INCLUSIVE ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE POLICY · 2026/27

# Crossgates Primary School

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# Attendance Policy

*A whole-school policy for promoting and securing excellent attendance, built around the Inclusive Attendance model and the Department for Education's 2026 statutory framework.*

This policy is written for Crossgates Primary School and should be adopted, completed and ratified by the governing body before publication.

| | |
|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME<br>Crossgates Primary School | SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION<br>Mrs Mitchell |
| GOVERNOR FOR ATTENDANCE<br>Kaylie Moncur | APPROVED BY<br>Governing Body |
| DATE APPROVED<br>October 2026 | REVIEW CYCLE<br>Yearly |
| NEXT REVIEW DATE<br>September 2027 | POLICY VERSION<br>v1.0 |

## Introduction and ethos

Crossgates Primary School is committed to making school attendance a whole-school priority, fully integrated with every aspect of school improvement rather than treated as a stand-alone administrative task. We use the Inclusive Attendance model to support children and families to connect, belong and thrive — built on child-centred action, evidence-informed practice, and a shared understanding of everyone's role in promoting excellent attendance.

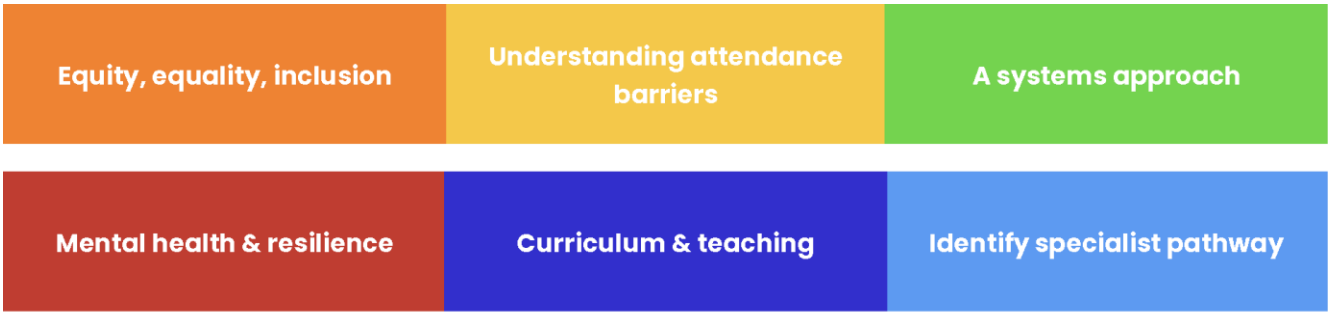
Attendance cannot be considered in isolation. The Department for Education's statutory guidance connects effective attendance practice directly with curriculum, behaviour, bullying, SEND support, pastoral provision, mental health and wellbeing, safeguarding, disadvantage and the effective use of resources including pupil premium. This policy is written on that basis: attendance is treated as an output of the whole school system, not a separate compliance exercise.

**THE PRINCIPLE BEHIND THIS POLICY**

Attendance is an output of the wider school system. Where a pupil is not attending well, the answer is rarely a single attendance procedure — it is usually found somewhere in curriculum, culture, SEND provision, safeguarding, family circumstance or the removal of a specific practical barrier.

## Our model

Our attendance work sits across six connected domains of practice. Rather than a stand-alone attendance procedure, these domains ensure the provision of professional learning, evidence-based practice, and exemplary leadership and management are integrated into everything the school does.




## Rationale, Expectations and Legalities

Regular and punctual school attendance is crucial. Pupils who attend school regularly are provided with the best opportunities to achieve their full academic potential, develop vital social connections, build emotional resilience, and access structured pastoral care. Non-attendance disrupts learning continuity, creates knowledge gaps, and can lead to educational and social disengagement.

Expectations & Legalities

- Parental Responsibility: Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- School Duty: Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Crossgate's Primary School must maintain accurate admission and attendance registers, monitor attendance trends proactively, and work alongside Rochdale Local Authority to address persistent non-attendance.

## Statutory context

This policy meets the requirements of Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026), the Department for Education's statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and Local Authorities. It should be read alongside statutory guidance on children missing education, pupils with medical conditions, children unable to attend because of health needs, suspension and permanent exclusion, alternative provision, and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

It should also be read alongside the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Mental Health & Emotional Well-Being Policy
- Pupil Premium & Equity Strategy

### The seven amended areas highlighted to schools in the DfE July 2026 update

The July 2026 edition highlights seven areas that this policy reflects throughout:

1. **Taking the attendance register** — clarification around consistent day-to-day registration practice, including when registers are taken.
2. **Attendance data and analysis** — strengthened clarification around analysing and benchmarking attendance and identifying the pupils/cohorts requiring greatest attention, including groups such as young carers.
3. **Absence because of illness** — further clarification about illness-related absence and the circumstances in which schools may appropriately seek evidence.
4. **Remote education** — clarification that remote education should be a last resort, not an alternative attendance pathway, and where appropriate should support a plan towards reintegration.
5. **Leave of absence** — clarification around considering requests on their individual circumstances and the application of exceptional circumstances rather than blanket approaches.
6. **Roles, responsibilities and system working** — clarification around responsibilities across schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities and the importance of partnership/system leadership.
7. **Registration, attendance codes and specific circumstances** — technical clarification across areas such as dual registration, flexi-schooling, pupils with no fixed abode, access arrangements and the appropriate use of attendance codes.

