The Hawksmoor Learning Trust ("the Trust")

Attendance Policy

Version 4
September 2026

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Annex A to this policy records the operational detail that differs between schools, including the name and contact details of each school's senior attendance champion and its register times. Each school completes Annex A and publishes it alongside this policy on the school website. Annex A does not vary the policy itself.

Key:

* Publication on website:

THLT Website		School Website	
1	Statutory publication	A	Statutory publication
2	Good practice	B	Good practice
3	Not required	C	Not required

** Policy level:

1. Trust wide: this one policy is relevant to everyone and consistently applied across all schools and Trust departments with no variations. Approved by the THLT Board of Trustees.

2. Trust core values: this policy defines the values to be incorporated fully in all other policies on this subject across all schools and Trust departments. It forms the basis of a localised school or department policy containing relevant information, procedures and processes contextualised to that school or department. Approved by the THLT Board of Trustees as a Trust Core Values policy, and by school or department governance bodies as a contextualised policy.

3. School or department policies: defined independently by schools or departments as appropriate, and approved by school or department governance bodies.

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1. Aims

This policy sets out how the Trust and its schools meet their duties on school attendance. It is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), which replaced the August 2024 edition, and on the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, we aim to:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Build strong relationships with families so that pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We treat absence as a signal. Absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances, and our first response will always be to understand and remove the barriers a pupil and family are facing.

Good attendance is defined as:

- 96% and above.
- Children attending every day the school is open.
- Children arriving on time.
- Children being collected on time.

Our attendance expectation is that every pupil attends school every day that the school is open, and that every pupil's attendance is 96% or above across the school year. Attendance below 90% is persistent absence. Section 5.3 explains when unauthorised absence may lead to legal action.

Why does attendance matter?

Attending school on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good routines for later life and the working world, as well as giving your child the opportunity to:

- Make lots of friends and feel included.
- Learn new things and develop new skills.
- Increase confidence and self-esteem.
- Improve social skills.
- Achieve potential and fulfil aspirations.
- Feel safe and supported through structure and routine.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all Trust and school leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Recording attendance accurately in the register and sharing the required information with the Department for Education and the local authority.

    - Working effectively with local partners to remove barriers to attendance, and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils where appropriate.
- Making sure each school has a named senior attendance champion and that the role is given the time and standing to be effective.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's policies and ethos.
- Receiving and challenging termly attendance reports covering all four schools, including data on key cohorts.

2.2 The CEO

The CEO will monitor and report on attendance across the Trust, and is responsible for:

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most, through termly attendance review meetings with each school.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance, and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of each school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs.
- Where a school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance.
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
    - The Trust's legal requirements for keeping registers.
    - Effective strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils where appropriate.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the Trust, and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources.
- Holding headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the Trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers, and sharing effective practice between schools.

2.3 The Local Academy Board

The Local Academy Board (LAB) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and challenging school attendance data for different cohorts and groups.
- Understanding and challenging the effectiveness of school strategies.
- Checking that Annex A to this policy is complete, accurate and published on the school website.

2.4 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school.
- Appointing the school's senior attendance champion and recording their name and contact details in Annex A.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the LAB.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Deciding whether to grant a leave of absence in term time, and the length of any leave granted.
- Referring cases to West Northamptonshire Council where legal intervention may be appropriate.
- Notifying the local authority about children missing education and about additions to and deletions from the admission register, as required by the regulations.

2.5 The Senior Attendance Champion

Each THLT school has a designated senior leader who acts as its senior attendance champion, with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. The name, role and contact details of the senior attendance champion for each school are recorded in Annex A and published on the school website alongside this policy.

The senior attendance champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance data and evaluating progress in attendance, proactively identifying areas for improvement.
- Following up on any unexplained absence, liaising with parents and external agencies as necessary.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents, carers and external agencies where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents or carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

- Representing the school at targeted support meetings with West Northamptonshire Council.
- Advising the headteacher when to refer a case for legal intervention.

