KEYSTONE ACADEMY TRUST

# Attendance Policy

# Lutton St Nicholas Primary Academy

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| Created by CEO February 2023 | |
| Reviewed by Deputy CEO September 2026 | Ratified by Trustees October 2026 |
| Next Review due June 2027 | |

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# 1. Introduction

We recognise that good school attendance is essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, especially their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education.

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 either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school. This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity in a supportive, relationship-based approach through conversation rather than correspondence.
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance and aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents and carers, pupils and trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will be published on the school website, made available electronically to parents when pupils join, and publicised at the start of each school year and whenever updated.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies

on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

## 2. Promoting Regular Attendance

We believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

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| Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school | Jake Perrin | enquiries@lsn.keystonemat.org<br>01406 363392 |
| Attendance monitoring – please report all absences to this member of staff | Laura Watson | Enquiries@lsn.keystonemat.org<br>01406 363392 |
| Additional attendance support – please contact us if you require any support with your child's attendance. | Jake Perrin<br>Laura Watson | Enquiries@lsn.keystonemat.org<br>01406 363392 |

Improving school attendance is everyone's business: it is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils, and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by individuals and classes.
- Reward good or improving attendance.
- Hold attendance assemblies weekly.
- Fortnightly attendance updates via the newsletter.
- End of term attendance prize raffles.
- Termly attendance updates to parents.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance report to the Department for Education through our MIS, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

**The Trust Board of Keystone Academy Trust** recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters (under the safeguarding umbrella).
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and support is adapted to individual needs, including pupils with long-term illness, SEND, a social worker or youth offending team worker, looked-after and previously looked-after pupils, young carers and cohorts with historically lower attendance.
- Reviewing the trust's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

**The school's leadership team (including Attendance Champion)** will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy.
- Ensure the school engages and works effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Ensure all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensure that attendance data is shared with the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named Attendance Champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Attend training facilitated by the local authority's Attendance Team so that the Attendance Champion and/or Attendance Officer is familiar with the latest legal systems.
- Return school attendance data to the local authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through regular reporting to the governors.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality weekly at individual, cohort and year-group level, with half-termly, termly and full-year analysis; benchmark against local, regional, national and similar-school data; and evaluate the impact of strategies.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

**All staff** will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Create a feeling of 'mattering' among pupils by 'noticing' them.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The **member of staff responsible for attendance** (Attendance Officer) will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Undertaking regular attendance meetings with Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of an attendance contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

We request that **parents:**

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school. "Regular attendance" means attending every session for its full duration, except where a statutory reason applies.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.

- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

**Pupils** will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

## 4. Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and can seriously affect learning and progress.

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session.' Absence from a session will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the headteacher.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines 'absence' as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

**Authorised absences** are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has seen evidence and granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause for which the school has granted leave.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.

- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the local authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

## 5. Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent' (SA)**. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

For every severely absent pupil, the school will agree a joint approach with Lincolnshire County Council, treating this group as a top priority for intensive multi-agency and whole-family support, with safeguarding action considered where appropriate.

If support is unsuccessful or not engaged with, the school will work with Lincolnshire County Council Attendance Team and may request formal or legal intervention. Lincolnshire County Council determines and administers penalty notices, Education Supervision Orders and prosecutions. A request for prosecution must use the council's online non-school attendance process and include the required attendance evidence, chronology, interventions, support offered and Notice to Improve documentation.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

See below for further information:

| Penalty Notice | Details |
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| First Notice in a **3-year period**: | Issued to each parent.<br>Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days.<br>£160 if paid within 28 days. |
| Second Notice in a **3-year period**: | Issued to each parent.<br>Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. |
| Third Notice in a **3-year period**: | Alternative action should be taken, for example, prosecution or other attendance legal interventions.<br>Fines per parent are capped at two within any three-year period. If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a magistrates' court appearance and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education. |

## 6. Leave of Absence

Leave of absence will be restricted to circumstances permitted by the 2024 Regulations. Exceptional circumstance requests will be considered individually, taking account of the facts and relevant background. The school will not operate a blanket policy that automatically grants leave for particular events. Any leave and its duration are at the headteacher's discretion.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing (or email) to the headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). We will treat each application individually and discuss with parents the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the local authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the local authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

