



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

Issued: September 2024
Review: Term 1 (annually)
LST: CCA/AWI

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Managing the attendance and absence of students)

This document is informed by:

- The Education Act 1996, 2002 & 2011
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, 2012 & 2013
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance September 2016
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance
- Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocols; Early Help Pathways
- Trust Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies.
- Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions DfE Guidance
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs DfE Guidance

REF	DESCRIPTION
1	Introduction/Rationale
2	Trust Schools
3	Definition of Parent/Carer
4	The Law relating to attendance and safeguarding
5	Guidance relating to attendance
6	Registration & punctuality
7	Definitions of absence, understanding types of absence and persistence absence
8	Requests for absence during school term

9	Deletions from Register
Appendices	
Appendix A	‘We will’ statements of intent
Appendix B	School Attendance Contacts
Appendix C	Additional Absence and Legal Information
Appendix D	Student Term Time Absence
Appendix E	Student absence request form

1. Introduction/rationale:

- a) This policy embraces the DFE ‘Attendance Strategy – Moments Matter, Attendance Counts’. It also adheres to the statutory guidance issued in 2024.
- b) All Midsomer Norton Schools’ Partnership (Trust) schools recognise the importance of excellent school attendance and punctuality to ensure excellent outcomes for children. Excellent attendance helps pupils to participate in the life of the school and more widely, in the local community. This means pupils will have optimum life chances enabling them to achieve a high level of attainment and enter adulthood successfully - high attainment is dependent on excellent attendance.
- c) All staff (teaching & support) employed by the Trust are responsible for supporting and promoting excellent attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- d) All absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. All absence disrupts teaching routines, so may also affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a **parent/carer legal responsibility** and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an **offence in law and may result in prosecution**.

2. Trust Schools:

- I. Are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available in each Local Authority.
- II. Provide a caring environment where all members of the School community feel secure and valued. Schools should be warm and welcoming and pleasant place to learn and work.
- III. Have an effective system of communication with students and parents/carers to support excellent attendance and punctuality and to provide appropriate information and advice.
- IV. Will use an appropriate system of rewards and incentives to recognise the effort students make in achieving excellent attendance and punctuality.
- V. Follow Department of Education (DfE) Guidance and best practice in the use of penalty notices as a deterrent to absence during term time. Each school’s Local Authority (LA) has the statutory duty to issue penalty notices and/or process legal action upon submission of appropriate evidence by a School.
- VI. Expect pupils to aspire to achieve 100% attendance at school with a minimum of 95%, unless there are exceptional reasons for absence, which would then be authorised. In our AP and Special school settings we have a minimum expectation of 90% attendance.

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school/Trust rules, will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend. Under this judgement, a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this. **It is for the CEO/ Headteacher or other authorised person to determine what constitute exceptional circumstances, not parents/carers or children themselves.**

3. Definition of a 'Parent/Carers

The term 'Parent/Carer' is used to address those with responsibilities for children. For the purposes of education and attendance matters and identifying those with legal responsibilities for pupil care and attendance, 'Parents' are determined as per Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 which defines a parent as:

- *the natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not;*
- *anyone who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child;*
- *any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child (including Corporate Parents)*

4. The Law relating to attendance and safeguarding:

- a. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states it is the responsibility of the parent/carer of a child to ensure they attend school. **It is a legal duty on parents to ensure that their children are in school.**
- b. **Absence from school is a safeguarding concern.** A pupil may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. *Section 175 of the Education Act 2002* places a duty on Local Authorities and Trusts/Governing Bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18 - **The child's welfare is always paramount.**
- c. Trust Schools have access to attendance guidance and can discuss their concerns to the Local Authority Officers and Education Welfare Officers from Education Welfare Services (South West) Ltd, or Local Authority employed Education Welfare Officers.
- d. Trust Schools adhere to their respective **Local Authority Code of Conduct and Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in their use of penalty notices** for unauthorised single periods of absence and persistent absence. Penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 enabling parents to discharge potential liability for the offence of non-attendance at school by paying a penalty within an allotted time frame. Failure to pay the penalty on time may result in the Local Authority either prosecuting for the original offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, or withdrawing the notice (this will only occur if it is proven that it contains material errors, or was issued incorrectly).
- e. Trust Schools have a duty to work together with parents/carers and other agencies (see paragraph 5c) to prevent a prosecution being necessary, however if the level of attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, schools will be required to collate evidence of non-attendance and report the information to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will then be required to fulfil their statutory duty of prosecution under **Section 444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act 1996.**
- f. Legal action may be used where:

