

Rainow Primary School

Caring, Learning, Achieving

Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy

Members of Staff Responsible:

Headteacher

Date approved by:

Autumn Term 2024

Date to be reviewed:

Autumn Term 2025 (or in line with statutory guidance)

	CONTENTS	Page
1	Rationale	1-2
2	Aims	2
2.1	School Attendance Thresholds	3
3	Legislation and Guidance	3
4	School Procedures	4-8
4.1	Attendance Register	4
4.2	Unplanned Absence	4
4.3	Collecting Pupils During the School Day	4-5
4.4	Medical or Dental Appointments	5
4.5	Lateness and Punctuality	5
4.6	Reporting to Parents	5
4.7	Known / Long-Term Medical Conditions and SEND	5-6
4.8	Reducing Persistent / Severe Absence	6-7
4.9	Dual Registration	7
4.10	Monitoring and Analysing School Attendance Data	7-8
4.11	Using Data to Improve School Attendance	8
5	Authorised and Unauthorised Absence	8-10
5.1	Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence	8-9
5.2	Legal Sanctions	9-10
5.3	Notice to Improve	10
6	Children Missing Education	10
7	Strategies for Promoting Attendance	10
8	Roles and Responsibilities	10-13
8.1	The Governing Board	10-11
8.2	Headteacher / Attendance Champion	11-12
8.3	Class Teachers and Support Staff	12
8.4	Administration Staff / Attendance Officer	12
8.5	Parents / Carers	12
8.6	Pupils	12
9	Staff Training	13
10	Links to Other Policies	13
	APPENDICES 1 – 10 (various sample letters and further procedural information)	14-28

1. Rationale

“Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.” (DfE: Working together to improve school attendance, Aug 24)

We know that there is a direct correlation between good attendance and high achievement. It is important that pupils develop a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that they do not miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities of reliability are important in adult life.

Poor attendance, especially when condoned by parents, disrupts a child’s education. This causes a lack of continuity and progression in schoolwork and can establish patterns of behaviour which may lead to long-term issues.

The data and research tell us that:

- Five minutes late each day equates to three days lost each year
- 17 days missed from school each year can equate to a whole GCSE grade
- Attendance affects future outcomes
- Attendance affects wellbeing and a sense of belonging

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility in school.”(DfE: Working together to improve attendance, Aug 24)

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

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

Good attendance is seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

1. Aims

We aim to:

- encourage good attendance and punctuality for every child.
- build strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality.
- promote and model high attendance and its benefits.
- regularly monitor and analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.
- monitor and discourage late arrivals.
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- act early to address patterns of absence.
- work collaboratively with other schools, as well as other agencies to improve attendance and punctuality.
- ensure equality and fairness for all.
- maintain our attendance registers in accordance with DfE guidance.
- monitor and discourage holiday absences.
- report unauthorised absences to parents via the annual report form
- ensure our Attendance Policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.

2.1 School Attendance Thresholds

% Attendance	Attendance Rating
98% attendance or above	Excellent
95% - 97.9%	Good
92% - 94.9%	Satisfactory
90% - 91.9%	Concerns
Below 90%	Serious Concerns (persistent absenteeism)

It is worth noting that 5% attendance equates to approximately 10 school days.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been written with due regard to the statutory guidance, [Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE, August 24\)](#).

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 [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [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:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. School Procedures

Our procedures are based on the model outlined in the DfE guidance, '[Working Together to improve attendance](#)' (Aug 24). This is summarised as:

EXPECT → MONITOR → LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND → FACILITATE SUPPORT →
FORMALISE SUPPORT → ENFORCE

4.1 Attendance Register (see also Appendix 1 for further details)

All schools, except those where all the pupils are boarders, must keep an attendance register in accordance with the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#).

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Pupils must arrive at school between 8.45 and 9.00am on school days.

- The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.20pm.
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of an unplanned absence and explain the reason for the absence as soon as is practically possible, ideally before 9.00am. Parents are asked to contact the school office and leave a message via phone, email or speak directly to a member of staff.

The school will follow up all absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The school will contact all parents / carers who have not provided a reason for absence by 10.00 a.m. at the latest.

If there is still no contact made by 10.00 a.m. the matter will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team so that further efforts to make direct contact with parents can be made, including the possible involvement of the Local Authority or other outside agencies.