**(The same penalty threshold table above also applies to leave of absences.)**

## 7. Medical Appointments and Absence due to Illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by an

appropriate person and be 'signed out'. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.
Medical evidence will not be routinely required for illness absence or subject to a blanket rule. It may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt, or to understand prolonged, complex or recurring health needs. The school will be flexible about its form and will first discuss the circumstances with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend a school-led meeting (Attendance Support Panel) as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Lincolnshire County Council policies. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

The school will submit a sickness return to Lincolnshire County Council for each compulsory-school-age pupil recorded with code I where there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. A return will be made through the council's online form in each of the six terms in an academic year for every pupil to whom this applies.

## 8. Pupil absence for the purposes of religious observance

The school will authorise absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Additional time will be considered separately as a request for leave of absence.

## 9. Discouraging staggered starts in Reception

We recognise the importance of children attending school full-time from the start of their education. Staggered or part-time starts for children in Reception can have a negative impact on their overall school attendance and academic progress.

We acknowledge that the introduction of 30 free funded hours of early education and childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds has meant that the majority of children now have experience of attending an early years setting for a full school day prior to starting Reception.

We will only consider part-time or staggered starts in exceptional circumstances, for example, where a child has significant additional needs that would make a full-time start detrimental to their wellbeing. In these cases, we will work closely with parents and any relevant professionals to develop a clear plan for the child to transition to full-time education as soon as possible.

For the vast majority of children, we expect them to attend school full-time from the beginning of the Reception year. We will work proactively with parents to ensure a smooth transition into school and to address any concerns they may have about their child starting full-time. We will provide support, such as home visits, staggered drop-off and pick-up times, and a gradual increase in hours, only where absolutely necessary to meet the individual needs of the child.

Our aim is for all children to be attending school full-time by the end of their first half-term in Reception. We will

monitor the attendance of Reception children closely and engage with parents promptly if there are any concerns about part-time attendance impacting the child's progress.

## 10. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils

We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of pupils from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller heritage. At our school, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of these communities. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child ( a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place) and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- the child has attained the age of six, that they have made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Lincolnshire, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Our school will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at our school will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

## 11. Our Procedures

At Lutton St Nicholas Primary Academy, learning begins at 8:45am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8:40am. Pupils will have a morning break at 10:45am, which will last until 11:00am, and a lunch break at 12:00pm, which will last until 1:00pm – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times. Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

• The morning register will be marked by 8:45am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their

classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark

• The morning register will close at 9:15am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time

• The afternoon register will be marked by 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

• The afternoon register will close at 1:30pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present. Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

## 12. Register Keeping and Recording

The 2024 Regulations require electronic admission and attendance registers. The attendance register will be taken at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils, and remain open for the same period in each session for no longer than 30 minutes. Entries will be retained for six years. Amendments will preserve the original entry, amendment, reason, date and person making it. Code N will be replaced within five school days, using code O if no reason is established.

## 13. Expected Absence Procedure for Parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school, parents are expected to contact school by telephone on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day (unless instructed by the school not to), identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.




**If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.15am when our register closes
- Call the school office on 01406 363392 and either leave a message on the answerphone or if you prefer to speak to Miss Watson, please call after 8am. You are also welcome to email enquiries@lsn.keystonemat.org.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.40am unless instructed by the school not to.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

**If your child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:**

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at **9.15am** and where no reason for absence is known. The school will telephone you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, and carry out a home visit, in the interests of safeguarding.

We will also inform all professionals involved in supporting the pupil if there are unexplained absences from school in line with statutory requirements. We will also inform all professionals involved in supporting the pupil if their name is to be deleted from the school register.

## 14. Late Arrival at School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

All pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at **8.45am**. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at **8.45am**. All pupils and their parents, if applicable, arriving after this time are required to report to the main office, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If a pupil who walks to school by themselves arrives late, their parents will be informed. If their arrival is after 8.45am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at **9.15am.** All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the local authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Miss Watson or/and Mr Perrin but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

## 15. Support Systems

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child. An overview of what this may look like is presented in Appendix 4.