The level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or above overall, or within a minimum period of 10 school weeks (this equates to a level of 90% attendance, or below). Up to 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year. In some cases, further action may be taken via the Section 444(1) or (1a) route through the Magistrates' Courts. **This may not be applied in all cases in our AP/Special settings.**

 - i. Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed (coded as U), will constitute unauthorised absence. Where this is at **10%** or above, legal action will be taken in our mainstream schools.
 - ii. In AP and Special school settings attendance may be lower due to medical issues or other associated challenges. Each AP and Special School has its own targets for good attendance & persistent absence.
 - iii. Pupils identified in a public place whilst externally suspended from school (during the first five days of the suspension period) without reasonable justification, may also result in parents/carers being subject to a penalty notice.

5. Guidance relating to attendance:

- a) The Government expects all schools to fulfil their responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. It is expected that schools in the Trust will promote the benefits of excellent attendance as part of a whole-school culture, have a clear attendance procedures, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents/carers, regularly and systematically analyse attendance data to identify patterns to target improvement efforts and identify pupils who require support or strategies, ensure registers are accurate, build strong relationships with families to enable barriers to education to be removed. They are also expected to share information and work effectively with the Local Authority and other local partners to address barriers to attendance and prevent pupils becoming persistently absent (where absence is 10% or more).
- b) Each Trust School has a member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for promoting excellent attendance. This person is known as the **'Attendance Champion.'**
- c) Trust Schools have **Attendance Procedures** which incorporate integrated working process with respective Local Authorities and other agencies using an early help pathway relevant to their Local Authority. This process assists in the assessment of need, using an **Early Help Assessment** (EHA (formerly known as CAF)) in order for appropriate support to be given, or referrals to be made. Each school will assist parents and students in the removal of any barriers preventing regular attendance by offering support in respect of safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and welfare within the early help pathway.
- d) Trust Schools will track and monitor pupil attendance to identify, action and highlight concerns that may require the above preventative interventions pathway. Initial concerns will be discussed with parents/carers by telephone, email and/or letter; this will be followed up with age appropriate discussions with students; and then meetings with parents/carers if concerns continue.
- e) Trust Schools will support the re-integration of pupils where necessary after an absence and involve all appropriate staff. In some cases, this may involve certain **reasonable adjustments** e.g. a reintegration timetable, counselling and/or mentoring, etc. It is for the school to determine what constitutes 'reasonable adjustments'
- f) If a student is on a bespoke timetable due to other appropriate provision being provided, or a reduced reintegration or support plan, their official registration session times may be different than stated in Paragraph 6 below.
- g) All altered timetables will be agreed and staged appropriately to support a pupil to increase their attendance over time. Trust Schools will use either their **Local Authority Reduced Timetable Forms** or the Trust Schools **Reduced Timetable Agreement** to ensure a clear plan is agreed and in place. It will also detail responsibilities for safeguarding the child when they are not on the school site and what education is being provided. A copy of which will be submitted to the Local Authority where required. Part-time timetables are not permitted.
- h) **The Headteacher of the school or CEO of the Trust are the only colleagues who can authorise a Reduced Timetable Agreement. Such agreements should be regularly (every 3 weeks) reviewed.**

6. Registration & Punctuality

- a) All Schools will keep registers in accordance with government regulations. The legal registration will be taken twice during the school day; morning session and afternoon session – please see each individual school website for specific registration times.
- b) Morning registration takes place during the first half an hour of the school day (this may be during a tutor time, class reading time or a lesson session). There is a legal requirement for pupils to attend registration sessions, unless alternative individual arrangements are made locally. It is worth noting too that each school within the Trust will have different site entry times for pupils. Please check with individual schools when children are permitted to be on-site at the beginning and end of the school day.
- c) **Poor punctuality is not acceptable.** Any student arriving within 30 minutes of the register opening in the morning or 15 minutes after the register opens in the afternoon, will be deemed as 'late' and therefore will be coded as 'L' on the register. A sanction such as detention, will be used to 'repay' the missed time. In our AP and Special School settings, punctuality may be affected by therapist or medical appointments.

