

Attendance Policy

Maple Tree is a kind and positive school that models respect and embraces diversity - where everyone feels safe and is encouraged to be the best they can be.

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1. Introduction and Aims

Maple Tree Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of

every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

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

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality by setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Acting early to address patterns of absence and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the 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 school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's 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
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising another senior leader to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, 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

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as 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 evaluating progress in attendance
- 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/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Amy Hyde who can be contacted via the school office: 01767 699806 or teacher@mapletreepriamaryschool.com.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher or other senior leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance administrator is Mrs Lynne Fowler who can be contacted via the school office: 01767 699806 or office@mapletreeprimaryschool.com

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enabling the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual pupils by recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance and/or Inclusion Lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent/carer, it refers to the adult the school and/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 (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time – if after 9am, parents must bring their child(ren) to the office for signing in.
- Report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence to the school (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 child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and evidence of appointments is sent to the school office via email to office@mapletreeprimaryschool.com
- Not book holidays during term time unless under exceptional circumstances which need to be authorised by the headteacher.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the designated senior leader for attendance, Amy Hyde who can be contacted via the school office: 01767 699806 or teacher@mapletreeprimaryschool.com.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and arrive by 8:55am (Years 5 and 6 by 8:45am)
- Understand that only 'real' illness can be a reason for absence.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning of each school day and once at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of the afternoon session (EYFS - Year 2 1pm, Years 3-4 1.15pm, Years 5-6 1.30pm) and will be kept open until 20 minutes after the register time. Should a child be late, the number of minutes late will also be recorded in the register.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer 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 the school office staff (see also section 7).

If the office does not hear from the parent/carer and your child is absent, a message will be sent to you asking you to ring the office to provide reasons. This will be done daily for all pupils in Year 5 and

6 who walk to school on a daily basis as a safeguarding measure unless the parent/carer has contacted the school on that day.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/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. Parents/Carers must provide a screenshot of the appointment as evidence for the attendance officer.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Maple Tree actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils.

- 5 minutes of lateness every day = 3 days of school lost a year.
- 10 minutes of lateness every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year.
- 15 minutes of lateness every day = 10 days of school lost a year.
- 20 minutes of lateness every day = 13 days of school lost a year.
- 30 minutes of lateness every day = 19 days of school lost a year.

On-going and repeated lates (U code) are unauthorised absences and maybe be subject to legal action.

Parents/carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved.

If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

4.5 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/carer 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 will notify the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and may carry out a doorstep visit/contact the police etc.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer. Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/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: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Maple Tree Primary School will report their child's yearly attendance figure through the annual school report. Attendance will also be reported at Parents' Evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms. Should there be concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality contact will be made with the family as appropriate (as outlined in this policy).

4.7 Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Maple Tree Primary School, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence

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

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

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. **All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed.** The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives with, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Central Bedfordshire Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

5.2 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. The headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, or unavoidable events which could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Circumstances where absences may be regarded as exceptional will vary from school to school and family to family.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 5 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Personal illness (excessive or extended absences will require medical evidence)
- Medical Appointment (copy of appointment to be seen and copied)
- Family bereavement
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to a child's health and safety
- Religious observance (where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart)
- A travelling child's absence (Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – 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)
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Reasons an absence is **unauthorised**:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc.)
- Leave of absence which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of the time agreed by the school
- Special occasions, such as birthdays
- Minding siblings
- Parent/carer or sibling illness
- Family holidays in term time
- Resting after a late night

- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Overlaps with the beginning of term

Unauthorised absence from school is considered truancy. This can take the form of absence from school for complete days or lateness. Each of these is as serious as the other, but the strategies for effecting change may need to be different.

Exceptional circumstances

Special reasons or exceptional circumstances that may be agreed to are:

- A dying relative in a different country
- A family funeral in another country/ part of the country
- Holidays for fostering or adoption purposes
- Religious observance
- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during normal school holiday times. (Evidence must be provided to this effect)

The school is therefore unable to authorise absence because of:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- Another sibling in another school where the holidays do not coincide
- A special treat for the child
- Absences which have not been explained

When deciding on the authorisation the following will also be taken into account:

- If the child's attendance is above the school's target of 97%;
- If there have been any other holiday requests during the same school year. (There must be only one request for the academic year);
- Should the application not be authorised and the holiday is taken, the Education Welfare Service in consultation with the school may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted but this must not exceed 10 days.

5.3 Children Missing in Education

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Central Bedfordshire County Council.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).

- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Maple Tree Primary School, we truly believe that every school day counts towards your child's future. Days off school add up to lost enjoyment, achievement and learning. We appreciate it when families use the 175 non-school days a year for time together, family visits, holidays, days out and routine appointments where possible.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between educational achievement and absence levels.
- Higher absence can lead to lower achievement.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to maintain.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders find transition points easier to manage.

The school provides regular information to parents about the importance of excellent attendance, through the website, school newsletters, a termly attendance leaflet and other forms of communication.

High levels of attendance are celebrated regularly, including the issuing of attendance bear to the class with the highest attendance each week, sharing the top 3 classes attendance each half term in the school newsletter and termly attendance certificates for individual children.

