



**THE CONSORTIUM**  
ACADEMY TRUST

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Shaping Positive Futures

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*This document can only be considered valid when viewed on The Consortium Academy Trust website. If the copy is printed or downloaded and saved elsewhere the Policy date should be cross referenced to ensure the current document is referenced. The linked policies can be viewed at [www.consortiumtrust.co.uk](http://www.consortiumtrust.co.uk)*

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1 Why the Policy Is Needed**

In our Trust, our culture is rooted in a commitment to excellent teaching and learning for every learner across all our schools. Attendance and Punctuality are essential to good academic outcomes, social development and positive life skills.

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

We take a Trust-wide 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 learner premium, can have on improving learner attendance.

### **2 What the Policy is About**

The Consortium Academy Trust is committed to ensuring all its learners receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities and achievement for all. For learners to gain the most from their time at school, it is vital that they maintain excellent attendance and punctuality and we are committed to supporting learners and their parents/carers in sustaining this throughout their time at school. In doing so, we will:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all learners
- Ensure that all learners access full-time education which meets their needs and allows them to reach their potential.
- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring and safe environment where each learner can engage in all opportunities offered
- Promote good attendance and punctuality and discourage unjustified absence
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Commit to building strong relationships with families to ensure learners have the support in place to attend school
- Continue to emphasise that it is everyone's responsibility to improve attendance and punctuality

### 3 What the Policy Will Achieve

Through being clear in our expectations around attendance we are providing our learners with a structure which will help them develop and achieve their potential through:

- **Improved Academic Performance:** Regular attendance has clear linkage to the understanding of the material and higher levels of achievement.
- **Enhanced Social Skills:** Being present in school helps learners develop social skills through interaction with peers and teachers.
- **Promoting Responsibility:** It teaches our learners the importance of the valuable life skills of punctuality and reliability

# PROCEDURE

## 1 Legal framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [Children and Young Persons Act 1963](#)
- DfE (2024) [Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- DfE (2024) [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- DfE (2024) [Children missing education](#)
- DfE (2024) [Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- DfE (2024) [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a learner's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 2 Roles and responsibilities

All members of the Trust and of our schools have a duty to support improved attendance and punctuality. Specific roles are outlined as follows:

### 2.1 Trustees

- Establishing and ensuring clarity in the vision, ethos, and strategic direction of the Trust, including its attendance expectations and strategies across all schools.
- Endorsing Trust-wide policies, including the attendance policy, and periodically review them.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

## **2.2 Trust Executive**

- Developing and embedding the Trust's principles, vision, and ethos across all Trust schools.
- Overseeing the regular and effective monitoring of attendance in schools, supporting senior leaders in devising and executing effective attendance procedures and practices.
- Facilitating collaboration among schools within the Trust to share successful attendance improvement practices and co-develop a clear framework for improving school attendance.
- Holding the headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy

## **2.3 Local Governing Boards**

- Promoting the importance of school attendance
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the school

To support them in their role, governors receive information about school attendance and absence rates at each local governing board meeting.

## **2.4 Headteacher**

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Where necessary, issuing fixed-penalty notices

## **2.5 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Senior Attendance Champion)**

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Fostering a culture and ethos across the school where 'Attendance is everyone's responsibility'
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance/punctuality identified through data

- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families
- Lead on recognition and reward programmes related to attendance

## 2.6 Attendance Team

The tasks and responsibilities outlined below will be performed by various individuals within schools, as appropriate. Roles may be assigned or delegated at the discretion of the headteacher, based on expertise, availability, and operational requirements.

- Monitoring attendance levels of all learners
- Sharing information with wider school staff as appropriate
- Liaising with parents or carers to identify any barriers which may be affecting attendance and offer support if appropriate to parents or carers and learners
- Supporting learners with difficulties in school
- Making home visits, if appropriate, to meet with parents or carers within three days of absence where no reason is given
- Informing parents or carers of legal responsibility for regular attendance and possible sanctions – via standardised letters where attendance has become a concern, penalty fines and prosecution
- Developing a support package, including the consideration of a phased return, where a learner is returning after a long absence from school
- Ensuring that learners are recognised and rewarded for good attendance
- Attending the welfare meetings to discuss learners below the 90% and 50% threshold Creating intervention and/or reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers
- Adopting a multi-agency working practice to support families with attendance
- Using a wide range of strategies to monitor and improve attendance of all learners, for example:
  - Attendance Action plans
  - Reintegration plan
  - Attendance contracts
  - The Attend Framework
  - Penalties (fines)
  - Prosecution
- Ensure registers are being completed and inform School Leaders (where there are persistent concerns)
- Clear and enter absence notes, (ensuring correct codes are used) absence emails and phone calls re absence
- Provide data for the LA and DFE returns