- d) Any student arriving after the register closes without a verified reason will be marked as **'unauthorised late' and coded as 'U'**. A 'U code' constitutes an unauthorised absence for the whole AM or PM session. Legal action may be taken for continued U code absences.
- e) Parents/carers are **required to notify the school of their child's absence on each morning** of absence. Parents/carers must also give a specific reason for the absence. If schools do not receive notification of a pupil's absence, it must be assumed that the child is on their way to school and if they do not arrive, the absence will be followed up accordingly. Schools will call Parents/Carers on the telephone if a pupil fails to arrive at school after the register has closed.
- f) When a child is absent and the school cannot contact Parents/Carers, those leading schools/responsible for attendance matters or safeguarding, will continue to try and make contact and where necessary (in the timeframe of 1-5 days), will make a welfare visit to confirm the safety of the child. In some circumstances, a welfare check will be made on the first day if no contact can be established with a child's parent or carer.

7. Definitions of absence, types of absence and persistent absence:

- a) Every half-day = one session. One whole day = two sessions. Absence from school is classified by the school (not by Parents/Carers) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing and supported by evidence wherever possible.
- b) An **Authorised** absence may be for illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall within the school day), emergencies or another unavoidable cause. **However, the school reserves the right to decide whether an absence should be authorised, or not.** Although reasons given for absence will be recorded, the absence may not be authorised if the reason is not deemed appropriate, reasonable, or if there are ongoing attendance concerns. This may also include where absences for illness or other circumstances become too frequent. Schools may then wish to further explore the reasons for absence.
- c) An **Unauthorised** absence is where the school does not consider it reasonable to be absent due to the reason given, or overall level of concern, and/or for which no "Term Time Absence Request" has been received. This includes, but is not limited to: parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy before or during the school day, unexplained absences, late arrival at school after registration has closed, shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, day trips, cheap holidays, weddings, shopping trips, visiting or being visited by family and friends or absence that has no exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absence can lead to the school submitting evidence to their Local Authority for financial penalties/sanctions and/or legal proceedings to be considered using the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).
- d) **Persistent Absence (PA)** is where a student misses **10%** or more of their education within a specific period of time (e.g. whole academic year, term or half-term) for whatever reason (authorised or unauthorised). Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to a child's education and well-being. Any case that is at risk of moving towards becoming categorised as a Persistent Absence, is given priority and these pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through each school's attendance and welfare systems (see paragraph 5d); this can also be combined with academic mentoring, as absence affects attainment.
- e) **Severe Absence (SA)** is when a pupil misses 50% or more of their education within a specific period of time (e.g. whole academic year, term or half-term) for whatever reason (authorised or unauthorised). Absence at this level will cause considerable and potentially long-lasting damage to a child's education and well-being.
- f) **Medical Evidence** can be helpful in demonstrating why legal action should not be considered. However, it will be required to authorise absences **IF** attendance concerns have reached a **Parental Attendance Agreement (Parent Contract)** meeting level, or if a child's attendance is already of concern and subject to an official written warning. The cost of providing evidence will be the responsibility of the Parent/Carer however, support to request the evidence in the interests of 'working together to safeguard children' can be given by the school, if required. Where a student has a long-term medical condition, reference should be made to the Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions DfE Guidance and Trust policy on Medical Conditions in School. Naturally, AP and Special School settings will operate with a wider definition given the complexities of issues faced by some children in their settings.
- g) **Child Absent or Missing Education (CME) or the Attendance and Welfare Support Department** are informed by schools when the location of a child is unknown (address no longer confirmed or no contact can be made). Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on Local Authorities and schools/academies to follow procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries to establish the location and welfare of a missing child.

This may including doing one or some of the following: making telephone and email contact, conducting a home visit/ 'safe and well' check, sending a letter to the last known address along with checking with friends, relatives, neighbours, landlords (private or social housing providers) and other local stakeholders who are involved with the family. Each enquiry should be recorded to show completion of the action to locate a child and should be undertaken in a timely manner. **A child absent or missing education are serious safeguarding concerns** and if there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral to Children's' Social Care (or the Police if appropriate) should be considered.

