



Sound & District Primary School

Our Children are the Future

Attendance Policy

Policy written by:	Mrs Minshall-Thomas
Governor Committee:	Curriculum
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Status:	Statutory Policy

Legislation, statutory requirements and statutory guidance

This Attendance Policy reflects the statutory requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. It also reflects Cheshire East Council expectations and Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF).

This policy has due regard to, and should be read alongside

- Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Cheshire East Council Attendance and Children Out of School Guidance and Procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- EYFS Statutory Framework (current edition)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Positive Behaviour Support Policy, Early Years Foundation Stage Policy, Nursery Admissions Policy, Equality Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Special Education Needs and Disability Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Children Missing Education Policy.

1. Mission Statement:

Good attendance and punctuality is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. Every day in school matters.

Children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- achieve well academically
- develop positive friendships
- feel secure and valued
- access the full curriculum
- develop resilience
- establish positive lifelong habits.

Sound and District Primary School promotes:

- excellent attendance
- excellent punctuality
- positive routines
- high aspirations
- partnership working with families
- a culture where attendance is everyone's responsibility

Attendance is a key safeguarding indicator. Persistent absence, unexplained absence or patterns of lateness may indicate safeguarding concerns and will be acted upon in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Cheshire East Children Out of School procedures.

We recognise that attendance difficulties rarely have a single cause. Our approach therefore places support before sanction, working collaboratively with children, families, Cheshire East Council and partner agencies to understand and remove barriers to attendance. Where support alone is unsuccessful, the school will fulfil its statutory responsibilities by working with Cheshire East Council to use the legal interventions available to protect every child's right to education.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Nursery
- Reception
- Key Stage One
- Key Stage Two

It also applies to:

- parents and carers
- governors
- volunteers
- agency staff
- contractors where appropriate

Some sections of this policy relate only to children of compulsory school age, as required by attendance legislation.

3. Principles

The school is committed to ensuring that attendance arrangements are:

- child-centred
- supportive
- consistent
- legally compliant
- proportionate
- fair
- inclusive
- evidence-based

Attendance will always be considered alongside:

- safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- medical needs
- mental health
- family circumstances
- equality duties
- the individual needs of each child

4. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote excellent attendance for every child
- establish a culture where attendance is valued
- ensure every child feels safe and welcome in school
- identify attendance concerns at the earliest possible stage
- remove barriers to attendance wherever possible
- work positively with parents and carers
- ensure attendance procedures are fair, transparent and consistent
- fulfil all statutory attendance duties
- safeguard children through effective attendance monitoring
- ensure governors receive robust attendance information
- improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils
- promote smooth transition between Nursery and Reception

5. Attendance as a Safeguarding Priority

The school recognises that attendance is one of the most significant safeguarding indicators.

Poor attendance may indicate:

- neglect
- domestic abuse
- child exploitation
- county lines involvement
- mental health difficulties
- bullying
- emotional distress
- unmet SEND needs
- unmet medical needs

- housing difficulties
- family crisis

Attendance concerns will therefore always be considered alongside wider safeguarding information.

Where attendance patterns indicate potential safeguarding concerns, staff will act immediately in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Cheshire East safeguarding procedures
- the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Attendance information forms part of the school's safeguarding monitoring systems and may contribute to decisions regarding:

- Early Help
- Child in Need
- Child Protection
- referrals to external agencies

6. Attendance Culture

Sound and District Primary School seeks to create a culture where attendance is promoted positively rather than through fear of sanctions.

Children should want to attend school because they:

- feel safe
- enjoy learning
- experience success
- have positive relationships
- feel included
- know they belong

The school will:

- celebrate excellent attendance
- recognise improvements
- promote punctuality
- work collaboratively with families
- remove barriers to attendance
- avoid practices that encourage children to attend when genuinely unwell

Attendance rewards will celebrate commitment and improvement and will never discourage parents from keeping ill children at home.

7. Nursery Attendance

Although attendance legislation applies only to children of compulsory school age, Sound and District Primary School places great importance on regular attendance in its nursery.

Children who attend nursery consistently are better able to develop:

- communication and language

- early literacy
- social skills
- emotional regulation
- independence
- routines for learning
- readiness for Reception

Parents are therefore expected to ensure that nursery children attend regularly unless prevented by:

- illness
- medical appointments
- exceptional family circumstances
- other agreed reasons

Parents should notify the nursery on the first day of absence and maintain communication with the school throughout any prolonged absence.

