Attendance and Absence Policy

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Approved by:	Full Governing Body
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Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in July 2026. It is due for review in September 2027.

1. Aims and commitment to attendance

CCS is committed to ensuring regular and punctual attendance for all pupils. We believe that good attendance and punctuality are crucial for academic success, to support personal development, and overall well-being. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance, through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Teaching and Learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2010.

Coquet Community School defines our key levels of attendance as:

Attendance	Description
97% and above	**Excellent**
95 – 96.9%	**Good**
93 - 94.9%	**Satisfactory**
90.1 – 92.9%	**Unsatisfactory**
90% and below	**Persistent Absence**
50% below	**Severely Absent**

2. [UPDATED] Principles

At Coquet Community School, our approach to managing attendance is built on several key principles designed to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential.

Our Core Principles for Attendance Management:

- **Shared understanding:** we ensure that all members of the school community – pupils, parents/carers, staff, and governors – have a clear understanding of our attendance and punctuality procedures
- **Enabling attendance**: we establish clear, straightforward procedures that help pupils come to school consistently
- **Curriculum integration:** attendance issues are addressed within the curriculum, reinforcing its importance as part of learning
- **Open communication:** we provide opportunities for parents/carers and pupils to raise concerns about attendance and actively participate in finding solutions where attendance is a concern
- **Resource allocation:** we dedicate necessary resources – including time, staff, and physical space – to effectively support our attendance policy
- **Positive reinforcement:** we reward pupils for good attendance and acknowledge those who make significant efforts to improve their attendance
- **Early intervention:** we are proactive in identifying and addressing patterns of absence early. We use data to promptly identify pupils at risk and work with school partnerships to provide appropriate and timely support
- **Understood sanctions:** the implications of failing to ensure regular attendance are clearly communicated and understood by the entire school community and parents/carers
- [UPDATED] **Sixth Form Expectations:** while legal prosecution isn't applicable, we expect excellent attendance from our Sixth Form pupils to maximise the opportunities sixth form provides. This includes attending school on a full time basis.

These principles collectively underpin our commitment to meeting statutory guidance from the Department for Education, fostering a whole-school culture that values good attendance, and ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education they are entitled to.

3. The importance of good attendance

There is a clear link between high attendance at school and academic success. Pupils need to be in school to make the most of the opportunities they are given.

Coquet Community School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils and the wider school community. We have high expectations for attendance for all pupils but recognize the need to adapt the processes and provide support for individual pupils or cohorts to meet the specific needs.

4. [UPDATED] Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers

- Have a named governor for attendance
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (and subsequent amending and related legislation,) is complied with together with statutory and non-statutory guidance such as Working together to improve school attendance, 2024 issued by the Department of Education
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and Department of Education as required and on time
- Have clear systems in school to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

4.2 The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance with good teaching and learning experiences and access to extra-curricular opportunities which encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Make staff aware of the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues as part of regular CPD so that they understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping accurate registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Make sure that dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function, including data interpretation and analysis
- Ensure that The *Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007* (and subsequent amending and related legislation,) is complied with together with statutory and non-statutory guidance such as Working together to improve school attendance, 2024 issued by the Department of Education
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance

4.3 [UPDATED] The Attendance Lead will:

- Work with the Deputy Headteacher on attendance and be allocated sufficient time and resources

- Return school attendance data, including CME data, to the Local Authority and Department of Education as required and on time
- Have systems in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Collate and analyse attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to develop solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- When attendance is a concern, work alongside the Pastoral Team and Education Welfare Team to develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to the standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Conduct home visits to pupils where attendance is of concern, and in line with our first response protocol
- Meet with parents and pupils where attendance is of concern
- Assist in helping pupils who have been absent from school in reintegrating back into lessons and catching up missed work through intervention
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

4.4 Directors, Teachers and Form Tutors will:

- Record pupil attendance through taking a register in the first 5 minutes of every lesson or where necessary submitting this information to the attendance lead
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve. A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Ensure pupils who have low attendance have the adequate support needed to catch up missed learning through identifying and providing key learning packages

4.5 The Pastoral Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers
- Work alongside the Attendance Lead to analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to the standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

- Take calls from parents / carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record this on the school system
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation

4.6 Parents/Carers

This policy uses "parent" to mean the adult(s) deemed most appropriate by the school and/or local authority to engage with, including:

- Any natural parent, regardless of marital status
- Anyone with legal parental responsibility for the child or young person
- Anyone with day-to-day care and responsibility for the child (i.e., resides with and looks after them)

4.6.1 Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school on time, every day.
- Call the school to report their child's absence and the reason for their absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise the school when their child is expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school or Local Authority
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bedtimes, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Avoid taking their child on family holidays during term-time.

