

Court Schools Attendance Policy



September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Contents

Introduction	3
Aims	3
Section 1: The Practical Procedures	4
The Admissions Register (or ‘School Roll’)	4
Lateness	5
Unplanned Absence	5
Approval for term-time absence	6
Following Up on Unexplained Absence	7
Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance	8
Promoting Attendance	8
Learners Leaving During the School Day	9
Data Strategy	10
Persistent Absence	11
Severely Absent	11
Absence Reduction Strategy	11
Learners with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	11
Part-Time Timetables	12
Flexi-Schooling	13
Pupil Missing in Education (CME)	14
Elective Home Education (EHE)	14
Learners Returning to School after a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence	14
Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities	15
Strategic Lead for Attendance at Court Schools	15
Governing Body Responsibilities	15
The Headteacher	15
The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance	16
Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly	16
Notices to Improve	17
Links with other Policies	17
Monitoring Arrangements	18
Appendix 2 -Learner Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances - Request Form	24
Appendix 3 Attendance Processes to Support Increased Attendance	25

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Appendix 4: Anxiety and Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)	27
---	----



Court Schools Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Court Schools, we believe it is of vital importance that our learners have high attendance at school as it contributes to the excellent progress that learners make at Court Schools.

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong, believe and to achieve their best. For our learners to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a learner's education. Any absence affects the pattern of a learner's schooling and regular absence will seriously impact on their learning.

We believe that high attendance at school has many other benefits besides supporting higher levels of learning and progress. Attending school as part of a routine can improve mental health and resilience and supports a healthier lifestyle. High attendance at school is an excellent way for learners to grow and develop their social skills. We want our learners to be happy, as well as successful.

Social connection is a key factor in determining levels of happiness and high attendance supports this.

Parents and schools have a key role to play in learners' success and happiness. We believe that one of the most important life habits we can instil in learners is attendance. Promoting good attendance helps learners to understand the importance of education, commitment and taking responsibility, supporting them in later life. Ensuring your learner's regular attendance at Court Schools is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Court Schools without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Aims

Court Schools is committed 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 (September 2026 to September 2027)**, an effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by high expectation, procedures and responsibilities. To ensure leaders, staff, learners, and parents understand these expectations, these are set out in this policy.

- Section 1: the practical procedures to be followed at Court Schools in relation to attendance.
- Section 2: the measures in place at Court Schools to promote regular attendance by its registered learners.
- Section 3: the responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.
- Section 4: the action to be taken by staff if a registered learner fails to attend school regularly.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Section 1: The Practical Procedures

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and learner protection duties as set out in Keeping Learners Safe in Education (DfE 2024). Our Safeguarding policy can be found on the school website.

The Admissions Register (or 'School Roll')

It is Court Schools responsibility for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every learner along with the date of admission, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

We also hold emergency contact numbers for each learner. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to contact a responsible adult should the need arise. A learner's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances and we follow the DfE guidance and must have confirmation from the LA SEND Statutory Team.

The Attendance Register

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

The attendance register will be taken at the start of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every learner is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

Punctuality and Regular Attendance

The Court Schools Day:

Start of the school day is 8:45am As learners arrive on site and greeted by staff, they go to class and get settled and regulate ready for learning.

Magdalen Court School: Morning register opens at 9:00am and 1:30pm.

Cardrew Court School – Morning registers opens at: 9:00am and 1:00pm.

Court Schools statutory register for the morning registration session is taken at 9:00am and be kept open until 9:20am, for a present code from 9:21am – 9:30am learners will be recorded as a late code. Any learner who is not present after this time is marked as an N until we have conformation of why the learner is not attending. Then the code will change in relation to the absent or if they arrived in school after registration closed, they will get a U code.

The register for the morning session is taken at 9:00am and **will remain** open until 9:20am.

From 9:21am to 9:30am, learners will be recorded as late. The registration period is therefore open for 30 minutes and will be applied to all pupils.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

The register for the afternoon session will be taken after lunch. And kept open for ten minutes.

Magdalen Court School Afternoon Registration 1.30-1.40pm

Cardrew Court School Afternoon Registration 1.00-1.10pm

Any amendment to the attendance register will be approved by SLT, and 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.

Court Schools will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not, reason and evidence (if provided)
- The nature of the activity, where a learner is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances, where a learner is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- Where a learner is on a school visit or trip, this will be coded correctly and will count positively towards attendance.

Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

Learners who are attending alternative provisions will be coded with the appropriate code.

Lateness

Learners at Court schools are expected to be on time as each day starts with a tutorial period. Court schools will monitor patterns of lateness and will seek to understand and address barriers to punctual attendance. Persistent or repeated lateness will be addressed in accordance with the school's attendance procedures.

Unplanned Absence

Parents¹ must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible **and every day the learner is absent.**

Magdalen Court School

This can be done as follows: by calling the school phone number on **01392 494919** and leave a message or by emailing **office@magdalencourt.org** with the following details:

- Full name of the learner.
- Learner's Year group or tutor group.
- Full name of person reporting absence and relation to learner.

¹ Throughout this document, the terms 'parent' and 'parents' are interchangeable and apply equally to 'parents and carers' and includes foster parents and social workers where relevant.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

- Reason for absence. **“Unwell” will not be accepted as a reason.**

Cardrew Court School

This can be done as follows: by calling the school phone number on **01209 912126**

and leave a message or by emailing office@cardrewcourt.org with the following details:

- Full name of the learner.
- Learner's Year group or tutor group.
- Full name of person reporting absence and relation to learner.
- Reason for absence. **“Unwell” will not be accepted as a reason.**

If a learner has been **absent** for four days or more, the tutor or administrative staff will arrange a Microsoft Teams call on Friday afternoon to maintain contact, check on wellbeing, and offer support to the family.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily, **however Court Schools may request professional evidence for anxiety if it becomes persistent absence and not in the EHCP, to put reasonable adjustments in place.** If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9.20am on the day of the absence, the school will contact the parents on the same day to understand the reason for the absence.

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow learners 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 learner 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 learner is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Head Teacher to determine the length of the time the learner can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence

Court Schools Attendance Policy

will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please collect an absence request form (Appendix 2) from the admin staff at least two weeks before the intended absence, except in the case of an emergency.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments. For mental health, professional evidence will need to be provided.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the learner is attending educational provision.
- If the learner is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
 - If there is any other unavoidable cause for the learner 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.

Following Up on Unexplained Absence

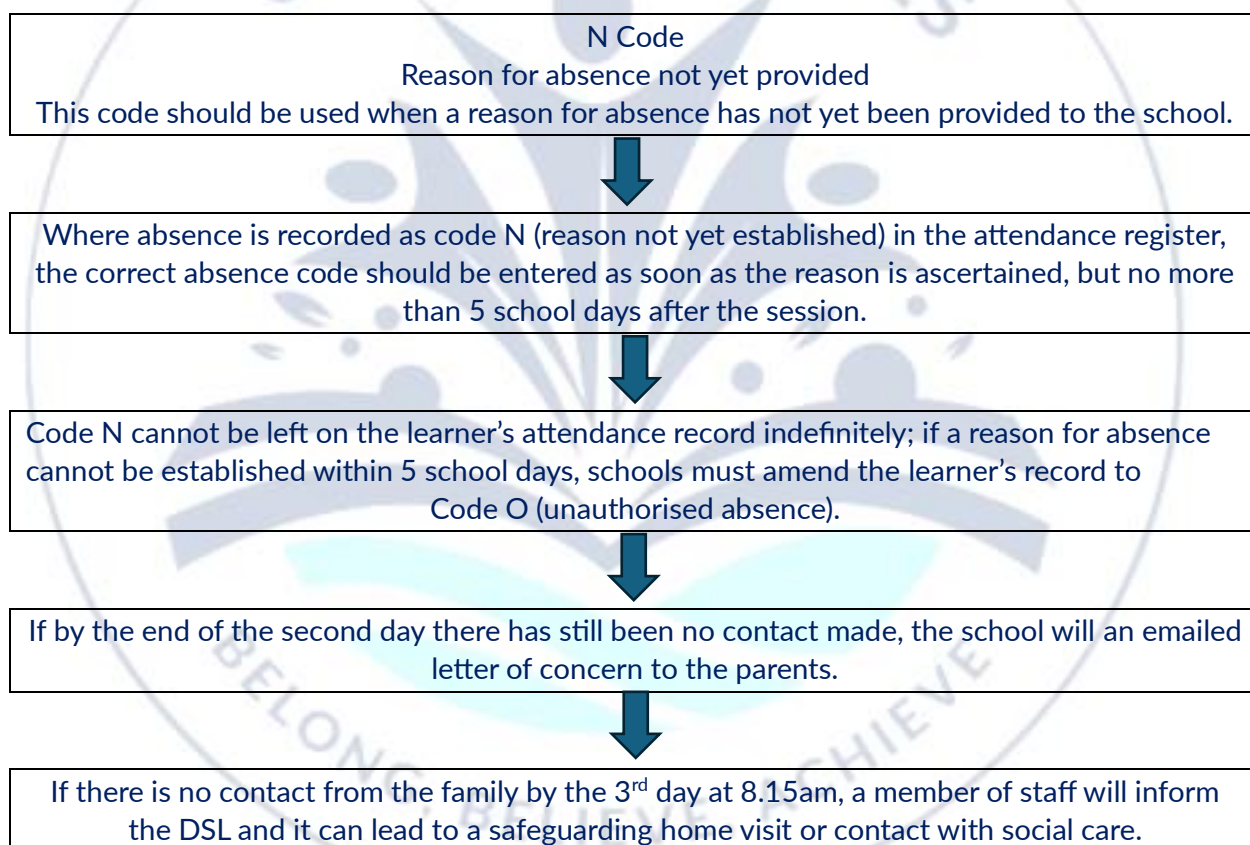
Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent(s) (including social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding why the absence has occurred, and when the learner will return.