The school will monitor nursery attendance in the same supportive manner as attendance across the rest of the school.

Because nursery children are below compulsory school age:

- penalty notices do not apply
- prosecution does not apply
- statutory attendance enforcement powers do not apply

Nevertheless, poor nursery attendance may indicate wider safeguarding or welfare concerns and will always be taken seriously.

Where concerns arise, nursery staff will:

- speak with parents promptly
- explore barriers to attendance
- provide advice and support
- consider Early Help where appropriate
- involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL if concerns emerge

Attendance information from nursery will also support successful transition planning into Reception.

8. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Attendance: The percentage of sessions a child attends school

Persistent Absence (PA): A pupil whose attendance falls below **90%**

Severe Absence (SA): A pupil whose attendance falls below **50%**

Punctuality: Arriving at school in sufficient time to enter the classroom and be ready to learn before registration closes

Attendance Support: The graduated process of identifying barriers, agreeing support and reviewing progress before considering enforcement measures.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board

The Governing Board recognises attendance as a strategic priority and will:

- promote a culture of excellent attendance across the school
- ensure statutory attendance duties are fulfilled
- receive regular attendance reports
- challenge leaders where attendance is not improving
- ensure appropriate resources are available to support attendance
- review this policy regularly
- ensure that training on attendance is included in the school's continued professional development offer for all staff
- ensure that attendance is covered in staff and governor induction packs

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance and will:

- ensure the school complies with all attendance legislation and relevant DfE, Government and Cheshire East guidance
- promote a whole-school culture of excellent attendance
- act as the school's Attendance Champion
- ensure attendance remains a safeguarding priority
- oversee attendance monitoring, intervention and reporting
- work closely with Cheshire East Attendance and Children Out of School Service
- ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training
- report attendance trends to governors
- ensure support is provided before legal intervention wherever possible
- ensure that staff complete admission and attendance registers accurately; in line with school policy
- keep parents updated on the School's overall attendance and individual class attendance via newsletters and social media
- ensure that parents receive notification, on an individual basis, how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this via regular parent evenings
- support and promote positive relationships between home and school which can be the foundation of good attendance
- ensure that monitoring of attendance and work with families on attendance considers the individual contextual of each individual family and child's needs; in line with the Equality Act 2010
- utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across pupil cohorts.
- ensure that staff consider the specific needs of pupils and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities) and that support is available to overcome these barriers. (e.g. Early Help or signposting to other wider partners)
- ensure that pupils are supported back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and that support is provided to build the child's confidence and bridge gaps

In line with the legal expectations placed on all schools the Headteacher will ensure that the following actions are completed:

- Submission of a daily attendance return to the Department of Education
- Informing a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school
- Providing the relevant council with the name and address of sick pupils who school believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days

Class Teachers

Class teachers have a crucial role in promoting good attendance.

Teachers will:

- provide a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment
- encourage excellent attendance and punctuality
- accurately complete attendance registers
- identify changes in attendance patterns
- discuss attendance concerns with parents at the earliest opportunity
- contribute to Attendance Support Plans
- notify safeguarding staff where attendance and/or punctuality gives rise to concern
- support pupils returning after absence
- recognise attendance improvements positively

Administrative Staff

Office staff will:

- maintain accurate admission and attendance registers
- contact parents regarding unexplained absence
- record reasons for absence
- maintain attendance records
- ensure the procedures for pupils being brought into school late are followed
- ensure statutory attendance returns are completed
- provide attendance information to school leaders
- work with Cheshire East Council when required

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education. Parents are expected to:

- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- inform school of changes to contact details immediately
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If this is not possible, parents should ensure that children attend school prior to or following their appointment. Parents should provide the school with any medical appointment cards.
- ensure their child attends every day; keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend
- notify school before **9.00 am** on each day of absence
- provide reasons for absence promptly
- keep school informed regarding prolonged illness
- provide medical evidence where reasonably requested
- bring their child to school on time each day

- establish effective communication with the school and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school so that we can work together to resolve this
- attend any meetings called by school and, where relevant, partner agencies to discuss attendance
- avoid arranging holidays during term time

Parents of nursery children are expected to follow the same procedures, although statutory attendance legislation does not apply.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend regularly
- engage positively with learning
- tell a trusted adult if they are worried about attending school
- participate in support arrangements where appropriate

10. Our Procedures

Registration Times

8:20 a.m. Gates open

8:30 a.m. Doors open; the school day starts

Morning register is called promptly as close to 8.30 am as possible

8:40 a.m. The external doors will be closed and the gate at the back of school will be locked

Arrival between 8:40-9:00 am will result in a Late mark (L Code).

