TITLE: Attendance Policy

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

This document constitutes version 1 of the **Attendance Policy,** personalised from the Devon Model Policy (Sept 2026) and was **adopted** in **October 2026** by the **Governing Board.**

This document is next subject to review in **October 2029** by the **Behaviour and Attendance Lead Governor** and the **Parent Support Adviser**.

The school conducted an Equality Impact Assessment on this policy in **October 2026.**

**Model Devon Education Services Policy, adapted to suit HPNS' setting*

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Our Vision
Discovering, Learning and Achieving Together

Within our welcoming, inspiring and inclusive school community:

- We will strive to empower all of our children to learn with curiosity, to be kind and to achieve their full potential.
- Children will discover a broad range of engaging opportunities and experiences that develop confidence, aspiration and cooperation.
- We will nurture responsible, respectful and resilient children, enabling them to make a positive difference in the world.

Our Values

Resilience - have a go, try my best in everything that I do and keep going.
Responsibility - take ownership of our actions and choices, help ourselves, our community and others
Respect - value my community, myself and the world around me
Curiosity - ask questions and explore ideas
Cooperation - work together, value relationships, support and encourage each other
Confidence - believe in yourself and your abilities

Working Together to Improve School Attendance Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Devon County Council and its partners work together to promote and secure regular school attendance.

It provides a clear, consistent framework for:

- identifying and responding to attendance concerns
- supporting children, young people and families
- escalating concerns where attendance does not improve

This policy ensures compliance with national guidance and clarifies the responsibilities of schools, the Local Authority and parents and carers, in securing regular attendance.

2. Devon's Attendance Approach

Devon County Council adopts a graduated, support-first approach to improving attendance. This means:

- Attendance is everyone's responsibility, with schools, families, services and partners working together
- Barriers to attendance are identified early and addressed through timely, proportionate support
- Schools lead early intervention, with the Local Authority providing targeted and specialist support where needed
- Legal intervention is used only where support has been provided and has not resulted in sustained improvement
- Particular consideration is always given to safeguarding, SEND, health needs and vulnerability

i. Our Approach in Practice

In delivering the expectations set out in this policy, all partners will apply Devon's Four Cornerstones. These principles describe how services, schools and professionals should work with children, young people and families in practice.

- Welcome and Care - Ensuring children and families feel safe, supported, and able to engage, particularly at times of change, challenge, or vulnerability.
- Value and Include - Recognising individual needs, promoting belonging, and removing barriers so all children can access and benefit from education.

- Communication - Sharing information clearly, consistently, and transparently, and ensuring that children and families are listened to and understood.
- Work in Partnership - Working collaboratively across schools, services, families, and partners to take shared responsibility for outcomes and ensure coordinated support.

These principles underpin how statutory duties and expectations are delivered, ensuring that practice is inclusive, relational, and focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All schools in Devon, including maintained schools and academies Devon County Council services with responsibility for attendance, education, inclusion and SEND (special educational needs and disabilities), safeguarding, early help and children's social care.
- Parents and carers of children of compulsory school age (5–16), including those below the age of five, where they are eligible to start school in accordance with statutory admissions frameworks.
- Any Alternative Provision or commissioned education providers

All organisations and partners are expected to work in line with this policy to ensure a consistent approach to attendance across Devon.

4. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

- ***Education Act 1996*** – parental duty to secure regular attendance; s436A Children Missing Education (CME) duty; section 19 duty to arrange provision
- ***School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*** – electronic registers, national absence codes, six year record retention, register deletion rules
- ***Working Together to Improve School Attendance*** – statutory expectations for schools and LAs, including monitoring, data sharing, TSMs and legal intervention pathways [Working Together to Improve School Attendance]
- ***National Framework for Penalty Notices (2024)*** – national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 school weeks, fine levels, limits on repeat notices and case-by-case decision making
- ***Children Missing Education (CME) Statutory Guidance*** *(updated Sept 2025)* – statutory duties for local authorities and schools to identify, prevent and respond to CME including maintaining accurate registers and undertaking appropriate enquiries [Children Missing Education]
- ***Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)*** – absence as a safeguarding indicator; attendance processes part of safeguarding practice [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026]

- ***Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance (DfE)*** *(updated February 2025)* - this includes expectations for attendance monitoring, oversight, and planning for pupils educated otherwise than at school, including those supported through Individual Support Plans Alternative provision [Alternative Provision]
- ***Equality Act 2010 (including Public Sector Equality Duty)*** – requires schools and local authorities to ensure attendance practice is non-discriminatory against pupils with protected characteristics and make reasonable adjustments where needed.

