EQUA Mead
Learning Trust
Every Child, Every Chance

Policy name	**Attendance and Absence**
Policy Lead	**Deputy CEO**
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1. Statement of Intent

EQUA Mead Learning Trust believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance
- Working collaboratively with other schools, as well as external agencies.
- 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
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

All schools in the trust will have a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) responsible for attendance. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact this person for queries or concerns about attendance.

2. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) ‘Working together to improve school attendance’
- DfE (2024) ‘Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024’

- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust and school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

At EQUA Mead Learning Trust, attendance is the business of everyone in the trust community. All trustees, governors and staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review procedures and strategies to support this. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents / carers who have chosen to have their child educated at school have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance. **The DfE Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance 2024** clearly sets out responsibilities for all stakeholders in ensuring children receive the educations they are entitled to.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the trust's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring schools arrange attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- 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, dependant on the stage of the complaint.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Local Governing Body has responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across their school.
- Working with the headteacher or member of the senior leadership team (SLT) to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the trust's Complaints Procedures Policy, dependant on the stage of the complaint.

Headteachers are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the role of Senior Attendance Champion.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The Senior Attendance Champion, who may also be the headteacher, is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on, or delegating to pastoral staff, incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the Local Authority (LA) of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils 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.

Parents are responsible for:

- 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.
- The attendance of their children at school.

- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

Children and young people are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

4. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason
- An absence for the reason of illness tagged on to/after a leave of absence/holiday that has not been evidenced

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

Unauthorised 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

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Severe absence (SA):

- Missing 50% or more.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

5. Attendance expectations

EQUA Mead schools have high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and schools ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson.

The school days starts with morning registration and pupils are expected to be on the school site in time to be in their classrooms ready for the start of registration.

Morning and afternoon registers have a set closing time. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time. This will be a U code, which means that the full AM or PM session will be unauthorised and will require a note from parents.

See individual school websites for times of the school day.

Secondary schools only

- Schools will record absences for each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers in line with the section of this policy.
- Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break/lunchtime and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.
- Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

6. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or relevant attendance app where used, before the start of school on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last

Where a pupil is absent and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via the school's communication portal as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend school, and will continue to do so until contact is made. Telephone contact may be made if there are any concerns about absence.

In addition to this, if school is unable to confirm reason for absence for a child they may call all emergency contacts. If they cannot reach the parents, they may visit the home address to carry out a welfare check to ensure everyone is safe. If school is unable to reach someone at that home welfare call, they will assess whether or not they need to refer the family to social care or the police in order to be assured of the family's safety.

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.

Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is an extended period of illness or where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. This may also include where there are concerns about the amount of absence for a child.

Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards and CAMHS letters, not just doctors' notes.

In the case of Persistent Absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Senior Attendance Champion, or someone delegated by them. The school will inform the LA of the details of pupils who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation, or 10 schools days in 10 weeks.

Parents /carers need to inform the school if a child's absence is due to some traumatic event which the schools needs to deal with sensitively so that the schools can respond appropriately to the emotional needs of the child on their return to school.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **90%,** the Senior Attendance Champion lead will initiate the school procedures. This is likely to be in the form of a formal School Attendance Meeting (SAM) with the parent and pupil where appropriate. ***See Appendix 1 for SAM process and Appendix 2 for SAM template.***

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days when there is no communication with parents/carers, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Attendance registers

All EQUA Mead schools use Arbor Management Information System for attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared across trust central team, school staff, governors, trust board and appropriate authorities.

Designated staff, typically class teachers at primary level and form tutors and subject teachers at secondary level, will take the attendance register. Details of the register and codes are available in ***Appendix 3: Attendance Register and Codes***

8. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered, dependant on the type of leave request, on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school, unless certain exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

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

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils 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 pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil's attendance would fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Where a pupil's parent is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance.

Additional authorised absences

Inevitably, there will be occasions when absence is unavoidable or justifiable, such as illness, bereavement, emergency medical or dental appointments and visits to other schools (eg phase transfer, entrance exams). Where an absence in unavoidable or unplanned, then parents / carers are asked to follow the procedures for reporting absences as outlined above.