Provide tracking data for attendance and punctuality as required

## **2.7 Teachers/Tutors**

- Accurately recording registers, including statutory AM and PM roll call for all learners – this is a legal requirement
- Informing the wider safeguarding team where concerns or patterns of attendance are identified
- Welcoming every learner on returning to school and ensuring they are supported and given the opportunity to catch up with missed work
- Marking learners who arrive late to school so accurate data can be sent to parents

## **2.8 Parents and Carers**

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Inform the school by following the school's local procedures of any absence or lateness, 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their learner are made outside of the school day
- Work with the school to improve their child's attendance where appropriate

## **2.9 Learners**

- Attend school every day and be punctual to lessons.

# **3. Recording attendance**

## **3.1 Attendance register**

All Trust schools keep an attendance register and place all learners on their roll onto this register.

Schools take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (AM register) and once during the second session in the afternoon (PM register). Schools mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Learner Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every learner is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

**See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.**

Schools will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a learner is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a learner is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Schools keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Schools' AM registers will be taken at the start of the school day and kept open for up to 30 minutes from the start of the day. Schools' PM registers will be taken at the start of the first afternoon session and kept open for up to 30 minutes from that time.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

The learner's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on each day of an unplanned absence before the start of the school day.

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

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

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

### **3.3 Absence procedures**

Parents of any learner who has not reported their absence will be contacted by the school on each day that they do not attend school.

A home visit will be conducted if the school has concerns regarding absence or the learner has not been in school for three days. This is a supportive measure designed to safeguard learners.

The school will always follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

- The school will inform the LA of the details of learners who fail to attend regularly, or who have 10 unauthorised absence sessions (5 school days) during a 10-week period.
- If a learner's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Attendance and welfare officer and pastoral leads will track the young person's attendance, and formal contact will be made with the parents/carers.
- Where a learner has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the learner from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the learner after making reasonable enquiries.

### **3.4 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment may be counted as authorised if the learner's parent/carer notifies the school in advance and provides evidence of the appointment.

- Parents/Carers should notify the school of any planned absence, following the school's local procedures for communicating absence.

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

The learner's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 3.5 Following up unexplained absence

#### Absence of vulnerable young people

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in each school will ensure that an accurate list of more vulnerable learners is identified and held by the Attendance team; this might include those known to the safeguarding and social care teams.

The appropriate pastoral lead will check the attendance of this group as soon as the register closes.

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

- Call the learner's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If we cannot reach any of the learner's emergency contacts, we may contact relevant agencies
- A home visit will be conducted by the school or agency involvement
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues the school will again make a home visit to the learner's address.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the learner's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the learner and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance
- Identify whether the learner needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged, consider further action as detailed in section 6.2 below

### 3.6 Lateness and punctuality

Being late to school and to lessons has a detrimental impact on achievement and is disruptive to other learners in classes.

**Please see appendix 2 for the cumulative impact of lateness over the school year.**

A learner who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will receive a mark to show that they are on site but will count as absent.

### 3.7 Truancy

Truancy means any active decision to not attend school/lessons.

- Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a learner might be truanting.

- If truancy is suspected, the wider safeguarding team will be notified and they will contact the learner's parents/carers, to assess the reasons behind the learner not attending school/lessons.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- Parents/carers will be contacted informing them of the truancy
- A sanction will be imposed in line with the Trust's behaviour policy and school procedures.