- Court Schools will endeavour to make contact on the first day of absence, if no email, or telephone call is received by the school office from the parent by 9.20 am that day. If the family is not available on the telephone a message will be left, where possible. Emails/SMS text messages may also be used. The office will keep a record of contact made and responses.
- If there is no response from either of the 2 emergency contacts nominated by the parent and this is considered a cause for concern, the school may decide to notify the police in the interests of safeguarding the learner concerned.
- Court Schools staff will continue to try to contact the parents on each day that the absence continues without explanation, if there is no response. If by the end of the second day there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to the parents. On an individual basis we might feel it's appropriate to send a member of staff to go to the family home to offer support. The school will tell parents that if absence persists, a referral will be made to the right external agencies at the county council.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

- Support will be offered to the family to improve attendance and possibly a referral may also be made to the Early Help or external agencies as quickly as possible and when necessary, if the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and SLT think this is appropriate.
- Follow up on all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents.
- Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention, as appropriate.
- The correct absence code will be put in the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained.

N Code Flow Chart



Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance

This section sets out the measures in place at Court Schools to promote regular attendance by its registered learners.

Promoting Attendance

See Appendix 3 Attendance Processes to Support Increased Attendance.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Court Schools will:

- Treat all learners and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- Set out expectations of attendance and reporting in this policy and communicate procedures clearly in the placement plan.
- Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and teachers will actively encourage regular attendance, celebrate learner achievements, and proactively communicate with families regarding absence patterns.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of learners who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Inform parents termly of the attendance data of their learner, this can be more regular if there are concerns about attendance.
- Identify learners who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support learners back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps. If well enough to do so learners will be provided with 'Continuity of Learning' work when absent which means that they are able to keep up with the curriculum while absent. Teachers will meet with the learner on return and agree ways that the learner can be supported on their return and will monitor their re-engagement with school and support with any ongoing medical needs where necessary.
- Make initial enquiries of parents of learners who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance. School will send formal letters when applicable.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Officer. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the school or/and inclusion officer may result in further actions e.g. Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Learners Leaving During the School Day.

Learners are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. If an appointment is in school time evidence will be requested for example an appointment card or letter with the date and time.

Parents are requested to confirm in writing / or email the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the learner is being collected or will make their own way to their destination.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Where a learner is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the learner is allowed to leave the site.

If a learner leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to contact the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police and register the learner as a missing person.

Data Strategy

Court Schools understands that the majority of our learners come with complex needs and are vulnerable and school attendance has been a historic concern. Schools within the Court Schools family know that prevention, early detection and support to prevent absence is crucial.

We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:

Both identify and provide immediate additional support to learners and/or learner cohorts that need it.

Look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. The Academy will typically carry out the following analysis:

Daily monitoring of attendance through the admin team and communicated to SLT.

Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual learners that has been identified via data analysis.

Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some learners on certain days.

Patterns of attendance and engagement within sessions, to ensure that all learners are attending all timetabled lessons.

Attendance data will be discussed at weekly Safeguarding meetings and through staff meetings.

Termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of learners and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance.

Benchmarking attendance data at whole school, against national special school data and sharing good practice with others for raising attendance.

We will use this analysis to identify learners who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those learners and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning.

Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with learners and families, and to school leaders.

We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence refers to when a learner misses **10% or more of their possible school sessions**. This translates to around 7 days of absence across a term and around 19 days of absence across the school year.

Severely Absent

Severely absent refers to when a learner has missed **50% or more of their possible school sessions**.

Absence Reduction Strategy

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Learners Safe in Education.

Hold regular meetings with the parents of learners 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.

Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these learners. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.

Learners with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Schools within the Court Schools family recognise that some learners face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include learners who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other learner and therefore the attendance ambition for these learners is the same as they are for any other learners.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

We ask all staff to reinforce messages about the importance of attendance and create a welcoming environment which encourages learners to attend. In working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these learners face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for learners with physical or mental health conditions. For example, reviewing the barrier, putting an agreed plan together with the learner involved where appropriate and reviewing the plan regularly and evolve the plan when needed. Home visits / Teams calls to rebuild relationships.

Considering whether additional support from external agencies (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers learners may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

Ensuring pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including EHCP annual reviews, Safeguarding meetings, so that additional support from other agencies is accessed where necessary.

Please see the school's policy on 'Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions at School' for further information. In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising learners and parents and will talk to them, understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop personalised approaches that meet an individual learner's specific needs.

Part-Time Timetables

All learners of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a learner's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a learner from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package for a short period of time only.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. A part-time timetable will only be available to those with medical evidence/a second professional recommendation. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the learner is expected to attend full-time, at school. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it every 6 weeks with the learner (if appropriate) and their parents and any agencies involved with that learner. CCS will review PTTT every 2 weeks. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a learner being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such

Court Schools Attendance Policy

absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a learner is working on a part time timetable.

Flexi-Schooling

Learners of statutory school age have the right to full-time education.

Learners who are home educated are not normally registered on the roll of a school, but parents can request that a school permits them to receive part of their education at a school. This is called flexi-schooling.

The purpose of flexi-schooling is often to access education in specific subjects more easily than through home education. It may also be seen as a means to support a learner who is not able to manage full-time education in a school setting or to enable a learner to socialise with its peers. This is distinct from part-time education where a learner cannot manage full time education whether in or out of a school.

Flexi-schooling is therefore not the same as a learner having a part-time timetable in school (recorded on an Annex R).

There is no obligation on schools to agree to a request for flexi-schooling. This would be taken on an individual basis and the offer would be to support learning in the core subjects.

Examples of where requests might be made include:

- for talented young sportspersons so they can benefit from elite coaching and training; or
- for learners who are gifted in other areas so that they can benefit from expert tuition; or
- where parents feel that there are areas of their learner's education (which may also be in relation to the learner's faith and culture) which they wish to provide

Flexi-schooling arrangements may be long-term where all parties agree that this is in a learner's best interest. It may be a short-term option for a particular reason and with the aim of supporting a learner back towards full-time attendance in school. This may be the case for a learner returning to education following illness.

Schools entering a flexi-school arrangement are required to put the learner on roll. Sessions when the learner is not expected in must be recorded as C – Other authorised absence. Sessions when the learner is due in will be marked as per any other learner (i.e. present, authorised absence or unauthorised absence).

A school will review the flexi-schooling agreement should a learner's attendance for sessions when he or she is expected to be in school give cause for concern.

The school may end the flexi-school arrangement at any time if the terms of the agreement are not being met and/or the arrangement is not considered to be working to the learner's

Court Schools Attendance Policy

best interests. The learner would then be expected to attend on a full-time basis as would any learner on the school's roll.

A parent may also end the arrangement at any time, either returning the learner to full-time attendance or by writing to inform the school that the learner will be Electively Home Educated (on a full-time basis) and taken off the school roll.

Parents must still ensure that the learner receives a suitable full-time education. A request for flexi-schooling may prompt a formal review of the learner's provision. No flexi-schooling agreement should be made without liaison with the 0-25 SEN Team.

Where there is an entitlement to education transport provided by the LA, that is for travel at the beginning and end of the school day. There is no additional entitlement to travel during the day, either to or from school to accommodate different patterns of attendance.

The LA may withdraw transport for those journeys that are not required due to a flexi-schooling arrangement. This does not affect entitlement, but it is advisable to give notice wherever possible if journeys are to resume earlier than planned.

Devon [Flexi-schooling policy - Learners, families and education](#)

Cornwall [Part-time Timetables - Cornwall Council](#)

Pupil Missing in Education (CME)

Refers to those who are of compulsory school age but are either not registered at a school or not receiving suitable education elsewhere. These learners may be at risk of involvement in criminal or gang-related activity.

[Learners Missing Education - Guidance for Local authorities](#)

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Elective Home Education (EHE) is when a parent chooses not to send their learner to school full-time but assumes responsibility for making sure their learner receives a full-time education other than at school. Some learners are electively home educated from age 5 and may never attend school. In other cases, a learner may be removed from their school's roll for EHE.

Learners Returning to School after a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence

Parents, teachers, and (where appropriate) the learner will meet to review the learner's needs and establish a personalised reintegration plan. This plan will incorporate a high level of pastoral support and will be reviewed on a daily or weekly basis by senior leaders.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.

Strategic Lead for Attendance at Court Schools

For Court Schools - The name and contact details of the strategic lead to attendance in Court Schools is Adele Thomas who can be contacted on 01392 494919 or emailed at:

office@magdalencourt.org

Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on “day 1” will be completed by a member of the admin team. Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will be undertaken by the admin team who will then pass on the information to a member of SLT.

More detailed support on attendance can be requested from SLT.

Governing Body Responsibilities

The Governing body recognises the importance of school attendance and will:

Promote it through the school's values, ethos and policies.

Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual learners or cohorts who need it most.

Ensure Court Schools staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Governing body will also ensure:

That the Attendance Policy and its contents are generally made known within Court Schools and to parents of registered learners at the school, and steps are taken at least once in every school year to bring the Attendance Policy to the attention of all those parents and learners and all persons who work at the school.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- 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 learners needs.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and /or authorising deputy Headteacher to be able to do so.
- Working with the parents of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for learners with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where learners with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a learner with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the learner's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to learners and parents through all available channels

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader within the schools 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 learners, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and support attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly

Notices to Improve

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

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the learner attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the learner's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.
- As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, in conjunction with guidance from School absence penalty notices – Education and Families (devon.gov.uk)

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (September 2026 to September 2027) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

Links with other Policies

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Court Schools Safeguarding policy, Court Schools Behaviour Policy, National Guidance on attendance produced by the DfE (November 2016) and the school's homework policy.

Our school will additionally use the Local Authority's Flexi-schooling agreement when relevant; the school will endorse Flexi-schooling agreements to ensure they are working in accordance with the protocols outlined by the Local Authority; Court Schools will monitor any learner who may be missing from education in accordance with the protocols determined by the Local Authority.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Adele Thomas Deputy Headteacher @ Magdalen Court School. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Learner is present when morning registration is taken from 9:00 to 9:19
\	Present (pm)	Learner is present when afternoon registration is taken from 1:30 to 1:40
L	Late arrival	Learner arrives late before register has closed from 9.20am – 9.30am
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence Learner has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session Change the N to a U and put in the time they signed in to school.
V	Attending an educational visit or trip on behalf of Court Schools e.g a trip to the museum. With a member of our staff.	Attending a place other than the school Learner is on an educational visit/trip organised or curriculum-based activities like outdoor education or / and approved by the school. Learner attended and we are safeguarding the learner. Safeguarding
P	Participating in a sporting activity. With a member of our staff	Attending a place other than the school Learner is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school supervised by a professional to ensure it happens. Safeguarding
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Absent – Other Authorised Reason Learner is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) School to decide illness is genuine can ask for medical evidence. Talk to parent can be enough for one offs

Court Schools Attendance Policy

M	Medical/dental appointment	Absent – leave of absence Learner is at a medical including CAMHS or dental appointment. Therapeutic appointment to support need described in the EHCP. Try to get not in school time.
B	Attending any other approved educational activity arrange by school. Elmtree, attending transition day at new school or provision.	Attending a place other than the school Learner is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. Not to be used as a blanket code. What is the activity? where are they?
C	Exceptional circumstances	Absent – leave of absence Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances Can grant leave of absence. School can determine number of days. A need or desire for a holiday is not exceptional circumstances. Transition – Due to SEN need learners have up to 6 weeks to transition into our school and this code will be use during this transition.
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable best interest to temporary reduce their timetable medical conditions. To help pupil to access as much education as possible. paragraph 64 -69.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. If named on the EHCP	Attending a place other than the school Learner is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority. Provision arranged by a tribunal outcome. Safeguarding letter of assurance is needed.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Absent – other authorised reasons

Court Schools Attendance Policy

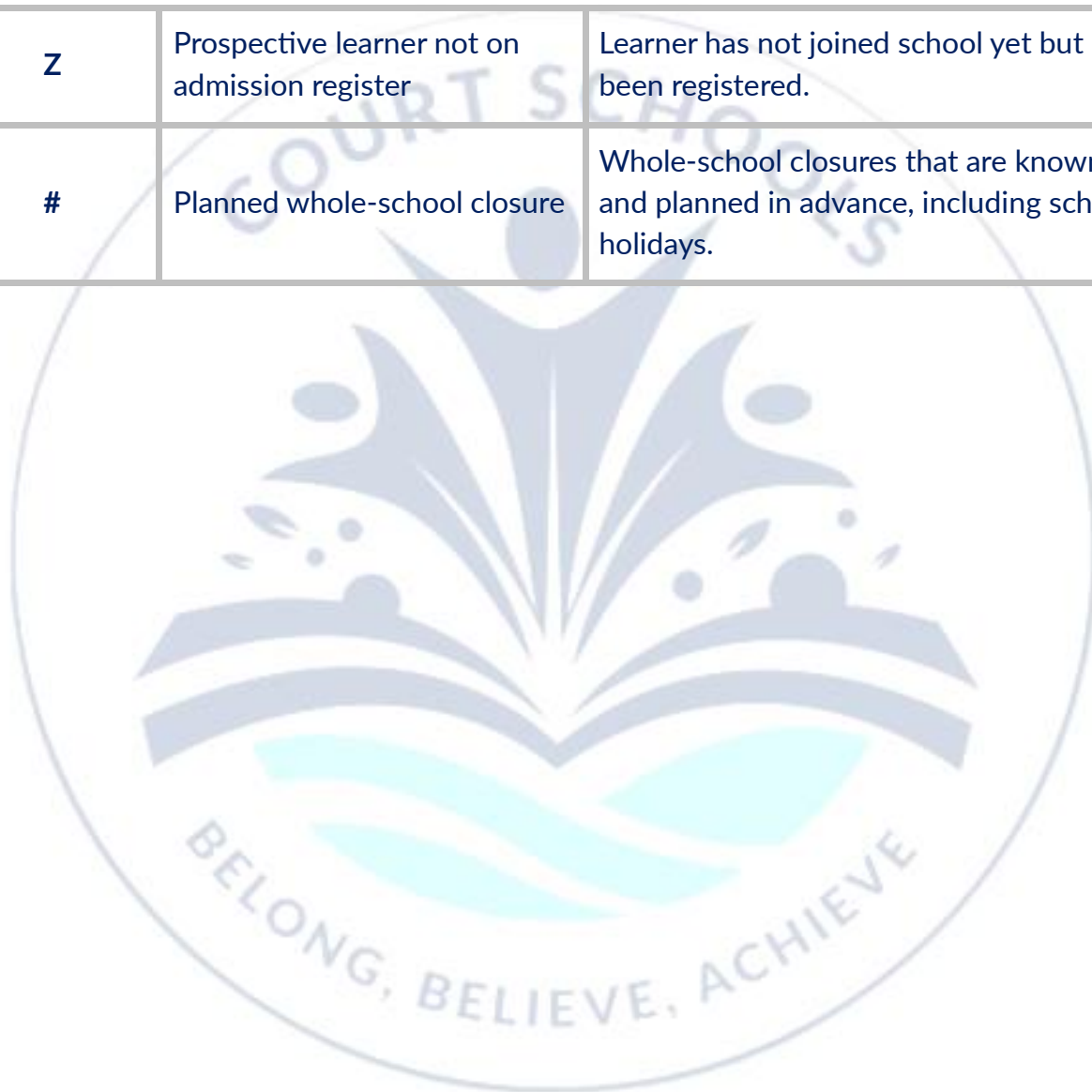
		Learner has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Attending a place other than the school		
W	Attending work experience.	Learner is on an approved work experience placement. Safeguarding letter of assurance is needed.
D	Dual registered	Learner is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
J1	Interview	Learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment.
S	Study leave	Learner has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination eg GCSE not for mock exams.
X	Not required to be in school	Learner of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend. Only use with learners who are commissioned for 15 hours as this is full time in post 16.
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Learner is a 'mobile learner' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes. Parents have no fixed address.
R	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance. Can check with religious body parent belongs to.
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Learner is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to

Court Schools Attendance Policy

		provide transport to enable attendance at school. Transport not in place as part of the transition.
Y1	Transport normally provided is not available	Learner is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available. Transport for one off session.
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Learner is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency. Snow fall, flooding.
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Learner 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 learner absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Learner is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Learner'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	Learner is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

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.
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective learner not on admission register	Learner 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.



Court Schools Attendance Policy

Appendix 2 -Learner Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances - Request Form

<i>Parents/Carers - Please return this request form to the Headteacher at least 2 weeks before</i>	
NAME OF LEARNER:	
DATES REQUESTED – FROM (Insert first date of absence):	
DATES REQUESTED – TO (Insert last date of absence):	
TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:	
I request leave of absence for the above-named learner due to the following exceptional circumstance(s): -	
Please state destination:	
Accompanying adults & their relationship to learner:	
In order to counteract any missed teaching and learning, my learner will: -	
Is there anything else that you feel would enhance the above? -	
I/ we agree to the terms and conditions outlined within the Exceptional Circumstances section of this policy.	Signed (Parent/carer):
I/we understand if we do not provide sufficient information to support the risk assessment the school can decline this request	Signed (Parent/carer):
To the parents/carers of:	
Request approved/not approved for your learner to have a leave of absence (exceptional circumstances):	APPROVED NOT APPROVED
If exceptional circumstances have been declined (reasons) – <i>if you would like an appointment to discuss any aspect, please telephone the office manager to request an appointment with the HT:</i>	

Court Schools Attendance Policy

FROM (first day of absence):	
TO (last day of absence):	
Head Teacher's signature:	
Date:	

Appendix 3 Attendance Processes to Support Increased Attendance

Tier 1	Universal Provision	Meeting National Special School Attendance Levels	86.81%+
Tier 2	Targeted Support	Below National Special School Attendance Levels & Above Persistently Absent	51% - 86.80%
Tier 3	Intensive Support	Persistently Absent	0 - 50.9%

Tier 1 Universal Provision

Role of School Staff	Role of Learners	Role of Parents/ Carers
Belong: A Relational Approach with learners and their families. Personalised Relational Approach plan – supporting feeling 'Just Right'. Meet and Greet learners. Create positive, safe learning environment. Recognise and celebrate achievement. Support with interventions/ therapies if and when needed. Monitor daily attendance & punctuality. Inform parents/ carers and learners of attendance levels termly.	Be punctual. Attend Regularly Recognise your achievements Share any concerns, potential barriers with a trusted adult	Support learners to: Be punctual Attend regularly Communicate with school any concerns, worries learner may have. Recognise and celebrate achievement Communicate with school regarding absence

Tier 2 Support for Learners & their families - To include Tier 1 Provision +

Role of School Staff	Role of Learners	Role of Parents/ Carers	Role of External Agencies
'Belong' culture instilled and embedded. Analyse attendance data.	To work with trusted adult and parent/ carers to increase attendance.	Work collaboratively with school:	Support families to view school attendance as a priority.

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Work with identified families, to identify reasons for absence and support the removal of any barriers to increasing attendance. Implement and monitor intervention support. Support referrals to external agencies if required. Hold at least half-termly meetings to review attendance level until meets National Standard of attendance (unless clear reason for absence and reason now removed)		To identify reasons for absence. To understand barriers to improved attendance. Make referrals to external agencies where needed. Proactively engage with any support offered to increase attendance levels. Attend at least half-termly meeting.	Work collaboratively with school to support and promote attendance including attending meetings. Provide advice and guidance related to role of expertise to explain barriers and strategies that could be harnessed to support removal of barriers.
---	--	--	--

Examples of Support

Family Support	Early Help
Learner Support	Access to Therapeutic support – Trauma Informed Practice Regulation strategy support & implementation Trusted adult check-ins Adapted timetable

Tier 3 Intensive Support for Learners & their families - To include Tier 1 & 2 provision +

Role of School Staff	Role of Learners	Role of Parents/ Carers	Role of External Agencies
Implement and monitor intensive support. Implement at least twice half-termly meetings to review attendance and reflect on effectiveness of intensive support.	To work collaboratively with staff and any external partners to support removing their barriers to increased attendance. To engage with support provided to increase attendance.	Collaborate closely with school and attend regular meetings to support increased level of attendance.	Offer specialist assessment and services to support removal of barriers and/ or medical issue which is a barrier to increased attendance. Attend and take an active role in any multi-agency effort to support attendance of learners in their education.

Examples of Support

Family Support	Attendance Support Plan Family Practitioner Support Twice half-termly Attendance Support meetings
----------------	--

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Learner Support	Home Visits Connection in the Community Personalised learning intervention Support to build self-belief in self as a 'learner' Access to online learning curriculum Regular check-ins
-----------------	--

Appendix 4: Anxiety and Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

1 Purpose:

This appendix outlines Court Schools approach to attendance difficulties related to anxiety and Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

Majority of our learners at Court Schools have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) and Communication and Interaction needs (C&I) as their primary need. For the majority of our learners, they have already experienced significant anxiety, emotional distress or trauma-related responses that have affected them being able to attend school regularly. This can be historical and can continue with their placement in Court Schools. Court Schools aims to support all learners with anxiety and EBSA with early identification, supportive intervention, and flexible reintegration strategies and a personalised approach.

2. Definition of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and Anxiety-related absence

EBSA refers to reduced or non-attendance at school due to emotional distress, most commonly anxiety. Characteristics may include:

- Severe anxiety about attending school.
- Panic attacks or severe distress related to attending school.
- Emotional dysregulation linked to school attendance.
- Physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches
- Difficulty separating from parents/carers.
- Frequent lateness or partial attendance
- Anxiety linked to SEND needs, sensory difficulties or social situations.

EBSA is not considered truancy or deliberate refusal to attend school.

For majority of our learners this will be recorded in sections B / C or both in the EHCP or in recent medical letters that have been received from medical professionals.

Where anxiety leads to ongoing difficulty attending school, the school may identify this as Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

3. EBSA / Anxiety Attendance Coding Decision Guide:

Step 1 – Did the learner attend school?

Situation	Code
Learner attended the session	/ or \ Present

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Learner attended part of the day due to anxiety	Present for the Session attended L or U up to PM reg
---	--

Step 2 – If absent, identify the reason

Situation	Code
Parent reports learner is unable to attend due to anxiety or emotional distress. School considers this to be due to difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school that can be managed by implementing reasonable adjustments to support attendance.	O - Unauthorised
Parent reports learner is unable to attend due to significant anxiety and emotional distress. The learner is experiencing symptoms consistent with severe anxiety / Emotionally Based School Avoidance (ESBA), this is having a significant impact on their ability to attend school. The level of anxiety experiences by the learner is acute and has substantial impact on their ability to function in daily life. Attempts to attend school or discussions about attending school can trigger heightened responses. Barriers to attendance are significant and extend beyond the school. The learner's anxiety affects daily life and functioning and they may struggle to leave the family home or engage in social situations due to overwhelming emotional distress. They may be under the care of CAMHS or medical professional. School consider that it is not possible for the learner to attend due to mental health related illness.	I - Illness
Learners attending therapy or medical appointment for anxiety.	M – Medical appointment
Planned authorised absent agreed by the school.	C – Authorised absent
Alternative provision arranged by the Local authority.	K - Alternative provision arranged by the Local authority.
School -arranged off-site support or educational activity	B – Off-site learning Activity

5. Attendance Code for Anxiety:

The aim is to ensure consistent attendance coding. While recognising that anxiety can significantly affect a learner's ability to attend school due to:

Description	Code
Learner is absent due to illness, including mental health conditions such as anxiety	I - Illness
Learner absent for medical or therapeutic appointment, including CAMHS and therapeutic appointment	M – Medical

Court Schools Attendance Policy

Exceptional circumstances authorised by the Headteacher	C – Leave of absence authorised by school
Learners attending alternative provision arranged by the LA	K – Attending Education Provision Arranged by the LA
Approved education activity supervised by the school to include online learning.	B – Off-site Educational Activity

