



## The Quest Academy

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## **Section 1 Vision and Scope**

At The Collegiate Trust, our mission is to collaborate to deliver an *Exceptional Education for All* and our schools share a common belief that this comprises an academically rigorous curriculum, the opportunities for pupils to engage in creative and cultural learning and the development of personal skills and qualities that will enable future success.

Our strong culture of ambition, focussed clearly on **PEOPLE** and **LEARNING**, ensures the best interests of all those in our communities are always at the heart of our decision-making.

We know that being in school allows pupils to learn and achieve well and also provides them with very important social interaction with their peers. It creates a vital sense of community and belonging. Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school, and to establish positive life habits that are necessary for future success.

This policy aims to outline the mechanisms at school level to support attendance through a child's school career.

## **Section 2 Links to other Policies and Guidance**

### **2.1 School Policies**

### **2.2 Trust Policies**

[TCT Safeguarding Policy](#)

### **2.3 Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

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

## **Section 3 Roles and Responsibilities**

All members of staff within our school have a role to play in valuing good attendance and promoting the welfare of children. All staff should notify the DSL if they are concerned about patterns of non-attendance for a child at the

school. At The Collegiate Trust, attendance matters to all stakeholders, and we have carefully identified staff and leaders with specific roles and responsibilities below.

### **3.1 Parents/carers**

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time.
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before (see school procedures in Appendix 3) on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Ensure that no holidays are booked during term time.
- Schools will work with parents and carers to proactively support this collective responsibility.

### **3.2 School admin staff**

- Will take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Will transfer calls from parents/carers to relevant colleagues in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.
- Make an attendance return to the local authority if the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U)
- Working with the LA to add new pupils and deletion returns
  - A clear record of any register amendments (showing date, reason, and person making the change)

### **3.3 School tutor/class teacher**

- All class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- These colleagues should be the first point of contact should the school need to be aware of any need or support required for the child to enable them to be in school.

### **3.4 School's Attendance Champion**

#### **Strategic Leadership:**

- Develop and implement a whole-school attendance strategy aligned with the school's improvement plan.
- Lead and manage the attendance team, providing guidance and support to ensure effective delivery of attendance initiatives.
- Ensure that attendance is a priority across the school, with clear expectations communicated to staff, students, and parents.
- Regularly review and refine attendance procedures in collaboration with SLT to ensure best practices are followed.

#### **Data Management and Analysis:**

- Monitor and analyse attendance data to identify patterns and trends, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups such as students with special educational needs, those eligible for free school meals, and children in need.
- Provide regular attendance reports to SLT and governors, highlighting areas of concern and progress.
- Utilise data to inform targeted interventions and track their effectiveness.

**Intervention and Support:**

- Develop and implement intervention strategies for students at risk of persistent absence, including personalised support plans.
- Coordinate and lead attendance panels, involving parents, students, and relevant staff to address attendance issues.
- Liaise with external agencies, such as local authority attendance teams and social services, to provide additional support where necessary.
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns related to attendance are promptly addressed in line with school policies.

**Communication and Engagement:**

- Establish and maintain effective communication channels with parents and carers regarding attendance expectations and concerns.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance through school newsletters, meetings, and events.
- Work collaboratively with pastoral and safeguarding teams to support students facing barriers to attendance.

**Compliance and Legal Procedures:**

- Ensure accurate and timely completion of attendance registers and codes, adhering to statutory requirements. Attendance codes should be finalised within 5 working days.
- Manage/oversee the legal process for pupil with poor attendance, including working with WPA to issuing penalty notices and liaising with local authorities as required.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of attendance legislation and ensure school policies are compliant.