4.7 [UPDATED] Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day
- Attend school on time
- Attend every timetabled lesson, on time.
- Seek support from a key adult if there are difficulties which hinder good attendance.

4.8 [UPDATED] Key contacts

Deputy Headteacher	The Attendance Lead is	The named governor for attendance is
Mrs Jacqui Johnson Telephone: 01665 710636 Email: JJohnson01@jcsc.co.uk	Gina Davidson	Katie Palmer-Heathman

Year group	Year Manager
Year 7	Tahli Rollitt
Year 8	Jacqui Johnson
Year 9	Natalie Morrisson
Year 10	Erin Forster
Year 11	Wendy Hills
Sixth Form	James Moore

5. Recording Attendance

5.1 Legal Framework

Under the requirements of section 7 of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") it is the duty of a parent to ensure that every child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs or additional learning needs they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the 1996 Act, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary and appropriate, consider and use legal enforcement. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare team.

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The school day starts at **8.45am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin their Tutor Curriculum Time session at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8.40am at the latest.** The school day is as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday		Wednesday only	
Tutor time	8:45am-9:15am	Tutor time	8:45am-9:15am
Period 1	9:15am-10:15am	Period 1	9:15am-10:05am
Period 2	10:15am-11:15am	Period 2	10:05am-10:55am
Break	11:15am-11:35am	Break	10:55am-11:15am
Period 3	11:35am-12:35pm	Period 3	11:15am-12:05pm
Lunch	12:35pm-1:15pm	PSHE- Period 4	12:05pm- 12:55pm
Period 4	1:15pm-2:15pm	Lunch	12:55pm-1:35pm
Period 5	2:15pm-3:15pm	Period 5	1:35pm-2:25pm
		Period 6	2:25pm-3:15pm

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9.00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:15am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:20pm (1:35pm on a Wednesday)**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:50pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present before this time.

Class teachers will also take registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers in line with the section of this policy.

5.2 Procedure for following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carers of the pupil on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupils' emergency contacts, the school may inform relevant agencies. A home visit may be considered should contact not be made via the telephone
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Log the communication
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, liaise with the Education Welfare Officer to issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate.

5.3 Categorising attendance and absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. (See Appendix 4 for the DfE attendance codes.)

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation and /or evidence for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will usually be categorised as set out below, however this is not an exhaustive list and should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation and statutory guidance (for example - The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 / Working together to improve school attendance.

5.3.1 Illness

In most cases a telephone call or message via MCAS from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card or prescription etc.

5.3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents /carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school before they leave or when they return.

5.3.3 Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances which will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher.

5.3.4 Suspension or Permanent Exclusion (no alternative provision made)

Suspension from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Year Leader will make arrangements for work to be provided. This will be set using Google classroom.

5.3.5 Religious Observance

Coquet Community School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

5.3.6 Traveller Absence

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Northumberland, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Coquet Community School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Coquet Community School in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Coquet Community School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents/carers advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen and inform the school regarding proposed return dates

5.3.7 Late Arrival

Registration begins at **8.45am**, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. (L) The register will close at **9.15am** pupils arriving after the close of

register will be recorded as late after registration (U), this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must sign in at reception and immediately report to their lesson to ensure that we know where they are and so learning is not further interrupted.

Absence will only be **authorised** if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

5.4 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. Some examples of 'exceptional circumstances' are a family bereavement or visiting a parent in prison.

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher

The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

5.5 Leave of Absence Application Process

A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application via a leave of absence form at least two weeks in advance.

School may invite the parent/carer into school to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education.

The school will reply to all applications. All replies will be signed and dated by the Headteacher.

If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected to return to school. All replies will be signed and dated by the Headteacher.