9. SEND and health-related absence

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

In line with EQUA Mead's SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

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

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

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

The school will consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils, a plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Early Support Assessment.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

10. 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 pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes at the point of the register being taken when the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil, 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 in line with the ***Penalty notices and legal intervention*** section of this policy where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Absent pupils

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

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds

- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes for a primary schools** and **30 minutes for a secondary school** (allowing more time to search larger premises), the school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted – either 999 or 111 depending on the circumstances.
- The missing pupil's form tutor will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

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

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

12. Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Senior Attendance Champion, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of specific, 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:
    - Sending letters/emails to parents.
    - Having a weekly tutor/class teacher review.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Creating attendance clinics.

All schools will use attendance data, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

All schools will aim to improve attendance in the overall school cohort by acknowledging good attendance. This may include a rewards system and schools will develop strategies for ensuring

that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

EQUA Mead schools will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance lead will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance lead will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance lead will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Please see Appendix 4: Parenting Contract – School Attendance

14. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA (10% or more absence), such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

EQUA Mead schools will focus particularly on pupils in this group and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing. Absence of 50% or greater is classed as 'severe'.

Where a pupil 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 pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

15. Penalty notices and legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the Senior Attendance Champion will consider:

- Referring to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- An attendance contract has to be considered/offered by school prior to referral to EWS.
- EWS may determine at a Local Authority Attendance Meeting that an Education Supervision Order (ESO) will formalise the plan required to bring about a return to regular school attendance.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice should be used to improve attendance. This includes an unauthorised holiday of 10 sessions or more.

A notice to improve attendance may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice. Other legal intervention would be considered by the EWS if the case meets threshold.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be help every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance lead will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance lead will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Trust board and local governing bodies (LGBs) will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends. The LGB will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

Schools will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

17. Training of staff

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

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

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance

- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Schools will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance lead and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

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

18. Deletions of names from admission register

Schools will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. Full details of each school's absence levels can be found on school websites. Attendance is also regularly monitored at whole trust level.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as appropriate with any changes to legislation.

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

Appendix 1: School Attendance Meetings

School Attendance Meetings (SAMs)

1. School Attendance Meetings are held for any pupils whose attendance becomes a concern and for all pupils whose attendance is approaching, 90%. This will monitor absences and put a plan in place to offer support. Parents will be made aware that if there are 10 or more unauthorised absences, they may be at risk of a Penalty Notice Fine and/or prosecution under Section 444(1)(A) Education Act 1996. The first SAM will be held by the headteacher for primary and Pastoral Leader for secondary
2. Attendance must always be discussed for any pupil where attendance is a concern. If attendance is going to be discussed as part of a broader review eg EHCP meeting in order to develop a plan to meet all needs there will also be a SAM invite that clearly states the reason for the meeting and the possible outcomes.

3. Parents are requested to confirm attendance at the SAM meeting with the school. If a parent is not able to attend the meeting time set by the school, they are requested to liaise with the school to arrange a suitable time. It is important parents attend SAM meetings to share their views and work together to improve attendance. If a parent will not engage with the process, then a SAM may have to be held without the parent present.

4. Parents are invited to attend the meeting in order to discuss any issues and to resolve any problems which may be preventing the young person from attending school. At times, a SAM may be held to identify needs of a child with medical issues so that school can set up a Medical Education Plan (MEP).

5. Following the meeting, it is normal practice to expect improved/sustained attendance, unless a phased return has been negotiated. A SAM review meeting will determine next steps.

6. If the pupil does not meet the target set, a penalty notice warning period of 15 days will be set in which the pupil is expected to meet the attendance target.

7. If a pupil's absence continues without good reason within this period, a decision may be taken at a further Review Meeting to request a fixed penalty notice (Section 9.1) or it may proceed to referral to the EWS which may result in legal action.

8. The school would not normally provide work to pupils who are kept at home by parental choice as this infers that the school condone the absence. In exceptional circumstances, work will be provided to a pupil who is experiencing difficult circumstances. This is at the discretion of the Behaviour & Attendance Manager or Primary Headteacher.