**3.5 Education Attendance Service WPA**

- Regular monitoring of absence levels across the whole school, and at individual pupil level, particularly persistent absentees (PA) and vulnerable groups
- Lead school-based strategies and interventions – meetings in school, re-integration programmes, meetings with parents, report and monitoring systems
- Visit parents at their home address to increase engagement or to investigate safeguarding concerns – announced and unannounced.
- Complete and request Penalty Notices in line with the Local Authority and DfE Protocols.
- Meet regularly with school staff to review attendance and agree action plan towards improvements.
- Provide advice and guidance on the school’s attendance processes and share good practice.
- Support the school in identifying the attendance of vulnerable groups and recommending actions for improvement.
- Complete documentation for cases to be progressed to the Local Authority for consideration of legal proceedings.
- Refer to social care and other supporting agencies when necessary.
- Attend multi-agency meetings for cases open to the EWO as required.
- Provide reports to the school summarising attendance data and EWO casework.

**3.6 Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- Closely monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups, especially children in public care, children on the Child Protection Register, young offenders, and pupils with high mobility factors.

- Inform a pupil's social worker or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

### **3.7 SENDCO**

- Work in partnership with parents/carers to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Provide SLT with timely information about attendance of pupils with SEND.
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

### **3.8 Principal<sup>1</sup>**

- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Implement this policy at the school.
- Ensure that attendance is discussed weekly at SLT meetings
- Monitor school-level absence data and reporting it to governors half termly
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **3.9 LGB**

- Ensure each TCT school has an attendance policy that meets DfE requirements and is reviewed annually.
- Support school leaders to record attendance accurately in the register (see Appendix 1) and share the required information with DfE and local authorities.
- Work effectively with local partners to help remove the barriers to attendance that go beyond the school gates, including building strong links with local statutory services (including social care, health and police) and the voluntary and community sector.
- Ensure each pupil has at least two emergency contact numbers.
- To identify and monitor attendance patterns across the schools to identify common issues and barriers.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Paying particular attention to attendance of pupil cohorts within their school that have historically had poor attendance or that face entrenched barriers to attendance. This should be specific to the school's context, but may include pupils who have a social worker, are from a background or ethnicity where attendance has historically been low, have a long-term medical condition, special educational needs or a disability, or are eligible for free school meals.
- Will have a member of the LBG who champions attendance at school level.

### **3.10 Trust Board**

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<sup>1</sup> From hereafter, all references to Principal will include Head of School/ Executive Principal. Where necessary, the responsibility assigned to the Principal will instead be assigned to the Executive Principal or Head of School, as appropriate.

- Regularly reviewing attendance data at board meetings. This should include thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the trust, local authority area, region and nationwide.
- Recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare. This can be achieved by prioritising attendance in strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour and combatting bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Paying particular attention to attendance of pupil cohorts within their school(s) that have historically had poor attendance or that face entrenched barriers to attendance. This should be specific to the school's context, but may include pupils who have a social worker, are from a background or ethnicity where attendance has historically been low, have a long-term medical condition, special educational needs or a disability, or are eligible for free school meals.
- To identify and monitor attendance patterns across the Trust schools to identify common issues and barriers and to share effective practice between schools.
- Will have a Trustee who champions attendance across the Trust.

The Collegiate Trust have a **Trust Educational Psychologist** who will work with families to understand the causes or barriers to attendance. School leaders will direct this support, where needed and necessary.

#### **Section 4 Absence – planned and unplanned**

Every half-day absence from school must be recorded and classified with a code by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can make this decision and record it. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required. Acceptable reasons for a child's absence from school can include sickness, hospital appointments, recognised religious holidays and funerals. Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of the school day, if possible. Where this is not possible, we would expect pupils to miss only part of the day.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

If parents or carers need to remove their child from the school for any reason, they must complete an *Application for Pupil Leave of Absence Request form* (See **Appendix 2**). No absences for holidays should be authorised, unless in extreme or exceptional circumstances. Permission for absence will only be given if there are extenuating circumstances.

The Principal will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
  - Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
  - Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
  - Attending provision arranged by the local authority
  - Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

For more information see **Appendix 1 Attendance Codes**

### **Section 5 Persistent and severe absence**

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), this is known as persistent absence.

Severe absence is when a pupil misses 50% or more of school. This level of absence will be impactful in terms of educational outcomes and social/ peer group interaction.

Schools will work to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. The Trust Educational Psychologist will work with schools and relevant services for severely absent pupils, to make this group the top priority for support. Some of these pupils may be finding it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. The school will work in partnership with parents/ carers and the pupil to understand any perceived barriers to support pupils to be in school.