The register for the second/afternoon session will be taken at 1:05pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

Late Arrival

Children arriving between **8.40 am and 9.00 am** will receive a **Late (L)** code.

Children arriving after **9.00 am**, when registers have closed, will normally receive an unauthorised late code in accordance with statutory attendance regulations unless another authorised attendance code applies. This counts as half a day's absence.

Parents must accompany late-arriving children to the school Reception area where they will:

- complete the "Late Arrival Record" for each child they are bringing; explaining, in writing, the reason for the lateness
- ensure their child/children are safely admitted into the school building

Reporting Absence

Parents should notify school:

- before **9.00 am** on the first day of absence
- every subsequent day unless another arrangement has been agreed

Parents should provide:

- child's name
- class
- reason for absence
- expected date of return

Where absence continues beyond the expected return date, parents should maintain regular communication with school.

First-Day Response

Unexplained absence is treated as a safeguarding concern.

Where a child has not arrived at school and no reason has been received, the school will, before 9.30 a.m. attempt to contact parents.

If unsuccessful school will:

- contact additional emergency contacts
- send electronic communications where appropriate
- record all attempts to contact the parents/carers and contacts

Where safeguarding concerns exist, further action may include:

- home visit
- consultation with Children's Social Care
- consultation with Police where necessary
- referral through safeguarding procedures

Children who are subject to:

- Child Protection Plans
- Child in Need Plans
- Early Help
- Social Worker involvement

will receive an enhanced first-day response where appropriate.

11. Registration

The attendance register is a legal document. Registers will be retained for the statutory retention period.

The school maintains attendance registers electronically in accordance with statutory requirements.

Registers record whether each pupil is:

- present
- absent (and if authorised or unauthorised)
- attending approved educational activity
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; this includes the nature of these circumstances
- attending another approved setting
- attending alternative provision
- educated off site where appropriate

Attendance codes prescribed by the Department for Education will be used at all times.

Any amendments to registers will record:

- original entry
- amended entry
- date on which the amendment was made
- reason for the amendment
- name and position of the member of staff making the amendment

12. Persistent lateness

Punctuality is essential; children who are brought to school on time:

- settle more quickly
- experience a positive start to learning
- develop positive routine
- experience less anxiety

A child who enters a classroom late often misses the principle objectives for the day and must start to catch up so will start the day from a place of disadvantage. Their late arrival is also likely to disrupt the class and delay learning for all.

Children who are often late may have trouble settling in and mastering routines. Lateness can throw off their whole morning or even their day, especially if the late commute to school was stressful. They can often feel self-conscious about entering the classroom late. Persistent lateness may affect a child's achievement and progress in school.

Where a child is brought to school late on a regular basis their parents/carers will be invited into for a School Attendance Meeting. The school will work with parents/carers in finding solutions if there are genuine difficulties. Depending on the circumstances consideration may be given to an appropriate referral to an outside agency or voluntary service; an Early Help Assessment may also be considered to provide early help and support to the family.

If lateness persists then further involvement from the Attendance and Children Out of School Service will be requested. In cases of persistent lateness (at least 10 sessions of unauthorised lateness over a period of 12 weeks, not including school holidays) a Truancy Penalty Notice (also known as Fixed Penalty Notices) warning may be issued.

13. Absence

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, *if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.*

Absence due to illness will be recorded as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If there are safeguarding concerns then a home visit may be undertaken on the first day of absence.

