



VERULAM
SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Policy Group	A	Education and Students
Title	A1p	Attendance Policy
Trust sub-committee	Standards and Curriculum Committee	
Last reviewed	September 2026	
Next scheduled review	September 2027	
Co-ordinated by	AET Attendance Lead Ceri Chaudry	

The Ambition Education Trust ('AET') believes that setting high expectations for all children will allow them to develop academically and emotionally.

1 Principles

The Trust will ensure all schools within the AET:

- 1.1 Develop and maintain a positive and effective whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and ensures that attendance is an integral part of the school's ethos and fulfils statutory duties. While post-16 students are not subject to statutory legal enforcement (such as penalty notices or prosecution), all internal attendance expectations, monitoring processes, and supportive interventions apply equally to Sixth Form pupils.
- 1.2 Demonstrate that attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach
- 1.3 Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, children and young people, taking into consideration the vulnerability of some children and young people and the ways in which this might contribute to absence; handling confidential information with sensitivity and working collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance
- 1.4 Have clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence, making cohorts who are severely absent the top priority for action and support.
- 1.5 Treat unexplainable, persistent or severe absence as a potential indicator of safeguarding risk or harm.
- 1.6 Recognise the needs of the individual child or young person when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- 1.7 Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- 1.8 Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- 1.9 Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools within the AET.
- 1.10 Promote effective partnerships with the Hertfordshire ISL Attendance Team (Hertfordshire LEA attendance service) and with other services and agencies
- 1.11 Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities, ensuring DfE guidance for academies and local authorities is followed - [Working together to improve School Attendance - September 2024](#)
- 1.12 Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement and make sure it is resourced appropriately to create, build and maintain systems and performance
- 1.13 Provide good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of proprietors of academies in England - [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, December 2015](#).
- 1.14 Apply this policy fairly and consistently and recognise the individual needs of children and young people and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools will consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 1.15 Understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity, recognising that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues
- 1.16 Follow the expectations set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#) regarding attendance, recognising that absence from education can be a vital indicator of a child at risk of harm. Schools will work closely with children's social care and other safeguarding partners where absence raises safeguarding concerns, in line with the statutory Department of Education *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance.

- 1.17 Follow the [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#) regarding attendance, ensuring absences are followed up promptly, patterns are monitored, and any safeguarding concerns are referred to the appropriate services.

2 Trust Arrangements

- 2.1 This policy has been developed at Trust level and therefore covers policy that is relevant and followed by all the schools within the Ambition Education Trust.

2.2 Attendance Registers

- 2.2.1 The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

2.2.1.1 In accordance with statutory guidance, all pupils must be registered at the same time and with the register staying open for a maximum of 30 minutes. Attendance Registers must be taken twice daily: once at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon (after the lunchtime break). Arrival after the close of register will be coded as U (unauthorised late).

2.2.1.2 Where an entry in the admission register has been made in error, staff must follow formal statutory procedures and notify the Local Authority immediately. Register entries must not be deleted informally.

- 2.2.2 The AET ensures that in all its schools:

2.2.2.1 The Headteacher will be responsible for the implementation and management of this policy underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities, which are communicated to and understood by staff, children and young people and families, ensuring compliance with DfE guidance for academies and local authorities - [Working together to improve School Attendance - September 2024](#)

2.2.2.2 There is a clear vision for high attendance underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, children and young people.

2.2.2.3 There is a Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance and punctuality of children and young people, who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the attendance management, accurate completion of admission and attendance registers, tracking and intervention systems, providing regular reviews to their senior team and an annual report to the designated governing board committee as well as calendared updates to the AET.

2.2.2.4 All teaching and non-teaching staff know and understand their responsibilities for attendance, adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness, and are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole, receiving the training and professional development they need.

2.2.2.5 Attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding.

- 2.2.2.6 Staff, children and young people and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe - ensuring compliance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) Parents and carers will take responsibility for the attendance and punctuality of their child or young person, in line with their legal obligations. They will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school.
- 2.2.2.7 A Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance is responsible for ensuring clear messages about attendance, punctuality, how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes are communicated through regular channels of communication, including sensitively praising and rewarding good attendance where appropriate.
- 2.2.2.8 The Local Authority is notified of any child or young person who is regularly absent from school, has irregular attendance, or has 10 or more consecutive school days absence via a 10 Day Absence Form.
- 2.2.2.9 Information, effective practice is shared and worked on collaboratively with other schools in the area, the LA and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent .

3 Definitions - Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

- 3.1 Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.
- 3.2 Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:
 - 3.2.1 Sickness (Medical evidence will only be requested where health needs are long term or complex, where formal evidence is required to support implementation of reasonable adjustments or where there is a genuine, reasonable doubt regarding the authenticity of illness).
 - 3.2.2 Medical/dental appointments
 - 3.2.3 Days of religious observance
 - 3.2.4 Exceptional family circumstances
- 3.3 Note: The AET emphasises to parents that all medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours where possible.
- 3.4 Absence from school will not be authorised for:
 - 3.4.1 Holidays
 - 3.4.2 Unsatisfactory explanations (e.g. shopping, minding the house etc)
 - 3.4.3 Caring for sick siblings or parents
 - 3.4.4 Birthdays
- 3.5 Persistent absence (PA) is when a child or young person is missing 10% or more of school. An individual child or young person is deemed to be PA if they have missed more than 10% of school, regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised.
- 3.6 Severe Absence is when a child or young person is missing 50% or more of school. An individual child or young person is deemed to be Severely Absent if they have missed more than 50% of school, regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised.