Referrals for a full children's social care assessment will be made if all avenues of support and intervention have been implemented, but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.

Re-integration following **Long-term Absence**. Where a pupil has been absent for a prolonged period, perhaps due to illness, the school will:

- Welcome the pupil back to the school and value their return.
- Provide support for the pupil in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the school.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return, if appropriate.
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the pupil's return.

### **Section 6 Why attendance matters**

We know that being in school allows pupils to learn and achieve well and also provides them with very important social interaction with their peers. It creates a vital sense of community and belonging.

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school, and to establish positive life habits that are necessary for future success.

Through regular attendance, pupils can:

- Build friendships and allow young people to feel part of a community
- Develop life skills and self-discipline
- Engage in learning and enjoy academic success
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour or feeling isolated.

We should not underestimate the importance of excellent attendance and being punctual. Even one day missed can have a negative effect on learning:

Getting 90% in a test or examination would normally be considered a good result. In attendance terms, however, having around 90% attendance can have damaging consequences for a young person's future. The government call this group of pupils **persistently absent**. Friendships can be affected by **persistent absence**, too: it can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their classmates.

At The Collegiate Trust, our goal is for all our pupils to have good attendance, even when they are experiencing challenging circumstances. Through effective support and working closely with families, we can ensure every child maximises their opportunities.

The table below provides an example of the impact of lost learning through pupil absence with a focus **on days lost**:

Attendance %	Number of days absent	Approximate weeks of absence
95%	9.5	2
90%	19	4
80%	38	8
70%	57	12

### **Section 7 How can school help?**

Although school has a responsibility to liaise closely with the Local Authority (LA) and provide information which may be required to support legal action, our aim is to prevent this from being necessary. At The Collegiate Trust, we pride ourselves on our ability to support families and help young people to succeed. We have the will and expertise to help and even in specialist circumstances where we are unable to help, we can signpost you to the right services and support you in this process. If you are experiencing difficulties with your child, and you haven't kept school informed, please pick up the phone and ask to speak to a member of staff – we are here to support you and we want to listen.

### **Section 8 How parents/ carers can support?**

As a Trust, we firmly believe in an '*Exceptional Education for All*' and this involves removing any barriers to attendance and working closely with families to support.

What can parents do to support:

- Support your child in developing healthy routines and habits around sleep so that they can be punctual to school.
- Teach your child that attending school is essential for future success and for building peer group relationships.
- Support your child in identifying extra-curricular activities at school that link to an area of personal interest.
- Speak to an appropriate member of staff if there are any perceived barriers in your child attending school.

### **Section 9 How we monitor Attendance**

Individual schools monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. They identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and consider what supportive/preventative mechanisms will be implemented.

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

This information is disseminated at Trust Board level to recognise any patterns, trends or areas for support.

### **Section 10 How we analyse Attendance**

The school will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. They will look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

The school will provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. They will use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

This information is disseminated at Trust Board level to recognise any patterns, trends or areas for support.

