll.

### **Children with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities:**

Some children face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include children who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Staff at the school will work with the parents and be mindful of the barriers these children face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education whilst maintaining the same, high expectations regarding their attendance.

This includes mental or physical health needs. The school should provide additional support and refer to local available services. Medical evidence for recording absences is likely only required in a minority of cases, but schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the child and identify the most suitable provision where reasonable adjustments or support may be needed.

### **Part-time timetables:**

All children at our school are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a child's best interest, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a child from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

Any part-time timetable will have a time limit by which point the child will be expected to attend full-time, either at school or an alternative provision. This will be kept under regular review with the child and their parents. Please see the Part-time timetable policy for more information.

### **Absence procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. They will also be required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns to school with a signed explanation of why they were absent.

This is required even if the parent has already contacted the school. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

- A telephone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- A message will be sent via the Arbor app to the primary contact of all absent children with no known reason for absence – this is a rapid system of communication and is one that we can track receipt.
- There will be a further call to the main contact number during the first morning of absence if no response to text.
- If there's still no response, a call will be made to the other emergency contact number(s) to establish the pupil's whereabouts or to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent / carer and update the school system accordingly.
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact number(s) if necessary.
- The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school.
- The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on Arbor.
- When no contact has been established by the third day of absence, the school will consider conducting a home visit or request a safe and wellbeing check from the police if the absence is unusual or school has concerns regarding the child's welfare.
- This may also result in a MARF (Multi-Agency Referral Form) referral to Suffolk CYP services.
- All absence communication will be recorded on Arbor and CPOMs.
- For children who are more vulnerable due to health or medical needs, known to social care, in families with additional needs, or poor patterns of attendance, we will consider a home visit on the first day of absence.
- For children in families who are working directly with a Social Worker or EWO, we will contact these professionals on the first day of absence.
- Our office team and Inclusion team have a list of our most vulnerable children who we will rapidly prioritise contact with on first day of absence.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- Take further action as necessary to improve attendance.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Deputy Head for Inclusion and a formal meeting will be arranged with the child's parent/carer.

Where a child has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the child from the school's admissions register, advise the Local Authority and follow Child Missing Education guidance, if the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

*(CME statutory guidance pg 8, para 18).*

## Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with child's and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, punctuality and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with child's and their families to support attendance and punctuality, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Ask staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance / punctuality or require support.

## Attendance register:

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether children are:

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

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.

The student is counted as absent, authorised.

C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance. Including a flexi- school agreement.
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness.

The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.

G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.

These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.

D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students whose parents have requested a delayed or gradually increasing time in school, who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant children who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment. Children who are absent from school and receiving remote education will be recorded as absent. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **six years** from the date of the last entry.

If they are persistently absent, children will be referred to the Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Education Welfare Officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The Administration / Attendance Assistant will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of children and to implement attendance procedures.

Where a child’s absence is 50% or below, the Headteacher will report this to the relevant staff members in school (e.g. DSL) and the Deputy Director of Education (DDoE), providing them with a detailed report of the issues relating to the poor attendance and the school’s actions to address this. The DDoE may decide to refer to this the Safeguarding lead for further advice and support.

## **Length of School Day:**

- Schools are expected to publish their school hours on their website
- Schools are expected to be teaching a minimum of 32.5 hours each week at the latest from September 2023 and should be actively working towards this during 2022-23.
- The 32.5 hours includes all the time that all pupils are expected to be in school from the point at which the register is taken to the end of the school day. This includes break times, lunch times assemblies and so on. However, it does not include optional before or after school clubs.
- For schools that operate a 'soft start' at the beginning of the day, this time does NOT count towards the 32.5 hours. The school day begins at the time at which the register is taken and all pupils are expected to be in school.

## **Lateness:**

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. The school day starts at **9:00am**. Children should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by **9:00am**. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **9:15am**. Children will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- Children attending after **9:20am** will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.
- After lunch, registers are marked by **1:00pm**. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **1:15pm**. Children will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

## **Term-time leave:**

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.

The headteacher will determine the amount of time a child can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher and in line with DfE and LA guidance. Any requests for exceptional leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the child's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

## **Absence from school:**

- Since the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, no school is able to authorise term time holidays, for any reason.
- If you make the decision to take your child on holiday in term time, and / or take leave of absence without prior permission from the school, the absences will be marked in the school register as an Unauthorised Absence, which may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.
- Any 'Leave of Absence during Term Time Requests' should be made to the school.
- Leave of absence should only be granted in only the most exceptional circumstances.