Young carers will be recorded in the school census and supported with the pupil, parents, Lincolnshire County Council and relevant organisations where caring responsibilities affect attendance. Where external support is delayed, temporary support will be considered and pupils returning after lengthy absence will receive reintegration support.

Strategies we may use to support include:

- If your child's attendance is becoming a concern we will reach out to you, normally by telephone or letter to let you know if your child's attendance is causing a concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- If requested, or no improvement is made, we may arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with Mr Perrin and/or Miss Watson.
- If we feel necessary, we may create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate or undertake an Early Help Assessment & Plan with you;
- Refer the matter to an external agency for multi-agency support or if we have safeguarding concern, we will make a safeguarding referral
- Refer to the Local authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate).
- Refer the matter to the Local authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

## 16. Attendance Rewards and Interventions

- Our attendance target is 96%. We communicate our class attendance fortnightly on our newsletter which is shared with staff and parents. Attendance is also announced in our celebration assembly each Friday. You can check your child's current attendance by visiting the attendance tab on the MCAS app. Please speak to Miss Watson in the office if you require any support with this.
- We run a termly raffle, each week your child completes a week at school with 100% attendance, they receive a raffle ticket. At the end of each term the raffle is drawn and one Key Stage 1 and one Key stage 2 winner.
- If your child's attendance is a concern, we will communicate with you and support you where possible. You will also receive communication at the end of each term if your child has outstanding attendance, or if your child's attendance is a concern.

We will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

## 17. Part-time Timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full- time education, and it would not be in their best interest to do so.

A part-time timetable may only be implemented in exceptional circumstances and as part of a clearly defined support, healthcare or reintegration plan. It must be agreed with parents, include agreed attendance times, regular reviews involving the pupil and parents, and a proposed end date. Social workers will be kept involved and EHC plan cases discussed with the local authority. Sessions will be coded in accordance with the Regulations.

The school will report every part-time timetable through Lincolnshire County Council's online reporting form. It will be temporary, reviewed regularly with the pupil and parents, maintained for the shortest time necessary, and include a clear date for return to full-time education.

## 18. School Attendance and the Law

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

## 19. National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now 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. The 10 sessions of unauthorised absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Lincolnshire County Council's Attendance Team administers and issues penalty notices, and schools must request them through the council's online system. For persistent absence, a Notice to Improve is required where support is appropriate but has not worked or been engaged with. For an unauthorised term-time holiday, it is not normally required, but parents must have been clearly informed of the attendance expectations and possible referral. Where leave is refused, the school will write or email explaining the refusal, unauthorised coding and intended penalty-notice request.

Where support is appropriate but attendance has not improved, the school may issue a Notice to Improve. This formal written notice will explain the attendance concerns, the support already offered and any further support available, the improvement expected during the stated monitoring period, and the possible consequences if attendance does not improve. Attendance will be reviewed throughout that period; sufficient improvement will

normally mean no further action, but continued unauthorised absence or failure to engage may result in a referral to Lincolnshire County Council to consider a penalty notice or other legal intervention.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

Before requesting a penalty notice, the school will follow Lincolnshire County Council's current Code of Conduct, check that duplicate action is not being taken, provide the required documentary evidence, and submit the request promptly through the council's online system.

**Penalty notices - code of conduct – Introduction -Lincolnshire County Council**

**There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours**.

In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and the local authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

## 20. Deletions from the Register

We will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. We will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

The school will make New Pupil and Deletion Returns within statutory timescales. It will report a Pupil Not Attending Regularly (PNAR) through Lincolnshire County Council's online form where a compulsory-school-age pupil has missed 10 continuous school days recorded with one or more unauthorised codes G, N, O and/or U. Unexplained absence will be investigated promptly as a safeguarding matter.