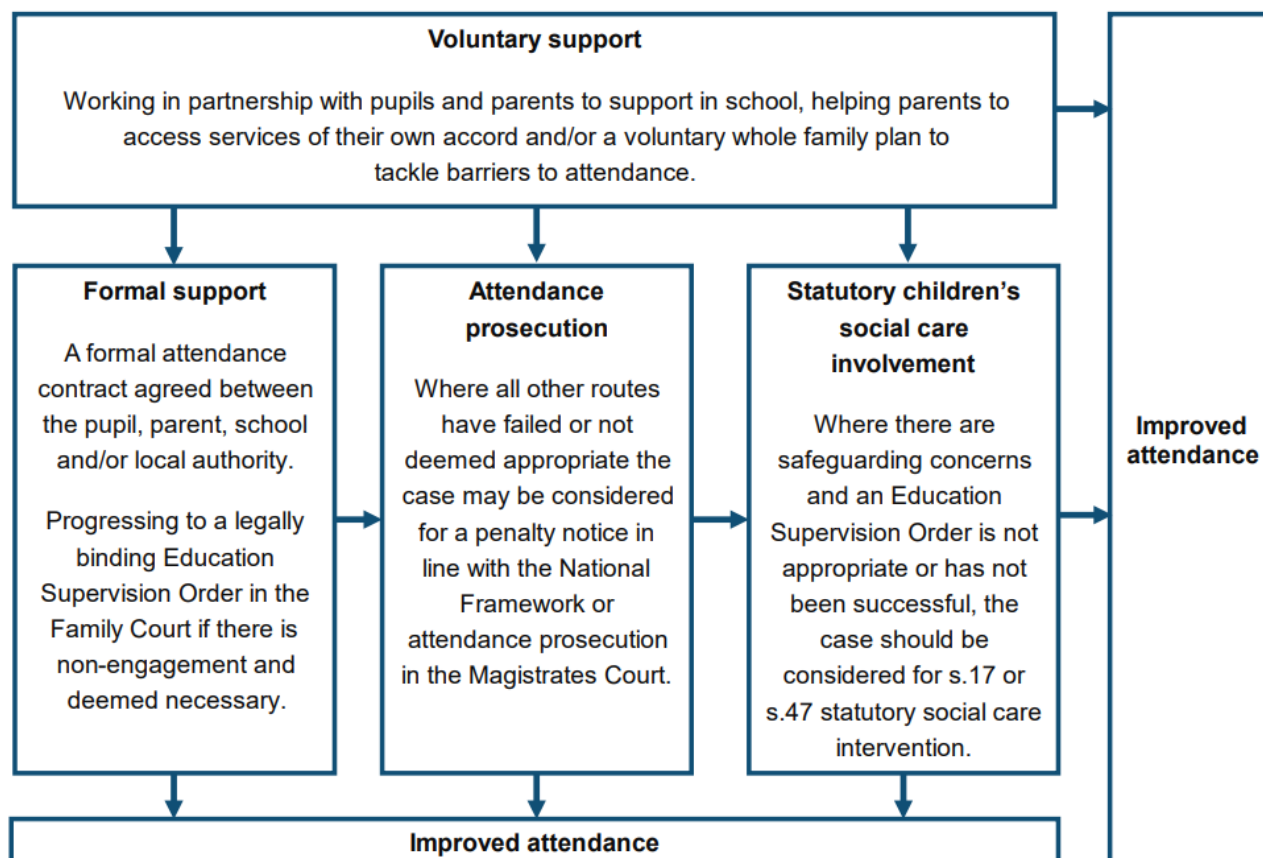
### **Section 11 Escalation Processes**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, all children of compulsory school age (between 5-16) must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring that this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making appropriate alternative arrangements. A parent who fails in this duty is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of this act.

A child is of compulsory school age when they are five and ceases to be on the last Friday in June of the school year in which he/she reaches their 16th birthday.

Once you have registered your child at a school, you are also legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. If you fail to do this – even if your child truants without your knowledge – legal action can be taken against you by the Local Authority.

## Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



For more information about escalation processes – see link below:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

**No more than two penalty notices should be issued before escalating to other interventions**

### 11.1 Attendance Contracts

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence. There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but TCT schools will always explore an attendance contract before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.

The aim from the outset should be for the parent/ carer, and the pupil where they are old enough, the school and the local authority to work in partnership. Where a school and/or local authority decide to use an attendance contract, a meeting should be arranged with the parent(s). It should include the pupil if they are old enough to understand. The meeting should explain the purpose of an attendance contract and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances. The parent(s) should be asked to outline their views on the pupil's attendance at school, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting should also allow them to share their views on the idea of an attendance contract and what type of support they think would be helpful to secure the pupil's regular attendance. Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts should be made to contact them and arrange another meeting but all attempts at support should be recorded.

Failure by the parent, school, or local authority to keep to the terms of the attendance contract cannot lead to action for breach of contract or for civil damages. There is no criminal sanction for a parent's failure to comply with, or refusal

to sign, an attendance contract. If the pupil's irregular attendance continues or escalates to the point where prosecution is deemed appropriate, however, any failure or refusal may be presented as evidence in the case. It is therefore important that any non-compliance with the contract is recorded so that it can be presented in court if necessary.