Absence due to physical or mental illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the attendance is very low, or a concern, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. School will also seek advice from the Local Authority's ['School Attendance and Children Out of School'](#) where there are ongoing issues and no sign of improvement.

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

4.3 Collecting Pupils during the School Day

If a pupil needs to be collected during the school day by a parent / carer, they need to be signed out of school at the school office, recording the time of collection and the reason for absence.

4.4 Medical or Dental Appointments

We encourage parents to book medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and return to school as soon as possible after the appointment.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

Advance notice is required for authorising medical or dental absences. Parents are asked to contact the school via telephone or email.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in Section 5.

4.5 Lateness and Punctuality

The school doors open at 8.45am and close at 9.00am, after which time pupils are required to enter school via the main reception.

- If a child arrives after the registration period, but before 9.10am, they will be marked as Late (L)
- If a child arrives after 9.10am this will be recorded as U for 'arrival after registration'.

Any child arriving late to school should enter via the main reception and will require an adult to sign them in. This process complies with our safeguarding policy where staff will record the attendance before the pupil goes to the classroom.

We will actively discourage lateness and encourage being punctual. Any concerns regarding the punctuality of pupils will be communicated to parents as necessary, so that we can discuss a way forward to help their punctuality to improve. That way, the child does not miss out on important learning at school. If a child is late on two or more occasions during a week, a letter will be sent, and/or a phone call will be made to parents to ensure they are aware of the situation and the amount of learning time lost. A file is kept in the office for late arrivals.

We monitor identified groups of children, for example, 'persistent absentees', children/families who are persistently late and will take appropriate remedial action when and where necessary. (See 4.10 for further detail about how we monitor and analyse school attendance data)

'U' codes entered on the register equate to one missed session of the 10 that may result in a notice to improve attendance or a Fixed Penalty Fine.

4.6 Reporting to Parents

The school reports attendance for the academic year to parents as part of the end-of-year reports in July. This will be reported as a percentage for the academic year to date, and include information about authorised and unauthorised absence.

4.7 Known / Long-term Medical Conditions and SEND

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

If a child has, or develops, a condition which is likely to impact upon their attendance at school their parents or carer should contact school. We will arrange a meeting with the relevant staff and parents / carer, and

other agencies where appropriate, to ensure that child is supported to manage their condition at school. Parents will be required to provide appropriate medical evidence. This approach will ensure that everyone is working together to ensure absences are minimised.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, we will also ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance. These adjustments will be in line with any Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) or Individual Health Plans (IHP). Where necessary, the school will seek to secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and our Senior Mental Health Lead teacher who will decide on an appropriate course of action.

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

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

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider (this list is not exhaustive):

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

In cases of long-term absence there will be ongoing weekly communication between school and parents. A summary of this communication will be formally recorded on the child's file on CPOMS (our online recording system).

4.8 Reducing Persistent Absence / 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 school's strategy for improving attendance.

In order to reduce persistent and severe absence, the school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Contact parents when a child's attendance begins to fall below 92% and / or there are noticeable patterns of absence in an effort to understand, support and improve attendance.

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and our Safeguarding Policy.
- 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.
- 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.
- Send letters along with Register Certificates to notify parents of concerns around attendance.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

If a child's attendance / punctuality continues to cause a concern, the school may request the involvement of the Local Authority's ['Attendance and Children Out of School Service'](#) (School Attendance Support Team).

The core functions of this service, as explained in the DfE document, [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#), are:

- [Communication and Advice](#) (pg. 33)
- [Target Support Meetings](#) (pg. 34)
- [Multi-disciplinary support for families](#) (pg. 36)
- [Legal Intervention](#) (pg. 37)
- [Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School Head](#) (pg. 38)

4.9 Dual Registration

Where a child is dual registered with another educational establishment for a defined period of time, the child's attendance at that school will be monitored and an agreed plan of communication with parents and the other educational establishments will be agreed.

4.10 Monitoring and Analysing School Attendance Data

The Attendance Officer and Attendance Champion (Head) will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. They will work with staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures to improve attendance.

We will collect, monitor and analyse data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence. We will conduct a thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends. The following data will be analysed:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, Looked After Children and pupils eligible for FSM.

This will include identifying and considering, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

We have granted the DfE access to our Management Information System so our attendance data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data is collected and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases, and the government's 'View Your Education Data' (VYED) portal.