- h) Where it is suspected that a child may be absent or missing education, reasonable enquiries must be carried out within the first 5 days of a child being absent from education. Schools must attempt to locate the child using the above suggestions in the first instance. After 5 days of unauthorised absence where no contact has been established with parent/carer, a child **must** be reported to the Local Authority as a child absent or missing education. Once a child has been reported as absent or missing education, they will be held on roll for 20 days from the last day of attendance prior to deletion, as per '9b' of this policy. Where the child is located and their address is confirmed within the school's area, the child will remain on roll and support required for improved attendance and a return to school will be established.

8. Requests for absence during school term

- a) The Trust actively discourages absence during term time. It is considered that each pupil should attend all sessions regularly and punctually in order to avoid disruption and maximise their educational achievement.
- b) Parents/carers are required to complete a **Term Time Absence Request Form** in advance of planned absence taking place. We ask that this is at least three weeks before the required absence, where possible, to enable the school to consider and respond to the request. Parents must detail and evidence the **exceptional circumstance** of the request.
- c) In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & subsequent Amendments, Trust Schools are unable to authorise any period of absence unless it is for exceptional circumstances, and in advance, as per the following extract from the above mentioned regulations:

Leave of Absence

(1) Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school. (i.e. CEO/Headteacher/Senior Lead for Attendance/Attendance Champion).

(2) Leave of absence shall not be granted unless-

*I. an application has been made in advance to the proprietor (Headteacher) by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; **and***

II. the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

- e) The Headteacher (or other designated/authorised senior leader) of each Trust School will determine whether the request for leave meets "exceptional circumstances" criteria. However, guidance suggests that Headteachers should not consider as exceptional circumstances the examples listed in paragraph 7c) of this policy. Parents/Carers may be required to attend a meeting to discuss the request in more detail with the Headteacher (or other designated/authorised person).
- f) Where the leave of absence request, or part thereof is **authorised**, parents/carers will be notified in writing detailing any restrictions set e.g. adhering to the dates requested. If restrictions are not adhered to, the leave granted will revert to being **unauthorised**
- g) Where leave of absence is unauthorised, parents/carers will be notified in writing and it will be addressed in line with the Local Authority penalty notice code of conduct and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act as per Paragraph 4 of this policy.
- h) Where an absence is **suspected** of being for the purposes of leave and a request was not made, it is the Parents/Carers responsibility to disprove the suspicion by providing evidence that the absence was for an alternative exceptional reason. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and addressed as per Paragraph 4 of this policy.
- i) Where leave of absence is stated as '**for the purpose of religious observance**' each Trust School will follow the guidance from their respective Local Authority. As a general rule, **only one individual day**, exclusively set aside

by a religious body will be accepted as a religious observance absence and there will be a maximum of three single days within a year that would be acceptable. Evidence from the religious body may be required.

- j) **Children Who Have Not Returned from Overseas** – This constitutes a safeguarding concern and will be addressed quickly and robustly by Trust schools who will notify the Local Authority of their concerns. The school will fully investigate the reason for travelling overseas in the first instance (if they are not already aware of the reason) and consider potential barriers preventing return travel that may be a result of government guidance in the UK or another country.
- I. Following the investigation, if the reason for the initial travel was deemed, by the Headteacher, to be for an exceptional circumstance and evidence has been provided; the Headteacher will determine a reasonable return date and advise the parent/carer of their decision. The school will keep in touch with the parent/carer on a regular basis to ensure that their return date to school remains on schedule and there is a smooth reintegration back into full time education.
 - II. If following the investigation, the reason for initial travel is not deemed, by the Headteacher, to be an exceptional circumstance, then the school will inform the parent/carer of the decision and the date which the child must return by also advising the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The school will explain the risks and criteria used to determine if their child should be removed from the school roll after 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence.
 - III. If there is no communication from the Parent/Carer or there is no specified return date, the school will refer its concern to the Local Authority. If the Parent/Carer has requested leave, but their child fails to return to school and is absent for 10 days or more, a referral to the Local Authority will be made. If a child is absent and there has been no request for leave or a return date agreed, the school will refer its concerns to the Local Authority after 20 days of unauthorised absence. After 20 days of absence where there is no contact from Parents/Carers or an agreed return date for the child, the school in consultation with the Local Authority, may remove a child from its roll.

