

Attendance Policy			
CURRENT POLICY REDRAFT/AMENDMENTS	YES	<i>If Yes please provide brief details of changes below and highlight changes.</i>	
NEW POLICY	No	AUTHOR	Lara Hall
LAST REVIEWED	July 2026	NEXT REVIEW	31st August 2027
REVIEW CYCLE	Annually	TO BE RATIFIED BY TRUSTEES	Yes
		TO BE RATIFIED BY THE LGB	No, LGB to note.
DATE APPROVED BY TRUSTEES	July 2026		
LiFE MAT school adopting this policy:	Desford Community Primary School		

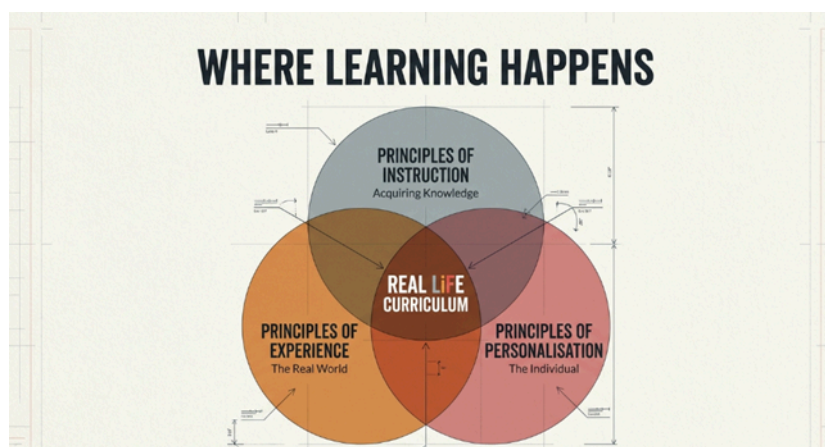
Section	Previous wording / approach	July 2026 amendment	Reason for change
Front Page	Policy based on DfE guidance (2024)	Updated reference to Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026)	Reflect latest statutory guidance.
1. Aims	Reference to 2024 guidance	Updated statutory guidance reference	Administrative update only.
2. Legislation and Guidance	Reference to 2024 guidance	Updated to July 2026 guidance	Administrative update only.
4. Recording Attendance	Registers recorded daily	Clarified that registers will be taken consistently at the published registration times for all pupils	Reflects July 2026 clarification on day-to-day practice.
5. Authorised Leave of Absence	Requests considered individually	Added explicit statement that the Trust will not operate blanket policies when considering exceptional leave requests	Reflects DfE clarification regarding leave of absence decisions.
6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance	Attendance monitoring and analysis	Added benchmarking against Trust, local authority and national data	Reflects strengthened expectations regarding attendance analysis.
6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance	Vulnerable groups referenced	Added explicit reference to monitoring attendance of young carers alongside other vulnerable groups	Reflects July 2026 guidance.
7. Supporting Pupils	Flexible learning/online learning referenced	Clarified that remote education will only be used as a temporary measure and as part of a reintegration plan	Reflects updated DfE guidance.
8. Attendance Monitoring	Attendance analysis	Added reference to benchmarking and evaluation of attendance strategies	Strengthens continuous improvement.
Throughout	General terminology	Minor wording amendments to reflect July 2026 statutory guidance	No change to Trust expectations or practice.

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LIFE MAT APPROACH

At LiFE MAT, our policies are anchored in our vision where every learner is empowered to thrive and develop agency through a steadfast commitment to equity. Our approach is operationalised through our Real LiFE Curriculum, which integrates the Principles of Instruction, Experience, and Personalisation to cultivate the diverse strengths and passions of each learner.



1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from July 2026), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from July 2026) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The board of trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all trust, schools, school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure all schools in the trust records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authorities when required
 - Making sure all schools in the trust work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keep them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust policies and ethos
- Making sure the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the trust has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most, through attendance support and challenge meetings with each individual school
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including with teachers from across the trust, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The trust's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The trust's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Holding headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy
- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers, and share effective practice between schools

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary and/or authorising the Attendance Officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The Trust School Improvement team

Trust Attendance Network Lead: Lara Hall (Director of School Improvement):

lhall@lifemultiacademytrust.org.uk

The Trust School Improvement team are responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust
- Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries
- Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes

3.4 The senior attendance champion

The senior attendance champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Ensure attendance remains central to school improvement by evaluating the impact of attendance strategies and adapting provision where required.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Nicholas Bates and can be contacted via

office@desford.org.uk

3.5 The school attendance officer

The school attendance officer at each school is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with the attendance team/education welfare officers at the local authority to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Helen Hampson and can be contacted via the school office on office@desford.org.uk

3.6 Class teachers (primary) form tutors (secondary)

All class teachers (primary) and form tutors (secondary) are responsible for recording attendance as set out by the school on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1).