Only the school can authorise an absence; parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, *if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours*, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Examples of authorised absence may include:

- genuine illness
- medical, dental or hospital appointments that cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours
- infectious illness requiring exclusion under current UK Health Security Agency guidance
- religious observance recognised by the family's faith
- approved educational activities
- approved exceptional leave of absence
- bereavement
- unavoidable exceptional circumstances

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- shopping trips
- birthdays
- holidays taken without authorisation
- staying at home to look after relatives
- oversleeping
- avoidable transport difficulties
- waiting for deliveries or home repairs
- routine hair or beauty appointment
- absence where no satisfactory explanation has been provided

Re-occurring unauthorised absence will be referred to the Attendance and Children Out of School Service; this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment

If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, the teacher will speak to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The teacher will speak to the parents, to discuss this with parents, if necessary.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter will be sent home raising concerns that the child's attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard inviting the parents into school to discuss concerns, identify any barriers and to discuss potential support. Early Help will be offered.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a further letter will be sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is being monitored on a daily basis, and again the parents will be invited into school where next steps will be outlined. Early Help will be offered/reviewed and a referral to Cheshire East Attendance and Out of School Team will be considered.

Medical Absence

The school recognises that children will occasionally be too ill to attend. Children should remain at home where attending school would:

- delay recovery
- place others at risk of infection
- be inconsistent with current public health advice

The school may request medical evidence where:

- illness is frequent
- illness follows an identifiable pattern
- absence is prolonged
- attendance causes safeguarding concern
- statutory attendance procedures are being considered

Medical evidence may include:

- appointment letters
- hospital correspondence
- prescription information
- consultant letters
- other professional evidence

The school will always seek to work constructively with families and will not routinely request evidence for short periods of illness.

14. Attendance Monitoring

Registers are reviewed and analysed frequently to ensure that any attendance issues are highlighted at the earliest opportunity so that pupils and families can be supported before patterns become entrenched.

Possible indicators of attendance issues are:

- unexplained absences
- continual broken weeks
- patterns of non-attendance on specific days
- attendance figures are below a certain agreed level
- repeated medical absences and patterns of illness
- persistent lateness.

In addition we conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends of particular cohorts of pupils; identifying potential patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance etc.

A representative from the Attendance and Children Out of School team for Cheshire East carries out a register check on an annual basis.

Monitoring includes:

- whole-school attendance
- year groups
- classes
- nursery attendance
- disadvantaged pupils
- pupils with SEND
- pupils with medical conditions
- pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- children with social workers
- children in receipt of Early Help
- children subject to Child Protection Plans

- pupils from minority groups
- pupils eligible for pupil premium
- persistent absence
- severe absence
- punctuality
- attendance by day of the week
- attendance by attendance code
- recurring illness patterns

The school uses attendance data proactively to identify concerns before poor attendance becomes entrenched.

15. Nursery Attendance Monitoring

Attendance in the nursery will be monitored separately from compulsory school-aged pupils. Where attendance concerns arise, staff will:

- speak with parents at the earliest opportunity
- identify any barriers to attendance
- offer practical support and advice
- consider safeguarding implications
- involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate
- consider Early Help if concerns persist

Because nursery attendance is non-statutory, legal attendance interventions such as Penalty Notices do not apply. However, persistent absence from nursery may indicate welfare concerns requiring support or safeguarding action.

16. Graduated Attendance Support

Sound and District Primary School follows the DfE principle of "Support First." Our approach is based on understanding the barriers preventing attendance and working collaboratively with families to overcome them.

The school recognises that attendance difficulties are often linked to wider issues including:

- anxiety
- medical conditions
- SEND
- family circumstances
- bereavement
- bullying
- caring responsibilities
- housing difficulties
- transport issues
- financial hardship

Where attendance begins to decline, support will always be offered before legal intervention unless safeguarding concerns require immediate escalation.

Attendance Support Plans

Where attendance concerns continue, an Attendance Support Plan will normally be developed collaboratively with parents. The plan may include:

- identified barriers
- agreed actions
- reasonable adjustments
- support from external agencies
- review dates
- attendance targets
- responsibilities of school
- responsibilities of parents
- responsibilities of the pupil, where appropriate

Plans will focus on achievable improvements and will be reviewed regularly.

17. Requests for leave of absence in term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations say that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Relevant to children in our school these would be:

- The child is taking part in entertainment, modelling or paid sport, and the relevant regulations have been met; in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend

Schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion.