9. Deletions from Register

- a. Under Section 8. (1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, should a child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence, the school is permitted to delete the child's name from their roll.
- b. This action may be taken by a school if a child has not returned by the date specified and if the following applies:
 - I. at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the CEO/Headteacher or other authorised person in accordance with regulation 6 (2);
 - II. the CEO/Headteacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause;
 - III. both the CEO/Headteacher of the school and the Local Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

By following this policy, The Trust will be working in partnership with Parents/Carers and other agencies to promote maximum attendance as a priority in order to secure successful outcomes for all Pupils.

Register coding:

Parents should be aware that schools must code registers for attendance in a specific manner and that registers are legal documents. There are changes to the coding for attendance from September 2024. These can be found in the DFE guidance document in Chapter 8.

Appendices

Attendance Policy Supporting Documents in relation to individual school settings

Appendices are subject to change without official ratification of the whole policy as they will need to be altered locally to link with each Local Authority as appropriate:

Appendix A	Trust expectations of schools and their local procedures – ‘We will’ statements
Appendix B	School Attendance Contacts
Appendix C	Additional Absence and Legal Information
Appendix D	Student Term Time Absence Request
Appendix E	Term Time Absence Request Form

Appendix A: Trust expectations of schools and their local procedures

As a Trust we expect all of our schools to consistently apply the **Trust Attendance policy**. In Addition, we have identified a set of **'We will statements'** that convey our expectations and intent that all schools in the Trust must implement:

We will Statements:

Item	We will.....	Purpose	Delivery
1.	... write to parents within 3 days of start of term outlining the importance of good school attendance, punctuality and our expectations as a trust.	To remind parents/carers of expectations and responsibilities	By letter/email and also posted on website.
2.	....update the Trust Looker database every 2 weeks and update DFE database as per their requirements.	To ensure that Trust and local school data sets are accurate ready for interrogation.	Direct to databases
3.	....send out information leaflets to parents outlining the Trust's campaign to support improved attendance three times a year.	To engage with parents and share information.	By mail/direct to parents via pupils. Electronically also as attached PDF. Posted on website.
4.	... ensure our Attendance Champions provide a termly report (six times a year) on attendance to the Local Governing Body via the Head Teacher Report using the Trust template provided.	To ensure information is provided to local governing bodies to enable them to offer challenge with respect to attendance issues of concern.	Written report to be added to Head Teacher report.
5.	... ensure that processes are actioned immediately/ within 24 hours when a child triggers a threshold (97% , 93% or <90%)	To ensure timely and collaborative approach to stemming any declines of concern in attendance	All interventions recorded on school tracker system.
6.	.....issue certificates to celebrate attendance (100% attendees, students who have demonstrated strong improvement in attendance from previous term or special awards for school engagement, those children who may not be attending for chronic ill health reasons but still engaging well with school) in the final week of each term.	To ensure that good attendance and punctuality coupled with good engagement in school is always systematically celebrated by the school every term.	Direct to pupils in class/tutor and/or via assemblies.
7.	... ensure all leaders of attendance, check and update their school website every half term.	To ensure information is always up-to-date	Termly check of website content.

8.	.....address any query about attendance or concern raised from a parent within 48 hours of receipt.	To ensure strong and robust communication with a parental attendance enquiry.	Attendance champions to ensure systems are in place to collate contacts from parents and offer appropriate responses.
9.	... write to parents at the end of term outlining progress towards whole school attendance targets and individual attendance, seeking further support for next term where applicable.	To ensure that parents/carers are communicated with and to maintain momentum in promoting good attendance.	Could be a letter or could be an insert in a newsletter.
10.	...issue an attendance certificate with a covering letter explaining the implications of the attendance.	To ensure parents are notified termly of their child's attendance and to pre-empt any significant decline.	Letter and SIMS generated attendance certificate for the term (cumulative from term 2)