5. Key Definitions

The following definitions are provided to ensure clarity and consistency in the application of this policy. Where applicable, they reflect national guidance and statutory frameworks.

- ***Regular attendance***: Attending school on every day the school is open, unless absence is authorised.
- ***Authorised absence***: An absence approved by the school and in accordance with statutory guidance (e.g., due to illness or unavoidable medical appointment).
- ***Unauthorised absence***: An absence not approved by the school, including absence without explanation or where the reason provided is not considered acceptable under statutory guidance. This includes arrival after the close of registration.
- ***Persistent Absence (PA)***: In line with national guidance, a pupil is considered persistently absent where they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions (authorised or unauthorised), measured on a rolling basis across the academic year (approximately 19 school days).
- ***Severe Absence***: below **50%** attendance, signalling elevated risk of poor outcomes.
- ***Late (before registers close)***: A pupil arrives after the start of the session but before the register is closed and is recorded as present using the appropriate national attendance code.
- ***Late (after registers close)***: A pupil arrives after the register is closed and is recorded as an unauthorised absence using the appropriate national attendance code.
- ***Children Missing Education (CME)***: Children who are not on a school roll and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. This does not include pupils who are registered at a school but are persistently or severely absent.
- ***Elective Home Education (EHE)***: A parental choice to educate a child at home rather than at a registered school. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable full-time education appropriate to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs.
- ***Alternative Provision (AP)***: Education arranged by a school or the Local Authority for pupils who, for reasons such as exclusion, illness or other barriers, cannot attend a mainstream or special school full-time.
- ***Commissioned Education Providers***: Any external organisation or provider commissioned by a school or the Local Authority to deliver education outside of mainstream school provision. This includes independent schools, non-maintained

special schools, alternative provision providers, and specialist, therapeutic or blended learning services.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The following responsibilities set out clear expectations for schools, the Local Authority, parents/carers and partners to ensure a consistent and effective approach to attendance across Devon.

Schools must:

- Maintain accurate electronic admission and attendance registers using statutory codes
- Undertake daily attendance monitoring and follow first day response procedures
- Analyse attendance patterns regularly and identify children at risk of persistent or severe absence
- Implement early help and school-led attendance support, including Attendance Support Plans
- Convene Targeted Support Meetings (TSMs) where attendance does not improve
- Work collaboratively with the Local Authority and other partners
- Consider safeguarding, SEND, health needs and Section 19 duties when planning support and before any escalation to legal intervention.

  Share attendance information with the Local Authority in line with statutory requirements and agreed local processes.

Commissioned Education Providers (including Alternative Provisions) must:

- Maintain accurate attendance registers for all sessions delivered
- Monitor attendance at each session and identify patterns of concern
- Provide attendance data to the commissioning school and/or Local Authority at least weekly, unless otherwise agreed
- Notify the commissioning body within 2 working days where:

i. A pupil has 3 consecutive days of unexplained absence
ii. Attendance falls below 90%
iii. There are safeguarding concerns linked to non-attendance
iv. A pupil fails to attend following placement

- Provide context and updates on pupils with attendance concerns as part of regular reporting
- Participate in Targeted Support Meetings and multi-agency processes where required
- Escalate concerns where engagement with parents and carers is not successful
- Ensure attendance monitoring aligns with safeguarding responsibilities and contractual expectations

The Local Authority will:

- Track and analyse attendance data across all schools and commissioned provision. Identify and address disproportionality for protected characteristic groups.
- Provide advice, support, training and clear escalation pathways to improve attendance.
- Coordinate multi-agency targeted support for pupils experiencing persistent or severe absence.
- Provide targeted intervention where school-led support has not secured sufficient improvement
- Lead decision making on legal intervention in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- Fulfil statutory duties relating to Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME)
- Ensure attendance information is received from all commissioned providers and take action where reporting is incomplete, delayed or inconsistent

All partners must ensure that attendance practices are inclusive and free from discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. This includes taking account of individual needs, backgrounds and circumstances, and making reasonable adjustments where necessary to support equitable access to education.

Parents and carers are required by law to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Notify the school on the first day of absence, providing reasons and evidence where required
- Avoid term-time holidays; requests will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Attend meetings when invited and engage with support and advice offered
- Work collaboratively with schools and the Local Authority where attendance concerns arise

7. Attendance Processes

7.1 Devon Graduated Response to Attendance

Attendance is addressed through a clear, staged approach to ensure that concerns are identified early and responded to in a timely and proportionate way.