A full list of the statutory and non-statutory guidance underpinning this policy is set out in the Legislative and statutory framework section near the end of this document.

## School day, registration and key contacts

Doors are open for children from 08.45am and school finishes at 3.15pm.
Morning registration opens at 08.55 and school gates close at 09.00am. Any arrivals after this must come through the school office.
Children in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 must be accompanied by a parent/carer to their classroom door to ensure that they enter their classroom safely. School gates are open from 8.40am to enter the playground, classroom doors are open from 8.45am and pupils are expected to be in class and ready to learn by 8.55am. School gates close at 9am sharp. Registers are taken at 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by this time. Children arriving after 9.00am are required to come into school via the school office, accompanied by a parent/carer
The afternoon register is taken at the start of each cohort's designated afternoon session (ranging from 12.05 PM to 1:15 PM) and will remain open for exactly 20 minutes after that start time.

**Rec**- *12.05-1.00*
**Year 1**- *12.15-1.00*
**Year 2 and Year 3** - *11.45-12.30*
**Year 4 and 5**- *12.30- 1.15*
**Year 6**- *12.00-12.45*

Registers are taken consistently, at the same time for all pupils, in line with the July 2026 Working Together guidance. Pupils arriving after the register has closed are marked using the appropriate code — see *Appendix 1: Attendance codes*.

Pupils are expected to arrive in time to be registered before the session begins. A pupil arriving late but before the register closes is marked present using the late code; persistent lateness is followed up in the same way as unexplained absence, since lost learning time matters whether a pupil is absent or simply late.

Crossgates Primary School's plan for effective attendance improvement and takes inspiration from strong curriculum planning, positive behaviour management, bullying prevention, robust safeguarding practices, special educational needs, medical needs support, mental health and wellbeing integration, and the effective deployment of resources. Our foundation for securing good attendance is ensuring school is a calm, safe, respectful, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be, they feel a strong sense of belonging, and arrive keen and ready to learn.

Afternoon registration is taken at 1pm and school closes at 3:15pm. We encourage parents to recognise that school learning consistently takes place throughout the day and by removing a child early from school, there is a risk of impacting their academic learning, routine and social connections.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION<br>Mrs Mitchell | HEADTEACHER<br>Mrs Mitchell | CHAIR OF GOVERNORS / TRUST BOARD<br>Mrs Doherty |
| GOVERNOR FOR ATTENDANCE<br>Mrs Moncur | DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD<br>Mrs Mitchell | SENCO<br>Miss Bolton |
| PUPIL PREMIUM / DISADVANTAGE LEAD<br>Miss Bolton | ATTENDANCE OFFICE PHONE<br>01706 654573 | ATTENDANCE OFFICE EMAIL<br>office@crossgates.rochdale.sch.uk |
| OUT-OF-HOURS / URGENT CONTACT<br>Mrs Mitchell | | |

## Our approach: from universal provision to legal intervention

Rather than building this policy primarily around percentages, letters and sanctions, we structure our attendance work as a graduated, multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) — right support, right time, for every child and young person. The diagram below sets out the model at a glance; the tiers that follow set out how we put it into practice day to day.

### INCLUSIVE ATTENDANCE: A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

*Right support, right time, for every child and young person*

| | TIER 1<br>UNIVERSAL SUPPORT | TIER 2<br>TARGETED SUPPORT | TIER 3<br>SPECIALIST SUPPORT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WHO?** | All children and young people | Children and young people at risk of poor attendance (PA) | Children and young people with persistent absence (PA) or severe absence (SA) |
| **FOCUS** | **Prevention**<br>Build positive attendance and strong foundations | **Early intervention**<br>Reduce risk factors and prevent escalation | **Intensive support**<br>Address complex needs and remove multiple barriers |
| **APPROACH** | **Whole school approach**<br>High-quality teaching, inclusive environment and strong relationships | **Targeted and individualised**<br>Identify barriers and provide early support | **Individualised & multi-agency**<br>Specialist support and personalised pathways |
| **EXAMPLES** | **Examples**<br>• Positive attendance culture<br>• Belonging and inclusion<br>• Family and community engagement<br>• Attendance monitoring<br>• Early identification of concerns | **Examples**<br>• Attendance plans<br>• Mentoring and coaching<br>• Parental meetings<br>• Targeted pastoral support<br>• Small group interventions | **Examples**<br>• Multi-agency working<br>• Personalised timetables<br>• Therapeutic and wellbeing support<br>• Alternative provision<br>• Specialist interventions |
| **GOAL** | **Goal**<br>Prevent absence and promote attendance for all | **Goal**<br>Reduce risk, improve attendance and strengthen engagement | **Goal**<br>Re-engage and reintegrate for sustainable attendance and outcomes |