Using national statistic releases, and the VYED portal, we will benchmark our attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement. We will endeavour to share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Governing Board will review attendance data at least termly, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

4.11 Using Data to Improve Attendance

Using information gleaned from data monitoring and attendance, we will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence 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.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Governing Board and school leaders (including SENDCo, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Pupil Premium lead).
- 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.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1

Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

The school encourages all parents / carers to limit any absence during term-time to an absolute minimum. Any absence will disrupt a child's routine, affect their learning and have a negative impact on progress at school.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Illness and medical / dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad.
- Attending an interview.

- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- 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
- Exceptional Circumstances.

If a parent requests leave of absence during term time, they are expected to put the request in writing to the headteacher, **at least four weeks in advance**, if possible. They must use the school's 'Absence Request Form'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence may be granted at the discretion of the headteacher.

If a request for term-time absence is refused, the headteacher will write to the parent / carer to explain the decision. The letter will include information that a school Absence Penalty Notice fine may be imposed if the absence occurs.

Exceptional Circumstances

"Exceptional circumstances" do not include having access to cheaper holidays or cheap travel arrangements.

"Exceptional circumstances" might include a short period of time for family bereavements, funerals and celebrations such as family weddings. It is unlikely that absences longer than five days will be authorised.

5.2 Legal Sanctions (Fixed Penalty Notice)

School can request the Local Authority to issue a fine to parents for an unauthorised absence by their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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.

5.3 Notice to Improve

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

A 20-day Notice 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.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

6. Children Missing Education

We follow the guidance set out in the DfE document, [Children Missing in Education](#). (See also, [Links to Other Policies](#))

7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

The school aims to promote, celebrate and reward good attendance by:

- Working in partnership with parents and carers, and communicating with them regularly to encourage high attendance and punctuality.
- Raising awareness with parents and carers via school newsletters and other communication.
- Providing Breakfast Club at school, if appropriate, and other strategies to promote good attendance.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Ensuring the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school 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 as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance.
 - That persistence / severe absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers.
 - The school'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 interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The Headteacher / Attendance Champion

The Headteacher / Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school, starting with the consistent implementation of this policy.
- Monitoring school-level attendance and absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Having a strong grasp of attendance and absence data, and an oversight of absence data analysis.
- 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 Deputy headteacher in their absence to be able to do so.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Working with all stakeholders, including the Local Authority's ['Attendance and Children Out of School'](#) team, to encourage, understand, support and improve school attendance.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating and delivering intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.

- 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 Plan (EHCP) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

8.3 Class Teachers and Support Staff

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office, both for morning and afternoon sessions.

Class Teachers and Support Staff are responsible for:

- Passing on any information shared by children and/or families regarding any situation which may affect attendance.

8.4 Administration Staff / Attendance Officer

Administration staff / Attendance Officer are expected to:

- Take calls and messages from parents about absence, implement the 'First Day Contact' system (see section 4.2) record attendance on the school system and inform the relevant staff.
- Monitor attendance and report concerns about attendance to relevant staff. Follow the actions required regarding recording the absence, contacting parents and keeping key staff updated.
- Provide the data on attendance to report to governors each term, including national benchmarking data.
- Working with Cheshire East's '[Attendance and Children out of School](#)' service to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to consider issuing Fixed-Penalty Notices (FPN) and collating the information to submit a valid FPN.
- Provide data on attendance for teachers' annual reports to parents.

The school's Attendance Officer is Rachel Gabbott and she can be contacted via email at admin@rainowpri.cheshire.sch.uk and by phone on 01625 572021

8.5 Parents / Carers

Parents / carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time.
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence, ideally before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- 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.
- Take holidays out of term time.
- Agree and adhere to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and / or local authority.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the headteacher head@rainowpri.cheshire.sch.uk or attendance officer admin@rainowpri.cheshire.sch.uk or on 01625 572021

8.6 Pupils

If healthy enough, pupils are expected to:

- Attend school on time, every day.

9. Staff Training

We will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their professional development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance.
- That persistent absence is usually as a result of wider circumstances.
- That increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and how such concerns should be managed.
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g., the keeping of registers.
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

Enhanced attendance training will be provided to the Attendance Officer, the Attendance Champion (Head) and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role. This will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

10. Links to Other School Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(DfE\)](#)
- [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions](#)
- [School Behaviour and Discipline Policy](#)
- [School Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- [SEN Policy](#)
- [Children Missing in Education.\(DfE\)](#)

APPENDICES 1 - 9

We have adopted the following attendance processes as laid out by Cheshire East LA in their Attendance Toolkit. This is to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard.