Where a parent gives written notice of elective home education, the school will apply regulation 9 and notify Lincolnshire County Council using its online EHE reporting process. The school will offer a meeting to discuss the decision and implications. A pupil will not be deleted retrospectively. Special-school and EHC plan cases will be handled in accordance with statutory requirements and in liaison with the local authority and relevant professionals.

https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-attendance/pupil-attendance

Where a pupil's whereabouts or access to education are unknown, the school will follow Lincolnshire County Council's published Children Missing Education procedure and submit the online CME referral, while continuing immediate safeguarding enquiries and making a separate PNAR notification where its criteria apply.

## 21. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy
- Pupil Behaviour and Exclusions Policy
- SEND Policy

## 22. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE
- Children missing education, DfE
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (every September)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

## Appendix 1: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

**Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents**

If you have a question about your child's attendance please speak with Miss Watson at the school office, by calling on 01406 363392, or by sending an email to enquiries@lsn.keystonemat.org.

**We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year. This is why:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 98-100% | • Excellent - children are accessing all learning opportunities |
| 96-97% | • Good - Very few learning opportunities are missed |
| 94-95% | • Risk of underachievement<br>• Up to 8 school days absent in an academic year |
| 92-93% | • High risk of underachievement<br>• Up to 10 school days absent in an academic year |
| 90-92% | • Severe risk of underachievement<br>• Upwards of 15 school days absent in the academic year |
| <90% | • Extreme risk of underachievement<br>• Upwards of 19 school days absent in the academic year |

**You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:**

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. If your child arrives after the register is closed, this will count as unauthorised absence. Your child must be in school by **XX:XX am**.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will look after them and let you if they are too unwell to stay in school.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and let the school know straight away. You will need to show a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter/text if your child has an appointment during school hours.

**What if my child does not want to go to school?**

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.

**What should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?**

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence to us by telephone or email before 9.15am to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name, class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

**What should I do if I want to take my child out of school?**
There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use MCAS etc to make these types of requests. The request should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence. You will receive a response to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

**Punctuality**
Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning. Your child is late to school if they are not in class by 8.45am.

**How will the school let me know if there is a worry about my child's attendance?**
We will let you know.
When your child's attendance falls below 95%, we shall write to you to make you aware. If you need any help at this point to increase your child's attendance then please ask. We are here to help.
When your child's attendance falls below 93%, this becomes a worry. We shall arrange a time to meet together to look at how we can work together to help your child increase their attendance. Our meeting will not be about blame. It will be about supporting your child to be in school more. We shall agree a plan of action together.
When your child's attendance falls below 90%, this becomes a concern. We will continue to support your child to increase their attendance. This support will be more formal but still focused on helping your child. If your child's attendance does improve we may need to draw up an Attendance Contract.

**What will happen if I do not work with the school?**
If an Attendance Contract is not working and your child's attendance is still a concern, we may issue you with a Notice to Improve. This acts as a final attempt to work with the parent before considering issuing a Penalty Notice or proceeding to prosecution.

## Appendix 2: Lincolnshire County Council: Penalty Notices regarding School Absence

## Guidance for Parents

**Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities**

Our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. This guidance is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In August 2024, the Government introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **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 period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the local authority retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The local authority also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3- year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Lincolnshire, where a pupil's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to- day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance**.

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

**Requests for leave of absence**

Working together to improve school attendance advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other

absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'
Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances, and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

**Support with ensuring regular school attendance**
If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact Miss Watson or Mr Perrin on 01406 363392.

## Appendix 3: Example Letters

**When a child's attendance falls below 95%...**

Dear Miss ABC,

XYZ's ATTENDANCE – THREE OR MORE DAYS OF SCHOOL MISSED

We are writing to you about XYZ's attendance. When a child has missed three or more days of school at this time of the year, this starts to be a worry for us. Our school is keen to let you know now so that XYZ's attendance can improve.

**Take a look at XYZ's attendance.** You can see this in MCAS under 'attendance'. This shows you how many days of school XYZ has missed since September. If you have already asked for a leave of absence, MCAS will know this and will be included in your child's attendance numbers.

**What happens next?**
Nothing, if XYZ's attendance improves.
If XYZ's attendance continues to fall, we shall be in contact with you again. This will be to arrange a time to plan together how we can improve XYZ's attendance.