4 Roles & Responsibilities

- 4.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances.
- 4.2 Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence on the first day of absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit) on the morning of any absence. If further absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding.
- 4.3 Parents/carers will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance/absence
- 4.4 Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child or young person stays at school once they have registered
- 4.5 Robust first day calling procedures are in place including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding.
- 4.6 Unexplained or unauthorised absence will be investigated promptly using a safeguarding-first approach to identify underlying causes or barriers, including harm outside the home. Where intentional non-attendance is confirmed, parents will always be informed and appropriate sanctions will be put in place. Through investigation, if necessary, support will be offered to the child or young person.
- 4.7 Where necessary, home visits will be carried out in line with the school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- 4.8 The Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance, in conjunction with the AET Attendance Lead, will put in place a targeted action plan with clearly defined review dates, to remove barriers to attendance and to reengage all children and young people with persistent and severe attendance. Where needs and barriers are individual to the student, bespoke support will be considered and the impact of any intervention will be monitored. Targeted tracking will identify cohort-specific barriers to attendance. The attendance of Young Carers will specifically be tracked and monitored to ensure that any barriers are identified and addressed through targeted support plans.
- 4.9 Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance will be enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education. The AET works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance and Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance. Support may be requested from the LAO (Local Authority Attendance Officer) for guidance with implementation of plans. If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.
 - 4.9.1 The AET follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures in conjunction with the AET Director of Attendance, the Governors reserve the right to consider requesting Herts County Council to take legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school. There is a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years. The first time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Second offence (within 3 years:) The second time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per

parent, per child within 28 day. Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years): The third time an offence is committed a penalty notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'

- 4.10 Where alternative provision is offered to children and young people as part of an attendance improvement strategy, this will be at the discretion of the school and will only be via an Ofsted registered provider. Where Alternative Provision is used, the school retains legal responsibility for the pupil's safeguarding and attendance. The school will ensure daily attendance checks are conducted with the provider and will maintain a schedule of regular placement reviews to ensure the placement continues to meet the pupil's safety and educational needs.
- 4.11 Flexi-schooling is a parent-requested arrangement enabling a pupil to receive a full-time education through a combination of school-based attendance and home education. In exceptional circumstances, where this is deemed appropriate and it is agreed that this is in the child's best interests (in terms of educational progress, wellbeing and safeguarding). This arrangement must be implemented in line with Hertfordshire County Council guidelines on flexi-schooling and documented in a written agreement between the school and parents/carers. For pupils with an EHCP, flexi-schooling must be agreed in collaboration with the Local Authority SEN team and recorded on the EHCP.
- 4.12 Where a pupil's mental health is impacting their ability to attend school, the school will work closely with parents/carers and, where appropriate, relevant professionals to assess need and implement a supportive, individualised approach. Reasonable adjustments may be put in place where appropriate. These arrangements will be regularly reviewed and documented in an attendance support plan in line with Department of Education guidance.
- 4.13 For children with a social worker and those in kinship care arrangements, the school will work collaboratively with the Virtual School Head to monitor, promote, and support their attendance and ensure any attendance concerns for these cohorts are escalated promptly.
- 4.14 Remote education will only be used as a last resort and as part of a time-limited reintegration plan with the aim of a full time return to school.
- 4.15 Before initiating formal statutory intervention or legal enforcement for pupils with SEND, mental health needs, or complex medical conditions, the school will document and implement practical reasonable adjustments (such as adaptations to uniform rules, daily school routines, or lunchtime arrangements) to actively remove attendance barriers.

5 Monitoring and Reporting

- 5.1 In the belief that the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all children and young people want to be and are keen and ready to learn:
 - 5.1.1 The curriculum will be monitored and developed to meet the needs of all children and young people
 - 5.1.2 The implementation of attendance policy and practice will be monitored regularly.
 - 5.1.3 A designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance is responsible for informing all school staff of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports enabling staff to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.
 - 5.1.4 A designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance is responsible for ensuring data is monitored and analysed weekly, identifying and challenging trends,

identifying declining attendance before children and young people become persistently absent (below 90% attendance) with early intervention implemented and evidenced. They will also be responsible for monitoring the impact of school wide attendance efforts, which will be used to evaluate strategy. They will also conduct regular and frequent reviews with the DSL to cross reference attendance data against safeguarding concerns, ensuring unexplainable, persistent, or severe absences trigger appropriate early help or child protection responses.

- 5.1.5 Attendance data will be benchmarked against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- 5.1.6 Attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets are reported to the governing body and trusts at least termly.
- 5.1.7 The implementation of recognition for attendance and punctuality, and sanctions for absence and lateness, in line with school policy, is established and monitored
- 5.1.8 The implementation of policy and practice is monitored
- 5.1.9 Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME
- 5.1.10 Children and young people with persistent or severe absence are set targets for improvement and are closely monitored by the relevant members of staff. These targets will be regularly reviewed by the AET Attendance Lead
- 5.1.11 Regular structured meetings will be held with the AET Attendance Lead in order to identify and support those children and young people whose attendance/punctuality is a source of concern.
- 5.1.12 Parents will be kept regularly and fully informed of their child's attendance and absence levels and of all concerns around attendance and punctuality
- 5.1.13 Annual reports will be made by the Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance to the local governing body on the issue of attendance/punctuality
- 5.1.14 Information for a summative AET report will be shared at specific calendared data points for presentation at AET committee meetings.
- 5.1.15 Parents, children and young people will be helped to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to attainment, wellbeing and wider development, and the short and long term consequences of poor attendance
- 5.1.16 Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be re-integrated back into school through a structured and individually-tailored programme.
- 5.1.17 All issues which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties will be promptly investigated