

ATTENDANCE POLICY



HARTFORD
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
HIGH SCHOOL

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

Signed by

Headteacher: Rachel Pickerill

Chair of Governors: Mike Smith

Date: 30 June 2025

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Mission Statement:

Our mission at Hartford Church of England High School is to provide an outstanding, inclusive and ambitious education for all. Children develop and thrive both within and beyond the classroom. They are known, with their talents embraced and promoted. They develop into young people who will make a substantial contribution to the world. They enjoy an education rooted in a shared set of Christian values that radiate the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

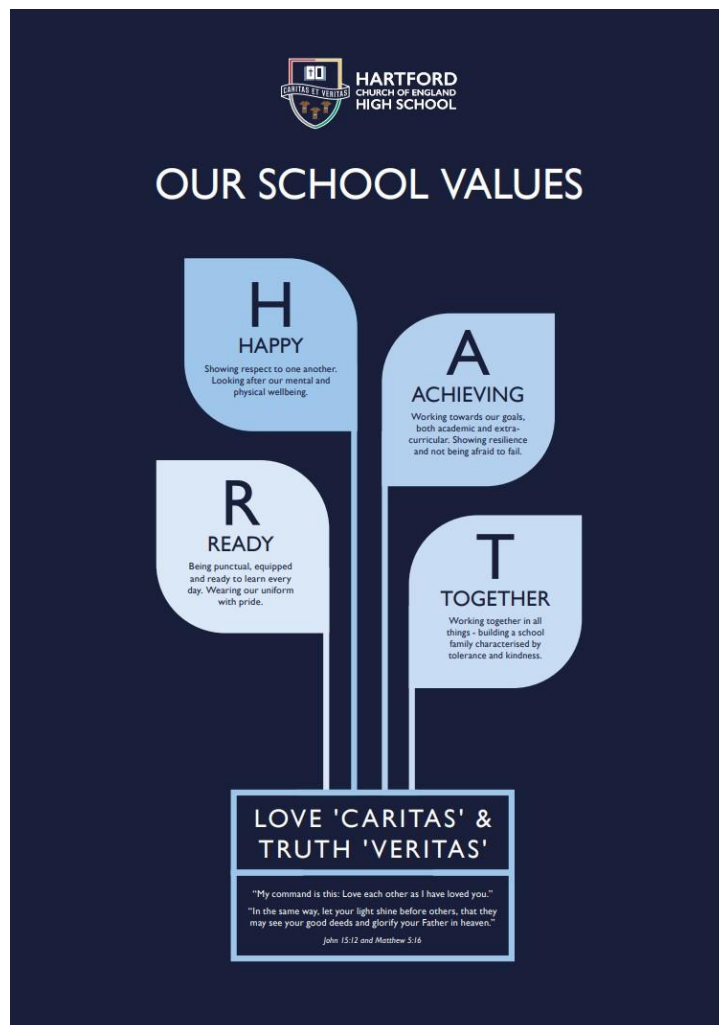
Everything we do at Hartford Church of England High School as students, staff, Governors and wider stakeholders, centres on the core values of our school:

Happy: Showing respect to one another. Looking after our mental and physical wellbeing.

Achieving: Working towards our goals, both academic and extra-curricular. Showing resilience and not being afraid to fail.

Ready: Being punctual, equipped and ready to learn every day. Wearing our uniform with pride.

Together: Working together in all things - building a school family characterised by tolerance and kindness.



"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

John 15:12 and Matthew 5:16

Equally, the educational offer at Hartford Church of England High School is based on the Church of England's four key principles for education:

- Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills
- Educating for hope and aspiration
- Educating for community and living well together
- Educating for dignity and respect

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential academically, socially, morally, spiritually and physically; this underpins our Christian distinctiveness and school mission.

The implementation of this policy ensures the vision of the school, and the Church of England is fulfilled through the work undertaken to maximise the attendance of our students.

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1. Introduction and Aim

Hartford Church of England High School recognises the importance of excellent attendance and the impact it has on children's progress, attainment, enjoyment of learning and relationships within school. Good attendance helps a child to realise their potential, ensure they are motivated, confident, and enjoy a diverse range of curricular opportunities and experiences. Everything that we do at Hartford Church of England High School aims to promote good attendance. The school monitors attendance and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. We recognise that whole school preventative and proactive approaches are key to promoting children's wellbeing and attendance. A child must attend school every day that they are required to do so unless an exceptional circumstance applies.

Our policy is accessible to all stakeholders and is published on our school website. It will be sent to parents with any initial information when students join the school and we will remind everyone of our procedures around attendance at the beginning of each school year and when the policy is updated. As the barriers to attendance evolve quickly, the policy should be reviewed and updated as necessary. In doing so, we will seek the views of all stakeholders. The Attendance Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

2. Legislation

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".
- Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence".
- Section 576 Education Act 1996 - Meaning of "parent"

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a 'parent' and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

3. Registers

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all students. They are legal documents and the register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school.

'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' (section 6)

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, morning (a.m.) and once during the second session, afternoon (p.m.).

On each occasion, they must record whether every student is:

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

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,

- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system as a priority and returned to the school office in a timely manner. This is used to download data to the School Census.
- Consider early identification, assessment, intervention and support processes that may need to be implemented.

The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department for Education (DfE) 'Working together to improve School Attendance Guidance' (for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities) [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/811111/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_guidance.pdf) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)) (See appendix 3.)

4. Procedure

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a student absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all its students. If a child is absent, their parents/carers should inform the school by 8am on the **first day of absence** and each following day of absence, stating the reason.

Parents/carers MUST phone the school or email:

Attendance Line (Absence Line): 01606 786000 (option 1)

E-mail for absence: attendance@hartfordhigh.co.uk

The school office will make contact with home when a child is absent, and the parent/carer has not notified the school of the absence. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted, the absence will be unauthorised.

5. What can parents/carers do to help their child?

Let the school know straight away, why your child is absent. Home-school communication is extremely important in supporting your child to achieve and feel settled in school.

Always try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

It is important that school and parents/carers work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a student's attendance and wellbeing. If despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

As a school, we recognise that building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for our students. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement. We are committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place with regards to promoting attendance and would encourage parents to make contact if they have concerns about their child.

We will provide parents/carers with information about Emotionally Based School Non-attendance to discuss needs and strategies to support their child, as appropriate.

Day-to-day, a number of colleagues are available to support students' attendance at school both within the Student Office and throughout the pastoral and inclusion teams, led by Senior Assistant Headteacher, Helen Turner and SENDCO, Tim Lee.

6. Absence Monitoring

School robustly monitor and analyse attendance data to promptly identify and address possible concerns and allow for early interventions to support the child/family's underlying needs. This will include –

- Weekly attendance code analysis
- Specific cohort and group monitoring – particularly for vulnerable groups
- Monitoring of lesson attendance across all subjects
- 'Welcome back' meeting for all students that have been absent for 5 days – to check wellbeing and ensure there are no ongoing needs that will impact on attendance.
- The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the students or students cohorts who need it most.
- The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.

7. Early Identification and Intervention: assess, plan, do and review

Every student has a right to a full-time education and Hartford Church of England High School sets high attendance expectations for all students. Hartford Church of England High School will consider the individual needs of students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance and will consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For any student who is absent from school it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place. All staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including Form Tutors, attendance, pastoral and SEND staff work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the student and to overcome barriers to attendance. In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review will be followed utilising a range of school-based resources, evidence-based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, when needed.

Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on the individual child's needs such as an SDQ, SEND assessments and wellbeing assessments or may include the holistic needs of the family, such as a TAF assessment. Assessments will include the views of the student as well as parents/carers, and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well).

Assessments undertaken may identify that a student is experiencing underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance. Cheshire West and Chester Council has developed guidance for schools - Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Good practice guidance for schools. This is a whole-school framework with a graduated approach to support the early identification of and intervention for students who may struggle to cope in school/attend school.

Information from assessments will inform a SMART action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services as appropriate. For example, Early Help, Prevention, and Social Care may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. SMART plans should be personalised to effectively meet a student's needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.

Regular reviews of support and attendance plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice and support from external services including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services.

8. Medical Absence

Absence due to illness should be reported to the school by phone (01606 786000) or email attendance@hartfordhigh.co.uk by 8am on the first day of absence and any subsequent days. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received. The school will ask about the child's symptoms in order to record their absence accurately.

In the majority of cases, a parent/carer's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern. School will not routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness given that it unnecessarily places additional pressure on health professionals.

Only where the school has a **genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity** of an illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence. In instances of **long-term or repeated absences for the same reason**, however, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods, it may also be required as a result of safeguarding concerns. If a parent proactively seeks out a note from a GP, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter.

If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, then we will offer support in accordance with the school's policies and statutory guidance relating to supporting students with medical needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-students-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>. As a school, we need to plan how children can access Education and how and when the child will return to school. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school must also demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are made to meet a child's educational needs.

For children who have a medical condition and cannot attend school, the school will refer to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Medical Needs Team. <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/education-and-learning/medical-needs-service/medical-needs-policy-latest.pdf>. Their policy states that referrals must come directly from the child's school and must be supported by medical evidence from one of the following health professionals:

- consultant paediatrician or adolescent psychiatrist
- consultant child psychiatrist
- hospital consultant

Supporting evidence from a General Practitioner alone cannot be accepted.

As of 19th August 2024, schools must make a sickness return to the Local Authority and provide the full name and address of all students who have been recorded with the code I (Illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help the school and Local Authority to agree any provisions needed to ensure continuity of education of students who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on Education for Children with health needs: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

9. Lateness and Punctuality

At Hartford Church of England High School, we will apply a robust day-to-day process to track and follow up on absence and poor punctuality. We will ensure registers are completed accurately and on time, twice per day, in accordance with the timings set out below. This will indicate which students are absent from or are late for school.

- Our gates open at 8.00am.
- We expect all students to be in school by 8.25am and attending form time or assembly by 8.30am where a register will be taken. All children in school by 8:30am will be marked as present.
- The school bell sounds at 8:30am, any student arriving through the school doors after this time will be met by a pastoral leader or member of the school's senior leadership team and will be marked with an **L**

code, late. Students who arrive late must also undertake a 30 minute detention on the day, in accordance with the school's Behaviour and Attitudes policy.*

- Registers close at 9.00am.
- If your child arrives at school after the registers have closed 9.00am, they will be marked as late and will receive the **U code**. This is an unauthorised absence for that session. Students who arrive after 9am must also undertake a 60 minute detention on the day, in accordance with the school's Behaviour and Attitudes policy.*
- Afternoon registers will be taken at 12.20pm, unless the lunch break moves forward, in which case the register will be taken at 1pm.

* It should be noted that if a student attends school late on a day for which they already have a detention after school, they spend the day in the Alternative to Suspension Room, in accordance with the Behaviour and Attitudes policy.

In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if a student arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parent/carers could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

Parents/carers may approach the school at any time for support and advice if they are having difficulty getting their child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

10. Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice

An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:

- i. no reason for absence has been given
- ii. medical evidence is not received when requested
- iii. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
- iv. a student arrives at school after registration has closed at 9.00am.

Parents/carers should be aware that Hartford Church of England High School may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week rolling period with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action.

The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that students will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same student within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3-year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions. (see *appendix 1 for CW&C Code of Conduct*).

11. Promoting and Incentivising Attendance (Rewards and Incentives)

At Hartford Church of England High School, rewards, incentives and competitions play an important part when working to improve attendance. The most effective schools consistently promote the benefits of good attendance. Rewards and incentives are devised with the student's and Parents/carers' views at the heart. This means that our incentives and rewards are purposeful and meaningful. At Hartford Church of England High School, the Family System plays an important part in this to ensure that we improve attendance in the most

effective way. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture to recognise and reward good attendance.

At Hartford Church of England High School, we understand that some students find it harder than others to attend school. Therefore, it is important that attendance is recognised, celebrated and held in high regard, no matter how small the improvements might be. Improved attendance or improved punctuality should be recognised and praised, not just 'perfect' attendance. Every child has the right to feel they can achieve and be successful, so any reward/incentive system must be inclusive of those with children with additional needs. It is important that students see the attendance incentives and competitions as a team effort and not as anything to isolate or place blame upon individuals. At Hartford Church of England High School, students are taught about the positive link between attendance and high achievement through our family system, assemblies and dedicated PSHCE sessions.

Attendance information should be readily available for both children and parents. At Hartford Church of England High School, we will share attendance information in many ways including in the form of display boards, through assemblies and through information being sent home to parents/carers. Barriers affecting attendance in our school will be explored, taking both the views of all stakeholders into account, so that every staff member is clear about how they can help to improve attendance and/or punctuality. This will be reflected in our rewards and incentives and the time dedicated to removing barriers where students do not regularly attend school. Late Gates and '100% Badges', regular rewards programmes (particularly sat the end of term) are examples of how we might actively promote good attendance. At Hartford Church of England High School, we will recognise and celebrate attendance on a weekly basis allowing all families the opportunity to achieve and feel successful – encompassing the school's philosophy of unconditional positive regard!

Parents/carers should be aware however, that sanctions might be used alongside our rewards and incentives.

We are proud to be a Trauma Informed school, and as such, where students have been absent, they will be welcomed back to school by their form tutor, Head of Year and Family, subject teachers and attendance staff and reasons for their lateness or absence will be explored sensitively with barriers established and the necessary support put in place. At Hartford Church of England High School, we recognise that some students will require their own individual reward systems.

12. Application for Exceptional Circumstances

As of 19th August 2024, the law ceases to include authorising absence for a student's leave of absence for a family holiday. A leave of absence should not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Headteachers are only empowered to approve a leave of absence when it is requested in advance by the parent or carer with whom the child resides and when circumstances of the requested leave are 'exceptional'.

The Headteacher will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must email head@hartfordhigh.co.uk. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carers.

The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carers' working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member

A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but they are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under-achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

I 3. Religious Observance

We recognise that some students may need to participate in days of religious observance.

Where a day of religious observance

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs

Parents/carers must notify Hartford Church of England High School in writing in advance, where absence is required due to a religious observance.

I 4. Enforced School Closure

If Hartford Church of England High School was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

I 5. Monitoring of Attendance and Intervention

All students will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school. Due to robust monitoring of attendance, all students, including vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have fair and equitable access to school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. Students will leave Hartford Church of England High School ready for a successful transition to further education or employment.

The table below sets out the attendance targets and at what stage parents/carers will be contacted about their child's attendance.

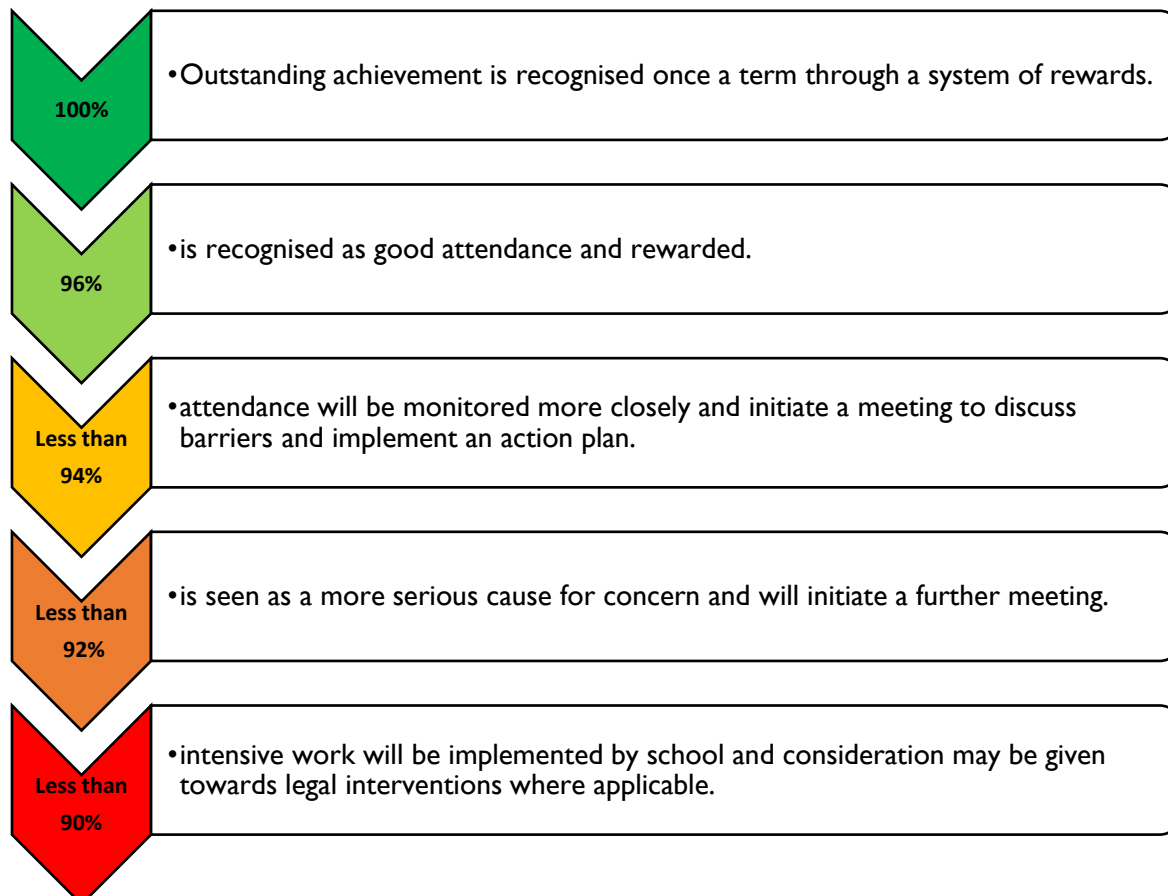
It should be noted that the Governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

Appendix I

Cheshire West & Chester

Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence & Irregular Attendance)

1. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
2. The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.
3. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
4. A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3-year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
5. A FPN may be issued per parent per child.



6. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if:

- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 consecutive school sessions (five school days).
- Sessions either side of a weekend or school holiday will be counted as consecutive school days.
- For poorly attending learners, at least 10 sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in line with the new national rolling threshold of 10 sessions in 10 weeks. These do not need to be consecutive.
- For poorly attending learners, persistent late arrival at school where there are at least 10 sessions in 10 weeks.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place in the child's first five days of exclusion (*N.B. points 2 to 4 do not apply where a FPN is issued for an excluded pupil in a public place.*)

7. The school must notify parents of the Attendance Policy and clearly state that parents may receive an FPN for an unauthorised leave of absence relating to holiday in term time.

8. Schools and the Education Welfare Services will take into account any exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue a FPN.

Appendix 2

What does 'percentage attendance' mean?

Parents/carers should be advised that from September 2015 the Government have categorised those students who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absence' students (P.A.). RSA will be specifically targeting this cohort of students, in an effort to improve their attendance in the future. The table below shows the learning time lost against percentage attendance figures.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons

Appendix 3

Absence Codes

According to the DfE guidance, the following codes are used on the register. New Attendance Codes from 19th August 2024.

Attending a place other than the school.

These codes are classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Code V	Attending an educational visit or trip

Code P	Participating in a sporting activity
Code W	Attending work experience
Code B	Attending any other approved educational activity
Code D	Dual registered at another school (this code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance)

Absent leave of absence - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code CI	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
Code M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
Code JI	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
Code S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
Code X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Code C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Absent - other authorised reasons - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Code R	Religious observance
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
Code E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause. - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Code Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Code Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Code Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Code Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Code Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Code Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Code Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent - unauthorised absence - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code G	Leave of absence not granted by the school
Code N	Reason for absence not yet established
Code O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed

These stages should be followed once a pupil has reached 10 sessions of unauthorised absence and the school is considering the Education Welfare Service's involvement, as current strategies are not improving attendance.