**See Appendix 5 for example of sample Attendance Contract.**

### **11.2 Education Supervision Orders**

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner should also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, local authorities must fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

See section 155 onwards for the ESO process:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/124444/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)

### **11.3 Attendance Prosecution**

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.

Local authorities have the power to prosecute:

- Parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order issued by the local authority to require a parent to get their child registered at a named school (under section 443 of the Education Act 1996). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).
- Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the 53 child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

### **11.4 Parenting Orders**

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be

appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. All parenting orders must specify a 'responsible officer' which will be named on the order. This should be the most appropriate lead practitioner working with the family.

### **11.5 Penalty Notices and National Threshold**

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence.

A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence). Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority.

Where a penalty notice is issued by someone other than a local authority officer, the person issuing the penalty notice is expected to check with the local authority before doing so and must also send them copies of any penalty notices issued.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

### **National Threshold**

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term). It is up to the TCT school to consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

### **No more than two penalty notices should be issued before escalating to other interventions**

**If a TCT school becomes aware that the threshold has been reached, they will make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case.**

- Is support appropriate in this case? If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a **Notice to Improve** if that support is not working or is not being engaged with.

**A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked. If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.**

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?

## **Section 12 Modified timetables/ Part time timetables**

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. If this strategy is being used the TCT Paperwork, including risk assessments, will be utilised and kept under review. The modified timetable will:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

## **Section 13 Elective Home Education**

Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents/carers to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time. This is different to education provided by a local authority other than at a school, for example for children who are too ill to attend school.

Deciding to educate your child at home instead of sending him or her to school is a step which should not be taken lightly. It will mean a major commitment of your time, energy and money. Think hard before making a final decision. It is especially important that you as parents/carers consider the nature of the education you intend to provide for your child before you begin to teach him or her at home. Think about the curriculum you will provide, and whether it will allow your child to reach his or her potential now and, in the future, including whether you expect your child to sit public examinations such as GCSEs or not. Also consider whether home education is in your child's overall best interests, including their social development

[Elective home education: guide for parents \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

If parents/ carers wish to educate their child at home, please contact the school in the first instance to formally discuss this request. This is particularly important for children in years 10 and 11 who are already preparing for public examinations. It is also unwise to consider temporary home education as a means of getting your child into a school other than the one he or she is currently registered at.

## Appendix 1 Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE'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 register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
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/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
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
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/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/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

<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent - Unauthorised Absence</b>		

<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

## **Appendix 2 Application for Pupil Leave of Absence**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that a Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Principal should determine the number of school days a child can be absent from school if the leave is granted. Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- Leave for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Leave to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time. Students may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Leave for important religious observances but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Leave which takes the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Leave which makes reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Leave for families who may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

The Principal will take into account a pupil's previous record of attendance when making decisions. It is important to note that the Principal can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether the absence is authorised at all. This form should be completed to enable the Headteacher to decide whether to authorise the application for leave. Authorising leave from the school is at the discretion of the Principal. If the leave is taken without the authorisation of the Principal, a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence may be issued.

### **Parental application**

<b>Name of pupil</b>	
<b>Name of TCT School</b>	
<b>Year Group</b>	
<b>Reason and dates</b>	
Parent/ Carer Name and Signature	<b>Name:</b>  <b>Signature:</b>
<b><u>Office use</u></b>	<b>Attendance percentage</b>  <b>Recommendation of Senior Attendance Lead</b>  <b>Agreed – circle YES/ NO</b>

**Response**

Dear Parent/ Carer

Your requested leave of absence has been:

**AGREED**

**NOT AGREED**

Comments:

If leave is taken without authorisation then legal action for unauthorised absence may be pursued.

Signed

Principal/ Head of School.....

Date.....