The Local Authority strongly encourages parents/carer to take holidays or leave of absence for other reasons during the school holidays, rather than during term time. Schools are closed for 13 weeks a year, so it should not normally be necessary for children to miss school for these reasons.

Department for Education guidance does state that 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'.

### **What is an 'Exceptional Circumstance'?:**

Exceptional circumstances are one off events which are '*rare, significant, unavoidable and short*', examples may include:

- death of a close relative, or attendance at a funeral
- a housing crisis which prevents attendance
- important religious observances
- The needs of the families of service personnel due to operational tours of service

### **Leave during lunch times:**

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a child will be allowed to leave the premises.

Children will leave the school premises within *10 minutes* of the start of lunch and will return no later than *5 minutes* before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child *at the school office* when taking them off the premises – the child will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register *at the school office*. A member of staff will be available *at the school office* before the child leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No child will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

If a child is expected to be leaving the school premises, they are required to do so – children will go home as soon as they leave the site and will not loiter outside the premises. If the need for leave is no longer required, e.g. a medical appointment is cancelled, parents will inform a member of staff at the school office immediately.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

### **Truancy:**

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of children and understand the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

All children are expected to be in their classes by **9:00am** and **1:00pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any child with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the child, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

### **Leaving the school without permission:**

Children will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. Please refer to REAch2 Missing Pupil Policy.

### **Religious observances:**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

### **Appointments:**

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note, appointment card or screenshot of an appointment text message will be sent to the school office as evidence.

If the appointment requires the child to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Children will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

### **Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities:**

The school will ensure that all children engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for children engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the child.

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

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

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a child's attendance would fall below 97%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

### **Looked After Children:**

Fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for unauthorised school absences are generally not issued for looked after children (LAC). This is because the legal framework and guidance around FPNS, as well as the overall approach to supporting LAC are different from those for other children.

#### **1. Exemptions for Looked After Children:**

- This is because the primary focus for LAC is on ensuring their welfare and providing appropriate support to address any barriers to their attendance, rather than imposing fines.

#### **2. Supporting LAC and School Attendance:**

- Local authorities and schools have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children.
- This includes working closely with foster carers, social workers, and other professionals to understand the reasons for any attendance difficulties and to put in place appropriate support.
- Strategies may include:
  - Individualized support plans tailored to the child's needs.
  - Access to educational support services.
  - Working with the child's school to address any specific learning or behavioural challenges.
  - Collaborating with the child's carers to create a stable and supportive environment.

### **3. When FPNs Might Be Considered:**

- While FPNs are generally not issued to LAC, there may be exceptional circumstances where they are considered, especially if:
  - There is evidence of deliberate and persistent unauthorised absence, despite the provision of support.
  - There is a clear indication that the child is being deliberately kept away from school by a parent or carer.
- In such cases, the local authority would need to carefully consider the child's welfare and best interests before issuing an FPN, and may need to consult with other relevant agencies.

### **4. Focus on Support and Intervention:**

- The primary goal when dealing with school attendance issues for looked after children is to provide support and address any underlying issues that may be contributing to the absence.
- FPNs are generally seen as a measure of last resort, and other interventions should be explored first.

In summary, while FPNs are a tool used to address unauthorised school absence, they are not typically applied to looked after children due to the specific legal and welfare considerations that apply to this group. The focus for LAC is on providing support and addressing the root causes of any attendance problems.

#### **Young carers:**

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each child will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for children who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

#### **Rewarding good attendance and punctuality:**

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and/or punctuality in the following ways:

- Half Termly and Termly Attendance Award Assemblies.

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Attendance Certificates, Badges & Books.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that children with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

## Attendance Monitoring and review:

Attendance and punctuality will be robustly monitored throughout the year by the school and the Local Authority.

Phoenix St. Peter Academy has adopted the following attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures, to ensure that children's attendance and punctuality meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where children's attendance and/or punctuality falls below the standard:

1. The Administrative / Attendance Assistant reviews attendance, following absence procedure daily.
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any child absence not reported.
3. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the child is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and daily.
4. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by the Administrative / Attendance Assistant are passed immediately to the SLT.
5. Contact is made to the parents of any children marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The attendance and Persistent Absence (P.A) of all children will be RAG'd (Purple, Green, Yellow, Amber, Red).

