



Attendance Policy and Procedures
St Matthew's Primary School

Policy Name	Attendance Policy and Procedures
Frequency of review	2 years
Reviewed On	December 2024
Next Review	December 2026

St Matthew's Primary School Attendance Policy

As a school, we realise that for a child to reach their full educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. An ethos of high levels of attendance and punctuality is recognised and valued across our whole school community. We aim to work with parents/carers to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the absence is unavoidable. We expect that all children will achieve 100% attendance but recognise that there may be exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, or absences relating to persistent health issues. **Our policy applies to all children, including Nursery and Reception-aged children, to promote good attendance habits from an early age.** The following guidance has been taken into consideration when developing this policy: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2024.](#)

Aims and Objectives

Our policy aims to:

- emphasise the importance to all pupils and families that maximum attendance at school is vital for achieving their full potential.
- support children and their parents/carers to have the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- make explicit to all (pupils, parents/carers, teachers) the school's expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help pupils maximise their attendance;
- stress the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance
- promote a consistent approach across the school towards attendance.
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties linked to attendance at school and in the Local Authority.

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

The school has a safeguarding duty of care to all its pupils. We take the role of ensuring a child's good attendance as part of our safeguarding duties.

Expectations:

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Make sure their child comes to school, as they have a legal duty to ensure that children attend school regularly.
- Make sure that their child arrives at school prepared for the school day, punctually and in time for registration.
- Inform the school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents may on occasion be asked to provide supporting information from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested. **Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.**
- Contact school **before 9am** if their child cannot attend school and inform the school why they can not attend.

- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time by filling out in **advance** the **Absence Request Form** (Appendix 8) which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Inform the school if their phone number, email address or home address changes. Ensure that we have **more than one** person's details in case we need to ring someone for their child in an emergency.
- Inform the school as soon as possible if your child is reluctant to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Engage with early interventions/ strategies designed to support your child's attendance at school.
- Talk to us about any problems with attendance. This could be face to face or on the phone or email.
- Discuss attendance where necessary face to face or on the telephone – conversations are preferable to messages or emails.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (the term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

We expect the school will:

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of when your child is in school and if they are on time.
- Monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, information from a GP or other relevant body may be requested to assist school in offering appropriate support.
- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality.
- Meet with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council (AIO) termly to help monitor attendance and offer support.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Provide bespoke support to children at risk of persistent absence.
- Work with other services to help a child's attendance. E.g. other schools, Cambridgeshire County Council, Social Care, Early Help, and the local community.
- Share attendance data with parents/carers and make it clear what good attendance and success looks like for their child.
- Communicate clearly and consistently with parents/carers and children regarding attendance.
- Have consistent rules about coming to school every day and on time.
- Follow the Local Authority Medical Needs Policy for children who are failing to access education in school due to medical and behavioural needs. This goes hand in hand with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- Consider an Individual Healthcare Plan for children with medical needs.
- Work alongside the Access and Inclusion team to identify and support children with medical needs preventing them from attending school.
- All staff - are expected to be excellent role models by having good attendance and punctuality records.

St Matthew's aims to establish a partnership with parents to promote good attendance. Any concerns around attendance are shared with parents and may also be discussed at parent consultation appointments and/or an attendance meeting if necessary. Parents should not keep their children away from school whilst a problem is being resolved. Families in particularly challenging circumstances may receive support from the Local Authority Attendance Officer, an Early Intervention Family Worker or through completion of an Early Help Assessment.

The Attendance Champion for our school is **Kate Spencer-Allen**. She is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. She can be contacted via the school office at: office@stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk or telephone 01223 568838.

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Headteacher having overall responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and/or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

We expect children will:

- Come to school every day.
- Arrive to school on time every day.
- Have what they need for a day in school.
- Talk to a trusted adult about any problems they have that make them want to stay at home.

We expect Governors will:

- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

We expect the Local Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) will:

- Provide support, information and guidance to school by having regular meetings to discuss attendance.
- Act as a partner with school to support cases of persistent absence (< 90%)
- Work with schools to decide what legal sanctions (penalty notice or prosecution) in cases that require legal involvement.
- Identify what support a child needs to be able to access education if they have medical needs.

