



BETTER TOGETHER LEARNING TRUST

ATTENDANCE POLICY

STATUTORY POLICY

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Glossary

The term '**School**' is used as standard to mean the educational establishment that is adopting this policy.

The term '**Headteacher**' is used to refer to the person with overall day-to-day responsibility of the **School**.

Directors are the Trustees of the Board.

LGB is the Local Governing Body.

Better Together Learning Trust offers an environment in which students and their parent/carers feel valued and welcomed. A varied and flexible curriculum is offered to all students and learning tasks are matched to students' needs.

The ethos of Better Together Learning Trust is that students should feel that their presence is important and that they will be missed when they are absent or late. The school's aim is to encourage every student to achieve high levels of attendance, employing a range of strategies to assure good attendance and punctuality.

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-trust culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Teaching and Learning Committee/Local Governing Body

The Teaching and Learning Committee/Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all trust and school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure all schools in the trust records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authorities
- Making sure all schools in the trust work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and ethos
- Making sure the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the trust 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 trust 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, including with teachers from across the trust, 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 schools' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including
 - working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Holding the heads of school to account for the implementation of this policy

Board of trustees: Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools.

3.2 The Head of school

The Head of School is responsible for:

- The 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
- 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/carers 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
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- 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

- o Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- o Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is identified in each school's structure.

3.3 Family Support Worker / School office

Family Support Worker / School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the family support worker where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Students arriving late in school are to report to the Office where the time of their arrival will be noted.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

If a student arrives late and their parent/carers have already been notified of their non-attendance, the school will telephone the parent/carers to confirm the student's arrival.

3.3 Class teachers

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), on Arbor during the registration period

3.5 Parents /carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance agreements that they make with the school
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the family support worker

3.6 Students

Students are expected to attend school every day and on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second 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
- 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, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.55 and ends at 3pm.

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 by calling the school, who can be contacted via :

Chelveston Road School – Call 01933 834490

Friars Academy – Call or text 07482 617831 or email absence@friars.northants.sch.uk

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

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 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.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

5. Authorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of school 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 Head of school's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:
- Rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur. Examples include:

- Medical emergencies
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)]

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

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The Head of school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence

5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parent/carer(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent/carer’s religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent/carer(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent/carer is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent/carer is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place

If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

Better Together Learning Trust promotes good attendance through a whole school strategy at both Chelveston Road School and Friars Academy. Pupils are welcomed into in the morning by Senior Leaders at the main gates and are greeted at their classroom door by their class teachers. Our whole school approach to positive attendance encourages students to want to attend, with class staff having a detailed knowledge of each pupil and their family circumstances and in turn the potential barriers they may have in attending school.

Both Trust schools use rewards in conjunction with our House System to actively promote good attendance. Students can receive certificates in weekly assemblies for:-

- Student of the Week
- Values Award nomination
- Values Award Winner

At the end of each term we also promote good attendance by issuing certificates to any student who achieves above 95% attendance for the term and for any student who achieves 100% attendance for that term their name is entered into a draw with ten names being drawn, those students are given an Amazon voucher to spend at their discretion.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority.

Chelveston Road School and Friars Academy works closely with all families with a dedicated Family Support Worker liaising with any family who may require additional support either as an ongoing matter or in an adhoc manner when required, for example, when another family becomes unwell and requires a parent or carers greater attention.

Our high levels of communication with parents/carers and carers ensures that we are aware of any appointments that may be needed during school hours as well as generally being aware of appointments which may impact a pupil's wellbeing.

Each school has a dedicated team of Designated Safeguarding Leaders who meet weekly and are then able to support where appropriate, for example, by referring to Young Carers.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

In addition to the support identified in 7.1 above, Senior Leaders and the Family Support Worker in both Trust schools may also refer to outside agencies for additional mental health support, for example, Service 6 and CAMHS.

Where appropriate, pupils will be offered work to be available online or hard copy to ensure the pupil is able to stay as up to date with their learning as possible. In certain circumstances a pupil's family may be offered the opportunity to have a laptop be made available for their use for the duration of the absence.

7.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

At Friars Academy and Chelveston Road School all pupils are closely monitored with regards to their attendance. Any patterns of irregular attendance are quickly addressed by the Family Support Worker and the senior member of staff for attendance, with welfare calls being made for early intervention.

Reasonable adjustments are made on a case by case basis and may include:-

- A period of part time attendance
- Pastoral support with a key identified adult over and above the usual classroom staff
- An adapted timetable to include sensory breaks

7.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

At both schools within Better Together Learning Trust the Family Support Worker works closely with class teachers and the Senior Leadership Team in monitoring attendance and therefore has a detailed knowledge of any concerns relating to a pupil's absence. Support strategies are developed in conjunction with families and any other agencies that are appropriate, on a case-by-case basis to support pupils back into school in a healthy and positive manner.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

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

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

Early intervention is key to promoting good attendance when data indicates that a pupil is moving towards a higher level of absence than is expected. To improve attendance, Better Together Learning Trust schools 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 we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Local Governing Body and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, 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
- Using this data, the Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance will write to families each term of those students whose attendance is below 95%, 90% and lower than 85%. These letters will be supportive but clear on expectations and will promote close liaison with the Family Support Worker.
- 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/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- 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

- o Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Chief Executive Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Trust board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- o Child protection and safeguarding policy
- o Relationship and Behaviour policy
- o Supporting pupils with medical conditions

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/carer travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent/carer(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 • 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