In the meantime, if there is anything we can do to help you improve XYZ's attendance, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Miss A Person
Attendance Officer
attendance@XX.keystonemat.org

Mr A N Other
Attendance Champion

**When a child's attendance falls below 93% due to illness...**

Dear Mr and Mrs ABC,

**XYZ'S ATTENDANCE – TWELVE DAYS OF SCHOOL MISSED**

We are writing to you again about XYZ's attendance. When a child's attendance falls below 93%, this starts to be a serious worry for us. Our school is keen to work with you now so that XYZ's attendance can improve.

### Take a look at XYZ's attendance.

You can see this in MCAS under 'attendance'. You will see that XYZ has a lot of time off school due to illness.

### What we can do to help.

- Meet together to talk about how we could help XYZ to improve her attendance.
- Talk about ways to look after XYZ when she is feeling ill, such as giving her medicine in school.

### What happens next?

1. Think about a date and time that you could meet with us, and any person you may want to bring along.
2. We will call you in a few days to arrange a time to meet.
3. Decide together how we are going to improve XYZ's attendance.

We will be in touch in the next few days.

Yours sincerely,

Miss A Person
Attendance Officer
attendance@XX.keystonemat.org

Mr A N Other
Attendance Champion

**When a child's attendance falls below 93% due to lateness...**

Dear Mr and Mrs ABC,

**XYZ's ATTENDANCE – TWELVE DAYS OF SCHOOL MISSED**

We are writing to you about XYZ's attendance. When a child's attendance falls below 93%, this starts to be a serious worry for us. Our school is keen to work with you now so that XYSs attendance can improve.

**Take a look at XYZ's attendance.** You can see this in MCAS under 'attendance'. You will see that XYZ is often late for school.

**What we can do to help.**

- Meet together to talk about the things that are stopping XYZ from getting to school on time.
- Offer different ways of starting the school day, such as going to Breakfast Club, or coming through a different door.

**What happens next?**

1. Think about a date and time that you could meet with us, and any person you may want to bring along.
2. We will call you in a few days to arrange a time to meet.
3. Decide together how we are going to improve XYZ's attendance.

We will be in touch in the next few days.

Yours sincerely,

Miss A Person
Attendance Officer
attendance@XX.keystonemat.org

Mr A N Other
Attendance Champion

**Record of support meeting #1…**

Dear Mr and Mrs ABC,

**XYZ'S ATTENDANCE**

During our meeting today, we agreed to do the following things to improve XYZ's attendance.

| | |
|---|---|
| **You have agreed to…** | 1. Bring XYZ to school every day. |
| **XYZ has agreed to…** | |
| **We have agreed to…** | |

Our next meeting is on _____ at _____ am/pm.

If XYZ's attendance has improved by the time of the next meeting, you will receive a green postcard and the meeting will be cancelled.

Yours sincerely,

Miss A Person
Attendance Officer
attendance@XX.keystonemat.org

Mr A N Other
Attendance Champion

Dear Mr and Mrs ABC,

**XYZ'S ATTENDANCE**

We met today because XYZ's attendance is not improving. We talked about what we are worried out, what is working well for XYZ and what needs to happen next. Then we worked together to come up with an action plan. You have a copy of this.

We also explained to you the consequences of persistent absence (below 90% attendance) and what formal or legal interventions may take place in the future. This could be

- formal support with an attendance contract
- issuing you with a Notice to Improve
- issuing you with a penalty notice.

We shall meet again in four weeks' time to review XYZ's attendance again. This will be on

_____ at _____ am/pm.

We shall call you in two weeks' time to see how well you are getting on with the action plan.

In the meantime, please get in touch if you need support with any part of the plan.

Yours sincerely,

Miss A Person
Attendance Officer
attendance@XX.keystonemat.org

Mr A N Other
Attendance Champion

**Supporting documents for meeting #2…**

| What we are worried about | What is working well? | What needs to happen next? (goals) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

**ACTION PLAN**

| How will you achieve the goal(s)? | What support will you need? | Who will support you? | By when? | How will we know it has made a difference? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

## Appendix 4: Attendance Support Overview