### Appendix 3 School Procedures

The time school starts and when pupils should arrive in school.
The Glass Gates open at 08:00am and students should be at Quest Welcome by 08:40am.
The time the morning register is taken and when a pupil is counted as being late.
Morning register is taken at 08:45am, any time after that is late.
The time the register closes and when a pupil is marked absent
09:15am.
The time that the afternoon register is taken
Afternoon register is taken at 1:25pm (Period 4).
How parents/ carers should report an absence to the school. Include name of the Attendance Officer and phone number
Call the Main School number on: 020 8657 8935 <b>or</b> Email: <a href="mailto:Attendance@thequestacademy.org.uk">Attendance@thequestacademy.org.uk</a>
How attendance is reported to parents/carers
Attendance is reported half-termly as part of a student's academic report.  Alternatively, a parent can request an update from their child's form tutor.
How the school will follow up on unplanned and unreported absence – calls home/ texts/ home visits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. On the first day of an unreported absence, the Attendance Coordinator will send an email and text message to the parent/carer requesting further information regarding the student's absence.</li><li>2. If no response is received by the following school day, the Pastoral Assistant will complete an 'O Code Call' between 9:15am and 10:15am. If contact is still not established, an O Code letter will be sent via email.</li><li>3. If no response is received within three school days, a home visit may be undertaken by a member of the Year Team, Safeguarding Team, Pastoral Team or the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).</li><li>4. Where there are safeguarding concerns, the school reserves the right to conduct a home visit or request a welfare check at any stage of this process.</li></ol> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for O Code Operational Procedure</p>
Strategies for promoting 100% attendance and punctuality including rewards, sanctions, meetings with parents/ carers etc
<p><b>100% Lunch</b> (Half-Termly) - The 100% Lunch is a half-termly attendance reward that recognises students who have achieved 100% attendance during a Half-Term. Students are invited to an exclusive celebration lunch, hosted by members of the Senior Leadership Team. As part of the event, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receive a bespoke 100% Attendance Badge.</li><li>• Receive a certificate of recognition presented by SLT.</li><li>• Leave their lesson 30 minutes early to attend the event.</li><li>• Enjoy a special lunch in the canteen, which is reserved exclusively for qualifying students.</li><li>• Are served food at formally laid tables to create a memorable and prestigious experience.</li></ul>

The initiative aims to celebrate excellent attendance, reinforce positive habits and recognise the commitment students make to attending school every day.

At The Quest Academy, we believe that excellent attendance should be recognised and celebrated, and the 100% Lunch provides students with a tangible reward for their dedication and consistency.

Attendance is also a key part of the school's 'Four Star Standard' which prioritises students for rewards trips and is instrumental in their ability to represent the school.

#### Processes for dealing with truancy

Students who truant from lessons will receive a 2-hour Senior Leadership Team (SLT) detention, which takes place every Friday. Parents/carers will be informed of the incident. A second incident of truancy will result in an Internal Suspension, a formal meeting with parents/carers and the student being placed on a Conduct Report to monitor their attendance to lessons, punctuality and behaviour.

Repeated incidents may result in further sanctions and interventions in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Details on who parents/ careers should contact if there are areas that the school can support in – form tutor, key stage leader, member of SLT, family liaison officer or TCT Educational Psychologist

In the first instance parents deal with a student's form tutor. If attendance issues become more severe or need to be escalated in any way it can be escalated up through the chain of: Attendance Coordinator (Stage 01), Pastoral Assistant (Stage 02) and the Head of Year / Assistant Principal (Stage 03).

Over and above this we have our Safeguarding Team who can intervene on a number of levels, include in attendance support, and our Education Welfare Officer (Stage 04), who takes on a number of cases across the school year.

#### Name and contact details of the school's attendance champion

**Mr Joshua Henry** (Assistant Principal)  
[jhenry@thequestacademy.org.uk](mailto:jhenry@thequestacademy.org.uk)

## **Appendix 4 Staged Process for decision making**

The Quest Academy adopts a graduated approach to attendance intervention, ensuring concerns are identified early and support is provided in a timely and proportionate manner. Attendance is reviewed regularly, with students progressing through stages where attendance continues to decline despite previous intervention.

### **Stage 01 (93% - 95%) – The Attendance Coordinator**

When attendance falls between 93% and 95%, the Attendance Coordinator reviews the student's attendance and sends a Stage 1 notification letter to parents or carers. This letter explains that attendance has dropped below the school's expected level, reminds families of reporting procedures and offers support where barriers may be affecting attendance. At this stage, medical evidence is not routinely required, although it may be requested if illness absence becomes frequent or prolonged.

[Click here](#) for Stage 01 Operational Procedure

### **Stage 02 (90% - 92%) – The Pastoral Assistant**

If attendance falls further to between 90% and 92%, a Pastoral Assistant contacts home and arranges a formal attendance meeting within three days. At this stage, an attendance contract is completed and targeted support is discussed. This may include strategies such as mentoring, a soft start, family early help, or other pastoral interventions designed to improve attendance and remove barriers to learning.

[Click here](#) for Stage 02 Operational Procedure

### **Stage 03 (87% - 89%) – The Head of Year / Assistant Principal**

If attendance drops to between 87% and 89%, a meeting is held with the Head of Year or Assistant Principal. This follows the earlier pastoral meeting and attendance contract, which are reviewed and strengthened as needed. Additional support is considered, and families are asked to provide relevant evidence, such as medical documentation or appointment letters. If attendance declines further, the case may be referred onwards for more formal involvement.

[Click here](#) for Stage 03 Operational Procedure

### **Stage 04 (86% and below) – The Educational Welfare Officer**

When attendance reaches 86% or below, the Educational Welfare Officer becomes involved. A formal meeting is arranged urgently, previous interventions are reviewed and further action may be considered in line with statutory guidance if attendance does not improve. At this stage, the school continues to work with families while also making clear the seriousness of continued absence.

[Click here](#) for Stage 04 Operational Procedure

## Appendix 5 Attendance Contract

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. This should be written in conjunction with the local authority.

Attendance **below 90%** statistically puts students in the bracket of failing to achieve 5 good passes at GCSE. Attendance is the single biggest factor to a student's academic outcomes.

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	
<b>Time of Meeting:</b>	

<b>Student Name:</b>			
<b>Date of Birth:</b>			
<b>Year Group:</b>		<b>Tutor Group:</b>	

<b>Current Attendance:</b>		<b>Day's Missed:</b>	
<b>Reason for Meeting:</b>			

Attendance Certificate attached

<b>Agreed Actions:</b> <i>Examples Overleaf</i>	
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<b>Attendance Target:</b>	No more days absent this half term, without medical evidence.
<b>Timescale for Improvement:</b>	6 Weeks

<b>Date for Review Meeting:</b>	
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<b>Parent/Carer:</b>	
<b>Pupil:</b>	

## **Non-compliance with an attendance contract**

The school and/or local authority should work in partnership with the parent to gain their cooperation and compliance throughout the attendance contract process.

Where a parent does not comply with the requirements set out in the attendance contract, the lead practitioner should contact the parent and seek an explanation and decide whether it is reasonable, and the attendance contract remains useful. If the explanation shows that the attendance contract is proving difficult to comply with through no fault of the parent, then a meeting should be arranged with the parent to review and amend it. Where no explanation is given, or the lead practitioner is not satisfied with the explanation, they should serve the parent with a warning to explain that the attendance contract is not working and may be terminated, and another course of action pursued, if the parent does not engage. This may be in the form of a letter, and record of it should be kept.

If there are further instances of non-compliance, they should arrange a meeting with the parent to review the attendance contract and discuss how it can be made to work. Following this meeting, the school and/or local authority should decide whether the non-compliance is undermining the contract to the extent that it is no longer useful in which case an alternative course of action (such as a different legal intervention) would need to be decided upon. The decision and reasons should be recorded.

Failure by the parent, school, or local authority to keep to the terms of the attendance contract cannot lead to action for breach of contract or for civil damages. There is no criminal sanction for a parent's failure to comply with, or refusal to sign, an attendance contract. If the pupil's irregular attendance continues or escalates to the point where prosecution is deemed appropriate, however, any failure or refusal may be presented as evidence in the case. It is therefore important that any non-compliance with the contract is recorded so that it can be presented in court if necessary.

[Click here](#) to webpage (Attendance and Punctuality)