Purple	Green	Yellow	Amber	Red
Attendance at or above 97% PA 8% or below	Attendance between 95.5 – 96.9% PA 8.1% - 10%	Attendance between 94 – 95.4% PA 10.1% -12%	Attendance between 92.5% - 93.9% PA 12.1% - 14%	Attendance 92.4% or below PA 15% or above

### **Lilac - Attendance at or above 97% and/or PA at 8% or below**

Attendance is above the national Primary average and persistent absence is below the national average.

### **Green – Attendance 95.5% - 96.9% and/or PA at 8.1% - 10%**

Attendance is broadly in line with or above the national average. A child's attendance needs further improvement in order to maximise their learning.

If a child's attendance falls within the 95.5% - 96.9% band, we will speak to the child in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The will also make a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.

A letter will also be sent home stating the number of minutes of lost learning and raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard.

### **Yellow – Attendance 94% - 95.4% and/or PA at 10.1% - 12%**

A child's attendance needs further improvement to avoid becoming disadvantaged in their learning.

If a child's attendance falls within the 94% - 95.4% band, a letter is sent home explaining that the child's attendance is now being monitored, and the Administration Assistant for Attendance will contact the parents to discuss this. The child's attendance will be monitored for *four weeks* and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child.

At this meeting, the barriers to the child attending school should be discussed and ways in which both parents and the school can work together to overcome such barriers. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.

After the *four-week* monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the child and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to *within 95.5% - 96.9% (green band) and/or PA is less than 10%*

### **Amber – Attendance 92.5% - 93.9% and/or PA at 12.1% - 14%**

Attendance is well below the national average and is causing concern. It is highly likely that a child is disadvantaged by poor attendance. Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided. The school will work in tandem with the local authority and any other relevant partners.

- **Issue a 'Notice to Improve'.**

A meeting will be held with parents to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the child (if old enough) and family and the potential need for legal intervention in the future. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid these consequences.

The school will maintain constant contact with the child and parents and celebrate any improvements made in the child's attendance.

### **Red – Attendance 92.4% or below and/or PA 15% or above**

A child's attendance is persistently and significantly below average and is significantly disadvantaged as a result of poor attendance.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will 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).
- Issue a 'Notice to Improve'.
- 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.

Please note that the time of year may impact attendance percentages, a day in Autumn term has a greater impact on a child's attendance than in Summer term. Leaders must consider this when making decisions about what actions should be taken.

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) to improve attendance and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the child, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan, or team around the family. Where interventions to improve attendance are failing, all parties should work together to identify the reasons why attendance is not improving and consider further steps to improve attendance, in line with the DfE and Local Authority guidance.

#### **Penalty Notices:**

Local Authority School Fixed Penalty Notices were introduced in 2003 as an alternative to prosecution with the aim to improve school attendance. A fixed penalty notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge their liability for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If a penalty notice remains unpaid the local authority must either proceed to prosecute for the offence to which the penalty notice relates which may lead to a fine of up to £1000 or withdraw the penalty notice.

The school has a statutory duty to inform the Local Authority of the attendance of all children and to take targeted action to improve attendance under the government's 'Working together to improve attendance' guidance and the 'Local Authority Anti-Social Behaviour Notice Code of Conduct, and Suffolk County Council's threshold matrix below.

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

### **Penalty Notices for School Attendance from 19th August 2024**

With the introduction of the National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes came into force for School Penalty Notices issued in Suffolk after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

#### **National Threshold:**

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by **all schools** in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of **any type of unauthorised absence.**

**The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.**

**Please note:** 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.

#### **First Offence:**

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.  
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.



#### **Second Offence: (within 3 years\*)**

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.



#### **Third Offence and Any Further Offences: (within 3 years\*)**

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal Records and fines of up to £2,500.00.

**Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's *future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.***

#### **Per Parent / Per Child:**

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child that was absent.

#### **For example:**

3 siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

#### **What defines a 'Parent':**

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'a parent' as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

V2 dated: 26 June 2024

#### **Policy Review:**

The Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** or sooner, taking into account any legislative changes and the latest guidance issued by the DfE.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.