Appendix 2: SAM template

SCHOOL HEADER *(to be inserted)*

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEETING

Student's name	
Date of birth	
Tutor group	
Date of meeting	
Present:	**Pupil:**
	Parent:
	Staff member:
Circulation:	

The meeting has been called because the pupil's absence has fallen below an acceptable level or unauthorised absences are accumulating and the school does not receive any explanation. It may be that explanations are received that are not specific or the reason is given often.

CURRENT ATTENDANCE RATE:	**%**
Unauthorised absence	**%**
Authorised absence	**%**
Number of full weeks attended since beginning of term	

Does the parent / guardian hold parental responsibility?

Does anyone else hold parental responsibility?
How does the pupil travel to school?
What does the parent do to support the student's attendance?
Is there a specific reason for the student not attending?
Has anything changed significantly at home that may be having an effect on the student?
Is there anything at school that is hindering regular attendance? (Peer group/work/staff member)
Parenting contract considered? If not, why not?
Additional Information / comments

	Pupil Actions	
1		
2		
	School Actions	
1	**Request medical evidence for absence**	
2		
	Parent Actions	
1	**Provide the school with medical evidence in the case of absence due to illness**	
2		
Targets:		
Date and Time of Review meeting:		

If a sustained improvement in attendance is not seen, your case may be referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service to be considered for legal intervention. This could be a Penalty Notice, prosecution, Education supervision order or parenting order.

Appendix 3: Attendance Register and Codes

Attendance Register and Codes

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 pupils 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:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available

- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils 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.

Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the school will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

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.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years as per school attendance (pupil registration)(England)(Regulations) 2024

Appendix 4: Template for Attendance Contract

EQUA Mead Learning Trust
Every Child, Every Chance

Attendance Contract

Name of child/young person:	
Date of birth:	

Parent/Carer details	
Name of parent(s)/Carer(s):	Relationship to young person
1.	
2.	

School details		
Name of school:		
Headteacher		
Designated Senior Leader (attendance):		
Member of staff responsible for ~~parenting~~ attendance contract:	Name:	Role:

Local Authority Details (if relevant)	
LA Representative:	

Current Attendance %		**Possible no of session:**	
Authorised Absence no. sessions		**Unauthorised Absence no. sessions**	

We are going to work together in making sure that ***name of child*** improves their attendance at school over the next ***insert time - no more than 12 weeks***.

The specific targets to improve attendance:	Target date for improvement:	
1. Jo needs to be at home at an agreed time each night.		
2. Jo needs to get up each morning by 7.20am		
3		
4		

School Agreement

We agree to support the parent(s)/Carer(s) and pupil in achieving these changes by being committed to the following school actions:
The school will ring home whenever ***Pupil*** is late so that parents know and can take immediate action.
Staff will meet ***Pupil*** every Friday at 2.45pm to talk about school work and offer support if needed.
Staff will access a parenting course for ***Parents*** and will monitor attendance.
Pupil will be placed on an attendance report for 4 weeks.

Parental Agreement

To achieve these changes, the parent(s)/Carer(s) agree to fulfil the following actions:
Parents will be available for the school to contact if ***Pupil*** is late and will take appropriate action.
Parents will agree a time with ***Pupil*** for when he is expected to come home at night and will enforce it.
Parents will attend a parenting group as arranged by ***Staff***

Pupil Agreement

NB: Actions for pupils are dependent on age and understanding

To achieve these changes, ***Pupil*** agrees to fulfil the following actions with the support of the school and his/her parent (s):

This parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the school, the local authority (if relevant) and the parent(s) and pupil as named above.

Consent by parent(s)

I/we have agreed to this parenting contract and will

(a) work with the school (and Local Authority) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and
(b) carry out what we have promised to do.

I/we also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

I/we understand that if my child has any unauthorised absences from school in the next (three months), a Penalty Notice may follow without further warning or the local authority may take further enforcement action. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

Signatures

	Name (Printed)	Signature	Date
Parent/Carer:			
Parent/Carer:			
Headteacher (or delegated member of staff)			
Responsible member of staff			
Pupil			

Review Meeting (4 weeks)

Date:		Time:	