Where we have concerns about the attendance of a child we will communicate swiftly with parents/carers in order to highlight the issue and offer support and guidance in how to improve attendance.

7. Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health Service, Early Help Worker/Social Worker/Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Child meeting (TAC) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the

additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance: Amy Hyde, deputy head, who can be contacted via the school office: 01767 699806 or teacher@mapletreeprimaryschool.com.

7.1 Local Authority attendance support services

Local Authority School Attendance Officers work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

8. Attendance monitoring

The pupil administrator monitors pupil absence on a daily basis, regardless of whether the child is of statutory school age or non-statutory school age.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

The school asks that you inform us each day during the absence of the child. The pupil administrator will also complete thorough attendance monitoring once each half term. This will monitor trends in attendance and identify children causing concern. She will discuss her findings with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and actions will be put in place if required.

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 governing board.

8.2 Analysing 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

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 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 severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- 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, local authorities 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

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school'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 (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Follow the protocol on the School Attendance Staged Intervention Flowchart (see Appendix) which will show when letters, meetings and closer monitoring will be used.

9. Education of Pupils with Medical Needs

In response to the guidance – Access to Education for Children & Young People with Medical Needs, DfES 0732/2001 – Maple Tree Primary School recognises its responsibilities 'for all pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons. Young persons should be able to access education without stigma or exclusion.' The school's aim is to ensure pupils have access to as much education as their medical condition allows.

Pupils covered by this may:

- Be recovering from an illness or injury, keeping the pupil away from school during recovery
- Have a long term or recurring illness
- Have an illness or clinically defined mental health disorder which causes them to be absent for a period in excess of 15 days, where medical opinion states they are still unable to access mainstream school.
- The Head Teacher will meet with parents when a child requires support with their education and attention due to medical needs.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by the designated senior leader. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour policy
- Children with Medical Needs

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
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/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/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
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(s) 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 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 (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 isn't 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 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

Appendix 2: Absence Protocol

First Day Response

A child not arriving at school where the parents have not informed the school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- On the first day of absence parents/carers are expected to contact the school, preferably by study bugs or telephone before 9.00 am.
- The parent/carer reporting the absence should give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return.
- If the date of the return is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the school; if the school receives no contact a member of the office team will inform the Headteacher.
- If further contact cannot be made with parents/carers, then staff will visit the home to make contact.

If your child is absent:

- We will send a message through study bugs or Parentmail in the first instance requesting you to make contact with the office, we will then telephone you every day whilst the child is absent – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- If absence is long term or there are ongoing issues about illness, parents/carers will be invited in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or member of SLT.
- We will refer the matter to the Central Bedfordshire Council's Access and Inclusion Service if absence is unauthorised and doesn't meet school expectations.

Third Day Absence

Please note: if your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carer, after three days of absence the school is required to consider implementing the child missing in education procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council.

We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to know friends, wider family and visiting the home.

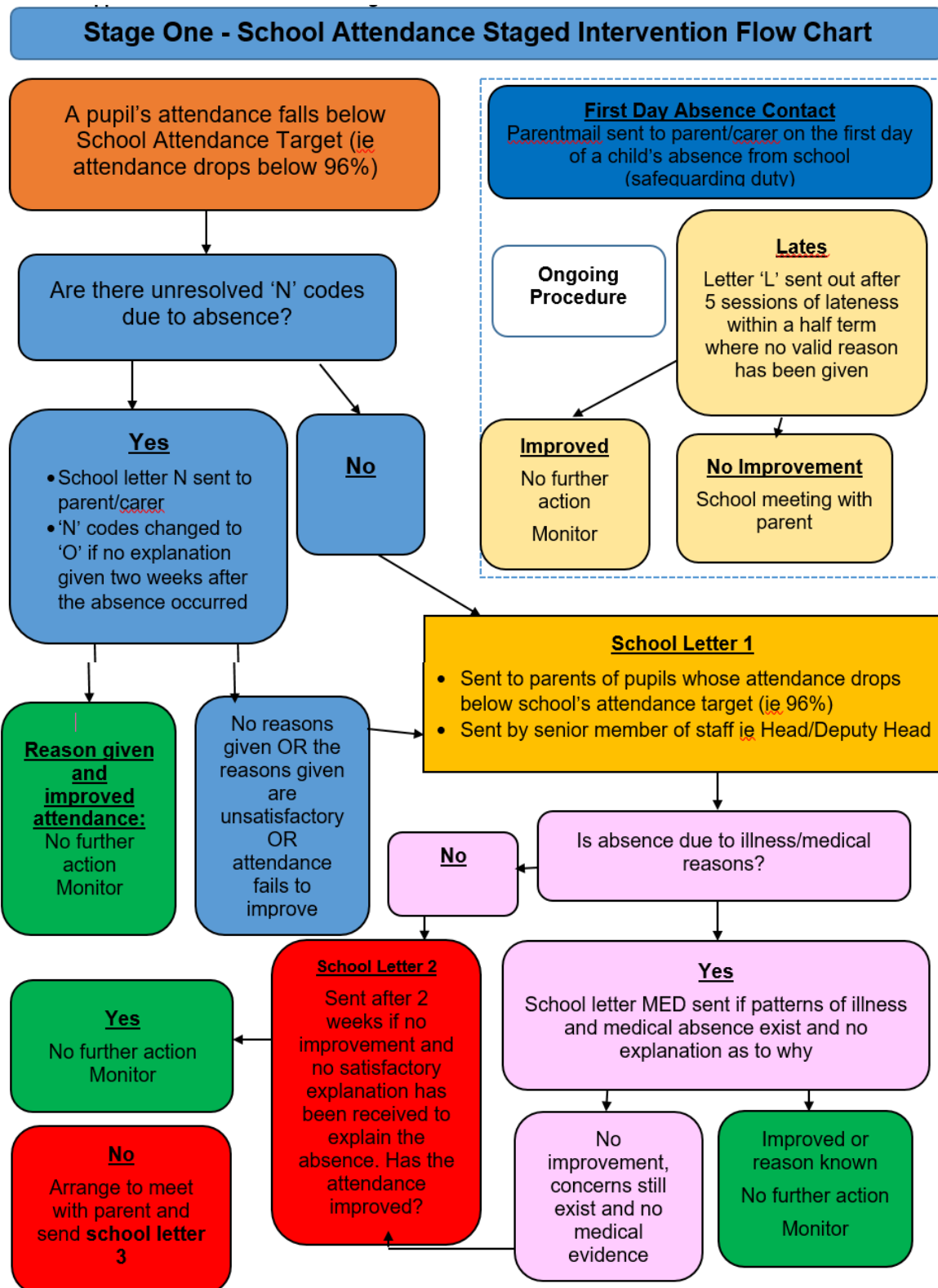
Five Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days.

If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named Parent/carer then the local authority is notified and the Child is Missing Education. Staff from the Access and Inclusion Service may visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

You can help us and your child by making sure we always have an up-to date contact number and home address.

Appendix 3: School Attendance Staged Intervention Flow Chart



Appendix 4: Template for Individual Attendance Plan

Name:	DOB:

Date of meeting:	In attendance:

Attendance Zone	Less than 85%	85% - 94%	95% - 97%	97%+
Review 1				
Review 2				
Review 3				

What are the reasons for absence? (please tick)			
Genuine Medical		Illness	
Parent Mental Health		Lesson avoidance	
No Reason Provided		Student Mental Health	
Behaviour / exclusions		Bullying	
Historic Attendance Issues		Peer/Relationship Issues	
Parent having difficulties getting child to school		School based anxiety	
Other:		Reason:	

What actions have been taken? (please tick)

Traffic Light Monitoring (see over the page)		Curriculum/class changes	
Pupil Interview		Peer mediation	
Telephone calls home		Rewards & Recognition	
Meeting with parent/carers		Early Help	
Attendance improvement meeting		Referral to Outside Agency:	
		External agency support (please specify)	
Group work			
Legal Action			
Other:			

Historic Attendance:

Nursery (1)	Nursery (2)	Rec	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6





Information Shared (including views of the parent/child, where possible):

Target:	Strategies	Monitoring Milestones	Responsible person	Outcome

Signed:	
Parent/Carer	
Staff	

Appendix 5: Leave In Term Time Request Form

Before requesting leave in term time you need to think about:

-  The lessons your child will miss
-  The difficulty your child will have in catching up
-  The effect it will have on your child's friendship groups
-  The effect it will have on how well your child performs in school

For your information: The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactorily up to the date covered by this request. Schools are also able to use their discretion if they believe that parents have falsely reported a child absent due to illness and can request additional evidence before authorising the absence

Warning: Parents/carers need to be aware that Penalty Notices can be issued per parent, per child for unauthorised absence/leave from school taken in term time. Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. **All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed.** The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

Please complete and return to the School Office at least one week before the proposed leave

Name(s) of child(ren): Class(es):
.....
.....

Date of leave:

Dates of leave already requested this academic year:

Please provide below a DETAILED reason and any relevant evidence as to why the leave MUST be taken during term time (continue overleaf in necessary):

Signed:

(Parent/Carer) Print Name:

Date:

Note: Leave is not authorised until signed confirmation has been received from the Headteacher

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:

Date form received	Number of school days absence requested	Current Attendance %

After careful consideration of your request:

- Leave not authorised - Penalty notice not to be issued on this occasion
- Leave not authorised - Consideration will be given to issuing Penalty notice if leave taken (see details above)
- Leave authorised

Comment:

Signed: (Headteacher) Date:

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS



Penalty Notice Fines for absence from school are changing

From 19th August 2024 Penalty Notice fines
increase to £160 for each parent, for each child.



You can be fined if your child has
a total of 5 days of unauthorised
absences in 10 school weeks, for
things like:

- being late after the register has closed
- truancy
- taking a holiday without permission from the school
- or if a headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason for missing school

Over a rolling 3-year period the
sanctions are:

- 1st offence – £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- 2nd offence – £160
- 3rd offence – Court hearing and up to £2,500 fine, or up to 3 months in prison and a criminal record



For more information go to:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/missing-school