PROMOTE | SUPPORT | SPECIALIST

WORKING TOGETHER · EARLY HELP · THE RIGHT SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME

**Role of teaching and non-teaching staff**
- Use data proactively
- Identify children and young people at risk
- Work with families
- Implement daily strategies
- Monitor pupil progress
- Recognise achievements regularly

**Role of children and young people**
- Participate in targeted interventions
- Recognise own achievements
- Share worries with staff
- Stay engaged in school
- Help and support others
- Understand missed days

**Role of parents and carers**
- Work with school
- Understand and share attendance barriers
- Engage with support
- Prevent escalation
- Communicate with school

**Role of external agencies (and trust, where applicable)**
- Provide timely support
- Share resources widely
- Collaborate with schools
- Strengthen multi-agency efforts
- Train staff effectively
- Support and challenge the school

**A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is an educational framework that offers a structured approach to addressing children's diverse needs.**

It involves delivering interventions and support in a tiered manner, with each tier representing a different level of intensity and targeted assistance.

INCLUSIVE ATTENDANCE

FOUNDATIONS ACROSS ALL TIERS

| STRONG RELATIONSHIPS | BELONGING | LIFE SATISFACTION | RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS | ATTENDANCE DATA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trust, connection and understanding | Every child feels seen and valued | Wellbeing, hope and aspirations | Understand and respond to individual needs | Use data to inform actions and decisions |

In day-to-day case management, universal, targeted and specialist support are worked through in five connected stages — adding an explicit identification-and-understanding-barriers stage between universal and targeted support and separating legal intervention out as the last-resort stage it is, used only once every reasonable step above it has been tried.

### TIER 1 Universal provision (School) · *All pupils, every day*

- High-quality, inclusive teaching and a curriculum that engages every learner
- A culture of belonging, strong relationships and consistent, positive behaviour management
- Accurate, consistent registration and whole-school attendance monitoring
- Clear communication with families about expectations and support available

### TIER 2 Identification & understanding barriers (School) · *Spotting concerns early and asking why*

- Regular analysis of attendance data at whole-school, group and individual level
- Priority cohorts identified: SEND, disadvantaged, young carers, children with a social worker, previously looked after
- Understanding the specific barrier behind the absence, not just the percentage
- Early, non-judgemental conversations with pupils and families

### TIER 3 Early & targeted support (School and LA) · *Pupils at risk of persistent absence*

- Individual attendance support plans, agreed with the family
- Mentoring, pastoral check-ins and small-group interventions
- Reasonable adjustments for SEND, medical need or other identified barriers
- Regular review with the family of what is working

### TIER 3 Intensive & multi-agency support (School and LA) · *Persistent or severe absence*

- Multi-agency planning — Local Authority, social care, health and other partners as needed
- Personalised, evidence-informed plans addressing complex or multiple barriers
- Attendance contracts as a supportive, non-punitive route where engagement has stalled
- Considered as part of a reintegration or re-engagement plan, not a stand-alone response

### TIER 4 Legal intervention (LA) · *Only where all reasonable support has been tried*

- Education Supervision Order considered only once voluntary support has been exhausted
- Penalty notices issued in line with the national framework and Local Authority code of conduct
- Prosecution as a last resort, following the Local Authority's statutory process
- Legal routes never replace, and are never used instead of, addressing the underlying barrier

## Promoting and recognising good attendance

Good and regular attendance is promoted through everyday culture and belonging, not primarily through prizes or sanctions. This school's approach to recognition is positive, consistent and inclusive of pupils facing additional barriers, so that no pupil is disadvantaged by circumstances outside their control.

- Attendance is talked about positively and often, by teaching and non-teaching staff alike, as part of everyday relationships rather than only at data points.
- Individual, class and whole-school achievements are recognised regularly — including meaningful improvement from a pupil's own starting point, not only high overall percentages.
- Recognition avoids approaches that could stigmatise, single out or financially disadvantage pupils with a legitimate reason for absence, such as a disability, medical condition or caring responsibility.
- Pupils and families are told clearly why attendance matters for learning, wellbeing and life chances — not only that it is a rule to be followed.
- Parents, carers and — where the school is part of a multi-academy trust — the trust are kept informed of how the school promotes attendance, alongside its data and its support offer.

Crossgates Primary School encourages class attendance awareness with a termly information letter, Attendance and Belonging Plans, and always strives to include recognition for any family that is struggling.

## Roles and responsibilities

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. The table below summarises who does what; the paragraphs that follow give more detail for each role.

| Who | Key responsibilities for attendance |
|---|---|
| **Parents and carers** | • Ensure their child attends regularly and arrives on time, in line with school registration requirements. Parents also recognise and adhere to safe drop off and collection procedure with a known adult. Parents must make school aware (Office) of any such changes so that school can continue to keep children safe.<br>• Notify the school on the first day of absence and provide the reason.<br>• Work with the school to understand and address any barrier to attendance.<br>• Request leave of absence in advance and understand that term-time leave is only granted in exceptional circumstances.<br>*Parents are then expected to support their child in completing a 'return to school' pack after a period of absence.* |
| **Pupils** | • Attend school regularly and arrive on time, so far as is reasonably within their control.<br>• Tell a trusted adult if something is making it hard to attend.<br>• Engage with the support that is put in place for them.<br>*Complete 'return to school' pack after a period of absence.* |
| **Class teachers and school staff** | • Take an accurate register at the same time for all pupils, every session.<br>• Know their pupils well enough to notice a change in attendance early.<br>• Report concerns promptly to the Attendance Champion or designated safeguarding lead.<br>• Apply reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, medical needs or other identified barriers.<br>*Class Teacher to liaise with DSL and parents when pupils have missed 3+ days so that 'return to school' support can be completed.*<br>*Additionally, 'return to school' packs will be issued to families upon their return to school after holidays for parents to complete at home.* |
| **Senior Attendance Champion / senior leaders** | • Lead the day-to-day implementation of this policy and own the whole-school attendance strategy.<br>• Analyse attendance data regularly, by cohort and by individual pupil, and target support accordingly.<br>• Ensure staff receive the training they need, and that safeguarding and attendance systems are properly connected.<br>• Report to senior leaders and governors on attendance, impact and priority cohorts. |

| Who | Key responsibilities for attendance |
|---|---|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead | • Ensure unexplained or extended absence is treated as a possible safeguarding signal, not only a data point.<br>*As such, the DSL will conduct a 'Friday Flag' for any children that have been off school for 3+ days so that Class Teacher can liaise with parents to complete 'return to school' support. Where there is immediate concern, safeguarding procedures will be followed.*<br>• Lead escalation to children's social care, the Local Authority or other agencies where required and complete A&B Plans with SENCo.<br>• Work with the Attendance Champion so that safeguarding and attendance information is shared without delay. |
| SENCo | • Ensure attendance barriers linked to SEND are understood and addressed through the graduated response.<br>• Advise on reasonable adjustments to attendance strategies for individual pupils and complete A&B Plans with DSL.<br>• Work with families and external professionals to remove barriers rather than manage their consequences. |
| Governing body (or trust board, if applicable) | • Treat attendance as a strategic priority, not an operational after-thought.<br>• Assure themselves that the school meets its statutory responsibilities under Working Together to Improve School Attendance.<br>• Regularly review and challenge attendance data, with particular attention to priority cohorts.<br>• Ensure staff receive adequate attendance-related training and share effective practice with other schools. |
| Local Authority | • Provide strategic leadership and support to schools in improving attendance.<br>• Lead statutory functions including Children Missing Education, School Attendance Orders and penalty notices.<br>• Work with schools and partners to identify and support pupils and families who need it most. |

## Teaching and non-teaching staff

Teaching staff and non-teaching staff alike — including teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors, pastoral staff, office and administrative staff, and midday and site staff — sit closest to pupils' day to day. They monitor daily attendance, promote punctuality, and take immediate action — contacting the Attendance Champion or designated safeguarding lead — when a pupil is absent without explanation. They identify early patterns of poor attendance or lateness, maintain open communication with families, and provide the academic and emotional support that helps a pupil overcome a barrier to attending. Crucially, they are alert to safeguarding concerns connected to attendance and know how to report them, whatever their role in the school.

## Senior Attendance Champion

The Attendance Champion leads the school's day-to-day attendance strategy: developing and implementing policy, analysing data to identify trends and priority cohorts, leading early intervention, supporting families, and monitoring and reporting attendance to senior leaders, governors and the Local Authority. They design interventions and recognition activity, provide staff training, ensure legal compliance, and are vigilant for safeguarding concerns connected to attendance.

## Senior leaders

Senior leaders set the tone for the school's attendance culture. They lead by example, develop and ratify policy, monitor data and hold staff to account for its use, ensure staff receive appropriate professional development, and give particular attention to vulnerable pupils — including those with medical conditions, SEND, or safeguarding concerns. They apply this policy consistently and fairly, and work with the designated safeguarding lead where attendance concerns raise child protection issues.

## Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to establish a daily routine that supports regular, punctual attendance; to communicate promptly with the school about absence; to engage with meetings and support offered; and to understand that term-time leave of absence is granted only in exceptional circumstances, assessed individually.

## Pupils

Pupils are supported to understand the value of attending school regularly and on time, to communicate difficulties to a trusted adult, and to engage with the support put in place for them — recognising that where a barrier to attendance exists, it is the adults around them who hold primary responsibility for removing it.

### Governing board

See Governance, below, for the governing board's specific statutory responsibilities.

## Safeguarding and attendance

THE PRINCIPLE

Unexplained or extended absence is one of the clearest safeguarding signals a school receives. It is treated as a possible safeguarding concern first, and an attendance statistic second.

This connection runs through the whole of this policy, not only this section. Staff at every level are expected to understand the relationship between attendance and:

- Unexplained or repeated absence, and children missing education.
- Vulnerability, exploitation, neglect and domestic abuse.
- Contextual safeguarding — risks pupils may face outside the school gates.
- Children with a social worker, on a child protection plan, or previously looked after.
- Information sharing between attendance and safeguarding staff, without delay.
- Same-day follow-up on unexplained absence, and clear escalation routes.

This policy operates in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), which applies the same core safeguarding expectations to all staff. The designated safeguarding lead is Laura Duke and can be contacted on 01706 654573.

## SEND and inclusion

For many pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, poor attendance is not a behaviour or motivation issue — it is a sign that a need is not being met. This policy requires reasonable adjustments, not punitive responses, wherever absence relates to unmet need.

- Attendance barriers relating to SEND are addressed through the graduated response — assess, plan, do, review.
- The SENCo is involved wherever a pupil's SEND may be contributing to their absence.
- Attendance is explicitly addressed within EHC plans and support plans, so families understand what is available.
- Reasonable adjustments are reviewed regularly, not fixed once and left unchanged.
- Punitive attendance responses are not used where the underlying cause is an unmet need.

INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM FUND 2026 TO 2027

Belonging and attendance is one of the seven principles of inclusive mainstream practice set out in the Inclusive Mainstream Fund's conditions of grant, alongside ambitious leadership and governance, early evidence-based intervention, inclusive and adaptive teaching, curriculum designed for all learners, partnership with families and services, and continuous improvement in accessibility. This policy is written to support all seven.

## Disadvantage and pupil premium

Disadvantage funding is only as effective as the gap it closes. Where disadvantage is linked to an attendance barrier, that link is made explicit — from identified barrier to evidence-informed activity, to the school's published pupil premium strategy, to measured impact.

Our pupil premium strategy statement, published annually by 31 December, sets out how pupil premium funding is used to support attendance for disadvantaged pupils. It is available via:

https://www.crossgates.rochdale.sch.uk/docs/Policies/Pupil_Premium_Strategy_Statement_2026-2029.pdf

## Young carers

Young carers are identified explicitly, rather than absorbed into a general category of "vulnerable pupils". Staff are alert to the specific pressures young carers face, and attendance support is shaped around their caring responsibilities rather than assuming non-attendance reflects a lack of engagement.

This sits alongside our approach to other cohorts known to be at greater risk of poor attendance: children in need, children on a child protection plan, looked-after children, and care leavers — reflecting the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance on improving the attendance of children with a social worker.

## Medical conditions and health needs

Pupils with medical conditions are supported through individual healthcare plans, reasonable support, and clear communication with health professionals — so that a medical condition does not, in itself, become an unnecessary barrier to attendance.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because of health needs and absence reaches, or is expected to reach, 15 school days — whether consecutive or cumulative — the school works with the Local Authority to arrange suitable alternative education under section 19 of the Education Act 1996, with a clear plan for reintegration.

The July 2026 update to Working Together gives clearer direction on illness-related absence: medical evidence is not requested routinely, only where it is reasonable and appropriate to do so.

## Mental health and wellbeing

Mental health difficulties do not mean attendance stops being important — but the response to them must be individualised, supportive and appropriately adjusted, never a standard sanction applied regardless of cause. Staff are trained to recognise early signs of anxiety, low mood or other difficulty that may affect attendance, and to work with pupils, families and, where needed, external agencies.

## Behaviour and culture

Behaviour and attendance are closely linked: a pupil who does not feel safe, or does not feel they belong, is far less likely to want to attend. Our behaviour policy and this attendance policy are designed to work together — building a culture of clear expectations, strong relationships, effective SEND support, and safe environments, and avoiding any practice that unintentionally pushes a vulnerable pupil away from school.

## Curriculum, teaching and RSHE

Attendance is not only secured at the school gate — it is won or lost lesson by lesson. An engaging, accessible curriculum, high-quality adaptive teaching, and strong teacher-pupil relationships are treated as universal attendance provision, not an optional extra. This reflects the Teachers' Standards, and the Inclusive Mainstream Fund's requirement for high-quality adaptive teaching with a curriculum designed for all learners.

From September 2026, our Relationships, Sex and Health Education provision, including Health Education, contributes to the preventative side of attendance — building the health literacy, relationships and sense of wellbeing that underpin a pupil's sense of belonging in school.

## Home-to-school travel

Transport is recognised as a genuine potential barrier to attendance, not assumed to reflect parental unwillingness. This is particularly relevant for pupils with SEND, those living furthest from school, families on a low income, pupils with mobility needs, and those attending specialist provision. Any transport-related barrier identified is addressed alongside the Local Authority's home-to-school travel duties.

## Using data to target improvement

Attendance data (DfE) is analysed regularly at whole-school, year-group, demographic and individual pupil level, benchmarked against national and Local Authority comparators. Particular attention is given to:

- Pupils with SEND, and those eligible for free school meals or pupil premium.
- Year groups of concern.
- Looked-after children, previously looked-after children and care leavers.
- Pupils with an allocated social worker or known to children's social care.
- Young carers.
- Pupils absent for prolonged or repeated periods, which may indicate a safeguarding concern such as child sexual or criminal exploitation, particularly county lines.
- Pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

### How we use data: a targeted approach

Using attendance data effectively starts with building a holistic understanding of pupils and families — not simply monitoring a percentage. Our approach follows five connected steps:

1. Build a culture of community and belonging.
2. Communicate effectively with families.
3. Improve universal provision for all pupils.
4. Deliver targeted interventions.
5. Monitor the impact of approaches.

### Understanding risk of persistent absence

The two reference tables below help staff translate raw absence figures into an early, consistent view of risk — used alongside professional judgement and the additional factors known about each pupil, never as a mechanical trigger on its own.

#### Table 1: days absent and risk of persistent absence (PA)

| Days absent (cumulative) | Risk of PA level | Additional factors |
|---|---|---|
| 1 – 4 days | Low (Risk of PA 100-96%) | ADDITIONAL FACTORS<br>Risk and protective factors, patterns in previous absence, SEND or free-school-meals demographic, and external agency involvement all inform how this risk level is used. |
| 5 – 9 days | Emerging (Risk of PA 95%) | |
| 10 – 14 days | Moderate (Risk of PA 90-94%) | |
| 15 – 18 days | High (Risk of PA 85-89%) | |
| 19+ days | Locked into PA (84%-) | |

#### Table 2: spells of absence and risk of persistent absence (PA)

| Number of spells of absence | Risk of PA level |
|---|---|
| 1 | Low (Risk of PA) |
| 2 | Low (Risk of PA) |
| 3 | Moderate (Risk of PA) |
| 4 | Moderate (Risk of PA) |

| Number of spells of absence | Risk of PA level |
|---|---|
| 5 | High (Risk of PA) |
| 6 or above | High (Risk of PA) |

### Persistent and severe absence — definitions

A pupil is considered persistently absent (PA) when their attendance rate is 90% or below — that is, they have missed 10% or more of possible school sessions. A pupil is considered severely absent (SA) when they are absent from school more than they are present, missing 50% or more of possible sessions. Severely absent pupils are likely to need the most intensive, multi-agency support.

## Leave of absence, illness and remote education

### Leave of absence

Requests for leave of absence must be made in writing at least 7 school days in advance. Term-time leave is only authorised in exceptional circumstances, and every request is considered individually on its own facts — this school does not operate a blanket or automatic policy for any category of request, in line with the July 2026 Working Together guidance. Miss Duke will then follow this up with a response via letter communicating the outcome and/or potential actions. Where leave is not authorised, parents should be aware that 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period meets the national threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered.

### Illness absence

Where a pupil is absent due to illness, the school does not request medical evidence as a matter of routine. Evidence may be requested where it is reasonable and appropriate to do so — for example, where a pattern of illness absence is of concern, or where evidence would support a wider plan of support. Crossgates welcomes open communication from families so that children feel comfortable when absences take place.

### Remote education

Remote education is not treated as an equal alternative to attendance. It is used only as a last resort, once it is clear a pupil cannot attend school, and — where used for an individual pupil — it forms part of a reintegration plan that is reviewed regularly. A pupil receiving remote education because they are absent is still recorded as absent.

## Day-to-day processes: first-day response

Parents and carers must contact the school on the first day of absence to give the reason. Where no contact has been made by 9:30am the school will attempt to contact the family by phone / text. Where absence remains unexplained, this is treated as a possible safeguarding signal and escalated in line with our safeguarding procedures, including home visits and contact with relevant agencies where necessary — see *Safeguarding and attendance*, above. Parents are expected to report continuing absences each day to update the school. If a child's absence causes concern, this may trigger a Home Visit by the DSL and Unit Lead/other staff member to check on the welfare of the child.

## Support before sanction

Legal routes are used only where genuine, sustained support has not resolved a pattern of absence — never as a first response.

- Attendance contract — a formal, voluntary agreement between parents and the school or Local Authority, offering support as an alternative to prosecution.
- Notice to Improve — a formal written notice, issued, where appropriate, before a penalty notice, giving the family a set period in which to improve attendance with continued support.
- Education Supervision Order (ESO) — considered only once voluntary support and attendance contracts have been exhausted, and only where it would benefit the pupil and parent.
- Penalty notices — issued in line with the national framework for penalty notices and the Local Authority's code of conduct, and only where a Notice to Improve has not resulted in the necessary improvement.

- Parenting Order — may be sought by the Local Authority where parental engagement with support has not improved a pattern of absence.
- Prosecution — a last resort, led by the Local Authority, for failure to secure regular attendance or comply with a School Attendance Order or Education Supervision Order.

Local, up-to-date detail on penalty notice thresholds and amounts, for reference. https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/schools

## Children missing education and removal from roll

Persistent or unexplained absence can, in some circumstances, lead to a child being identified as missing education. This school follows the strengthened Children Missing Education statutory guidance (September 2025) and works with the Local Authority to track and support any pupil who may be missing education, before any consideration of removal from roll.

**UNLAWFUL PRACTICE**

Informal or unofficial exclusion — removing a pupil from roll or asking a family to keep a pupil at home, outside of the formal, recorded process — is unlawful and is never used by this school.

## Alternative provision, suspension and permanent exclusion

Where a pupil attends alternative provision, the commissioning school retains responsibility for monitoring attendance, safeguarding and quality, and for planning reintegration. Dual registration is used and monitored appropriately.

Following the July 2026 update to statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion, alternative provision is arranged within six school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, using the correct attendance code, with attendance monitored closely on a pupil's return and a clear reintegration plan in place. Off rolling is not practised by this school.

### Governance

Working Together to Improve School Attendance sets out a specific chapter for governing bodies, and for trust boards where a school is part of a multi-academy trust. This school's governing body — and trust board, if applicable — is expected to:

- Recognise attendance as a strategic priority, promoted through ethos and policy, not only through this document.
- Ensure senior leaders fulfil their statutory attendance responsibilities.
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data, with particular attention to priority cohorts and persistent or severe absence.
- Ensure Governors and staff receive adequate attendance training.
- Share effective attendance practice with other schools, as part of wider system leadership.

Attendance is a standing item at every full governing body meeting reported by Danni Mitchell and Laura Duke.

## Professional development for all staff

Governors and senior leaders assure themselves that staff receive adequate attendance training, in line with statutory expectations and Ofsted's evidence base linking attendance to the Teachers' Standards and staff expertise. Development includes:

- Inclusive attendance accredited training delivered across the academic year.
- Induction training on this policy and on attendance codes for all new staff.
- Whole-staff development on the link between attendance, safeguarding, SEND and wellbeing.
- Role-specific development for the Attendance Champion and pastoral staff.
- Updates whenever national or local guidance changes.

- Sufficient expertise for staff undertaking targeted or intensive attendance work.

## Linked policies and review

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour policy
- Teaching and learning policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Mental health policy
- SEND policy / information report
- Pupil premium strategy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body, or sooner where statutory guidance changes. It was last reviewed on 12th October 2026 and is next due for review on 1st September 2027.

## Legislative and statutory framework

This policy is underpinned by the following documents. Where a document is statutory, this school complies with it in full; where it is non-statutory guidance, it informs our approach.

| Document | Status | Relevance to this policy |
|---|---|---|
| Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026) | *Statutory* | The core attendance framework for schools and Local Authorities. |
| School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 | *Law* | Registers, attendance codes, deletion from roll and dual registration. |
| Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) | *Statutory* | Safeguarding duties, including the link between absence and safeguarding. |
| Children Missing Education (September 2025) | *Statutory* | Identifying and responding to children missing education; removal from roll. |
| SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years | *Statutory guidance* | Reasonable adjustments, the graduated response and SENCo involvement. |
| Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions | *Statutory guidance* | Individual healthcare plans and medical absence. |
| Education for Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School | *Statutory guidance (LAs)* | Section 19 provision for long-term or recurring absence. |
| Suspension and Permanent Exclusion (July 2026) | *Statutory guidance* | Coding, sixth-day provision, reintegration and off-rolling. |
| Alternative Provision | *Statutory guidance* | Commissioning AP, dual registration, monitoring and safeguarding. |
| Home-to-School Travel (May 2026) | *Statutory guidance (LAs)* | Transport as a potential barrier to attendance. |
| Relationships, Sex and Health Education / Health Education (from September 2026) | *Statutory* | Preventative, curriculum-based contribution to wellbeing and belonging. |
| National Curriculum | *Statutory (maintained schools)* | Access, engagement and relevance of what is taught. |
| Teachers' Standards | *Statutory force* | Workforce responsibility for relationships, adaptive teaching and identifying concerns. |

| Document | Status | Relevance to this policy |
|---|---|---|
| Inclusive Mainstream Fund 2026 to 2027 (incl. support for school leaders) | *Conditions of grant / guidance* | Belonging and attendance as one of seven principles of inclusive practice. |
| Pupil Premium 2026 to 2027 | *Funding conditions / guidance* | Linking disadvantage, attendance barriers and the pupil premium strategy. |
| Improving the Attendance of Children with a Social Worker (March 2026) | *Non-statutory* | Children in need, child protection plans, looked-after children, care leavers and young carers. |
| Behaviour in Schools | *DfE guidance* | Culture, relationships, SEND and avoiding practices that push pupils away from school. |
| Providing Remote Education | *Non-statutory* | Remote education as a last resort, and as part of a reintegration plan. |
| Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools | *DfE guidance* | Whole-school culture, early identification and working with external agencies. |

# Appendix 1: Attendance codes

DFE NATIONAL CODES · 2026/27

Attendance must be recorded using the Department for Education's national attendance and absence codes. The appropriate code must be entered for every pupil on each occasion the register is taken.

This table is a concise summary of the code titles and statistical classifications in Chapter 8 of Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026). Where there is uncertainty about which code applies, schools should refer to the full statutory guidance and regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

| Code | Meaning | Statistical classification |
|---|---|---|
| **ATTENDING THE SCHOOL** | | |
| / \ | Present at the school (/ = morning session; \ = afternoon session) | Attending |
| L | Late arrival before the register is closed | Attending |
| **ATTENDING A PLACE OTHER THAN THE SCHOOL** | | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Attending an approved educational activity |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip (with staff member) | Attending an approved educational activity |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Attending an approved educational activity |
| W | Attending work experience | Attending an approved educational activity |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity (with staff member) | Attending an approved educational activity |
| **ABSENT – LEAVE OF ABSENCE** | | |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Authorised absence |
| M | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment | Authorised absence |
| J1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution | Authorised absence |
| S | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination | Authorised absence |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school | Not a possible attendance |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registered at another school | Not a possible attendance |
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance | Authorised absence |
| **ABSENT – OTHER AUTHORISED REASONS** | | |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Authorised absence |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Authorised absence |
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded | Authorised absence |
| **ABSENT – UNABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL BECAUSE OF UNAVOIDABLE CAUSE** | | |
| Q | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements | Not a possible attendance |
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available | Not a possible attendance |

| Code | Meaning | Statistical classification |
|---|---|---|
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | Not a possible attendance |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Not a possible attendance |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Not a possible attendance |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention | Not a possible attendance |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | Not a possible attendance |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| **ABSENT – UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE** | | |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school | Unauthorised absence |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | Unauthorised absence |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed | Unauthorised absence |
| **ADMINISTRATIVE CODES** | | |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Not collected for statistical purposes |
| & | Planned whole school closure | Not collected for statistical purposes |

**Important:** Attendance codes must be applied according to the individual circumstances of the absence. This table is a summary only; schools should use Chapter 8 of the DfE statutory guidance for the full criteria and detailed application of each code.

*Source: Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), Chapter 8; School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.*

## Appendix 2: National Framework for Penalty Notices and Statutory Escalation

DfE · 2026/27

Under the national regulations (*Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*), a single National Threshold governs the issuance of Penalty Notices across England.

The National Threshold
A Penalty Notice must be considered when a pupil has missed 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorized absence within a rolling 10-school-week period. These 10 sessions can be made up of unauthorized term-time leave, sporadic unauthorized absences, or lateness after the register has closed.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st Offence | £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days (3 year rolling period) | Rises to £160 if paid between 21-28 days. |
| 2nd Offence | £160 per parent, per child and must be paid within 28 days (3yr rolling) | No lower rate option |
| 3rd Offence | Escalates directly to Magistrates Court. Prosecution under Section 444(1)/(1A) of the Education Act 1996 (3yr rolling) | Fines up to £2500 and potential imprisonment |

- Notice to Improve (NTI): Where appropriate, the school or Local Authority may issue a formal *Notice to Improve*. This gives parents a set period of time to engage with support and improve the child's attendance before a fine is formally issued.
- Formal Attendance Contracts: A non-statutory agreement between parents, the school, and/or the Local Authority outlining explicit support and attendance goals to prevent legal action.

- Education Supervision Orders (ESO): Applied for through the Family Court under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 to assign a supervisor to assist and advise parents in securing education.