This includes:

A) Universal (all pupils)

- Daily attendance monitoring
- First day response for unexplained absence
- Promotion of good attendance

B) Early Concern (attendance below 95% or emerging patterns)

- School-led support and engagement with families
- Identification of barriers to attendance
- Implementation of an Attendance Support Plan where appropriate

C) Persistent Absence (below 90%)

- Targeted Support Meeting (TSM)
- Formal attendance plan with clear actions and review arrangements
- Involvement of the Local Authority where needs are complex or not improving

D) Severe Absence (50% or below)

- Immediate and coordinated multi-agency response
- Consideration of safeguarding, SEND, health and Section 19 duties

E) Legal Intervention

- Considered only where support has been provided and has not secured improvement
- Triggered in line with national thresholds for unauthorised absence

This graduated approach ensures a consistent and transparent response across Devon, with support prioritised and escalation applied where necessary.

7.2 Monitoring and Early Identification

In line with the Devon graduated response, schools should identify and respond to emerging attendance concerns at the earliest stage.

- Attendance is monitored daily and first day response procedures are implemented for all unexplained absence
- Schools should review attendance regularly to identify emerging concerns, including attendance below 95% or patterns of absence
- Early engagement with parents and carers should take place to understand and address barriers to attendance
- School-led support should be implemented where appropriate, including an Attendance Support Plan Commissioned Education Providers must monitor and report attendance in line with this policy.

7.3. Escalation for Persistent Absence (<90%)

Where attendance falls below 90%:

- School arranges a Targeted Support Meeting (TSM) with the family and relevant partners.
- A plan is developed with clear actions, responsibilities and review dates.
- The local authority Inclusion and Learning teams will be involved where needs cannot be met through school led support alone.

- Where a pupil is placed with a commissioned education provider, the provider must inform the commissioning school and/or Local Authority and contribute to the Targeted Support Meeting.

7.4. Response to Severe Absence (<50%)

Where attendance falls below 50%

- A rapid, multi-agency response is initiated to address barriers to attendance.
- Statutory duties under SEND, Section 19 and safeguarding legislation are actively considered and applied where relevant.
- Risk of Children Missing Education is assessed, with appropriate enquiries and notifications made where required.
- All providers, including commissioned education providers, must escalate absence immediately to the commissioning body.

7.5. Specific Attendance Requirements

7.5.1. Punctuality

- Schools must operate attendance registers in line with statutory requirements
- Pupils arriving after the close of registration must be recorded as an unauthorised absence in line with national attendance codes.
- Persistent lateness should be addressed at an early stage through school-led intervention, including engagement with parents and carers. Repeated lateness, particularly after the close of registration, may:
    - contribute to a pupil's overall absence level
    - result in the pupil meeting thresholds for persistent absence
    - lead to escalation in line with this policy, including consideration of legal intervention where appropriate

7.5.2. Part Time Timetables

Part-time timetables are an **exceptional measure** and must only be used where it is clearly in the best interests of the child or young person. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. A reduced timetable must:

- be **temporary**, planned and time-limited
- form part of a **clear support strategy** to address identified need
- include a **defined plan for reintegration** to full-time education

Part-time timetables ***must not*** be used:

- as a response to poor attendance
- to manage behaviour or risk of exclusion
- to compensate for unmet SEND needs or lack of appropriate provision

<u>Planning and oversight of Part Time Timetables</u>

Where a part-time timetable is implemented:

- A written plan must be in place, agreed with parents/carers, setting out:

- the rationale for the reduced timetable
- expected duration
- support to be provided
- arrangements for review and reintegration

- The arrangement must be reviewed regularly and at least every 4 weeks
- Attendance must continue to be recorded accurately for all sessions, including those not attended
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that arrangements are lawful, proportionate and kept under active review
- The Local Authority will expect to be informed and involved where arrangements are prolonged, complex, or relate to vulnerable pupils

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Where a pupil has identified or emerging SEND, a part-time timetable must operate alongside, and not in place of, statutory SEND processes. It must not delay assessment, provision, or review, and must never be used to compensate for unmet needs.

For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), an interim or early annual review must be convened to consider whether provision remains appropriate.

Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups

Part-time timetables must be applied with particular caution for vulnerable pupils, including;

- Children looked after
- Children who have a social worker
- Children with SEND
- Children at risk of exclusion
- Children who have significant health or mental health needs

For these pupils there must be multi-agency oversight and safeguarding considerations must be actively assessed and reviewed. For children looked after and children who have a social **worker, the Virtual School must be consulted and agreement obtained.**

8. Legal Intervention

Legal intervention is a last resort and will only be considered where the support and intervention set out in Section 7 of this policy have been implemented, monitored and reviewed, and have not secured sufficient improvement in attendance.