Discretionary leave must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with, in writing using our school's "exceptional leave" request form; giving as much notice as possible (at least **four school weeks** before the proposed absence). Supporting evidence should be provided where available/appropriate.

The request will be considered by the Headteacher; the parent may be asked to discuss the request. We will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts, 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.

Attendance regulations say that leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Generally the DfE 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. Therefore holidays in term

time will only be authorised if the circumstances are deemed exceptional. The decision rests solely with the Headteacher and cannot be delegated.

18. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

The school believes that legal intervention should always be a last resort. Before requesting legal action, the school will normally demonstrate that it has:

- worked collaboratively with the family
- identified barriers
- offered support
- reviewed progress
- considered Early Help
- involved appropriate agencies where necessary

Where support has not secured improvement, Penalty Notices may be issued where the statutory threshold has been met. This currently includes:

- **Term time leave:** unauthorised term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.
- **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period,** including combinations of:
 - unauthorised absence
 - unauthorised holidays
 - late arrivals after registers have closed

For example, *four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late.*
The period of 10 weeks can also span “different terms or school years”.

Councils retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example: *where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.*

Thresholds are determined by current national regulations and may change during the lifetime of this policy.

Penalty Notices are issued by Cheshire East Council, not the school. The school does not receive any income from Penalty Notices.

Penalty Notice fines are issued per parent per child. For example: *3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in **each** parent receiving 3 separate fines.*

First Offence The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at: £160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued.

The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

19. Attendance and SEND

The school recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities may experience additional barriers to attendance. These may include:

- autism
- ADHD
- sensory processing differences
- speech, language and communication needs
- physical disability
- medical conditions
- learning difficulties
- emotional regulation difficulties

The school will comply fully with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 by making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Attendance expectations remain high for every child, but the support provided will reflect individual needs.

Possible adjustments may include:

- adapted arrival arrangements
- personalised transition support
- safe spaces
- visual timetables
- sensory regulation opportunities
- phased reintegration
- individual attendance targets
- curriculum adjustments
- flexible pastoral support

20. Supporting Children with Medical Needs

Where a child experiences ongoing medical difficulties, the school will work collaboratively with parents, NHS professionals, community paediatricians, specialist nurses, therapists, Cheshire East services

Support may include:

- phased return
- reduced timetable (where lawful and appropriate)
- reasonable adjustments
- healthcare plans
- curriculum support
- flexible arrangements agreed in the child's best interests

Temporary part-time timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest possible time, and will be regularly reviewed in line with DfE guidance.

21. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

The school recognises that some children experience significant anxiety associated with attending school. Where Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is suspected, the school will adopt a supportive, graduated approach.

Support may include:

- early conversations with parents
- assessment of underlying causes
- pastoral support
- mental health interventions
- SEND assessment where appropriate
- reduced anxiety transition arrangements
- phased return plans
- reasonable adjustments
- referral to appropriate external agencies

The school will avoid approaches that increase anxiety unnecessarily while maintaining high expectations regarding attendance.

22. Mental Health and Attendance

Poor attendance may be both a cause and consequence of mental health difficulties. The school will:

- listen carefully to children and families
- work collaboratively with health professionals
- balance compassion with maintaining educational engagement
- provide pastoral support
- review attendance regularly

Mental health concerns will not automatically result in authorised absence where alternative support can safely enable attendance.

23. Reintegration Following Absence

Children returning after prolonged absence will receive appropriate reintegration support; this may include:

- a welcome back meeting
- pastoral check-in
- reintegration plan
- curriculum catch-up
- emotional support
- phased return where appropriate
- review meetings

The aim is to rebuild confidence and prevent further absence.

24. Children Missing Education (CME)

The school has a statutory duty to identify children who may be missing education.

Concerns may arise where:

- a child fails to attend school without explanation
- repeated attempts to contact the family are unsuccessful
- the family cannot be located
- attendance patterns raise safeguarding concerns

The school will follow the Cheshire East Children Missing Education procedures, including:

- making reasonable enquiries to locate the child
- contacting emergency contacts
- undertaking home visits where appropriate
- consulting partner agencies
- notifying Cheshire East Council
- maintaining detailed records of all actions taken

Attendance concerns involving Children Missing Education will always be considered alongside safeguarding responsibilities.