Procedures:

Registers

All registers will be coded in line with [Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2024](#) document, according to the time of arrival.

- Codes for absence are inserted by a member of the office during the daily check of registers.
- Staff should make a note of any relevant information provided by a parent on the attendance sheet in the MIS system.
- Any child leaving the school for a medical appointment, illness or other reason after the register has closed will need to be signed out at the school office so we have an accurate record of pupils on site for fire and evacuation purposes. The Attendance officer will mark this change on the paper register for fire evacuation purposes only and use the relevant attendance code e.g. M, I, C.

Nursery

- The gate is open at **8:45 am** for the morning session and **12:15pm** for the afternoon session.
- The gate will be locked at **8:50am** for the morning sessions and **12:25pm** for the afternoon session.
- Once the main gate has been closed, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at **8:45am** and will be completed by **9 am** for the morning session.
- Registers are open at **12:15pm** and close **12:30pm** for afternoon session.
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.
- If a child is recorded late, the time that the child has arrived the time will be accurately recorded in the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after **9:15am** or **12:45pm**, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

Reception, Year One and Year Two:

- The main school gate will open at **8:40am**.
- Classroom doors are opened at **8:45am**.
- Children are expected to be in school for an **8:45am** start.
- The main gate and all external classroom doors are locked at **8:50 am**.
- Once the main gate has been closed, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at **8:45am** and will be completed by **9 am**. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.
- If a child is recorded late, the time that the child has arrived the time will be accurately recorded in the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at **9:15am**, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

Years Three, Four, Five and Six

- The main gate will open at **8:40am**.
- Children will walk to their classroom independently.
- Children are expected to be in school for an **8:45am** start.
- The main school gate is locked at **8:50 am**.
- Once the main gate has been closed, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at **8:45am** and will be completed by **9 am**. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.
- If a child is recorded late, the time that the child has arrived the time will be accurately recorded in the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at **9:15am**, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

It is a legal requirement that a register of attendance is taken during the morning and afternoon at school. Any unexplained absence must be coded as unauthorised until a reason is given by parents/carers. This must be no later than 5 days after the session. Only the Headteacher or Attendance Champion may authorise or unauthorise an absence. The register can only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register will show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason

for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. Registers are kept for six years as a record.

Lateness

When children arrive late at school, they disrupt routines, affect other children's learning, miss the teacher's instructions to the lesson and may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They may also miss important intervention programmes and the opportunity to practice key learning skills.

If a child is not present when the register is taken in the classroom, they will be marked as absent with an 'N'. This will then be followed up by the office staff (in line with the Safeguarding Policy) by phone call or email to the parent to obtain a reason for absence.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parents/carers will receive contact from the school advising them of the concern and offering support to resolve the issue. Should the lateness continue, the class teacher will contact the parents/carers to discuss this further and suggest ideas for improving the punctuality. If the punctuality does not improve, a late letter will be sent and the parents/carers invited into school for a meeting will be asked to discuss the concern with the Attendance Champion.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for pupils who are of statutory school age.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first day their child is not in school by **9am**. Parents/carers must contact the school again every day that their child is not present.

For any pupil not in school when the register closes at **9:15 am**, and school does not know the reason, a member of staff will try and get hold of the parent/carer. The member of staff will ring all the contacts on their child's record, starting with the first one, until they find out why the child is not in school. They will leave a message on voicemail if there has not been an answer and follow up with an email if needed. The office will make a note of any conversations. Staff will mark the registers using one of the codes (see Appendix 1) at the end of this policy.

If a parent/carer does not tell us why a child is absent, the child will be marked as unauthorised. If we do not know where a child is, school staff may complete a visit to the child's house to see if the child is safe.

Illness

If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea, they can return after they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for 48 hours.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezes and runny noses **can** come to school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and they are well enough to return to school. This is a good website that the NHS and Government has made which tells you if your child is well enough to go to school or not: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-stay-at-home/)

Children should come to school unless they are too unwell to do basic things. School will ring you if they need to go home.