Appendix 1 - Attendance Register and Codes

Attendance Register

The school uses the [Arbor MIS](#) to keep attendance registers to ensure that they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members (usually class teachers) will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

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

Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE statutory guidance, ['Working Together to Improve School Attendance'](#).

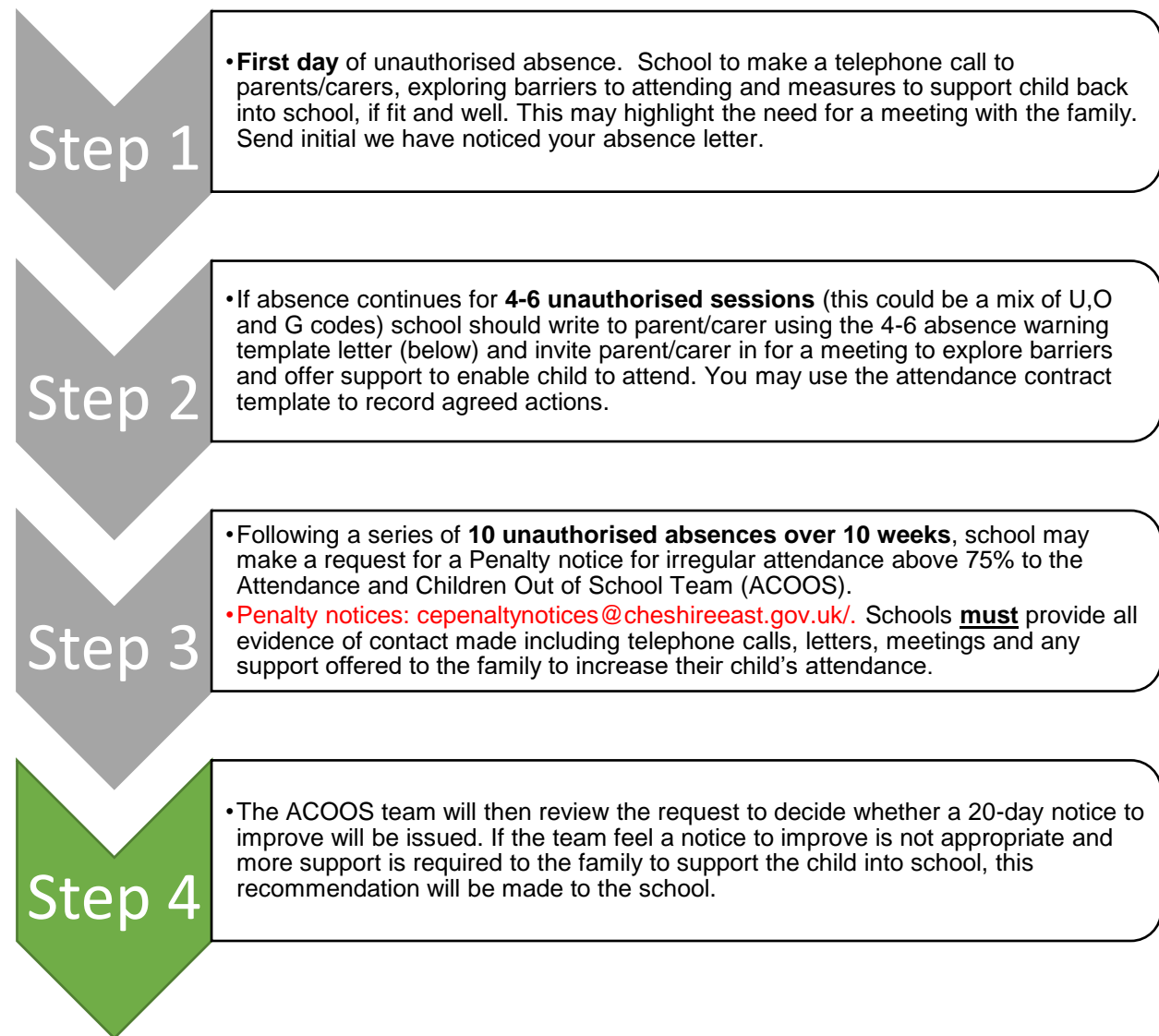
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Appendix 2 – Flow Chart for pathway for unauthorised attendance above 75%





• If panel agree that a 20-day notice to improve is appropriate, parents/carers are issued a letter to advise them of the 20-day notice to improve, the date it commences and expectations during this period. School will also be notified via email.