### **3.8 Reporting to parents/carers**

Schools will regularly inform parents/carers about their learner's attendance and absence levels. This information will be included in the formal reports which are sent to parents during the year. Where a learner's attendance is causing concern, the school will contact parents/carers to make them aware of the attendance level and offer support to improve attendance.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to learners during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. An 'Exceptional Absence Request Form' can be requested from the school and should be submitted at least 21 days before the absence. The school will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Physical or mental illness and medical/dental appointments with supporting evidence
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller learners travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the learner is attending educational provision

Any absence can disrupt your child's education so children must not be kept away from school for reasons such as:

- unnecessary medical issues such as headlice, headaches, toothache
- looking after relatives or siblings
- birthdays
- house minding
- visiting relatives
- long weekends
- shopping trips
- taking family holidays without the agreement of the headteacher.

## 4.2 Legal action to enforce school attendance

Local authorities and schools can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay the local authority £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the local authority will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution. In line with statutory guidance, headteachers will decide whether it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice for any child where their attendance meets the national threshold for issuing a penalty notice.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

As stated at the start of this policy, the school is committed to building strong relationships with families to ensure learners have the support in place to attend school. With this in mind, the headteacher will not issue penalty notices where they are of the view that:

- The parent/carer is working proactively with the school to improve their child's attendance
- Issuing a fine would be counterproductive.

## **5. Attendance monitoring**

### **5.1 Monitoring attendance**

Learner-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. Schools will compare their attendance data to the national average and share this with their local governing body. The Trust Executive will compare schools' attendance data to the national average and share this with the Trust Board.

Schools will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual learner level
- Identify whether there are groups of learners whose absences may be a cause for concern

### **5.2 Analysing attendance**

Schools will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify learners or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these learners and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **5.3 Using data to improve attendance**

Schools will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to tutors/classroom teachers/curriculum leaders, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with learners and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **5.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a learner misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of school.

Schools will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of learners who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **6. Children Missing Education (CME)**

### **6.1 Definition of children who are not receiving a suitable education**

“A compulsory school age learner who is not on the roll of a school, not placed in alternative provision by a local authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education at home”

(Statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education January 2009).

### **6.2 Local Authority CME protocols**

Local Authority CME protocols are designed to support professionals, partners, and stakeholders in their combined efforts to safeguard children who are missing in education. It aims to identify the practical steps to be taken by professionals to locate and track children and young people missing from education.

If any learner is absent without explanation for 10 consecutive days, the school will notify the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Service. The school will include details of the actions taken to ascertain the reason for their absence from school.

No learner will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher and Education Welfare Service, when appropriate.

## **7. Part-time Timetables**

All compulsory-aged children are entitled to a full-time education. Only in an exceptional circumstance would a part-time timetable be granted; this arrangement will be short-term and will be reviewed regularly.

## **8. Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

To support high levels of attendance, the school will continually monitor and act to improve attendance. Schools will follow a graduated approach as outlined in their local procedures. Attendance stages are used to support learners to improve their attendance or, in some cases, to make a successful return to school following absence.

**Please see appendix 3 for how each percentage drop in attendance equates to lost learning days over the academic year.**



## **8.1 Removing Barriers to Attendance – Emotional Wellbeing/Mental Health**

Throughout the schools' attendance process, staff will convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing, and wider outcomes. Staff are aware that mental health problems could also be a barrier to good attendance. In some cases, it is also a sign that a learner has suffered or is experiencing trauma.

Schools have a variety of internal and external support networks that they can refer to. The school may also choose to signpost relevant support for both learners and their parents/carers. If a member of staff has a mental health or well-being concern about a learner, immediate action should be taken, following the school's Learner Protection Policy, and in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a learner goes missing or is persistently absent from school, this may be an indicator of criminal or sexual exploitation, especially if other key factors are also present. Schools will monitor absenteeism daily to ascertain learners' whereabouts to ensure they are safe from harm. The Trust and schools will work with all statutory and non-statutory agencies, including parents/carers to protect any learner at risk or possibly risk of abuse.

## Appendix 1 Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

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

<b>C1</b>	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Learner is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Learner has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Learner of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Learner is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Learner is a 'mobile learner' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Learner is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)

<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Learner has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Learner is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Learner is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Learner is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Learner is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every learner absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Learner is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Learner's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Learner is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	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
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Learner has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective learner not on admission register	Learner has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2 Impact of Lateness



### Appendix 3 Attendance Ladder