Longer term absence due to physical and mental health conditions

Where a child is absent for 15 school days (consecutive or non-consecutive) due to physical or mental health conditions and the reasons for absence have been explored by the school St Matthew's Primary School will follow the Cambridgeshire Medical Needs Policy 2023.

This includes the following actions:

- A meeting is held to discuss and write the IHEP (Individual Health and Education Plan). This includes contributions from key school staff, the child (where appropriate), parents and relevant professionals
- Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles are followed using the IHEP to include school professionals, parents, health and medical professionals if possible.
- Where medical advice states a child is too ill to attend school the IHEP and supporting documents are sent to the Access and Inclusion Team and a child may receive medical tuition or alternative provision from the Local Authority.

Medical Needs and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

When children are prevented from accessing school due to physical or mental ill health, school will try to identify the barriers these pupils face, and use our tiered approach to supporting medical needs. This starts with the universal offer of support for all children and leads to higher tiers of need where increasingly specialist support is required. We will consider reasonable adjustments for transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements. We will liaise with appropriate services to ascertain support, in the rare instances that a pupil is unable to access any education inside the school setting. We will work with the Local Authority Access and Inclusion Team to identify available options for education. Where a pupil's health needs mean they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, we may seek medical information to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision. This may take a variety of forms, which we will discuss with parents/carers on an individual basis.

Where children have an EHCP, we will liaise with the child's SEN Caseworker to work towards the best attendance outcomes for the child.

We are able to make adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments must be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with, the pupil and their parents/carers.

General Non-Attendance

This is different to being absent due to illness or other authorised reasons, or for unauthorised term-time leave.

General non-attendance is when a pupil is absent from school, without it being exceptional circumstances and without it being authorised by school. If your child does not attend school regularly, the school will work with you to find out why it is happening, and how school can help. If your child continues to be absent without authorisation from the school, then we may send your details to the Local Authority to consider a penalty notice or a prosecution. A pupil would need to be absent for 10 sessions (a morning or afternoon mark in the register is one session) over a period of 10 or more school weeks. Before school refer to the Local Authority for non-attendance, we will work with you and offer support. We may offer you an Attendance Contract Meeting where we discuss the barriers to attendance and try to break them

down. If you do not join in with the support from school, we may choose to set targets for your child's attendance instead. We do this together with the Local Authority. This is called a Notice to Improve and is a last try at improving attendance before fines or a prosecution is asked for.

Definitions of Leave of Absence

Absences from school may be authorised or unauthorised, depending on the circumstance.

Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect leave to be granted during term time. At St Matthew's Primary School, we strongly discourage such leave as learning and progress is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child.

The Headteacher and/ or Attendance Champion, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is authorised or unauthorised. **Coding is always at the Headteacher's discretion.**

Authorised leave

Authorised absences are where a pupil has been absent from school and a satisfactory and legal reason that has been communicated to the school (via school office).

For example:

- A child may also be representing the school or be on an educational visit.
- Genuine Illness or unavoidable medical appointment. (If they are well enough, children should be at school for the rest of the day if they go to an appointment.)
- Religious Observance – official religious days which are decided by the religion. E.g. Eid.
- The absence has been authorised as 'an exceptional circumstance' by the Headteacher or Attendance Champion because it is short, exceptional and unavoidable (bereavement/marriage of immediate family member or traveller children going 'on the road')

The school expects authorised absences to be kept to a minimum and therefore, routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during the school holidays wherever possible. **Where absence through illness has led to an attendance of below 90%, parents and carers will be expected to provide evidence of illness and/or appointments.**

Unauthorised leave:

Unauthorised absences are when no acceptable explanation for an absence is provided by parents or carers, or the reason provided is not deemed as acceptable by the school.

Examples of these may be:

- lateness after the end of registration
- attending a birthday celebration
- minding a house, caring for a sibling,
- lack of childcare,
- going shopping, having a day out,
- visiting relatives or going on holiday during term-time when flights are cheaper.
- a parent/carers has not given a reason for the child not being in school.
- a parent/carers has not completed an Absence Request Form.
- Being off school for something that the Headteacher does not think is exceptional.