2.6 Class Teachers

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office directly after registration.

2.7 School Administration Staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Refer calls from parents and carers to the relevant staff member where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Phone parents on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain reasons for the pupil not being in school.
- Process school registers on the school management information system.

2.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, meaning the child lives with and is looked after by them.

In all THLT schools, we believe that close and collaborative working relationships with parents are central to all children being as successful as they can be, and we work with parents to resolve any problems together.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time, and is collected on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Keep to any attendance plan or agreement they make with the school or local authority.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the class teacher or relevant senior teacher.
- Notify the school if their child is leaving, including the date of the move, the new address and the name of the new school.

2.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day, on time.

2.10 The Local Authority

West Northamptonshire Council is the local authority for all four THLT schools. The local authority:

- Issues penalty notices for school absence, in line with its published Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. Schools do not issue penalty notices in West Northamptonshire; they make referrals to the local authority.
- Provides a School Attendance Support Service, which schools can access for advice, targeted support meetings and casework.
- Has a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying and following up on children missing education.
- Considers other legal interventions, including prosecution, education supervision orders, parenting orders and school attendance orders.

3. Recording Attendance

3.1 The Attendance Register

We keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. The register is taken at the same time for all registered pupils.

The register for each session is kept open for the same length of time, and for no longer than 30 minutes. The exact register times and closing times for each school are recorded in Annex A.

In all Trust schools, doors open at 8.30am. The school day starts with registration at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. The register for the first session is taken at 8.45am and is kept open until 9.00am.

Using the national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the register records whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the attendance codes. We will also record:

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

We keep every entry on the attendance register for six years after the date on which the entry was made.

Our schools share daily attendance data with the Department for Education through their management information systems. This allows the school, the Trust, the local authority and the Department to monitor attendance, benchmark it and identify pupils who need support at the earliest point.

3.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling or emailing the school office.

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

Medical evidence is only needed in a minority of cases. We will not ask for it routinely, and we will not ask parents to obtain evidence that places an unnecessary burden on them, on their child or on health services. We may ask for evidence where:

- A pupil's health needs are complex, long term or frequently recurring and we need to understand what support or reasonable adjustments should be put in place, or
- We have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where we do ask, evidence can take a range of forms, including an appointment card, a prescription, a text message or letter confirming an appointment, or information the school already holds. We will not insist on a doctor's note.

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

3.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by calling or emailing the school office.

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

The pupil's parent or carer must apply for any other type of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 4.1 sets out the circumstances in which a leave of absence can be granted.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

Being on time to school, before 8.40am, allows your child the best chance to settle and be prepared for the day.

- Gates are open from 8.30am. Registration is at 8.45am.
- Arrival between 8.45am and 9.00am will result in a late mark (L code). This counts as a present mark.
- Arrival from 9.00am onwards, after the register has closed, will result in a U code. This counts as one unauthorised absent session.

If your child has two late marks (L code) in a week, you will receive a phone call from someone in the attendance team to check in and see if there are any ways we can support you. You will receive a helpful hints guide on how to ensure your child gets to school on time.

Over a half term, if your child's late marks total 20% or more of sessions, someone from the attendance team will give you a call to check in and see if there are any ways we can support you.

If we do not see a sustained improvement after this check in, you will be invited in for a Connections Meeting to discuss support mechanisms. This may include an Early Help Assessment to support you in improving punctuality.

3.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact other external services, for example the local authority or the police.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, consider a referral to the local authority for a notice to improve, a penalty notice or other legal intervention.

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent without authorisation for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, or where the school cannot establish where a pupil is, we will notify West Northamptonshire Council in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and children missing education guidance.

3.6 Reporting to Parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parent meetings and in the end of year report, or more frequently if there are concerns.

Attendance letters to parents will set out the school's attendance expectation and the national framework for penalty notices described in section 5.3.