25. Children with a Social Worker

Children who have a social worker are particularly vulnerable to poor educational outcomes. Attendance concerns for these pupils will be addressed promptly through multi-agency working.

The school will work closely with:

- Children's Social Care
- Family Support Workers
- Virtual School (where appropriate)
- Early Help professionals
- foster carers and kinship carers where applicable

26. Alternative Provision and Off-site Education

Where pupils receive education away from the school site, attendance remains the responsibility of Sound and District Primary School. The school will:

- monitor attendance carefully
- maintain regular communication with providers
- ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective
- record attendance using the correct statutory attendance codes

27. Elective Home Education

Parents have the right to educate their child otherwise than at school in accordance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

Where parents express an interest in Elective Home Education, the school will notify Cheshire East's Attendance and Children Out Of School team, before the child is withdrawn from the school, to arrange a meeting with parents and the school in which parents will be provided with impartial information, can be made aware of the implications of such a decision and to allow for exploration as to whether attendance barriers can be resolved.

School will never encourage home education as a means of addressing attendance concerns.

The school will fulfil all statutory notification duties.

28. “Mobile Children”

The T code is used in the register for a pupil who is a “mobile child” and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance defines a mobile child as one who is 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. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school. This period of travelling for work must be agreed with the school beforehand.

The child must have attended at least 200 school sessions in the past 12 months if they are over six years old. (One school day has two sessions.)

**Please note that since the 2024 guidance was published the Department for Education have confirmed that the ‘mobile child’ only needs to be of no fixed abode whilst the parent is trading/working.*

29. Children living in a different Authority

In cases where a pupil lives in a different local authority area to Cheshire East the overarching principle is that both the local authority, in whose area the pupil attends school (the ‘School LA’), and the local authority in whose area the pupil lives (the ‘Home LA’) work together to support the pupil and family where local authority action is needed. They will agree a way forward, and will identify which local authority will lead on specific actions.

30. Attendance Rewards

The school recognises the importance of celebrating positive attendance. Recognition may include:

- certificates
- celebration assemblies
- class awards
- newsletters
- recognition of improved attendance
- end-of-term awards

The school will ensure that recognition systems:

- celebrate improvement as well as high attendance
- are inclusive
- do not disadvantage pupils with genuine medical conditions or disabilities

Weekly	Class with the best attendance gets attendance treat – winning class announced on a Friday afternoon in the Celebration Assembly. Weekly “Magic Moments” newsletter on Class Dojo informing parents of attendance information e.g. Current yearly attendance and class of the week rag rated against school target.
Half Termly	A monthly item in the school newsletter regarding the importance of attendance
Termly	The class/es who achieved the greatest number of weeks with the highest attendance over the term have a celebration afternoon planned in.
Yearly	Children with attendance at or above the school target receive a medal/award

31. Reporting to Governors

Governors will receive attendance reports at least termly. Reports will include:

- whole-school attendance
- comparison with national data where available
- persistent absence
- severe absence
- nursery attendance
- attendance of vulnerable groups
- effectiveness of interventions
- trends over time
- legal interventions
- safeguarding implications

Governors will provide constructive challenge and support to ensure continuous improvement.

32. Equality, Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustments

The school is committed to ensuring that attendance procedures comply with the Equality Act 2010.

When attendance concerns arise, consideration will always be given as to whether a pupil requires reasonable adjustments because of:

- disability
- SEND
- medical needs
- mental health
- protected characteristics
- caring responsibilities

Attendance expectations remain high for every pupil, but support will be tailored to individual circumstances.

33. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Attendance information forms part of the pupil's educational record. Attendance records will be:

- accurate
- secure
- retained in accordance with statutory requirements
- processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

Attendance information may be shared with:

- Cheshire East Council
- Department for Education
- Children's Social Care
- Police
- NHS
- other agencies

where lawful, necessary and proportionate.

34. Monitoring the Impact of this Policy

The Headteacher will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy by reviewing:

- attendance outcomes
- persistent absence
- severe absence
- punctuality
- effectiveness of Attendance Support Plans
- parental feedback
- pupil voice
- safeguarding outcomes
- governor challenge

The findings will inform the School Development Plan.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum. In between reviews the policy will be updated, when necessary, to reflect local and national changes.

Appendix A

Attendance procedure flow chart