Appendix B
School Attendance Contacts

School Name	Attendance lead	School Tel.	School Website
Primary Phase			
Clutton	Head of School	01761 452510	http://www.cluttonschool.com/
Dundry	Headteacher	0117 964 7181	http://www.dundryprimary.co.uk/
Farrington Gurney	Head of School	01761 452419	http://www.farringtongurneyschool.co.uk/
Hemington	Headteacher	01373 834320	http://www.hemingtonprimary.co.uk/
High Littleton	Headteacher	01761 470622	http://www.highlittletonschool.com/
Leigh-on-Mendip	Head of School	01373 812592	http://www.leighonmendipschool.co.uk/
Longvernal	Headteacher	01761 412777	http://www.longvernal.com/
Midsomer Norton Primary	Headteacher	01761 412289	http://www.midsomernortonprimary.co.uk/
Norton Hill Primary	Headteacher	01761 205630	http://www.nortonhillprimary.com/
Peasedown	Headteacher	01761 432311	http://www.psiprimary.co.uk/
Shoscombe	Headteacher	01761 432479	http://www.shoscombepprimary.co.uk/
St John's	Headteacher	01761 412019	http://www.stjohnsmn.co.uk/
St Julian's	Headteacher	01225 833143	http://www.stjuliansprimary.co.uk/
St Mary's	Deputy Headteacher	01761 470245	http://www.stmarystimsbury.co.uk/
Trinity	Deputy Headteacher	01761 438650	http://www.trinitychurchschool.com/
Welton	Headteacher	01761 413131	http://www.weltonprimaryschool.co.uk/
Westfield	Headteacher	01761 413662	http://www.westfieldprimary.com/
Secondary Phase			
Beechen Cliff	Deputy Headteacher - Pastoral	01225 480466	http://www.beechencliff.org.uk/
Buckler's Mead	Asst HeadTeacher - Attendance	01935 424454	http://www.bucklersmead.com/
Frome College	Vice Principal	01373 465353	https://www.fromecollege.org/
Hayesfield	Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral	01225 426151	http://www.hayesfield.com/
Norton Hill	Asst Headteacher – Pastoral	01761 412557	http://www.nortonhillschool.com/
Oakfield Academy	Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral	01373 462539	https://www.oakfieldacademy.co.uk/
Park Road Support Centre (St Dunstan's)	Head of Centre	01458 264979	https://www.stdunstansschool.com/
Preston	Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral	01935 471131	http://www.prestonschool.co.uk/
Somervale	Asst Headteacher – Pastoral	01761 414276	http://www.somervaleschool.com/

Somerset Studio School	Headteacher	01761 438557	http://www.mendipstudioschool.org.uk/
St Dunstan's	Asst Headteacher – Pastoral	01458 832943	https://www.stdunstansschool.com/
St Mark's incl. Orchard Lodge	Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral	01225 312661	http://www.st-marks.org.uk/
Writhlington incl. Sixth Form	Deputy Headteacher - Pastoral	01761 433581	http://www.writhlington.org.uk/
Specialist Provision			
Critchill	Head of School	01373 464148	http://www.critchillschool.co.uk/
KnowleDGE	Deputy Headteacher	01173 708030	http://www.knowledge.learnmat.uk
Notton House	Head of Welfare	01249 730407	http://www.notton.learnmat.uk/
Soundwell Academy	Headteacher	01174 280505	http://www.soundwell.learnmat.uk/
St Matthias (Fishponds and Brentry)	Careers Lead and Learning Mentor	01179031320	http://www.stmatthias.learnmat.uk/
St Matthias (Rush Hill)	Behaviour Lead	01225 430009	http://www.stmatthias.learnmat.uk/

Planned Absence

Term Time Absence Request forms are available from each school website, reception area or house office. The Headteacher (or designated/authorised person) **cannot grant leave** of absence for a pupil unless the absence has been received in **advance** (we request a minimum of **three weeks** prior to travel where possible, to allow for administering the request) **and** it is considered to be of **exceptional circumstances**. Additional evidence may be requested in order to consider authorising the absence request. A meeting may be arranged to discuss the request further.

Once the request has been considered, parents/carers will be notified of the **decision in writing** (prior to the absence being taken where correct notice has been given by parent/carer) which will be posted and emailed. The reason supporting the decision will also be detailed within the letter. If the absence is unauthorised the letter will contain a legal warning. If the requested absence is **unauthorised** as it is not deemed exceptional circumstances, it will be recorded as such on the pupils' attendance record (coded **G**).

If the requested period of absence is **authorised**, as it is deemed exceptional circumstances, it will be recorded as such on the pupils' attendance record (a code of **H** or **C** depending on circumstances). However, **failure** to travel on the given dates, i.e. additional absences before and/or after the dates given, will result in an **unauthorised** (coded **G**) absence being recorded.

