Pathway Trust

Attendance Policy

Policy effective from	15 September 2026
Policy owner	Director of Inclusion
Policy applies to	Berrow Church Primary School Burnham-on-Sea Infant School Castle Batch Primary School Charfield Primary School Cherry Garden Primary School Downend School East Huntspill Primary School Lyde Green Primary School Mangotsfield School Marlwood School Pawlett Primary School Priory Community School Severn Beach Primary School St Andrew's Church Junior School St Anne's Church Primary School The Castle School The King Alfred School Tortworth Primary School West Huntspill Primary School Worle Community School Pathway Partnership Teams
Policy changes since last version	Updated registration timings in Section 4

1. Aim of this policy

1.1 To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at schools within Pathway Trust.

1.2 This policy has been prepared with regard to the school's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

2. Key principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Regular attendance means attending all sessions, for the full duration of those sessions, unless there is a statutory reason for non-attendance.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this, and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The school will work with pupils, parents and carers and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or pupils have should be discussed with staff as described in the attendance section of each school's website.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The school

The school will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of regular attendance including:
    - Regular recognition of good attendance by groups and individuals.
    - Displays around school which promote and celebrate the importance of high attendance.
    - Regular communication with parents to promote and celebrate the importance of high attendance.
- Work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance.
- Investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate.

- Take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations (School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024) and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance.
- Regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data, including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future.
- Ensure that all pupils can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case.
- Ensure that the trust board and school's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance.
- Have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which can be found on the trust website).
- Provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- Support pupils who are returning to education following long-term absence.
- Ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers, using an electronic management information system.
- Assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education (Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- Ensure that their child arrives at the school on time, in the correct uniform, and with the necessary equipment.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance at home.
- Follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the school (see section 6.3 below).
- Avoid unnecessary absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.5. below).
- Inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live.
- Observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education (Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024).

3.3 **Pupils**

We expect pupils to:

- Attend school regularly and on time.
- Be punctual to all lessons.
- Follow the correct procedure if they arrive at school late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

3.4 **Senior Attendance Champion**

The Senior Attendance Champion at the schools are as follows:

School	**Senior Attendance Champion**
Berrow Church Primary School	Charlotte Bradley
Burnham-on-Sea Infant School	Carly Hatch
Castle Batch Primary School	Wayne Higgins
Charfield Primary School	Michelle Engley
Cherry Garden Primary School	Amy Barrett
Downend School	Sonia Kaur
East Huntspill Primary School	Emma Barker

School	Senior Attendance Champion
Lyde Green Primary School	Tom Hutchings
Mangotsfield School	Tiffany Partridge
Marlwood School	Dave Johnson
Pawlett Primary School	Emma Barker
Priory Community School	Tina Delaney
Severn Beach Primary School	Laura Panting
St Andrew's Church Junior School	Carly Hatch
St Anne's Church Primary School	Emma Hardy-Smith
The Castle School	Danny Haines
The King Alfred School	Richard Walker
Tortworth Primary School	Michelle Engley
West Huntspill Primary School	Emma Barker
Worle Community School	Rhian Davies Jones

The Senior Attendance Champion has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at each school and will:

- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by all staff.
- Evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes.
- Have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- Ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and carers and pupils.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

3.5 **The Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust and school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure the school's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its schools.
- Work with other trusts, schools and local authorities to promote effective attendance management practice and help to develop a consistent, sector-wide understanding of best practice.
- Have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the trust, assess and evaluate variation of practice, act as a central point for academies with attendance queries and provide more intensive support to individual schools when required.

4. Registration

4.1 The schools maintain an attendance register and use this to record each pupil's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

School	**Morning registration session opens.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked late.	**Morning registration session closes.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked absent.	**Afternoon registration session opens.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked late.	**Afternoon registration session closes.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked absent.
Berrow Church Primary School	8.45am	9.15am	1.00pm	1.20pm
Burnham-on-Sea Infant School	9.00am	9.30am	1.05pm	1.15pm
Castle Batch Primary School	8.50am	9.20am	1.10pm	1.20pm
Charfield Primary School	8.45am	9.15am	1.15pm	1.20pm
Cherry Garden Primary School	8.45am	9.15am	1.05pm	1:20pm
Downend School	8.45am	9.30am	1.05pm	1.35pm
East Huntspill Primary School	8.45am	9.30am	1.00pm	1:05pm
Lyde Green Primary School (Willowherb)	8.35am	9.00am	12.30pm	1.30pm
Lyde Green Primary School (Honeysuckle)	8:50am	9:15am	1:10pm	1:30pm

School	**Morning registration session opens.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked late.	**Morning registration session closes.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked absent.	**Afternoon registration session opens.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked late.	**Afternoon registration session closes.** Pupils arriving after this time are marked absent.
Mangotsfield School	8.45am	9.30am	1.20pm	1.40pm
Marlwood School	8.45am	9.05am	1.45pm	2.05pm
Pawlett Primary School	8.45am	9.30am	1.15pm	1:20pm
Priory Community School	8.40am	9.20am	12.40pm	1.10pm
Severn Beach Primary School	8.45am	9.30am	1.00pm	1.05pm
St Andrew's Church Junior School	8.45am	9.30am	1.05pm	1.15pm
St Anne's Church Primary School (West Wick)	8.30am	9.00am	1.00pm	1.05pm
St Anne's Church Primary School (Hewish)	8.45am	9.15am	1.00pm	1.05pm
The Castle School	8.40am	9.30am	12.20pm	1.15pm
The King Alfred School	8.45am	9.15am	1.00pm	1.30pm
Tortworth Primary School	8.45am	9.15am	1.15pm	1.20pm
West Huntspill Primary School	8.45am	9.30am	1.00pm	1:05pm
Worle Community School	8.40am	9.10am	1.10pm	1.40pm

4.2 Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where pupils arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.

4.3 The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance.

4.4 Where a pupil attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter, in accordance with the Behaviour Policy, and engage parents where necessary.

5. Late arrival

5.1 If a pupil arrives at school after the relevant registration period has ended, but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the school to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation (e.g. a verified medical appointment), the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.

5.2 Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with Behaviour Policy.

6. Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

6.1 **Authorised absence** – absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence.

6.2 **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

6.3 **Reporting absence from school**

- Where a pupil is to be absent from school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the school by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the school know when they expect the pupil to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.
- On the day of return to school, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence
- Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the school promptly
- In cases where the school needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised. Where there are prolonged or repeated patterns of illness, medical evidence may also be requested to support the school's understanding of a pupil's health needs and to ensure that appropriate support and/or adjustments are put in place (please refer to our policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions).

6.4 **Appointments**

- Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given.

6.5 **Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)**

- The school will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 36 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:
    - Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad.
    - Attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment.
    - Study leave for public examinations.
    - Temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
    - Other exceptional circumstances, which will be decided upon based on the individual merits of each case.
- Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.
- To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Headteacher and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
    - Will be confirmed in writing.
    - Is solely at the Headteacher's discretion.
    - Is final.
- Where permission is granted, the Headteacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

6.6 **Religious observance**

- We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Absence from school will be authorised where a day of religious observance:
    - Falls during school time.
    - Has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs.
- We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

7. Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

7.1 The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, the school, led by the Senior Attendance Champion, will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and changes in attendance at individual pupil, cohort, and year group level to support early intervention.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners, as soon as possible, and deliver this support in a targeted manner.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark school attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level.
- Monitor the impact of school strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups.
- Work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who the school and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable.

7.2 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found on each school's website.

7.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- A pattern of unauthorised absence.
- A question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival.
- Persistent truancy or lateness.

We will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

7.4 In cases where the school has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the pupil, a home welfare check may be carried out.

7.5 Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

7.6 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental cooperation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention

steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies, and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.

7.7 Where out-of-school barriers to attendance are identified, the school will signpost and support access to any additional services.

7.8 Schools will work with the local authority to follow specified attendance processes which may include penalty notices and legal action. Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school, and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents, which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

7.9 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- The National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 176–202 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

7.10 In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.