Term-Time Leave

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are one-off events which are unavoidable and examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral or a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

Term-time leave will not usually be authorised. Parents must apply as far in advance as possible (preferably at least 3 weeks) for requests for leave of absence from school using the school's **Absence Request form** (Appendix 3) and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request to the school office. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

The '**Absence Request**' form is available from the school office or in the 'Useful Forms' section of the school website: http://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website/useful_forms/570007

If the school suspect term-time leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed an 'Absence Request' form, we will write to the parents/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not** meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and **will not** be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

Following up on absence

- Any member of staff who has an ongoing concern about attendance or patterns of absence of a pupil should raise their concerns with the Attendance Champion or Officer so appropriate enquiries can be made.
- If no explanation for an absence has been received, an email is sent to remind parents and carers of the need to inform the school and to request an explanation.
- The school works closely with the Local Authority Attendance Officer who supports St Matthew's with school attendance. The LAAO advises the school on the most appropriate action to take to improve attendance
- Attendance under 90% is deemed to be Persistent Absence (PA) and parents / carers will need to provide medical evidence for their child's illness (medical appointment cards and prescriptions are acceptable)

Penalty Notices

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 sessions in a row or more (normally 5 days or more) they will receive a penalty notice.

The fine for a penalty notice is **£80 per child, per parent/carer**. If you haven’t paid after 21 days, it goes up to **£160**. If you haven’t paid after 28 days, you may be prosecuted in court. This could mean a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison for up to 3 months per parent.

If you take **another** term time leave of 10 sessions (5 days) or more with the same child, in a three-year rolling period, the fine is **£160 per parent**, per child and you have 28 days to pay it. If you do it a third time, in a three-year rolling period for the same child, your details will be sent to the Local Authority for a prosecution (Section 444 Education Act 1996).

Three-Year Period		
First Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.	Second Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.	Third Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.
£80 for each child per parent. <div>E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be £80 x 3 = £240 per parent. The total would be £480. If you pay after 21 days it rises to £960.</div>	£160 for each child per parent. <div>E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be £160 x 3 = £480 per parent. The total would be £960.</div>	Prosecution.
If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.	If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.	

Please note that the Local Authority cannot override the decision made by the Headteacher to unauthorise the absence. If you have any reasons to believe the Penalty Notice should not have been issued, please contact the school within 10 working days. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice

School would prefer to work with parents and carers to improve poor attendance and to avoid the need for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, and the school does not know where the pupil is, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us. During this 20-day period, school will continue to try and contact you, and will liaise with any other services that your child is open to. The Local Authority will conduct investigations into the location and educational provision of the child.

School Attendance Strategy - What School does for Attendance

Kate Spencer-Allen is our Senior Attendance Champion, but for day-to-day attendance issues, please contact the school office on 01223 568838 or email office@stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk

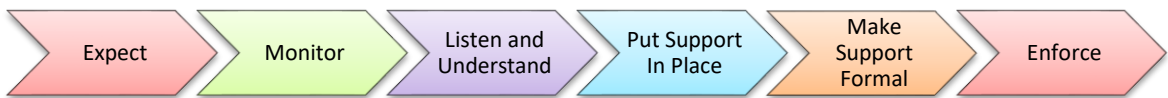
We are responsible for all children’s attendance at school, and we partner with other agencies to help us do this. For children who might need extra support to maintain their attendance e.g. Young Carers, we signpost families to appropriate places to reduce the impact that their needs and personal circumstances have on their attendance at school. Safeguarding and attendance are closely linked, and we work together with Social Care to identify where children need extra support. We will work with families in many different ways to overcome barriers to attendance. All staff have direct access to our trained Designated Safeguarding Leads, and this is important for this work.

