

The Canterbury Academy Trust

Schools for all the Talents



Name of policy:	Attendance and Punctuality Policy – The Canterbury Primary School
Document owner:	Head of school / Deputy Pastoral Manger & DSL.
Document issued/last reviewed:	November 2025
Date for review:	September 2026
Additional notes:	The Academy has a separate policy
Number of pages:	

The Canterbury Primary School Attendance Policy

Policy Statement

Regular attendance at The Canterbury Primary School is essential for pupils to achieve their full potential. This policy sets out our commitment to promoting good attendance, preventing absences, and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.

Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Aims

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to encourage students of compulsory age to attend school regularly (definition of regularly means every day the school is open in term-time. Striving for 100%) The Canterbury Primary School expects students to attend fully to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to students being disadvantaged. It can also place children at risk and in some instances result in patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

It is part of the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which lead to non-attendance. In pursuing this aim, we see the need to work closely with parents/guardians who are legally responsible for securing that their children attend school.

The Canterbury Primary School recognises the influence of the curriculum on promoting good attendance and maintains that its ethos and organisation also has a significant impact on student attendance. Coupled with effective following of process, will reduce significant numbers of persistent and severe absentees.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry should be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age.

Implementation of the Policy

The Canterbury Primary School will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day. **(Appendix 1)**
- The Trust sets annual attendance targets for both authorised and unauthorised absence, which will be reviewed, at least termly.
- Individual students and parents are given individual attendance targets where appropriate and progress towards achieving these targets will be reviewed as part of the initial review system.
- Parents are contacted on the first day of absence by the most appropriate means of communication.
- All medical appointments, where possible, should be made out of school time. The Canterbury Academy and The Canterbury Primary School will require evidence of medical appointments which must be shown to the appropriate attendance personnel.
- The use of a red, amber and green system identifies the process of interventions required for students and parents, which is implemented and closely monitored
- After 5 missed sessions of unauthorised absence parents are informed and penalty notice warning letter is sent. Any further absences will result in a meeting, being held between parents and pastoral staff. After 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence a Penalty Notice may be requested.
- The Canterbury Primary School attendance statistics are reported to Directors at their regular meetings.
- Termly attendance reports are shared with parents and this is also accessible on Arbor.
- At The Canterbury Primary School and The Canterbury Academy the attendance teams across the trust work collaboratively together to track and monitor attendance and discuss siblings.
- A review system is in place to reward good and improved attendance.
- Vulnerable students with specific problems will be supported with regard to their attendance.
- After 10 consecutive days of non-attendance without communication from home, The Canterbury Primary School will exhaust all methods of contact including home visits before completing a Child Missing Education (CME) Referral and submitting it to the Local Authority.

In Addition

The Canterbury Primary School uses a system of electronic registration monitored by the class teachers and school office. This enables the tracking of internal absence/truancy as students are registered during am and pm registration.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Staff

There is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Pastoral Team have overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues. This is overseen by the Head of School – **Appendix 3**.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of the day and the afternoon. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the pastoral of children whose attendance is causing concern – these are raised in the vulnerable groups meetings.

Pastoral team

It is the responsibility of the Pastoral team and school office to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up-to-date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parent/guardian are contacted on the first day of absence by email requesting a reason for absence
- When there has been no response for the parent/guardian, a registration mark of 'O' is used.
- On day Two of absence a further email is sent to parent/guardian, if a response is not received by midday, then a follow up call requesting reason for absence will be made
- On day Three of absence, if no communication has been made by parents/guardian notifying the school of a reason for absence, the pastoral team will complete a home visit.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (using National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed regularly of their child's attendance.
- Children Missing Education will be reported to the Local Authority following the Safeguarding Regulations.
- The Pastoral Team and School Liaison Officer (SLO) regularly meet for targeting support meetings.

Parents

Parents are required to:

- Report to the school office at The Canterbury Primary School if they arrive late and provide a reason for lateness.
- Inform the school office on the first day of non-attendance and all subsequent days of absence until the student returns to school. At The Canterbury Primary School calls must be made to the main school office using option line 2 to report absence. All absence must be reported by 9am.
- Inform the school office of any medical appointments and show evidence of this appointment.
- Discuss planned absences in advance. Any absence requested for exceptional circumstances should be applied for in writing with at least 2 weeks' notice, where possible. All written requests will be reviewed on an individual case by case basis and parents will be informed of the decision as to whether the absence will be authorised. The decision can only be made by the Head of School.
- During any unavoidable long-term absences, maintain regular contact (agreed with the school/Attendance officer) to assist with the support of the student and the provision of work.

- Ensure their child/children attend every day the school is open.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time and be punctual to all lessons.

Local Authority Action

The Canterbury Primary School will seek support of the Local Authority (LA) through the digital front door and a referral will be made if it is believed that all previous strategies/interventions have not helped improve a pupil's attendance. Examples of action that could be taken by the LA include:

- Attendance Improvement Meetings (pre-referral meetings)
- Home visits with specialist from the Trust
- Liaison with other agencies Children's Social Care/EarlyHelp
- Court action

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Unauthorised Absence

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. A penalty notice can be issued as a result of the following:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)
- Where a suspended child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of suspension.

A Penalty Notice may be issued when a pupil has been absent for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 school days – these absences do not need to be consecutive.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/guardian of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Executive Principal's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head of School may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head of School, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each individual case will be judged on its merits and the Head of School’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. Failure to comply with a request for absence during term time will result in a Penalty Notice issued to Parents / guardians.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student’s previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Head of School can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Authorising Absence

Only the Head of School can authorise absence and will use a consistent approach. The Head of School is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the school requesting a statutory attendance intervention from the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings will be attached to the completed statutory intervention referral form with any other relevant information.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head of School and Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see circumstances below.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.
- If school have not been provided with a new home address or new school for the child.

Children Missing Education procedure

From: DAY 1 of Absence	A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the reason of any absence is always required. If a child is absent and we have not received any notification, we will call parents/carers on the first day of absence. If the child is subject to a child protection plan or has complex needs, the procedures set out for day two unexplained absence will be implemented immediately.
From: DAY 2	If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, on the second day of absence, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and other schools where siblings are known to attend and undertaking home visits. We will keep records of every attempt we have made to confirm the whereabouts and safety of the child. If we are able to confirm that the child is safe, we will arrange a home visit. If there is no response to the home visit, a letter will be hand delivered requesting contact and advising that, if necessary, liaison with the Police and Children's Services will be initiated. This action will be taken on day one if the child has complex needs or is subject to a child protection plan.
From: DAY 3	We will undertake another home visit. If there is no response, we will contact Children's Social Care and following their advice, we may also contact the police to request they undertake a welfare check.
From: DAY 10	We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner and Child Missing Education Officer. Joint reasonable enquiries will be undertaken to locate the child. The school will write to parents advising of the possible removal from roll of the pupil following the twentieth day of unauthorised absence.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

The Canterbury Academy Trust will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be developed and implemented throughout the Trust.

Appendix 1

Morning Timings:

Year Group	Gates & Register open	Gates & Register close	Time – Late mark (Registration Code – L)	Time – Unauthorised mark (Registration Code – U)
All year groups	8.30am	8.45am	8.46am - 9.00am	9.01am

Afternoon Timings:

Year Group	Afternoon session commences	Register close	Time – Late mark
FS (Reception)	12.45pm	1.00pm	1.01pm
KS1 (Years 1 and 2)	12.45pm	1.00pm	1.01pm
Lower KS2 (Years 3 & 4)	1.15pm	1.30pm	1.31pm
Upper KS2 (Years 5 & 6)	1.15pm	1.30pm	1.31pm

Appendix 2 – Attendance flowchart for the Primary School

95%+

PRAISE

- Dojo points
- Share and celebrate with the rest of the Key Stage and School
- 100% and most improved attendance entered into a prize draw every term
- Attendance newsletter is sent home termly

Below
95%

- Warning letter sent home to those identified, to highlight attendance with four+ unauthorised marks ('O' and 'U' registration marks)
- Monitoring period of 2 weeks and if further unauthorised absences are recorded, a letter is sent home inviting parents/guardians to attend a meeting with the Attendance Team to offer support
- Penalty notice letters may be issued if a pupil has a period of unauthorised absence on 10 missed sessions in a period of 50 school days.

Below
90%

- Child identified as a Persistent Absentee (PA). Penalty notice warning letters may be issued and support given
- Attendance tracked and monitored with school Attendance Team and School Liaison Officer.

Below
50%

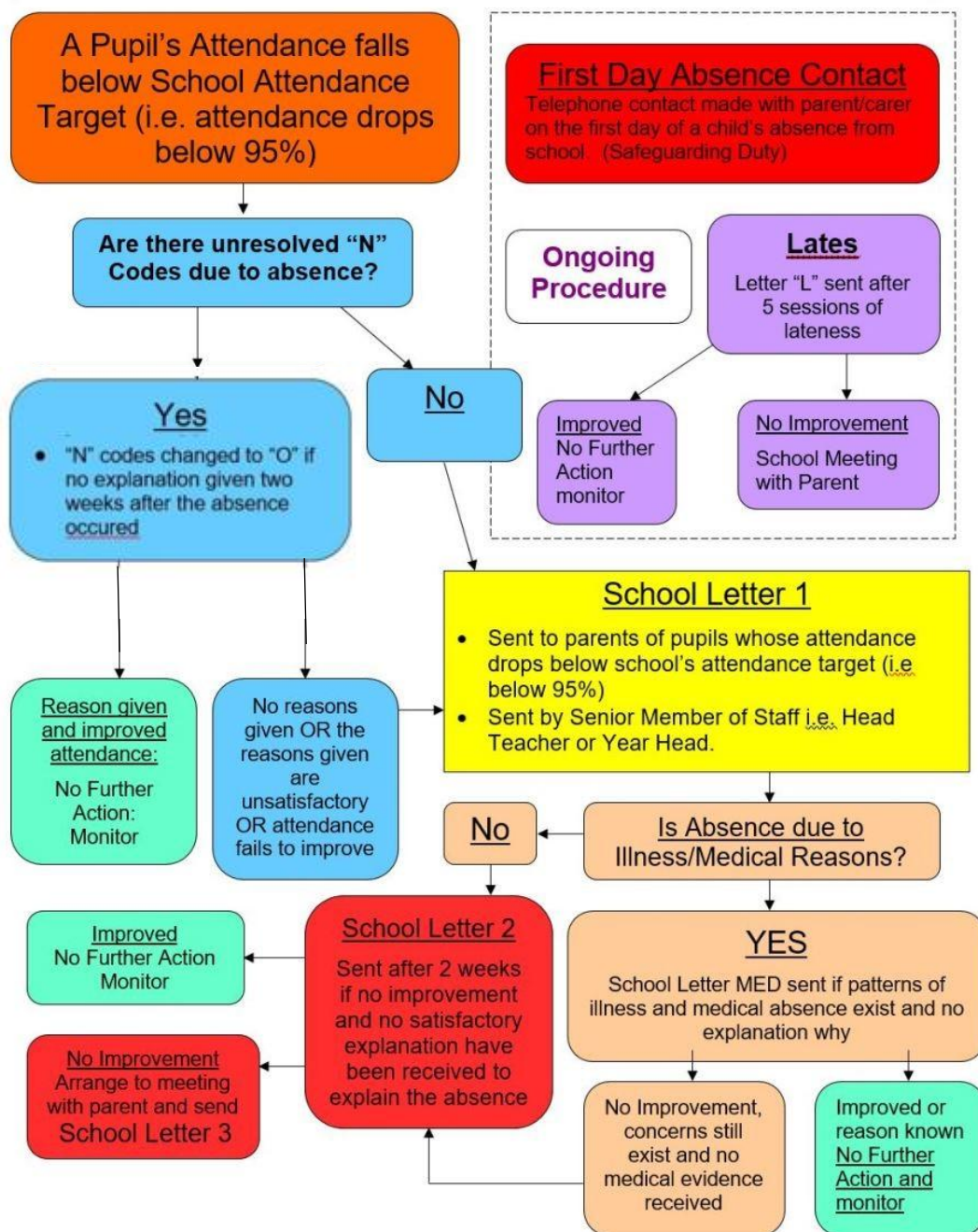
- Child identified as a Severe Absentee/Medical
- Referral via Kelsi to School Liaison Officer or other agency (Early Help)
- Penalty notice warning letters may be issued

Appendix 3 – Teacher’s responsibilities

Class Teacher’s responsibilities:

If you have a pupil who is arriving late or misses school on a regular basis, tackle this by having either a face-to-face meeting or a telephone conversation. Inform the pastoral team of the meeting outcome. This will be raised in our vulnerable groups meeting and further support will be offered where appropriate.

Stage One – School Attendance Staged Intervention Model



Appendix 4 – Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.

R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel

Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.