3.7 School administrative and office staff

School administrative and office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to relevant staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Any other relevant administrative tasks as required to support attendance and absence processes as set out in individuals' job descriptions.

3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Communicate their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return by telephoning the school office or Arbor messaging.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school or local authority

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the adult within the school identified as the person who will provide on-going pastoral support for their child, for example the class teacher, form tutor or other pastoral lead.

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.
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4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:30am and ends at 3:10pm .

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and will be kept open until 8:50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm

Registers will be taken consistently at the published registration times for all pupils each school day, unless there are exceptional operational circumstances.

4.2 Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by communicating with the school, who can be contacted via telephone or email.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Requests for leave of absence should be communicated to the school office in advance either in person or by calling.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Our Attendance Officer and Attendance Champion work together to monitor attendance. Where attendance is a concern, they will contact you to discuss how they can support. Repeated lateness and punctuality is recorded.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the home address of the child and if they are still unable to make contact they will contact the police and or social care.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Contact the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the attendance team at the local authority.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.8 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview

- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

The school will not operate blanket policies that automatically approve or refuse requests for leave of absence. Each application will be considered individually, taking account of the specific circumstances presented.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with any leave of absence request process. Please contact the school office for a leave of absence form which you will need to complete and return to school. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

If a pupil is over compulsory school age (e.g. sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority

- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our trust will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice 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 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, parents may receive a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
 - The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
 - Details of the support provided so far
 - Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
 - A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
 - A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
 - The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period
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6. Strategies for promoting attendance

LIFE Multi-Academy Trust promotes the collaboration of senior attendance champions and attendance officers across all of our schools. A platform for supporting this collaboration is in place through scheduled network meetings throughout the year, providing school-to-school to support where needed and further support from the LIFE Multi-Academy Trust School Improvement Team where required.

Strategies for promoting attendance include, but are not limited to:

- Data analysis and monitoring
- Leadership and governance
- Promote a positive school culture
- Engagement with parents and carers
- Early intervention and support
- Flexible learning options
- Regular communication
- Training and professional development
- Review and adapt
- Sharing best practice
- The use of 'attendance contracts' between parents/carers and the school
- Benchmarking attendance against local, trust and national data where available

- Monitoring the attendance of key vulnerable groups including pupils with SEND, children with a social worker and young carers
-

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

See below for examples of support schools will use.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Assessment and Identification:

- Early Identification: Use attendance data and patterns to identify students with irregular attendance early.
- Holistic Assessment: Conduct thorough assessments to understand the root causes of absenteeism, considering factors such as health issues, family circumstances, socio-economic challenges, mental health concerns, and bullying.

Building Relationships and Trust

Engaging with Pupils:

- Personalised Support: Assign a dedicated mentor or counsellor to build a trusting relationship with the pupil.
- Student Voice: Encourage students to express their feelings and challenges through regular check-ins, surveys, or informal conversations.

Working with Families:

- Open Communication: Establish regular, open, and empathetic communication with families. Ensure that parents/carers feel heard and supported.
- Cultural Sensitivity: Understand and respect cultural differences and how they might impact attendance. Use culturally appropriate communication methods and materials.

Collaborative Planning

Individualised Attendance Plans:

- Personalised Interventions: Develop individualised attendance plans that address specific barriers for each pupil.
- Multi-Agency Collaboration: Work with social services, healthcare providers, and other relevant agencies to provide comprehensive support.

Family Involvement:

- **Family Meetings:** Conduct regular meetings with families to discuss progress, challenges, and adjust plans as necessary.
- **Parent Workshops:** Offer workshops for parents on topics such as the importance of attendance, parenting strategies, and available support services.

Removing In-School Barriers

Creating a Supportive Environment:

- **Positive School Climate:** Foster a welcoming and inclusive school environment where all students feel safe and valued.
- **Flexible Learning Options:** Provide flexible learning arrangements, such as a reduced timetable which is in line with the clear processes around the use of these, or online learning options, for students who cannot attend full-time.

