ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

	Position/Committee	Date
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This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's own **Attendance Procedures Information.**

General Principles

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to reach their full potential. Moorlands Learning Trust believe that regular attendance is key to pupils maximising the educational opportunities available to them to become resilient, confident and competent members of society.

We recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and school staff will work to encourage high attendance by providing welcoming, stimulating and inclusive environment in which pupils thrive. Each school sets high targets for attendance.

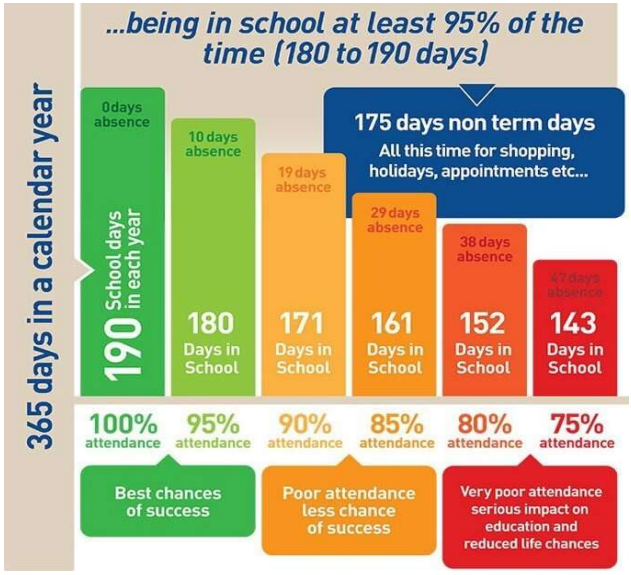
We actively seek to ensure that the Moorlands Learning Trust schools:

'…consistently promote the benefits of good attendance and make schools a place pupils want to be, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically analyse their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance……Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.' *DFE Working Together to Improve Attendance, 2024*

Parents and carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. This policy aims to share these in order for the schools in our Trust to work together with parents to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually. We aim to build strong and trusting relationships and to work together to put the right support in place at the earliest sign of a concern.

Attendance Matters



Punctuality Matters

5 minutes late every day	3 days lost
15 minutes late every day	10 days lost
30 minutes late every day	19 days lost

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2025) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

2. Roles and responsibilities

The local governing board in each school has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance champion / lead role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance champion / lead is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Considering requests for absence and advising the headteacher in their decision.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments outside of the school day where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe absence (SA):

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

Moorlands Learning Trust schools have high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils are expected to attend school punctually every day.

Please see **each** individual schools' registration and absence procedures via their website.

Parents and pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Attendance register

Each school uses a management information management system to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Schools will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews

- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance, or in exceptional circumstances, to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the school will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

6. Authorising parental absence requests

The parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be considered by the headteacher and school attendance champion / lead – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the

pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents.

Holidays
The school is not able to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Leave of absence
The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may be referred to the Local Authority and result in a sanction such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments
Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work
The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

The licensing authority will grant a license if it is satisfied that the child's education will not suffer by reason of taking part in the performances or activities in line with The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

Pupils subject to a part-time timetable
In very exceptional circumstances and where it is in a pupil's best interests, the school will grant leave of absence to accommodate for a pupil on a part-time timetable. In such circumstances, the days on which the pupil is expected to attend school will be agreed in advance.

Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
The school will usually grant leave of absence where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day/days where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Study leave for a public examination

Study leave is a school decision and not an entitlement. Legally, for students in compulsory education, it may only be granted to students in Year 11 and this can only be during public examinations. Consequently, study leave for selected Year 11 students will only commence at the start of the GCSE examination period. In line with DfE expectations, study leave must be used sparingly even during the GCSE exam period. Consequently, there are some Year 11 students who will not be granted study leave usually because of concerns raised regarding attainment, progress, commitment to independent learning and/or attendance. These students will continue to receive targeted support and revision in school during the exam period to help them achieve well.

Secondary schools also have a duty to make provision for students who have been granted study leave to be able to come into school and revise during the examination period. There will be a supervised space provided for silent, focussed independent study. Some subject specific revision sessions and/or drop-in sessions may also be offered through this period to maximise students' chance of success.

Education off site

Schools can also allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings:

- To attend an offsite approved educational activity
- To attend another school at which the pupil is registered (dual-registration).
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority. e.g. alternative provision or as part of an education, health and care plan.
- To participate in an approved sporting activity
- To attend an educational visit or trip arranged by the school.
- To attend work experience.

As these circumstances are part of delivering a full-time education they are not classified as absences for statistical purposes.

7. SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

Moorlands Learning Trust schools will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the Local Authority (LA) if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.

- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

8. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and the parent will be contacted in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

Truancy is classed as unauthorised absence and may be referred to the Local Authority and result in a sanction such as a penalty notice. Notices are likely to be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9. Attendance intervention to promote good attendance

Poor attendance is habitual, therefore, prevention and early intervention is crucial. In order to ensure the school has effective strategies for managing absence, the schools will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem, which may include:
    - Sending letters to or otherwise communicating with parents.
    - Pastoral support systems.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance champion / lead will conduct a thorough analysis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

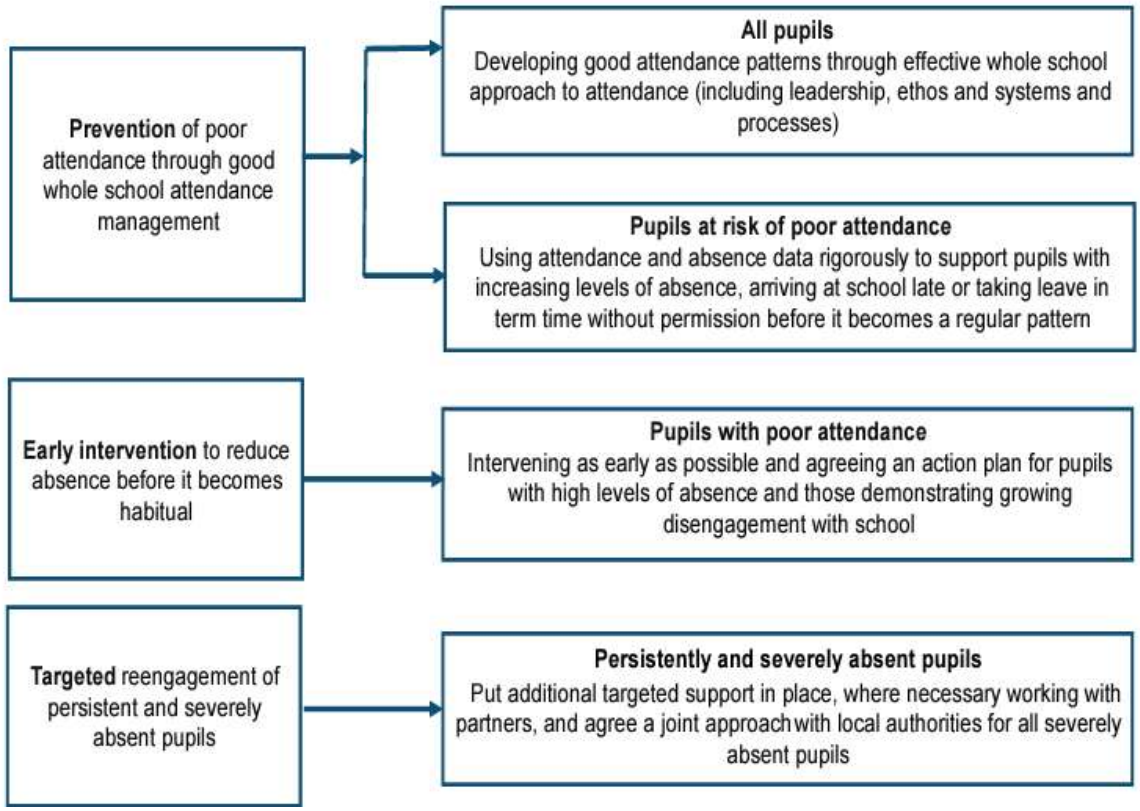
The attendance champion / lead will provide regular information to staff across the school to enable them to support and track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance champion / lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Board of Trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

Effective school attendance improvement and management



10. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance champion / lead will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly.

11. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Children looked after in care (LAC)
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND)
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils and/or parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Holding check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether SEND pathways may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12. Penalty notices and legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance champion / lead will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice may be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

- Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two penalty notices for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, Local Authorities may consider other action such as a parenting order or prosecution.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be help every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

13. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after

the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason set out in regulation 9(1) or (3) of School Attendance Regulations under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.