• During this time of notice to improve period, schools must continue to offer child and family support.
• At the end of the notice to improve period school send a copy of the register certificate to Penalty notices: cepenaltynotices@cheshireeast.gov.uk If there are further unauthorised absences in the 20-day notice to improve, then the team will look at the case and agree whether a penalty notice will be issued.



• First time Penalty notice will be charged at £160 per parent per child. If paid within 28-days of the issue it is reduced to £80 per parent per child. Second offence is charged at £160 per parent per child if within 3 years of first notice. If the fine is not paid a request is sent to the ACOOS Team Manager, Head of Service and Legal team for authorisation for prosecution.

Appendix 3 – School Absence Request Form

You do not have the right to take children on holiday in term time. It is a criminal offence for a parent to 'fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school'. Children are expected to attend school unless they are ill. The school is closed to children for a total of thirteen weeks each year and holidays should be taken during these times. Headteachers can only give permission to take a child out of school when there are **exceptional circumstances**.

If you would like your child to be absent from school during term time, you will need to complete the request slip below so that, where possible, we can approve the absence. You should contact the school, ideally, at least four weeks before the intended absence.

Absences will only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances. Please see our Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy on the school website for examples.

We want all children to be happy and successful in our school, and we know that absences can seriously disrupt a child's progress.

.....

Planned dates of absence Total number of school days

Reason that the child needs to be taken out of school during term time

.....

.....

I/We request permission for to be absent from school on the above dates.

Signed Parent/Guardian

Date.....

Appendix 4 - Joint school / local authority letter noticing absence – earliest intervention

[Add school letter header]

[Insert Date]

Dear [Parent's name]

We noticed that your child [Child's name] has been off this week. They have been missed. Cheshire East Council are working with schools to try and improve school attendance because we know that school attendance makes such a big difference to children's futures. The Department for Education tell us 'school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.' (DFE 2023).

We also want to remind you that the Education Act 1996 section 444, requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open.

If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact [named person at school] to discuss further.

Further Information can be found on the websites below

Attendance information

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Attendance and children out of education \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Early help support

[Early Help Assessment \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Mental health support

[Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

[Anna Freud on my mind](#)

Yours sincerely



J Norris
Headteacher



Deborah Woodcock
Executive Director of Children's Services

Appendix 5 – School Notification of falling / unacceptable attendance

At Rainow, we aim to ensure that everyone in our school community understands the importance of regular school attendance, and we will do our utmost to support you to achieve those high levels.

Part of our procedures include undertaking regular attendance reviews and contacting families where attendance has dropped below acceptable levels – this is generally 90% or below; however, at Rainow we use 92% as a first concerns measure. A full table of our School Attendance Thresholds can be found on the reverse of this letter


The following table shows you a summary of your child’s attendance/absence which is below what we deem to be acceptable and the reason for this letter.

Name	Dates	Overall Attendance %	Authorised Absence %	Unauthorised Absence %	Approx. no. of days absent

We are very aware that some children have medical or personal circumstances, which negatively impact on attendance on a long-term basis, and we are dedicated to supporting families where this may be the case. However, unauthorised attendance is generally unacceptable.

It is likely that me or the office have already been in touch to talk to you about this situation, but if not, please feel free to call us so that we can work together to improve your child’s attendance.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Norris
Headteacher

Rainow School Attendance Thresholds

% Attendance	Attendance Rating
98% attendance or above	Excellent
95% - 97.9%	Good
92% - 94.9%	Satisfactory
90% - 91.9%	Concerns
Below 90%	Serious Concerns (persistent absenteeism)

It is worth noting that 5% attendance equates to approximately 10 school days.

Our Attendance and Absence Policy can be found under – KEY INFORMATION – POLICIES, or by clicking here: <https://www.rainowpri.cheshire.sch.uk/page/policies/1114>

Appendix 6 - Template Warning Letter 4-6 unauthorised sessions (referenced in Step 2 of Appendix 1)

[Add school letter header]
[Insert Date]

Dear [Parent's name]

It has been brought to my attention that your child has not been attending regularly at school. According to the Attendance Register, [Child's name] attendance is currently [insert %]. This is below the school's expected attendance.

[Child's name] currently has [insert number] unauthorised sessions, if this reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10-week period then school can apply to the Local Authority to issue you with a Penalty Notice warning period, which could result in each parent receiving a £160.00 fine, reducing to £80.00 if not paid within 28 days.