3.7 Deletions from the Admission Register and Children Missing Education

A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register in the circumstances set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

We will notify West Northamptonshire Council whenever a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the admission register at a point other than the normal transition point, giving the information required by the regulations and as soon as the ground for removal is met.

Where a parent gives written notification that they intend to educate their child at home, we will notify the local authority and follow the process in the regulations. We will not remove a pupil from roll on the basis of an assumption or an informal conversation.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces further duties in this area, including a statutory Children Not in School register, with provisions expected to be commenced in stages from late 2026. This policy will be updated as those provisions come into force.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Leave of Absence in Term Time

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain approved educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are recorded as approved educational activity, not absence.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets one of the circumstances set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- Attending an interview with a prospective employer or educational establishment.

- Study leave to prepare for a public examination.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances.

We consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

We do not operate blanket policies on leave of absence. We will not automatically grant or automatically refuse any category of request, and we do not apply a fixed maximum number of days. Whether to grant a leave of absence, and the length of any leave granted, are decisions for the headteacher in each individual case.

Because a leave of absence will only be granted in the circumstances above, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

A leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Where a request for a leave of absence is refused, the school's response letter will explain that any absence taken will be recorded as unauthorised, and will set out the national framework for penalty notices described in section 5.3.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as unauthorised absences. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery.
- Going for a family day out.
- Sleeping in after a late night.
- Going shopping or for a haircut.
- Because it is your child's birthday.
- A holiday for which a leave of absence was not granted.
- Where there is no explanation for the absence, or where the explanation or reason given is considered unsatisfactory.

If your child arrives after the registers have been closed in the morning, at 9.00am, they will be marked with the U code, arrived in school after registration closed. This is an unauthorised absence.

4.3 Absence Due to Illness

If your child is feeling mildly unwell, it is usually best to send them into school. We can monitor them and, in some cases and with written parental permission, administer medicine in line with our supporting pupils with medical conditions policy. We will always contact parents if we feel a child is becoming more unwell. The NHS guidance, Is my child too ill for school?, at www.nhs.uk, outlines when it is best to keep your child off school. Absence for illness will be authorised.

If your child has repeated periods of illness throughout the year, a member of the attendance or pastoral team will contact you to offer support and signpost to further help if required. This is a support conversation, not a challenge to the reasons you have given.

Where a request is made for a term-time absence for a reason such as a recognised sporting event, the funeral of a close family member, a wedding, a hospital visit or religious observance, it will be considered as a request for a leave of absence under section 4.1 and decided on its own facts. Absence for a day of religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs is recorded using code R and is not a leave of absence.

4.4 Part-time Timetables and Flexi-schooling

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to, and expected to receive, a full-time education.

The Trust does not offer flexi-schooling. We will not agree an arrangement under which a pupil on roll is educated at home for part of the week. Where a parent asks about flexi-schooling, the headteacher will meet them to understand what lies behind the request and to discuss the support the school can put in place so that the pupil attends full time. If a parent decides to educate their child at home, that is a decision to withdraw the child from the school, and section 3.7 applies.

A part-time timetable is different. It will only be used as a short term measure, where it is in the pupil's best interests, and where it forms part of a plan to return the pupil to full-time education.

West Northamptonshire Council refers to these arrangements as reduced timetables, and its guidance, consent form and review templates all use that term.

Where a part-time timetable is used, the school will:

- Agree it with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil, and record it on West Northamptonshire Council's reduced timetable consent form, setting out the rationale, the objectives, the number of teaching hours per day, and the week-by-week pathway back to full-time education.
- Set a clear end date, with the expectation that the pupil returns to full-time education within six weeks, and review the arrangement with the parent at least every six weeks until they do.
- Notify West Northamptonshire Council of every reduced timetable by sending the completed consent form to the school's allocated School Attendance Support Officer, or to the allocated caseworker where the pupil has an EHC plan.
- Name a lead professional responsible for monitoring the plan, and set clear success criteria linked to attendance and engagement.
- Record the views of the pupil and of the parent.
- Complete a risk assessment covering the pupil's safety and wellbeing for the duration of the arrangement, including the risk of exploitation, criminal activity and substance misuse.
- Consider the impact on the pupil's travel to school and on their access to free school meals, and set appropriate work for the time the pupil is not in school, so that the work set and the time in school together constitute a full-time education.
- Record the sessions the pupil is not required to attend using code C2.