Targeted Interventions:

- **Academic Support:** Offer additional academic support to help students catch up on missed work and reduce the anxiety of falling behind.
- **Help students develop coping skills, resilience, and a sense of belonging.**

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular Review:

- **Attendance Tracking:** Use a robust system to monitor attendance regularly and identify any emerging patterns or issues.
- **Progress Reports:** Provide regular progress reports to students and families, highlighting improvements and areas needing attention.

Adjusting Strategies:

- **Feedback Mechanism:** Create a feedback mechanism to continuously improve attendance strategies based on input from students, families, and staff.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Use data to inform decisions and adjust interventions to better meet the needs of students and families.

Celebrating Successes

Recognising Improvement:

- **Positive Reinforcement:** Celebrate attendance improvements through positive reinforcement, such as awards, certificates, and public recognition.
- **Incentive Programs:** Implement incentive programs that reward consistent attendance and effort, tailored to motivate individual students.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

See below for examples of support schools will use.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Initial Assessment and Planning

Assessment of Needs:

- **Thorough Evaluation:** Conduct comprehensive assessments to understand the specific needs and challenges of each pupil. This includes medical assessments, educational psychology evaluations, and consultations with relevant healthcare professionals.
- **Develop or update the 'one-page profile'** or an equivalent personalised support plan that outlines specific goals, required adjustments, and support strategies.

Collaboration with Families:

- **Family Meetings:** Hold initial meetings with the pupil's family to gather information, discuss concerns, and set mutual goals.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Establish a regular communication schedule to keep families informed and involved in their child's progress and any changes in the support plan.

Adjustments and Accommodations

In-School Adjustments:

- **Flexible Learning Options:** Provide flexible learning arrangements, such as a reduced timetable which is in line with the clear processes around the use of these, or online learning options, for students who cannot attend full-time.
- **Adapted Curriculum:** Modify the curriculum to match the pupil's pace and learning style, ensuring it remains challenging yet achievable.

Classroom Support:

- **Teaching Assistants:** Provide additional support through teaching assistants or specialist staff trained in supporting pupils with similar needs.
- **Assistive Technology:** Implement assistive technologies like speech-to-text software, communication devices, or other specialized equipment to aid learning and communication.

Specialised Support Services

Health and Wellbeing Support:

- **School Nurse and Health Professionals:** Ensure regular access to healthcare professionals to monitor the pupil's health and respond to any immediate needs.
- **Mental Health Support:** Offer mental health support through school counsellors, external therapists, or mental health programs tailored to the pupil's needs.

Social and Emotional Support

Peer Support Programs:

- **Buddy System:** Implement a buddy system where a peer supports the pupil, helping them stay connected to school life and fostering friendships.
- **Social Skills Groups:** Facilitate social skills groups to help pupils develop and practice social interactions in a supportive environment.

Emotional Resilience Programs:

- Integrate Social-Emotional Learning programs that teach coping skills, resilience, and emotional regulation.
- Counselling Services: Provide individual or group counselling to address emotional and psychological challenges, helping pupils navigate their feelings and develop coping strategies.

Monitoring and Review

Regular Progress Monitoring:

- Frequent Check-Ins: Schedule regular check-ins with the pupil, their family, and relevant staff to monitor progress, address any emerging issues, and adjust the support plan as needed.
- Data Collection: Collect and analyse data on attendance, academic performance, and social-emotional wellbeing to inform ongoing support and adjustments.

Feedback and Adjustment:

- Responsive Adjustments: Be flexible and responsive to feedback from the pupil, family, and staff, making adjustments to the support plan to better meet the pupil's evolving needs.
- Celebrating Achievements: Recognise and celebrate the pupil's achievements and progress, no matter how small, to boost their confidence and motivation.

Professional Development and Training

Staff Training:

- Ongoing Professional Development: Provide ongoing training for staff on supporting pupils with mental or physical ill health and SEND. This includes training on specific conditions, inclusive teaching strategies, and emotional wellbeing support.
- Expert Workshops: Arrange workshops and seminars with experts in special education, mental health, and physical health to keep staff updated on best practices and new research.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Remote education will only be used where appropriate as a temporary measure and as part of a planned reintegration into full-time education.

See below for examples of support schools will use.

Pre-Return Planning

Assessment and Preparation:

- Initial Meeting: Schedule a meeting with the pupil, their family, and relevant staff members to discuss the pupil's return and gather information about their current situation, concerns, and needs.
- Individualised Reintegration Plan: Develop a personalised reintegration plan that outlines specific goals, necessary adjustments, support strategies, and a phased return schedule if needed.