The Local Authority is responsible for decisions regarding legal intervention and will work with schools to ensure that all appropriate support has been offered and evidence is available. Schools may refer cases for legal intervention; however, the final decision rests with the Local Authority.

The Local Authority may consider legal action where:

- There is sufficient evidence that attendance support has been provided, implemented and reviewed, and;

- Unauthorised absence meets the national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions within any 10 school week period

Penalty notices will be issued in line with the National Framework:

- First Penalty Notice: £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days).
- Second Notice (within 3 years): £160.
- No further notices within 3 years; cases may proceed to prosecution.

All decisions regarding legal intervention will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking full account of:

- the individual circumstances of the child and family
- any safeguarding considerations
- special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- health needs
- the Local Authority's duties under Section 19

9. Support and Inclusion

Devon County Council and its partners are committed to a support-first, inclusive approach to improving attendance.

Support should be timely, proportionate and tailored to the individual needs of the child and their family, with a focus on removing barriers to attendance and enabling sustained engagement in education.

Principles of support

Schools and the Local Authority should:

- Work collaboratively with children, young people and families to understand the underlying causes of absence
- Provide early help and pastoral support at the earliest stage
- Ensure that support plans are clear, coordinated and regularly reviewed
- Take account of the wider context, including family circumstances and external factors impacting attendance

SEND and additional needs

- Reasonable adjustments must be made for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Attendance support must align with statutory SEND processes and must not replace or delay assessment, provision or review
- Support should consider individual needs and promote full access to education wherever possible

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Where absence is linked to emotional or mental health needs:

- Schools and partners should apply EBSA-informed approaches

- Support should focus on understanding the child's experience and reducing anxiety-related barriers to attendance
- Multi-agency input should be considered where needs are complex or persistent

Working with families

Engagement with families, from all organisations and providers, should be supportive, respectful and in line with Devon's adopted Four Cornerstones approach.

10. Safeguarding and Statutory Duties

Attendance is a key safeguarding indicator. Children who are not in school, or who are missing from education, may be at increased risk of harm. Schools, the Local Authority and partners must ensure that attendance concerns are identified, assessed and responded to in line with safeguarding responsibilities.

10.1. Children Missing Education (CME)

All schools and the Local Authority must fulfil their statutory duties to identify, prevent and respond to Children Missing Education (CME), ensuring that all children are in receipt of suitable education.

A child is considered CME where they are:

- not on a school roll, and
- receiving suitable education otherwise than at school

CME does not include children who are on roll but are persistently or severely absent.

Schools must:

- Maintain accurate admission and attendance registers
- Undertake reasonable enquiries without delay where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown
- Notify the Local Authority immediately when a pupil is removed from roll, in line with statutory regulations

The Local Authority must:

- Track all children known to be CME
- Undertake enquiries to establish a child's whereabouts and educational provision
- Take appropriate action to ensure children are receiving suitable education

All CME activity must be undertaken promptly and in line with safeguarding procedures.

10.2. Safeguarding and Attendance

Absence from school is a potential indicator of safeguarding risk.

Schools must:

- Follow Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance in relation to absence and safeguarding
- Ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is informed of patterns of absence, including persistent absence, severe absence and repeated lateness

- Consider safeguarding concerns, including neglect, exploitation or other risks, where attendance deteriorates

Where concerns arise:

- Attendance concerns must be considered alongside wider safeguarding information
- Appropriate action must be taken, including referral to relevant services, where required

The Local Authority will:

- Work with schools and partners to ensure that attendance concerns are addressed within safeguarding and multi-agency processes
- Ensure that children at risk, including those with a social worker or who are vulnerable, receive appropriate oversight and support

11. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies and guidance, which together support a consistent, inclusive and safeguarding-led approach to attendance:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Children Missing Education (CME) Policy
- Alternative Provision Policy
- Elective Home Education (EHE) Policy
- Section 19 Policy

These documents set out additional statutory responsibilities and processes which must be considered alongside attendance practice.

12. Governance, Reporting and Review

School governing bodies and academy trust boards are responsible for:

- oversight of attendance performance
- regular review of attendance data
- providing appropriate challenge and assurance that action is taken where concerns are identified

Devon County Council will:

- monitor and report attendance information through appropriate strategic governance arrangements
- use this information to support system oversight, safeguarding and continuous improvement

This policy will be:

- reviewed annually to assess its implementation and impact

- formally reviewed every three years, or earlier where required in response to changes in statutory guidance, legislation or identified areas of risk or improvement.

Appendices

Appendix 1

1. Key Personnel

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