4.5 Pupils Unable to Attend Because of Health Needs

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because of physical or mental health needs, we will work with the pupil, their parents, health professionals and the local authority to put the right support in place, including reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

The local authority has a duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable education for pupils who, because of health needs, would not otherwise receive suitable education. We will work with West Northamptonshire Council to make those arrangements where they are needed.

Remote education will only be used as a last resort, for the shortest time possible, and only as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil into face-to-face education. It will not be used as a substitute for attendance, as a way of managing absence, or in place of the support a pupil needs to return to school.

5. Support and Legal Intervention

5.1 Support First

We will always work with families to understand and remove the barriers to attendance before considering legal intervention. Legal intervention will only be used where support has not been appropriate, has not worked, or has not been engaged with. Decisions are made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Our schools make use of the full range of support and, where necessary, the sanctions set out below, all of which are led by West Northamptonshire Council.

5.2 Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, a notice to improve may be issued to give parents a final chance to engage with support before a penalty notice is considered.

Notices to improve are issued in line with the West Northamptonshire Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period, which in West Northamptonshire is normally four weeks.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

A notice to improve is not normally used where the unauthorised absence is a term-time leave of absence that was not granted, because in those cases there is no ongoing pattern of absence for support to address.

5.3 Penalty Notices

In West Northamptonshire, penalty notices for school absence are issued by the local authority. THLT schools do not issue penalty notices. Where the national threshold is met and a penalty notice is the right tool, the school will make a referral to West Northamptonshire Council's School Attendance Support Service in line with the council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

The national threshold, which applies to all schools in England, is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school day is two sessions, morning and afternoon, so 10 sessions is the equivalent of five school days. The sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10 school week period can span different terms or school years.

If you take your child out of school, or your child is otherwise absent without authorisation, for a cumulative total of five school days or more (10 sessions) in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, which is equivalent to attendance of 90% or below over that period, the school will deem this to be irregular attendance and will consider a referral to West Northamptonshire Council for consideration of legal action. Legal action may include:

- A penalty notice of up to £160 per parent, per child, in the amounts set out below.
- Prosecution of a parent under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, where on conviction a parent may be fined up to £1,000.

- Prosecution of a parent under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, where on conviction a parent may be fined up to £2,500, or imprisoned for up to three months, or both.

Whether a pupil has attended regularly is ultimately a matter for the court, decided on the facts of each case. The threshold above is the point at which the school will consider a referral. It does not of itself establish the offence.

Before making a referral, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold has been met.
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil.
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another intervention would be a more appropriate solution.
- Whether any obligations the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may also be issued where a parent allows their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent or parents who allowed the absence.

The amounts below are set nationally and are correct at the date of this policy:

- A first penalty notice is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within three years is £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within three years of the date of the first. Where the national threshold is met for a third time within those three years, no penalty notice will be issued and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court for prosecution.

Payment is made directly to the local authority. If payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to refer the case to the Magistrates' Court for prosecution or withdraw the notice.

Further information on penalty notices is available on West Northamptonshire Council's website at www.westnorthants.gov.uk/attendance-support/penalty-notices-school-non-attendance. The national framework for penalty notices is set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance.

5.4 Other Legal Interventions

Where a penalty notice is not appropriate or has not worked, West Northamptonshire Council may consider:

- Prosecution of the parent under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- An education supervision order, where parents are cooperating but the child is not attending.
- A parenting order, requiring attendance at counselling or guidance sessions.
- A school attendance order, where a child is not registered at a school and is not receiving a suitable education.