I must remind you that S.444, Education Act 1996 requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open. I am writing this letter to give you an opportunity to make sure that from now on and in future, your child attends school regularly.

If your child continues to not attend regularly, a referral will be made to the Local Authority to pursue further action. These interventions may include,

- (A) Issuing you with a Fixed Penalty Notice under S.444A Education Act 1996 which will make you liable to a penalty of up to £160. **(As above)**
- (B) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1) Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you may be fined up to £1000.
- (C) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted of this offence you may be fined up to £2,500 or be sent to prison for up to 3 months or both. To avoid Local Authority intervention, please ensure your child attends school regularly and on time. If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact [named person at school] to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher

Appendix 7 – Local Authority Letter to parent/carer when leave in term time has not been requested

Date:

Dear **PARENT**

Re: CHILD NAME, FORM

I note from our records that **Child** has been absent between **Dates**. I understand you sent an email / phoned school absences to advise **Child** had **add Illness**; however, we have reason to believe that you were on holiday from **Add Dates**. This absence will be considered unauthorised, unless medical evidence can be provided (in the form of medical appointment card, medical stating child's name, letter from GP/ Hospital) by **Add Date**. If this is not provided, then we will be informing the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice. If a PN is issued, failure to pay the penalty fine within the required time may result in prosecution. I would like to remind you that under Section 444 of the education Act 1996 – Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school.

Please refer to chart below for details of the PN process including fines and timelines.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 28 days	£80 per parent	£80 per child = £160 per parent
After 28 days	£160 per parent	£160 per child = £320 per parent
After 28 days	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that they have failed to secure their child's regular attendance	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that they have failed to secure their children's regular attendance

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher

Appendix 8 – Local Authority Attendance Contract Between Family and School

Attendance Contract



Child's name:		
Current attendance:		
School/NCY:		
Parent's name:		

Senior staff member with overall responsibility:	
Member of staff responsible day-to-day:	
Local Authority Representative (If Applicable)	

The specific targets of our plan. What we aim to do:	Actions / How we will Achieve the targets

Comments by the child/young person (if applicable):

Agreeing to the contract:

We have agreed to this Attendance Contract and will

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

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

We understand that if my child has any unauthorised absences from school, a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

Role	Name	Signature	Dated
Parent			
Parent			
School representative			
LA representative			

Agreed Review Date:

Appendix 9 – School Example Late Letter

Dear Parent / Carer,

Name of Child ##### Class #

As part of our attendance policy, we monitor punctuality. If a child is 'late' (i.e. arrives at school after 9am or later) on 2 or more occasions within a week, we will write to parents to inform them of this. Children should arrive at school no later than 9 am, ready for the register to be taken and learning to begin. Arrivals between 9 a.m. and 9:20am are recorded as 'L' late, and those after 9:21am recorded as U (late after registers close). A U code is recorded as 1 session absence which will contribute towards a collective 10 sessions instigating a possible fine 20-day notice to improve or fine for absence.

As you will appreciate, arriving at school on time is essential to ensure that children do not miss out on the vital input at the start of lessons. Children arriving late is disruptive for teachers and to other children in the class.

We understand that this can be due to a number of reasons during the school year, but if there is anything we can do to support you in ensuring that xxxxxxxxxx arrives to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me as we are very happy to help.

Your child was late by # minutes on the xxxxxxxxxx

I would also refer you to the following section taken from our School Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy.


“Research tells us that:

- 5 minutes late each day equates to three days lost each year
- 17 days missed from school each year can equate to a whole GCSE grade
- Attendance affects future outcomes
- Attendance affects wellbeing and a sense of belonging”

Please also be aware that continued and persistent lateness for school may leave us with no alternative but to refer you to Cheshire East’s Attendance and Out of School Service.

I would be grateful if you could try to ensure that your child arrives promptly for school from now on.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Norris
Headteacher

Appendix 10 – Sample School Celebration Letter

Dear Parent / Carer,

Re: Attendance Information for «Name»

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As you are aware, it is important for your overall success at school. Our school target for every child, is to achieve school attendance of 97%.

We are pleased to inform you that «Name» achieved «Percentage»% attendance for the xxxxxx of the 2024 - 2025 academic year. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both you and your child for «Meet/Exceed» the school target.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Norris

Headteacher

Rachel Gabbott

Attendance Officer