If a parent/carer removes their child from school without requesting leave of absence, or without authorisation from the Headteacher, the Headteacher can ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice; the parent will be informed in writing that a request to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice is being made (n.b. a minimum absence of ten sessions (five school days) which are unauthorised must be recorded against the pupil's name within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This guidance is in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices).

If a pupil fails to return to school and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration - England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place. Any deletions from the Register will be in accordance with regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

6. Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to children of compulsory school age (5–16) who are not on a school roll, not receiving suitable education elsewhere (e.g. home education), or

absent from school for 20 consecutive days without known whereabouts. These children are at risk of underachieving, exploitation, or becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training). James Calvert Spence College follows Northumberland County Council's CME Guidance to identify, track, and safeguard such children, fulfilling statutory duties under Section 436A of the Education Act.

All schools must make a return to the local authority (a 'sickness return') where a pupil of compulsory school age has been recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (illness) and the school have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will be, or will have been unable to attend school because of illness for at least 15 school days during the school year, whether consecutive or not. We do this by monitoring daily attendance, investigating unexplained absences, and report CME cases to the Local Authority after 10 days of unauthorised absence using the Vulnerability Checklist. If a child's whereabouts remains unknown after 20 days, we may may remove a pupil from the roll and upload their Common Transfer File to the national Lost Pupil Database.

For detailed procedures, refer to the Northumberland County Council CME Guidance (October 2019). Any deletions from the Register will be in accordance with regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

A Lead Education Welfare Officer (LEWO) oversees CME processes, maintains records, and coordinates with agencies. Monthly CME Tracking Panels, involving education, social care, and safeguarding teams, ensure children are re-engaged in education. The Pupil Placement Panel allocates school places for CME children.

CME is a safeguarding priority due to risks like child exploitation. Schools and JCSC reports concerns to the LEWO (Dawn Westerby, 01670 623027, Dawn.Westerby@northumberland.gov.uk) or One Call (01670 536400) for child protection issues.

7. Monitoring Attendance

7.1 Monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing and using attendance data

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and identify pupils whose absences

may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

- Indicate if a pupil's attendance has stayed the same, improved or deteriorated. This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1)
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-term, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils who have absences that may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to pastoral staff, class teachers and form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and their families, and to the governing body and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place and modify accordingly
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate. All information shared will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

7.3 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels through the MCAS application, and via school reports and half termly attendance letters.

7.4 Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Closely monitor pupils who are persistently or severely absent from school and ensure that this is clearly communicated with parents/carers
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available

- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions.

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

7.5 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the LA may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

7.6 Legal Sanctions.

Where intervention by school and the Education Welfare Team fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, enforcement will be considered. A referral may be made to the Local Authority for enforcement action as appropriate. Parents do need to realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education. Enforcement action may include (but is not limited to):

(a) the issue of a **Penalty Notice**, (***see below for further information relating to Penalty Notices***) which would require payment of a sum of **£80** (if paid **within 21 days** from receipt of the Notice), or **£160** (if paid **after 21 days** and **before 28 days** from the date of receipt)

(b) **prosecution** in the Magistrates' Court for an **offence** under section 444 of the 1996 Act, for which the penalties on conviction are:

(i) a fine of up to **£1,000** for an offence under section 444(1); or

(ii) a fine of up to **£2,500** for an offence under section 444(1A) **and/or** a **custodial sentence** of up to **3 months**;

(c) an application to the Magistrates' Court for a **Parenting Order** of up to **3 months** should the Local Authority be successful in a prosecution under section 444

(d) an application under section 36 of the Children Act 1989 for an **Education Supervision Order** to authorise the Council to take responsibility for advising, assisting and giving directions to you and the Child to secure that the Child is properly educated.

Penalty notices may be issued to a parent as an alternative to prosecution for irregular school attendance under s444 of the 1996 Act.

7.7 Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

- Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice which would require payment of a sum of **£80** (if paid **within 21 days** from receipt of the Notice), or **£160** (if paid **after 21 days** and **before 28 days** from the date of receipt).
- A ***second Penalty Notice*** issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of **£160** per parent, per child.
- If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court.

As stated above if prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, the penalties on conviction are:

(i) a fine of up to **£1,000** for an offence under section 444(1); or
(ii) a fine of up to **£2,500** for an offence under section 444(1A) **and/or** a **custodial sentence** of up to **3 months**;

Penalty Notices will be issued in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Code of Conduct.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

Should a penalty notice be issued, it should be noted that this is a direct alternative to prosecution, non-payment of the penalty notice may lead to a prosecution under section 444 of the 1996 Act.