The school will provide the evidence and attendance records the local authority requires, and will continue to offer support to the family throughout.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

6.1 Attendance Thresholds and Tiered Support

Below 96%

As the year progresses, if your child's attendance falls below 96%, you may receive an email of notification and a leaflet of signposted support. Please contact the school office if you wish to discuss this further with a member of the attendance team. Your child's attendance will continue to be monitored until they are at 96% or above.

Below 90% (persistent absence)

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, they are considered to be persistently absent. We consider each case individually, knowing our families and individual contexts, and, if appropriate, you may be invited to a Connections Meeting with the attendance team to discuss ways in which we can work together to improve your child's attendance in school.

Below 88%

If your child's attendance falls below 88%, we will follow a tiered approach to support.

Tier 1: You will be invited in to complete a formal action plan alongside school to support you in improving your child's attendance. An Early Help Assessment will be offered to you.

Tier 2: While the action plan is in progress, school will be monitoring trends in your child's attendance. If your child's attendance drops to 85%, you will be invited to a panel meeting with attendance teams where next steps will be discussed.

Tier 3: Despite Tiers 1 and 2, if your child's attendance drops to 80% or below, school will make a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub for external support to improve your child's school attendance. As part of this referral, we will involve the local authority.

Below 50% (severe absence)

If your child's attendance falls below 50%, they are considered to be severely absent. At this point, depending upon the context for such absence, it may become necessary to follow the local authority processes towards legal intervention, alongside continuing and intensive support.

6.2 Pupils Absent Due to Complex Barriers to Attendance

We understand that for some children and families there are complex barriers to attendance, including issues with mental or physical health. In these circumstances, we will work closely with the family to identify the most appropriate support in conjunction with external agencies as required, and formulate an individual support plan.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan, is in care, has a social worker, or is subject to a child protection plan, and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority and any relevant external agencies as part of its safeguarding responsibilities.

We identify young carers and record them in the school census. Where caring responsibilities are affecting a pupil's attendance or punctuality, we will work in partnership with the pupil and their family to understand the barriers and put support in place, including referral to young carers services where appropriate.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence will be supported through a reintegration plan, and a period of phased integration may be arranged.

6.3 Monitoring Attendance

Fortnightly, the senior safeguarding and attendance team will analyse the school attendance data and follow up on any absences or concerns that arise from this meeting. During this meeting, patterns will be analysed, including those of all key vulnerable groups and any additional targeted and identified children within school.

Any specific concerns that arise during these meetings will be discussed with the parents or carers of these children and actions will be set. In these meetings, we will review any children whose attendance has fallen below our thresholds and appropriate action will be taken in line with the procedures in this policy. These meetings also offer the opportunity to celebrate success where attendance or punctuality of individuals or key groups has improved as a result of the actions taken.

Data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the Department for Education's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school benchmarks its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and shares this with the LAB and the Trust.

6.4 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- Pay particular attention to the attendance of key cohorts, including pupils with SEND, pupils with an EHC plan, pupils eligible for free school meals and pupil premium, children with a social worker, children in need, children looked after, young carers, pupils with long term medical or mental health needs, pupils with English as an additional language, and service children.
- Identify attendance patterns across the Trust to identify common issues and barriers, and share effective practice between schools.

6.5 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence, of all severities, of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the LAB and school leaders, including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, the local authority and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

6.6 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, which is attendance below 90%. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school, which is attendance below 50%. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Trust's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping children safe in education.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school, or the local authority, considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
  - Listen to, and understand, barriers to attendance.
  - Explain the help that is available.
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
  - Implement individual support plans and review any existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- Refer for legal intervention, where necessary.

6.7 Working with West Northamptonshire Council

The school works with West Northamptonshire Council's School Attendance Support Service. This includes:

- Taking part in targeted support meetings with the local authority for pupils who are persistently or severely absent, or at risk of becoming so.
- Sharing attendance data and information about individual pupils where appropriate, in line with our data protection policy.
- Making referrals for notices to improve, penalty notices and other legal intervention.
- Working with the local authority on children missing education and on pupils who are unable to attend because of health needs.

7. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and documents:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy.
- Behaviour policy.
- SEND policy and information report.
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy.
- Data protection policy and privacy notices.
- Complaints policy.
- Annex A to this policy, published by each school.

8. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026). The guidance is based on the following legislation, which sets out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996.
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002.
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, most recently by the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2024.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, the provisions of which are being commenced in stages.

It also refers to:

- Keeping children safe in education.
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities.
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance.
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.
- The West Northamptonshire Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

This policy also complies with our Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

9. Annex A: School-specific Information

Each THLT school completes this annex and publishes it on the school website alongside this policy. The LAB checks annually that it is accurate. Annex A records operational detail only; it does not vary this policy.

School	Marie Weller Primary School
Senior attendance champion: name	Mrs Caroline Lewis
Senior attendance champion: role	Deputy Headteacher and Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead
Senior attendance champion: email	clewis@mwps.thlt.academy
Senior attendance champion: telephone	01327 552400
Headteacher	Mr Dan Cox
Designated safeguarding lead	Mrs Caroline Lewis, Lead DSL. Deputy DSLs: Mr Dan Cox, Mrs Nicki Wilson, Miss Jess Bloxham and Ms Andrea Curtis.
Reporting an absence: telephone	01327 552400, before 9.00am on each day of absence
Reporting an absence: email	enquiries@mwps.thlt.academy

The school day and register times

Gates open	8.30am
Start of the school day	8.45am
Morning register taken at	8.45am, at the same time for all children
Morning register closes at	9.00am, 15 minutes after opening
Afternoon register taken at	12.45pm for Reception to Year 2. 1.15pm for Years 3 to 5.
Afternoon register closes at	1.00pm for Reception to Year 2. 1.30pm for Years 3 to 5. 15 minutes after opening in each case.
End of the school day	3.15pm

The register for each session must be kept open for the same length of time and for no longer than 30 minutes, and must be taken at the same time for all pupils.

At Marie Weller the afternoon register is taken at two different times because lunch is staggered. Reception to Year 2 take lunch from 11.45am to 12.45pm and Years 3 to 5 from 12.15pm to 1.15pm, so the afternoon session begins 30 minutes apart for the two key stages. Each register is open for 15 minutes. The school has recorded this with the Trust and will review the lunch timings.

Local authority	West Northamptonshire Council, School Attendance Support Service
Annex last updated	1 September 2026
Checked by LAB on	Not yet checked. Due at the Local Academy Board meeting on 21 January 2027.

10. Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the Department for Education's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before the register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit or trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent: leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment, paid or unpaid, during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical or dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer or educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent: other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child who is travelling with their parent or parents who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness, either related to physical or mental health
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent: unable to attend school because of an unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within

		walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly, for example due to adverse weather
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are in police detention, remanded to youth detention awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent: unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of the session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Applying the codes

- Codes B, V, P, W and K are only used where the school is satisfied that the off-site activity is supervised, educational, and actually taking place. These pupils are counted as present for statistical purposes, so the codes must not be used where a pupil's whereabouts are not known.
- Code D is only used for a session where the pupil is due to attend the other setting at which they are registered. Each school records its own sessions; the school the pupil is not attending in that session uses code D.
- Code Q is only used where the local authority has failed to make the access arrangements a pupil needs, for example transport that the local authority is required to provide.
- Code Y6 is only used where attendance or travel is prohibited by public health guidance or law. It is not used for a pupil who is unwell; code I is used for illness.
- Code U is used where a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session. The pupil is in school, but the session counts as unauthorised absence.

- Codes G, N, O and U are recorded as unauthorised absence in the statistics. Code N must be resolved as soon as the reason for the absence is established and must not be left in place.
- The Trust does not offer flexi-schooling, so no code is used for it. See section 4.4.

11. Appendix 2: THLT Absence Flowchart

Please refer to the separate document titled THLT Absence Flowchart, which is available to download from your school website.