Health and Wellbeing Considerations:

- Medical and Psychological Input: Consult with healthcare professionals (e.g., doctors, therapists) to understand any medical or psychological considerations that need to be addressed.
- Risk Assessment: Conduct a risk assessment to ensure that the pupil's return to school is safe and that any potential health risks are mitigated.

Academic Support

Curriculum Adjustment:

- Adjust curriculum access to accommodate the pupil's current academic level and pace. This may include modified assignments, extended deadlines, or simplified content.

Gradual Reintegration:

- **Phased Return:** Consider a phased return where the pupil starts with shorter school days or specific classes and gradually increases their attendance as they become more comfortable.
- **Flexible Learning Options:** Provide flexible learning arrangements, such as a reduced timetable which is in line with the clear processes around the use of these, or online learning options, for students who cannot attend full-time.

Emotional and Social Support

Welcoming Environment:

- **Peer Support:** Assign a peer buddy or mentor to help the pupil navigate their return, re-establish friendships, and feel welcomed.
- **Safe Spaces:** Create safe spaces within the school where the pupil can go if they feel overwhelmed or need a break.

Counselling and Mentorship:

- Arrange regular sessions to provide emotional support and address any anxiety or stress related to returning to school.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Pair the pupil with a teacher or staff member who can act as a mentor, offering guidance, support, and a consistent point of contact.

Family Engagement

Ongoing Communication:

- **Regular Updates:** Maintain regular communication with the pupil's family to provide updates on progress, address concerns, and adjust the reintegration plan as needed.
- **Family Support Services:** Offer resources and referrals to family support services, such as counselling or community programs, to help the family support the pupil's return.

Collaborative Problem-Solving:

- **Family Meetings:** Schedule periodic family meetings to discuss the pupil's progress, celebrate successes, and collaboratively address any challenges that arise.
- **Parent Workshops:** Conduct workshops for parents on how to support their child's transition back to school and manage any associated stress or anxiety.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular Check-Ins:

- **Frequent Monitoring:** Schedule regular check-ins with the pupil to monitor their academic, emotional, and social progress. These can be informal conversations or structured meetings.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Create a feedback mechanism for the pupil, family, and teachers to share observations and concerns, ensuring that any issues are promptly addressed.

Progress Tracking:

- **Data Collection:** Collect and analyse data on attendance, academic performance, and social interactions to inform ongoing support and adjustments to the reintegration plan.
- **Adjustments and Flexibility:** Be flexible and responsive to the pupil's needs, making adjustments to the reintegration plan based on their progress and feedback from all stakeholders.

Celebrating Success

Positive Reinforcement:

- **Acknowledging Efforts:** Recognise and celebrate the pupil's efforts and achievements, both big and small, to boost their confidence and motivation.
- **Reward Systems:** Implement a reward system, such as certificates, praise in assemblies, or small incentives, to encourage continued progress and attendance.

Community Involvement:

- **School Events:** Involve the pupil in school events and activities to help them feel part of the school community and rebuild their social connections.
- **Peer Recognition:** Encourage peers to recognize and celebrate the pupil's return and efforts, fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment.

7.4 Attendance Contracts

An attendance contract will be issued when there are ongoing serious concerns over a student's attendance. Parents and the student will be invited into school for a meeting with a member of school staff to discuss what measures can be done to improve attendance. Circumstances where an attendance contract may be issued include:

- A student has an unauthorised holiday during term-time
- A student reaches a level of concern and the school feels this would be an appropriate intervention.
- A student has historically poor attendance.

At the initial contract meeting, a supportive discussion will take place with specific targets and interventions set. The contract will then be reviewed once every 4-5 weeks to update any targets or intervention and evaluate any impact on attendance. The contract may be reviewed sooner if there is a limited initial improvement in the child's attendance.

If there is no significant improvement, then the school will escalate further.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The trust and school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The trust will benchmark its attendance data at a whole trust year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The trust and schools will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Identify attendance patterns across the trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

Schools will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the trust board, LGB and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Regularly benchmark attendance against trust, local authority and national attendance data to identify strengths, trends and priorities for improvement.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the trust's strategy for improving attendance.

The trust and schools will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by a Director of School improvement for LiFE Multi-Academy Trust. At every review, the policy will be approved by the board of trustees.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays