Tittensor CE (VC) First School Attendance Policy

Policy date: September 2026
Review date: September 2027

For more information on Attendance from Staffordshire County Council please visit
https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx

Current Context
This Policy has been written with guidance from Staffordshire County Council and from DfE guidance - Working together to improve school attendance which was published on 29.1.24 and came into effect from 19.8.2024. Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) This guidance is statutory, and schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities must have regard to it as part of their efforts to maintain high levels of school attendance.

It is issued under:
-section 175(4) of the Education Act 2002 (all chapters),
-sections 19(4A) and 444B (3) of the Education Act 1996 (chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6),
-section 19(9) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (chapters 1-6),
-paragraph 7(b) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (chapters 1 and 2) and paragraph 3(a) of the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 (chapters 1 and 2)

All schools are expected to promote excellent attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence. Parents are expected to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children attend regularly and arrive to school on time.

Definition of Parent – DfE Advice on School Attendance:
- All natural parents whether married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child or young person.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student, that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

National Context
Section 7, Education Act 1996 – s444 states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by **'regular'** attendance at school or 'otherwise'. **The duty on parents is to ensure their children are educated, either at a school or 'otherwise'.** Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of 'otherwise' children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, i.e. – special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

Principles:

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other polices related to the well-being of children including teaching and learning, safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern. Our school has a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 sessions or more, where there are concerns about the absence, to the Local Support Team. This could result in a penalty notice.
- All schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent; every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise absences, not parents/carers. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given, this is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children away from school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- holidays taken within term time

The Headteacher will apply common sense principles to the decision-making process but, exceptional circumstances are at the discretion of the Headteacher and in line with DFE and Staffordshire guidance.

The Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the policy and can delegate the leadership to a named member of staff. Designated staff should follow up individual pupils and analyse attendance data to identify trends for individual pupils, classes and year groups enabling the school to target efforts. Wherever possible, action will be taken by the school to improve a pupil's attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before considering whether to make a referral to the appropriate team in the Local Authority. The school aims to work closely with families to work with families where attendance falls below an acceptable level. We will work with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support families with any issues that may affect punctuality.

In addition, Tittensor CE (VC) First School will:

- have a Senior Attendance Champion (Miss G Craig)

- build strong relationships with families
- have a whole school culture on attendance
- publish a school attendance policy
- have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence
- monitor and analyse attendance and absence data
- work collaboratively with other schools and support services
    - Share date with DFE and County Council
    - Be particularly mindful of pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support

Senior Attendance Champion (Miss G Craig) will:

- set a clear vision for improvement and maintaining good attendance
- establish and maintain effective systems
- have a strong grasp of absence data
- monitor and evaluate progress
- lead on schools' attendance strategy
- contribute to the SLT

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away, by telephone or Dojo message, if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Bring their child to the office if they arrive at school after 8.55am. A reason for the lateness must be provided. The register must be taken by 9:00am. Persistent lateness will be challenged. It is worth noting that if a pupil is 15 minutes late everyday this is equivalent to missing 10 days of school over the year.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up-to-date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

Admissions Register:

- Our School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.
- Our school keeps a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.
- A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;
    - Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
    - Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
    - Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;

- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education:

If our school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Procedures for Registration:

- Registers open in the morning at 8:40am. Any pupil not in registration at the start of school will be marked as absent with the appropriate code if this is known in advance or 'N', where no reason is known.
- Any children arriving after 8:55am, when the gates are closed, will need to be signed in at the office and a valid reason for the lateness must be provided. A late mark will be issued.
- The registers officially close at 9:30am and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked absent for the session. Unless a valid reason is provided, the 'U' code will be used and parents should be aware that if a pupil reaches 10 'U' absences, there is the risk of a Penalty Notice being issued against them for poor attendance, just the same as if the pupil were absent.
- Regular late checks are completed by the school.
- In the afternoon, registers open at 1pm for KS2, KS1 and Reception. Registers close 5 minutes after opening.

ABSENCE

If your child is unable to attend school or nursery for any reason please telephone or e-mail the school office to let us know. If your child has sickness or diarrhoea, we ask that he/she does not return to school for 48 hours as this type of illness can be very infectious.

Tittensor First operates a first day contact policy whereby if the school has not been notified of an absence, parents/carers will be contacted to obtain an explanation. High concern children are monitored and are contacted immediately if they are absent, these include child protection and on-going concern children identified by the Safeguarding Officer.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving any problems. Letters are sent out to parents, to address low school attendance and punctuality, meetings can be arranged, and action plans are completed to address any attendance concerns. This process is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent/carer may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Support Team. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support (if other ways of trying to improve the pupil's attendance have failed.

Parents or children may also wish to contact the Local Support Team directly to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

PUNCTUALITY

The school day begins promptly at 8:55am and we ask that children arrive promptly (from 8:40am onwards) to ensure a positive start to their learning. Please ensure your child is not late for school. Children who arrive late are

asked to report to the school office on arrival. Any late attendance is recorded on the end of year school report to parents.

However, if your child is late, you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as we may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Procedures

Tittensor CE (VC) first School applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Parents/carers are advised that pupils are expected to be in school every day. The importance of good attendance is stressed through written and oral communications with pupils and parents.
- Parents/carers are discouraged from making non urgent medical and dental appointments during the school day, but must inform the school if there is no alternative providing an appointment card.
- Pupils who need to leave the school during the day must have evidence explaining the reasons for this.
- All requests for known absences from the school must be made in writing.
- Holidays during term time will be unauthorised.
- A fixed penalty notice will be issued:
  If (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks / or
  If holiday / unauthorised absence has already been taken during the previous 12 months
- All absences through illness must be backed up by written evidence explaining the nature of the illness or a telephone call to school.
- Attendance is regularly monitored and reported to the senior leadership team.

Point to be considered
Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. Parents will be asked to provide evidence, where pupil attendance falls below 90%, that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing written evidence from a medical professional, (e.g.: appointment cards, copies of prescriptions) There is no need to request a GP doctors note, as this can cause confusion and could have a financial implication.

Attendance Codes
A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input in the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the following are the codes used by the DfE.

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

These codes can be found in Appendix 3.

Practicalities of Managing Medical Absence

- If concerns are highlighted regarding the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred contact will be made with the parents/carers to discuss it further and look at ways to support a pupil with medical conditions in school through the use of an Individual Health Care Plan.
- If still concerned the school will suggest that the pupil visit their GP or other health professional, if this has not already been done.
- Pupils and Parents will be invited to Attendance Clinics with school staff once their attendance becomes a concern.
- Any pupil whose attendance, at the end of each half term is below 90% may be asked to attend an interview with relevant staff.
- If parents do not attend the Educational Welfare Worker, Attendance Agency or school staff may make a home visit to offer support

- If attendance does not improve the school may request parents seek a note of explanation from the relevant health professional or may involve the school nurse.
- If despite the request for the note of explanation, no note is forthcoming, the school may not be able to authorise absences unless satisfactory medical evidence is provided to support the pupil's inability to attend school.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the (Local Authority) Educational Welfare Worker may be made by the school. Following investigation, any unresolved issues could result in the parent/carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s444.

Attendance Categories

- 100 to 96% - as expected
- 95 to 91% - at risk of persistent absence
- 90 to 80% - persistent absence
- 79 to 51% - at risk of severe absence
- Less than or equal to 50% - severe absence

Persistent Absence (PA)
Tittensor CE (VC) First is committed to reducing persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) and has specific procedures for dealing with this. There are strong and proven links between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Attendance of less than 95% (equivalent to 9.5 days or more absence in an academic year) has been shown to compromise pupil attainment. An attendance of 90% is equivalent to missing 19 days or nearly 4 weeks from school in a year.

A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems. The letter will inform the parents of the school's concerns and offer support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a pupil from attending. Pupils falling to below 95% attendance will be monitored as to whether their attendance improves or deteriorates and parents will receive a letter explaining this. The aim is to avoid a pupil falling into the Persistent Absence category (less than 90% attendance). One session's absence per week is an absence rate of half a day per week. The length of each half term varies per academic year but the table below gives an indication of the impact on a child's attendance of being absent from school for half a day per week in a typical school year.

By the end of half-term 1 (Autumn Term) 7 weeks	7 + sessions (3.5 days)
By the end of half-term 2 (Autumn Term) 7 weeks	7 + sessions (7 days)
By the end of half-term 3 (Spring Term) 6 weeks	6 + sessions (10 days)
By the end of half-term 4 (Spring Term) 6 weeks	6 + sessions (13 days)
By the end of half-term 5 (Summer Term) 6 weeks	6 + sessions (16 days)
By the end of half-term 6 (Summer Term) 7 weeks	7 + sessions (19.5 days or one month's absence in one school year)

Penalty Notices

The Local Authority holds statutory powers under the Education Act 1996 to ensure children attend school. If they cannot successfully engage with the family to achieve this, they may use the many statutory powers to enforce the parents/carers responsibility regarding their child's school attendance. The Education Welfare Worker (The Local Authority, not the individual worker) can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, amended Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, allows parents to be issued with a penalty where they fail to ensure their child of compulsory school age (5-16) attends school.

The first Penalty Notices for leave in term time will be £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000. The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the Academy and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the Academy reception or by contacting the Local Support Team. Requesting a leave of absence in term time.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

If a child receives 10 late marks (U), and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are, therefore, encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late, you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness
If a pupil has had 5 days unauthorised absence or is late (U) 10 times over a ten-week period, parents /carers may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

Absence due to illness

When your child is unwell, it can be hard deciding whether to keep them off school. Whether you send your child to school will depend on how severe you think the illness is.

When deciding whether or not your child is too unwell to attend school, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my child well enough to do the activities of the school day?
- Does my child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff?
- Would I take a day off if I had this condition?

Think carefully before keeping your child away from school for medical reasons. If they wake up saying they are unwell, consider whether the symptoms they have mean they need to stay at home. Do not keep your child away from school 'just in case' when they could be in class learning with their friends.

If you are unsure of whether to keep them off, how long they should be off for or when to send them back, then there is a useful link on our website 'should my child go to school?' http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Yourchildatschool/Pages/Illness.aspx which links to the NHS information and guidelines. Please send your child to school as much as you possibly can and be assured that **if they are unwell, we will look after them here and send them home if necessary.**

We usually ask parents to provide a written note, or telephone call, explaining your child's absence from school. In most cases, this should be sufficient evidence for us to authorise the absence. Appendix A

Do you know how many days *you* have been away from school this term?

Before the end of each term each pupil will know which Zone, you are in. It will depend on how many days you have been away from school.

Over 95% attendance puts you in the Green Zone. Well Done! This means that you are making the most of the opportunities on offer at school; you get the chance to join in as much as possible and make lots of friends.
You have the best chance of doing well at school because you don't miss any work and you get to do all the fun stuff too.

Under 95% but more than 85% attendance and you'll be in the Amber Zone. Your attendance might be a little lower than the other children because you have been ill or have had a holiday during school-time. You don't want to miss out so try to come to school as much as you can. If you do, you'll soon be into the GREEN ZONE.

If you have had a lot of time away from school your attendance may be less than 85% and you could be in the RED Zone. If you're in the RED Zone you could be missing lots of important and fun things at school. You could get into the AMBER ZONE if you tried really hard not to have a day off and came into school every day, next term.

Appendix B

Thinking of booking a holiday in term time?

Something to consider:

If you are away from school for a week you will miss approximately:



5 hours of numeracy



5 hours of literacy



10 hours of science, ICT, P.E, art, geography, history, D&T, R.E. and music.

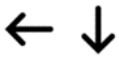
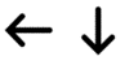
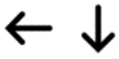
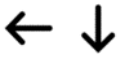
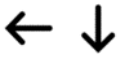
If you have a holiday of two weeks during term time and also a one week period of sickness in one year you will miss:

15 hours of literacy, 15 hours of numeracy, 30 hours of other subjects!
Can you really achieve your best if you miss out on **60 hours of education** a year?

If you were to do this every year throughout your school life you would miss **36 weeks** of your education!

38 weeks = One School Year

Appendix C

	Welcome letter to all parents and carers regarding attendance and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) service. This is sent out annually.
	
	Termly attendance reviews take place
	
	STAGE 1 If attendance falls below 95%, parents of informed of this through Attendance Letter 1.
Attendance improves. Letter of improvement issued.	
	STAGE 2 Attendance fails to improve. Attendance letter 2 issued advising of possible EWO involvement
Attendance improves. Letter of improvement issued. Attendance continues to be monitored.	
	STAGE 3 Attendance fails to improve. Attendance letter 3 issued advising absences without medical proof will be unauthorised.
Attendance improves. Letter of improvement issued. Attendance continues to be monitored.	
	STAGE 4 Attendance fails to improve. Attendance Clinic invite.
Attendance improves. Letter of improvement issued. Attendance continues to be monitored.	
	STAGE 5 Notice to improve letter issued
Attendance improves. Letter of improvement issued. Attendance continues to be monitored.	
	STAGE 6 Statutory action taken by Local Authority

Appendix D

Penalty Notice fines for school attendance are changing!

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per parent, per child

Penalty Notice fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example, 3 siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

5 days of term time leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for unauthorised term time leave of more than 5 days.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

This is reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28

Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Magistrates fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Appendix E

Present at School
Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm
Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed
The L code will only be applied between 9.00am and 9.10am when the registers will close. A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity
An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity
This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity
This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip
This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School
Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school
Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
C1 – Approved Leave for entertainment.
C2 – Approved absence for part-time timetable

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made
If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made, they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school
Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments
Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance
Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.
This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School
Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher.
If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided
Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely, if absence is not provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation
If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed
Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes
The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school
This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Y1 – unable to attend as provided transport not available
Y2 – Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel – Not weather- emergency event
Y3 – Unable to attend, part of school is closed.
Y4 – Unable to attend whole school site closed. Weather
Y5 – Unable to attend child in criminal justice detention
Y6 – Unable to attend – public health guidance
Y7 – Unable to attend – unavoidable cause for the pupil

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register
This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure
This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.
K - Attending education provision arranged by the county council. Section 19 provision
Q – Unable to attend due to lack of access

Appendix F

Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices: Commencing on 19/8/24

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

Penalty Notices are one of the sanctions available for this offence and offer a means of swift intervention, which can be used to combat attendance problems early, before they become entrenched.

Parents and children should also be supported by their school to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies.

Therefore, Penalty Notices and other legal sanctions will only be used where parental cooperation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem. They will also be used to support and challenge parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance.

In April 2012, the Government accepted the Charlie Taylor report recommendation to challenge the culture of expectation to term time holiday and set out a clear expectation that term time leave should only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations

2013 made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 to: clarify that leave of absence shall not be granted by schools unless there are “exceptional circumstances”.

The Supreme Court judgement on the Isle of Wight v Platt case on the 6th April 2017, has brought clarity to the issue of what regular attendance means and the use of penalty notices. Lady Hale gave the conclusion that “regularly” means “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”, she went on to say that there are many examples where, what could be perceived to be, a very minor or trivial breach of the law can lead to criminal liability.

With specific regard to leave during term time, the judgement stated (this interpretation is also consistent with the provision in section 444(3)(a) and (9)) that a child is not to be taken to have failed to attend regularly if he is absent with the leave of a person authorised by the governing body or proprietor of the school. Unlike sickness or unavoidable cause, leave is not a defence. It is part of the definition of the offence. A child is required to attend in accordance with the normal rules laid down by the school authorities for attendance but the school can make an exception in a case.

Legal Framework:

- Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers (as well as deputy and assistant head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 prescribe the necessary details for the operation of the penalty notice scheme under section 444A of the Education Act 1996 and section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 includes the duty of parents in relation to excluded pupils and provides for penalty notices to be issued where a parent has committed an offence by an excluded pupil being present in a public place at any time during school hours on a school day.
- Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines the meaning of “parent”.
- The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence if a parent fails to secure their child’s regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

For the purposes of this document the LA uses section 576 of the Education Act 1996 which defines "parent" in relation to a child or young person as including any person: who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child or young person. The LA, in line with the Department for Education, considers a "parent" to include:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a guardian or other relative who has acquired parental responsibility.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

The LA reserves the right to issue a penalty notice to all persons defined as a parent(s) under the 1996 Education Act section 576 in relation to Unauthorised absence.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised absence of least 10 sessions (each school day contains two sessions) this may comprise of any unauthorised absence or late arrival at school or alternative provision over a rolling period of 10 school weeks, excluding school holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- If in an individual case the LA believes a penalty notice is appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the 10-session threshold is met. In such instances there must be at least 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in term time not authorised by the head teacher over a period of 10 rolling school weeks or any period of leave more than the period authorised by the head teacher.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded/suspended from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the Local Authority with whom other interventions will be used.

Other conditions.

- Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate as detailed below.
- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In this case where the criteria to issue a penalty notice is met for a third time within 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- All Penalty Notices are entered onto a database maintained by the Local Authority to ensure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.

A 10-session period of unauthorised absences/lateness

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour, and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence.

The local authority's (LA) decision on whether sufficient support has been provided before issuing a penalty notice should be treated as final.

The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 unauthorised late arrival within the Autumn Term).

Notice to Improve

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or late arrival in a rolling period of 10 school weeks the school may request the local authority to issue a Notice to Improve to a parent.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and a school can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a

Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact.

The Notice to Improve should include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks. This is at the discretion of the local authority
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

The LA will consider, and issue a Notice to Improve requested by a school in response to 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or late arrival where the school has:

- completed and sent a request form.
- provided the LA with a pupil attendance registration certificate signed by the Head teacher / Principal – or their nominated deputy – confirming that non-attendance / lateness during the period was unauthorised.
- provided the LA with information which demonstrates that the use of a Notice to Improve is now the appropriate action to address the child's school attendance / punctuality.
-

The LA EWO will then issue a Notice to Improve to the parent (s) by post or email.

If the required improvement in attendance is achieved the LA will not issue a penalty notice but will ask the school to continue to support the family.

If there is not sufficient improvement within the timeframe of the notice the LA will issue a penalty notice to the parent (s).

Where improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended.

Please note: Schools are requested to send in their request forms for a notice to improve as soon as the threshold has been met, so that the notice can be issued in a timely manner and prevent further unauthorised absences.

A period of unauthorised absence, not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

The LA will consider, and issue Penalty Notices requested by a school in response to any unauthorised leave of absence (including family holidays) resulting in unauthorised absence where the school has:

- completed and sent a request form which, if possible, should include:
  - Copy of parental request form
  - Response letter to parents

- provided the LA with a pupil attendance registration certificate signed by the Head teacher / Principal – or their nominated deputy – confirming that non-attendance / lateness during the period was unauthorised.

- In cases where the unauthorised leave of absence occurs without prior request from the parent (s) or is due to unauthorised absence beyond that which was agreed, the school should provide evidence of what efforts have been made to contact the parent(s) to explore the unauthorised absence.

- If parents dispute the school's allegation that the child was on an unauthorised leave, then the parent is responsible for providing the evidence to substantiate their claim. This should be provided to the school and included in with the request form.

Please note: Schools are requested to send in their penalty notice forms within 4 weeks of the end date of the unauthorised leave, so that the penalty notice can be processed in a timely manner.

Whilst the LA reserves the right to issue a penalty notice to all persons defined as a parent under the 1996 Education Act section 576 in relation to unauthorised leave, the LA may seek to specifically issue a penalty notice to the parent(s) whom the child resides with, or if parents are separated, the parent(s) who have taken the child out of school for the unauthorised leave.

Where the Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to a leave of absence related unauthorised absence or is in relation to an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Notice to Improve does not apply.

Excluded and suspended pupil seen in a public place during school hours

The parent of the pupil must ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours on a day that he / she is excluded or suspended, up to and including the first 5 days or, where it is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates.

If the pupil is present in a public place at any time during school hours on a school day specified above, the parent commits an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

In such cases the school should provide to the LA:

- A copy of the letter sent to parent(s) pursuant to s.104 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 warning them to ensure that the child is not permitted to be present in a public place in the first five days of exclusion.
- Robust and reliable evidence in the form of a witness statement, stating how the child is known to the witness, where the child was seen including the date and time.

Please note if the case is contested the witness may be required to give evidence in court.

<u>Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:</u>

A Penalty Notice may only be issued by authorised LA staff. In Staffordshire this will be LA Education Welfare Officers. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, avoid duplication of issue, and allow schools to maintain good relationships with parents and ensure that they reinforce other enforcement sanctions.

A Penalty Notice may be requested by a head teacher / principal and school staff authorised by them, or a police officer during a truancy sweep under the provision of Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Penalty Notices will initially be issued by post and never as an instant action, e.g. during a truancy sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place, duplication of issue is avoided and to limit the health and safety risks associated with delivering such notices by hand. However, if a parent requests a further copy of a penalty notice, this may be sent via email to the parent.

Where Schools, Police or neighbouring local authorities ask Staffordshire County Council to issue a Penalty Notice, their request will be investigated and actioned by the LA EWO provided that:

- The circumstances of the case meet the criteria specified in this Code of Conduct.
- The pupil is registered at a Staffordshire School;
- Checks have been made with a previous local authority if a pupil has moved home or school during the previous 3 years.
- All necessary evidence is provided to establish an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 has been committed.
- Issuing a Penalty Notice would not conflict with another intervention strategy already in place or another enforcement sanction already being processed; and
- There is evidence which demonstrates that the use of a Penalty Notice is now the appropriate action to improve the child's school attendance (not required in the case of unauthorised leave of absence).

The LA will endeavour to keep schools informed about the outcomes of the penalty notices.

Truancy Sweep

A Penalty Notice will only be issued after due consideration, when all facts are known and the threshold for serving the notice has been met. Information should be given to anyone stopped on a truancy sweep (pupil and/or parent) about the possible support and sanctions used to address non-attendance.

Criteria for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued a Penalty Notice may be withdrawn if Staffordshire LA is satisfied that:

- The Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to this Code of Conduct.
- The Penalty Notice contained material errors.
- The evidence demonstrates that the Penalty Notice should not have been issued, e.g. medical evidence.

If a parent believes one of the above criteria to withdraw a penalty notice has been met, this should be raised with the LA immediately, by contacting:

Head of Attendance and Inclusion
Children's and Families
1 Staffordshire Place
Stafford ST16 2DH

Email - Penaltynoticeenquiries@staffordshire.gov.uk

This will then be investigated, and the parent(s) informed of the outcome either to withdraw or uphold the penalty notice.

[1] Please note - in the case of a material error the penalty notice may be re-issued with the appropriate corrections made by email.

Representation

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

However, the parent may choose to not pay the penalty notice and therefore the matter will be referred to the Magistrates Court where they can make representation to the Magistrates.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.
- Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's liability for the period in question therefore:
- they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.
- they cannot subsequently appeal the penalty notice as the matter is then considered closed.
- The LA retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs and other functions of the local authority which serve to support the regular attendance at school of registered pupils.
- Payments will not be accepted in part or by instalments.

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger the fast-track court prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Parents will be sent Single Justice Papers by post, which will explain the process and which they must then complete and post to the Court address given.

Policy and Publicity

- Identifying information about Penalty Notices issued to particular parents or specific children should not be made public;
- School attendance policies should include information on the issuing of Penalty Notices, and this should be available to parents;
- The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional or public information material.

Reporting & Review:

Staffordshire LA will:

- Report at regular intervals to the head teacher forum groups (Primary, Secondary, Middle and Special) and Staffordshire Police on the deployment and outcomes of Penalty Notices.
- Make regular reports to Staffordshire County Council on attendance matters which will include Penalty Notice use; and review Penalty Notice use at regular intervals and amend the Code of conduct as appropriate.

Appendix G

National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence and Attendance Support for Staffordshire Parents - FAQs for parents

What are my responsibilities as a parent of a child of statutory school age?

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Why has the Department for Education brought in a National Framework for penalty notices?

There was concern that penalty notices (sometimes called fines) were being issued inconsistently across the county with some Council's issuing multiple penalty notices to a family within a year and some issuing none at all. This created a postcode lottery for families, so the framework has been introduced to ensure more fairness and consistency. There has also been a rise in term-time holidays which are disruptive to a child's education.

What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice allows parents to discharge an offence by paying a one-off penalty without the matter being referred to court where they could receive fines of hundreds of pounds and a criminal record. Penalty notices can be issued for term time holidays, when excluded pupils are seen in a public place and where children are persistently absent from school. Only two penalty notices will be able to issue to parents for these reasons in a three-year period as the third offence will now have to be referred directly to court. This will apply from 19th August, 2024.

I've already applied for authorisation of leave this term but for a holiday in September 2024. If the school don't authorise the leave, will I have to pay £80 or £60, as I applied this academic year?

The new law will require any unauthorised absence from 19th August 2024 to be dealt with under the new regulations so it would be £80 for each child and each parent. For a family of four with two children, that would amount to £320 if paid within 21 days of receiving the penalty notice. If paid between day 22 and 28, it would be £640.

What if I have a family emergency or bereavement abroad?

Unexpected family emergencies do happen unfortunately and can be very upsetting. However, parents must notify the school themselves of the absence as soon as possible as messages from friends or relatives who don't have parental responsibility may not be accepted. Schools are not allowed to authorise leave retrospectively. Notifying the school doesn't mean the absence will be authorised though. In the case of a family emergency or bereavement abroad, parents are strongly encouraged to request authorisation from the school and ensure absence is no longer than 5 school days. The final decision about authorisation sits entirely with the Headteacher.

What if I receive a penalty notice and don't pay it?

The law states that the local authority must withdraw the penalty notices and prosecute the parents in court where they could each receive £1000 fine, a parenting order, a criminal record and various costs awarded against them.

What happens if I pay a penalty notice for unauthorised leave next term but then take the children on another holiday the following year?

The new framework means that for a second offence within a three-year period, the discount of £80 per parent for each child won't apply. For a family of four with two children, that would amount to £640. A third period of unauthorised absence within a three-year period means that the local authority will be unable to issue another penalty notice and may instead refer the matter directly to Court.

I want to visit family abroad for six weeks next year. If the school don't authorise the absence, will I be issued with a penalty notice?

Any level of absence can have a serious impact on children's education, but lengthy absence can be particularly devastating. For that reason, it's unlikely that a penalty notice will be issued, and the matter may be referred directly to the Court instead.

What happens to the money for penalty notices when they are paid?

Currently the law requires penalty notice revenue to be spent on the administration of penalty notices which generally means, for example, any online payment software, electrical equipment such as laptops for issuing penalty notices and staffing costs. From 19th August 2024, local authorities will be able to use the revenue to support school attendance more widely, including promotional materials, etc. Penalty notice revenue must be ringfenced for attendance and cannot be used for wider council funding.

What is 'good attendance' and why is it so important?

Generally good attendance is considered to be at least 96% for most children. Some parents think 90% attendance is good but that means a child will have missed at least 200 lessons over a year, lessons that will never be repeated. Research shows there is a clear link between high attendance and educational outcomes, leading to better life opportunities and the best results that an individual can achieve. Absence from school of any length can therefore have a negative impact on children's wellbeing, including their mental health. Worries about not being able to catch up, not understanding lessons, or impacts on friendships are all common when children are absent from school.

I'm struggling to get my child to school. What help is available to me?

Schools in Staffordshire are all supported with resources and trained to support you encourage your child into school. Please ensure you speak your child's school and ask for a meeting to discuss your concerns. There are also resources available to you on our Staffordshire County Council including a series of video clips talking about some of the issues parents face which you may find helpful. https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Learning-options-and-careers/Happiness-and-Wellbeing/Ask-the-expert.aspx

Staffordshire schools have reward and incentive schemes in place to encourage school attendance, Staffordshire County Council are supporting with a unified campaign to all primary schools from September 2024. The tone of the campaign will be supportive and encouraging – with a strong focus on emotional health support. Our attendance campaign focuses on the 'HERO' theme to encourage the message:



At school, materials will be displayed to remind and motivate pupils, as well as sticker charts and certificates to reward pupils that are leading by example and to create a fun and engaging attendance activity in the classroom.

For pupils that are struggling with their emotional health, we have created a 'Helpful Heroes' workbook to understand children's barriers to avoiding school and to help manage their worries through a book full of mindfulness activities, suitable for their age group. We have created a 'Helpful Heroes parents' guide' to talk you through the different activities and mindfulness activities. https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Little-Heroes-Campaign-Toolkit.aspx

What if my child is too ill to attend school? Children sometimes are absent from school due to genuine extreme physical or mental health needs which require support. In those circumstances, attending school as often as they can will be acknowledged and celebrated and if they require additional support outside of school, Staffordshire County Council will work with parents, schools, health partners and other agencies to assess what support is required. Children may need to be on a reduced timetable for a short period of time or further reasonable adjustments be made to support a return to school. All assessments require parents and schools to work collaboratively together and be committed to the child returning to school as soon as they are assessed as able to. https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/