School is responsible for monitoring whole school attendance data and using this to inform how we support pupils. We share this data within the school staff to ensure continuity of support. We are required to report our attendance to the Department for Education (DfE) so that we can compare our performance with that of other schools, both locally and nationally. Attendance data is analysed regularly, and children whose attendance is falling or deemed to be a concern will be noted. This will be communicated with parents and carers. Support will then be put in place. Children whose attendance falls to 90% or under are deemed to be **‘persistently absent’** (absent a lot of the time) and can be referred to the Local Authority for enforcement action. Pupils whose attendance is 50% or under are **‘severely persistently absent’** and parents/carers will be expected to engage in substantial support.

We have a whole-school ethos of promoting and celebrating attendance. This means that we train every staff member in attendance procedures so that everyone understands the processes for attendance and the pastoral structures in school. We train, remind and support all staff to follow this policy, and constantly refer to it. Good attendance is celebrated with children and families and reported to parents/carers at Parents Evenings and in formal written end-of-year reports.

Our whole-school strategy for attendance involves deciding how to allocate resources (both financial and staffing) to manage attendance. Our support and early interventions for attendance are regularly monitored to ensure they are having an impact and are worth the resources allocated to them.

Supporting Attendance



As a school, we try to work together with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen to you, emphasise and support you. However, if this unsuccessful, we may think about using the legal options below:**

When we need to, we will put support in place to help improve a child’s attendance or lateness. If this doesn’t work, and your child doesn’t meet a target for attendance set by school, we will send your details to the Local Authority Attendance Team. This might mean you get a Penalty Notice/fine, or may be prosecuted by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This could be a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Lateness and attendance are monitored daily by the Office and overseen by the Attendance Champion who will:

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns of identified patterns of lateness with the appropriate Senior Leader.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Identify children whose attendance has fallen below an acceptable level and inform the Attendance Champion who will make contact with parents/carers.
- Offer support or signpost to other areas of support within the community.
- **Step One.** Telephone call or face to face contact advising parent/carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child's attendance/lateness, and offering support.
- **Step Two.** Send a letter to offer support (**Early Intervention Letter**) and further explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the child.
- **Step Three.** Send an invitation to attend a meeting to enter into an **Attendance Contract**. This is a supportive meeting, entered into voluntarily to discuss the needs of a pupil and family and identify ways that barriers to attendance can be removed.
- **Step Four.** Should the Attendance Contract fail to improve attendance, or should there be no engagement with interventions and support despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for children of statutory school age.
- **At Step 3 or 4,** school might consider using a **Notice To Improve letter**, a strategy used in partnership with the Local Authority to set targets for improved attendance. This is a final attempt to improve attendance when parents/carers are failing to engage with support being offered by school, before referring parents for legal sanctions.
- Following use of one of the two pathways above, if attendance does not improve, school will refer to the Local Authority for legal sanctions.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance/lateness.
- Monitor pupil attendance within specific and identified groups.
- Monitor and respond to pupil absences for those with additional medical needs.
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils who are 'Children Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to home educate their child.
- Follow statutory procedures when deleting a pupil from roll.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Reporting pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 consecutive 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school.
- Report pupils with unauthorised term-term leave absences (10 consecutive sessions of 'G' codes) to the Local Authority for issuing of a legal sanction to parents/carers.
- Report pupils with 15 consecutive days of 'I' (illness) codes to the Local Authority.

Appendices

- 1) Register Coding
- 2) Early Intervention Letter
- 3) Invite to Attendance Contract Meeting
- 4) Attendance Contract
- 5) Attendance Declined Review Meeting
- 6) Notice To Improve Letter
- 7) Attendance Contract Terminated - Referral to Local Authority
- 8) Absence Request Form

Register Codes

Attending School	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure



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Email: office@stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk

Web site: www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr T. Davies

«date_of_printing»

Dear Parents/Carers of «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»,

Re: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» **Date of Birth:** «date_of_birth»

We are writing to advise you that «chosen_forename»'s school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to «percentage_attendance»%. We are asked by the Local Authority to make you aware that your child's attendance has fallen to below 90% and will be recorded as Persistent Absence (PA). Please find attached a copy of «chosen_forename»'s attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement. Good attendance enables students to keep up with the work required. Unauthorised absence during term-time can result in you receiving a Penalty Notice fine of £80 per parent per child so please make every effort to ensure that «chosen_forename» attends well during term-time this academic year.

We will continue to monitor «chosen_forename»'s attendance over the next 6 week period of school, and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If possible, and again if it is medical, please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

If there are any difficult circumstances within your family causing your child's low attendance, and you require support please contact school. We know that a lot of families already have a supportive network of relatives, friends and community groups. However additional support is also available for families via an Early Help Assessment, where help can be provided from trained professionals who can provide support, signposting and access your community offer. If you would like to discuss this process in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Further support is also available in the community, more information can be found on H.A.Y website. Please scan the QR code below.



Yours sincerely,

Enc Attendance Record

 School Attendance Leaflet



St Matthew's Primary School

19 Norfolk Street, Cambridge CB1 2LD

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Web site: www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr T. Davies

Name and address of parent

«date_of_printing»

Dear Parents/Carers of «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»,

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

Thank you for working with us to help improve «forename»'s attendance. Their current attendance is xx%. However, this is still a concern and can potentially affect their life chances. We would like to work with you to offer support to help improve «forename»'s attendance. The next step in offering this support is an Attendance Contract.

An Attendance Contract:

- is a voluntary contract that you can end at any time.
- Can last as long as is helpful
- Can include regular catch-ups to offer support
- Can help to reduce barriers to attendance
- Can involve any other services open to you, who can be involved if you would like.

Our attendance policy includes more details about an Attendance Contract.

(if young person is NOT open to other professionals, please remove below):

We recognise that «forename»'s is being supported by other professionals. It's important that we all work together to make it as easy as possible for «forename»'s to access education. We believe that an Attendance Contract can help to achieve this.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me to discuss further. We would be grateful if you could attend a meeting with us:

Date: xxx

Time: xxx

Should this be inconvenient, please let us know and we can re-arrange. This meeting can take place in person, or online if you would prefer.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve «forename»'s attendance. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely,

Encs Record of Attendance, School Attendance Leaflet

Appendix 4 – Attendance Contract



St Matthews's Primary School - Attendance Contract

ATTENDANCE CONTRACT BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITY, SCHOOL, PARENT(S), and CHILD

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular school attendance. An attendance contract is not legally binding and can be ceased by either the school or the parent at any time. It allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

Date and Time of Meeting	
Venue	

Pupil Information				
Pupil		DOB		Ethnicity
Year Group		School		
Main Address:				

Sibling (s) Information (add more boxes if needed)				
Pupil		DOB		Ethnicity
Year Group		School		
Attendance %				

Parents Information					
Name		DOB		Gender	
Ethnicity		Language		Interpreter required?	Y/N
Address (if different to above)					
Name		DOB		Gender	
Ethnicity		Language		Interpreter required?	Y/N
Address (if different to above)					

School Representatives:	
Name	Role

Other People Present & Roles:	
Name	Role

Apologies received	
Name	Role

Purpose of Agreement
Summary of School Interventions to date:
•

SUMMARY OF OUTSIDE AGENCY SUPPORT TO DATE:		
OTHER PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED	CURRENT INVOLVEMENTS (name of professional and start date)	PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENTS (date / duration)
EHA (offer again if previously declined)		
SOCIAL CARE (CIN/CP)		
CAMH/YOUnited		
MEDICAL NEEDS		
SEND		
ATTENDANCE SERVICE		
OTHER		

Did you offer an EHA today?		Was support accepted or declined?	
-----------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	--

Summary of areas of concern:	
% Attendance (Previous year):	XX% Unauthorised Absence = ____%
% Attendance (Year to date):	XX% Unauthorised Absence = ____%

Issues Raised (please detail below)	YES	NO	Issues Raised (please detail below)	YES	NO
1. Alleged Bullying			6. Peer/Staff relationships		
2. Behaviour/Attitude			7. Academic/SEND		

3. Home related difficulties			8. Community/other		
4. Transport			9. Medical Needs		
5. Other (please detail)					

Issues Raised	Detail
Alleged Bullying	
Behaviour/Attitude	
Home related difficulties	
Transport	
Peer/Staff relationships	
Academic/SEND	
Community/other	
Medical Needs	
Other:	

Medical Needs:	
What is the illness, symptoms, presenting behaviours? Is it inside school, outside, both?	
Have you followed the tiered approach for Medical Needs?	Yes/No
If Yes, what have you done?	

Pupil Voice:	
How does the Young Person feel about school/tuition?	
What is going well?	
What do they not like about school? What are their perceived barriers?	
How do they find getting to school?	
What do they think would improve their school experience?	
Which staff members are they receptive to, or have a good relationship with?	

Agreed Actions:

School will determine with the family and open professionals the duration of the attendance contract (between 3 – 6 months or longer if beneficial).

I/We the parent[s] agree to address the following target areas (see last page) until the next review period for improvement in attendance and/or punctuality and to co-operate fully with these aims.

If I am concerned about my aspect of the delivery of the plan, I will contact school. My key contact is: _____ (contact name / email or telephone number).

Method of communication preferred by parent(s) e.g. Post/email/phone: _____

Parent(s) will be given a copy of these notes following the meeting. A copy of these notes will be sent to other agencies involved with this child as necessary.

For further support and information, please scan QR code.



Scan me

Additional support can be found from: Sendiass, Pinpoint, HAY.

Review			
Date of review		Number of school weeks from the date of this meeting:	
Place of review E.g. at a TAF meeting, Child In Need meeting, online, in person at school, etc.			

Reasons an Attendance Contract may Cease

- If an attendance contract is not proving successful or beneficial, it will be reviewed and may potentially cease.
- If a parent does not consistently engage with the Attendance Contract process, there is a risk that the Attendance Contract may cease. A warning will be provided before this occurs.
- Parent may request for the Attendance Contract to cease at any time.

Please note that prior to the Attendance Contract ceasing, a warning letter will be sent to the parent(s) confirming the end date and the reason for the Attendance Contract ceasing.

Whilst the aim of this contract is to provide support, if there is a lack of engagement, disguised compliance (parents are agreeing to the contract actions but failing to actually take action to improve the situation) or unauthorised absences continue, then the school may refer to the Local Authority for enforcement action to be considered.

The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Parent(s) Signatures:					
Name:		Signature		Date	
Name:		Signature		Date	
School Representative Signature:					
Name:		Signature		Date	

Actions agreed:

Please write in detail, as this forms part of your evidence of interventions and support for the pupil.

What does the young person/child need to support them? E.g. referrals to other agencies; amendments to timetable/school day/lunchtime arrangements/uniform etc.	Aims/objectives of identified action(s)	Success criteria – how will we know that the contract is making a difference?	Timeframe/start date	People Involved	Review Date:	Review of Action/Updates Please note, actions do not necessarily need to be COMPLETED. They can be continued or extended as this process evolves. Any new barriers to the action should be identified and steps taken to address these barriers.
Here is a possible example: XYZ needs an alternative route into school. Have a named staff member to be there to meet them at the main gate to the playground and walk with them to registration.	To make XYZ feel more comfortable coming into school. To enable a fresh, positive start to each school day. To make the time before school more manageable for parent.	XYZ will be comfortable coming into school and will be on time. Child will have a positive and calm start to the school day.	Monday. For the 4 weeks until next review.	Named staff member and child. Parent to reinforce.	(4 weeks after)	This was working well for XYZ, for the first two weeks. However, XYZ was pushed over by another pupil on the way into the playground, giving XYZ a negative experience of this strategy. We have now put in place for XYZ to be met at the main Reception door instead to decrease anxiety and allow XYZ to come straight from home to meet their trusted adult at the door. They walk to Registration together.

Appendix 5 – Notice to Improve



St Matthew's Primary School

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Web site: www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr T. Davies

Name and address of parent

«date_of_printing»

Dear Parents/Carers of «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»,

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

It is disappointing that despite our offers of support, <<forename>>'s attendance has failed to improve sufficiently. May we remind you that the Attendance Contract is only effective if everyone engages and works together to improve <<forename>>'s attendance.

As per our attendance policy, we would like to invite you to a meeting to review the Attendance Contract that was agreed on xxx, where any new barriers to attendance can be discussed and support offered. If engagement and attendance do not improve, you are at risk of the Attendance Contract terminating, which may result in a referral to the Local Authority, who could issue a Penalty Notice Fine, or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**. This may result in a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

INSERT REVISED FULL LEGAL WARNING

We would like to avoid this if possible and continue to work with you to support you and <<forename>>'s. We would be grateful if you could attend a meeting with us:

Date: xxx

Time: xxx

Should this be inconvenient, please let us know and we can re-arrange. This meeting can take place in person, or online if you would prefer.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve «forename»'s attendance. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Enc. Record of attendance
Attendance Leaflet

Appendix - Referral to Local Authority for enforcement actions



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Web site: www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr T. Davies

Name and address of parent

«date_of_printing»

Dear Parents/Carers of «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»,

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

It is disappointing that despite our offers of support, <<forename>>'s attendance has failed to improve sufficiently. In our Notice to improve letter dated xxx, we warned that the Attendance Contract would be terminated if attendance did not improve. This is detailed in our attendance policy and in the Attendance Contract that was agreed between us on xxx. As <<forename>>'s attendance has not improved, we are now terminating the Attendance Contract.

As per our attendance policy, we will now be referring this matter to the Local Authority for enforcement actions to be considered. The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice Fine, or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**. This may result in a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

Offers of support remain open to you and <<forename>>. If you have queries or want support, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Encs Record of Attendance
School Attendance Leaflet



Application for Leave of Absence for a School Pupil in Term-Time in Exceptional Circumstances

Dear Parent/Carer,

The attached form is used to apply for special leave of absence for a child during term time. When making an application it is important to have regard to the following.

It is important to remember that children attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Absence from school leaves children vulnerable to falling behind with their learning.

The Education Regulations 2006, as amended by Education Regulations 2013, no longer permit Headteachers to authorise leave for holidays.

- Headteachers shall not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- The Headteacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.
- The Headteacher will determine how long the absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.
- Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and /or prosecution.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (e.g. home education). For a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1)).

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential.

If you are applying for leave of absence for your child, please have regard to the above and follow the procedure below:

1. The application must be made **in advance** by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
2. Please be clear on the form why the application is exceptional. Applications for leave of absence should be:
 - rare,
 - unavoidable (the leave has to happen when it does, it cannot be arranged for the school holidays)
 - short (as little time as possible given the exceptional circumstance).
3. In considering the application, the school will consider the above alongside the child's overall attendance, the frequency of such requests and the impact on the child's attainment, progress and well-being.
4. Please complete a separate Leave of Absence form for each child

Please note that parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted for unauthorised absence including holidays.

We look forward to your co-operation. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Term Time Absence for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to the school office

Purpose of Absence – Please ensure you detail **specific reasons** for the absence and **what is exceptional** about the circumstance. You may attach a longer explanation if you wish. Please attach any evidence or supportive information that demonstrates why the absence is exceptional, especially why the absence **cannot** be taken during a school holiday period during the year.

NB: Types of evidence can include booking details, flight documents, booking cancellation details to show absence could not be avoided, invitations, appointments, letters etc.

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Pupil/s: _____ Class Teacher/s: _____

Dates of Proposed Absence: From _____ To: _____

.....

.....

.....

.....

Total Days Requested On This Occasion

Signature of Parent / Carer: _____ Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Date received by school _____ Request received in advance of travel (ideally 3 weeks) Y/N

Number of days requested _____ Last Year's Attendance Rate (if applicable) % : _____ Current Attendance % _____

Previous Leave taken: Y / N Dates: _____

Reason for decision:

.....

1st Date of Absence: _____ Expected date of return to school: _____

Discussed with Headteacher: Y/N Authorised: Y / N SIMS/MIS Code used: _____ Class Teacher informed: Y / N

Signed by: _____ Date: _____