In the event of the above, parents/carers will be requested to provide evidence such as delayed travel arrangements or supporting medical documentation at their own cost. If this request is not met, the school may request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice.

Upon the pupil's return to the school following a period of unauthorised absence (whether requested or not), the school may request the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice(s). An exception to this will be if a pupil's attendance is already of concern and therefore the period of absence may be incorporated into a wider prosecution period, via the school attendance welfare procedures, or there has been a penalty notice warning issued and the attendance is being monitored for a 30-day period already.

Penalty notice fines are set by the Government; the school does not receive the fine. They are currently £60 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. This rises to £120 per child, per parent, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority must either prosecute the persons to which the penalty notice was issued, or withdraw the notice.

Please Note: only the Local Authority can withdraw a penalty notice and they can take this action if there is a reason why the penalty notice should not have been issued originally. For example, if no offence was committed, it has been issued to the wrong person, or it contains material errors.

Following the receipt of all required documentation, the Local Authority will issue the requested penalty notice(s). The Local Authority will liaise directly with the school at each stage of following a penalty notice being issued.

Unplanned Absence

Most absence will be addressed via the specific school procedures which include daily absence tracking and regular monitoring. Where absence is unauthorised and there are no defences this may lead to legal action via Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, or by way of a penalty notice warning and potentially a fine.

There is always a significant amount of time prior to any legal action for a child to improve their attendance or for parent/carers to address issues of concern to the school. This allows the child and parents/cares to make improvement before legal action is taken.

Please ensure you discuss all absence from school, whether planned or unplanned, with appropriate staff so that support or preventative measures can be put in place to avoid escalation. **We want legal action to always be a last resort.**

PRIOR TO APPLYING FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE PLEASE READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The full Trust Attendance Policy followed by each school can be accessed via each school website.

1. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children, if they are of compulsory school age, receive a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at school or otherwise (e.g. elective home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
2. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school they are registered at, the parent/carer will be guilty of an offence (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).
3. School attendance is vital for educational progress and all Trust Schools strongly discourage term-time absence.
4. There is no entitlement to have leave of absence during term time and CEO/Headteacher/or other authorised person, are unable to authorise absence unless it is **evidenced** that the request constitutes an **exceptional circumstance** in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & subsequent amendments.
5. The expectation is that all students aspire to achieve 100% attendance at school, with a minimum of 96%, unless there are exceptional authorised reasons for absence.
6. **A Parent/carer is defined** under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as: the natural parent of a child, whether they are married or not; anyone who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child (e.g. partner, step-parent, sibling over the age of 18 or grandparent).
7. Department of Education (DfE) Guidance states good attendance should be promoted, and absence should be challenged and addressed early to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
8. **Penalty notices** are used as a deterrent to absence during term time. Each School's Local Authority (LA) has the statutory duty to issue penalty notices and/or process legal action upon submission of appropriate evidence by a school. A penalty notice is a fine of **up to £160 per parent, per child**, and failure to pay will result in prosecution before a Magistrates Court. Should prosecution take place (under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996) and if convicted, parents/cares may be fined up to £2500
9. All requests for leave will be considered on an individual basis and **must be received in advance** - (we ask for at least 3 weeks advance notice of any absence where possible, to allow for administering the request). Details of other school age siblings and where they attend school should be provided, as we are required to liaise with schools where siblings are on-roll.
10. **If a request is refused the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.** All unauthorised absence will carry a warning that legal action may be taken. Whether this action takes place will depend on the amount of sessions/days absence requested. Each Local Authority will determine if a penalty notice should be issued based on information received from the school.
11. If the period of absence requested is **authorised**, the requested dates must be adhered to. Failure to travel and return on the requested dates, will cause additional absences to be recorded as unauthorised and may lead to a legal sanction being imposed.
12. If absence is **not requested in advance** and it is suspected that absence from school is due to unauthorised reasons e.g. holiday or unexplained absence, you will be required to provide evidence to prove the absence was for legitimate authorised and exceptional reasons. Failure to do so may result in a penalty notice being issued.
13. Your child may also be registered as a 'Child Missing Education' with the Local Authority and their place at the School may be at risk if they have unauthorised absence for 20 days or more and we cannot establish your child is definitely returning.