8. [UPDATED] Strategies for Promoting Attendance

School recognises that low attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in a child's life. This may be linked to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Coquet Community School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance meetings / School Attendance Contracts (Example, Appendix 2)
- Referrals to support agencies (such as Early Help, OT or HINT)
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship group
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Reintegration support packages.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and pupils.

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Coquet Community School will refer to the Education Welfare Team and the use of legal sanctions will be considered.

9. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

9.1 Supporting pupils

At Coquet Community School, our relational approach supports pupils with complex barriers to attendance through personalised assessments, data-driven early interventions, and trauma-informed practices to understand issues like mental health challenges or family circumstances.

We collaborate with families through empathetic communication, tailored support plans, and partnerships with external agencies such as children's services. In school, we foster an inclusive environment with anti-bullying initiatives, and flexible learning arrangements, such as adjusted timetables or hybrid options, while our pastoral team provides ongoing support. We tailor learning for pupils with additional l needs, celebrate attendance milestones, and use early warning systems to prevent persistent absence. For reintegration, we offer gradual plans, ongoing monitoring, and extra support during transitions to ensure sustained attendance.

9.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

We support pupils who are absent due to mental or physical ill health difficulties or SEND through a relational approach. We use data to identify pupils who would benefit from early interventions to address barriers to attendance such as anxiety; our staff are trained in trauma-informed practices. We collaborate with families via empathetic communication, tailored support plans, and partnering with external agencies such as the local authority SEND team for pupils with EHC plans. In-school, we foster inclusivity with anti-bullying initiatives, flexible learning arrangements, and tailored adjustments for pupils with SEND - this is supported by both our SEN and our pastoral teams. We celebrate attendance milestones, provide wellbeing

initiatives, and implement gradual reintegration plans with ongoing monitoring and transition support to ensure pupils thrive.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan, and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of medical barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the SENCO will work with the local authority to provide additional support where available.

9.3 [UPDATED] Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

At Coquet Community School, we employ a comprehensive approach to support pupils returning after a lengthy or unavoidable absence. We begin with a reintegration planning meeting involving the pupil, their family, key staff (such as the SEND Coordinator or pastoral team), and, where relevant, external agencies such as the local authority for pupils with EHC plans. This meeting identifies barriers to attendance, assesses the pupil's needs, and develops a tailored reintegration plan. For pupils with EHC plans, we inform the local authority if barriers related to their needs are identified, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and alignment with their plan.

Gradual reintegration plans are central to our approach. These plans may include time restricted reduced timetables, part-time attendance, or hybrid learning options to ease pupils back into the school routine, with adjustments made based on their physical, emotional, or academic needs. For example, pupils recovering from mental health challenges may start with shorter school days, while those with physical health issues may receive accommodations like accessible classrooms or rest breaks. We align these plans with any existing EHC plans or Pupil Passports) for pupils with SEND, ensuring consistency and appropriateness.

We foster a supportive school environment to make pupils feel safe and valued upon their return. This includes pastoral support, mentoring programs, and sensory-friendly spaces to reduce anxiety. Our pastoral team provide ongoing support through regular check-ins to monitor progress, build resilience, and address emotional or social challenges. For pupils with SEND or health-related needs, we implement reasonable adjustments, such as an adapted curriculum additional time for tasks, or specialised equipment to support their engagement.

Collaboration with families is key. We maintain regular, empathetic communication through phone calls, home visits, or virtual meetings to ensure families feel supported and involved. Family support plans may include practical assistance, such as or referrals to external agencies like the Early Help Team, CYPS or medical specialists.

Early intervention and ongoing monitoring ensure the reintegration plan remains effective. Key staff members are assigned to each pupil for regular check-ins, and we use attendance data to track progress and identify any emerging issues. Wellbeing initiatives, such as mindfulness sessions or access to school counselling "Be You", help address emotional barriers.

We celebrate reintegration milestones through rewards, recognition, and assemblies to motivate pupils and reinforce their sense of achievement. For pupils with prolonged absences, we ensure sustained support by regularly reviewing and adjusting reintegration plans in collaboration with families and, where applicable, the local authority, to maintain long-term attendance.

10. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance

parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children missing education, DfE (August 2024)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (December 2023)
- 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made

It also refers to:

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

Appendix 1: [UPDATED] Promoting Good Attendance

% Attendance	Key Person	Action(s)	Support Entitlement
100% -97%	**Form Tutor/ class teacher**	• Encourage attendance • Ensure all absence is followed up. • Accurate and consistent marking of registers • Half termly attendance statement • Challenge lateness to lessons or to school in the morning	• Postcards/letters home for positive attendance
96% -95%	**Form Tutor**	• Encourage positive attendance • Remind pupils of attendance targets • Inform Pastoral Support Officer of any deteriorating attendance patterns and follow up. • Contact parent/carer • Fully support inter-form and attendance challenges. • Half termly attendance statement • Discuss any changes in presentation of the pupil or any chances to their attendance	• Continued school support
94% - 93%	**Pastoral Support Officer**	• Contact parent/carer • Meeting with the pupil to discuss any concerns • Letter home and/or arrange meeting with parent/carer • Agree attendance action plan/ implement any support • Half termly attendance statement	• Support for pupils in school • - target set to improve
92% -91%	**Pastoral Support Officer** **Attendance Lead**	• Letter home - review action plan • Meet with pupil and their parent/carer • Advise parent /carer no further absence due to illness will be authorised without evidence • Conduct attendance contract • Discussion at HINT/ Early Help Triage meeting in school • Half termly attendance statement	• Home visit • Discussion at a pupil meeting as appropriate. • EHA if appropriate.
90% and below	**Pastoral Support Officer** **Attendance Lead** **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**	• Letter home advising referral to Educational Welfare • Educational Welfare case work undertaken • Local Authority Action including: • Warning Notice • Penalty Notice • Education Supervision Order • Prosecution • Half termly attendance statement	• Continued support from school/EWO and pupil support and other agencies where appropriate

Appendix 2: [UPDATED] Coquet Community School Attendance Contract

Date:	Name of Pupil	Year Group:	Current attendance:
Days Absent:		Lessons Missed:	
Home Address:			
School: James Calvert Spence College Address: Acklington Road Amble NE65 0NG			
Parent/Carer (1):		Telephone number:	
Parent/Carer (2):		Telephone number:	

Regular attendance is crucial for your child's education and success. It is your legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school on time every day unless absence is unavoidable. Our expectation is that a pupil should not miss more than 6 days of school per academic year.

Why Attendance Matters

- Absences disrupt your child's learning and may impact others in the class.
- Unauthorised absences may lead to legal consequences, including prosecution.

Types of Absence

Authorised: Absences due to emergencies or unavoidable reasons, with prior notification.

Unauthorised: Absences without valid reasons, such as truancy, unexplained absences, late arrivals after registration closes, shopping, birthdays, or unapproved holidays. These may result in sanctions or legal action.

Addressing Attendance Issues

- If your child is reluctant to attend or has persistent absences, do not cover up absences or excuse them unnecessarily, as this worsens the issue.
- Work with the school to resolve problems early. Persistent issues may involve the Education Welfare Service, with possible sanctions like Penalty Notices or court action.

Procedures for Absence

- Notify the school on the first day of absence via MCAS or contacting the absence telephone line. Reasons for absence must be given
- If necessary, contact school using MCAS App to arrange an appointment to meet with a Year Leader to discuss the absence.

If attendance declines, the school will:

- Contact you in writing.
- Invite you to a meeting to discuss persistent absences and any support that can be offered
- Refer to the Education Welfare Team, if necessary.

Lateness

- The school day starts at 8:45 AM. Late arrivals disrupt learning and may be marked as unauthorised if after 9:15 AM.
- Persistent lateness will lead to a meeting with a member of the pastoral team and may result in a Penalty Notice.

Leave of Absence

- Requests for term-time leave must be made in advance and are subject to the headteacher's discretion, decisions will be based on exceptional circumstances and prior attendance patterns.
- Unapproved leave or exceeding agreed leave will be unauthorised and may incur sanctions.

Target

We have set a target for your child to not miss any remaining school days this academic year.

By signing below, I confirm I understand and agree to the terms of this School Attendance Contract.

Parent / Carer	
School staff	
Date	

Academic information:

Appendix 3: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays