

# The NSB Trust

## Attendance Policy

To be reviewed annually (to reflect the annual publication of updates from the DfE usually published in September of each year)

**This policy will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025**

Related Policies include Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and Behaviour Policy

This policy is drawn from: Working together to improve school attendance; Statutory Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (August 2024); School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (2024); statutory guidance documents on children missing education, supporting students with medical conditions at school, education for children with health needs who cannot attend school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and Keeping Children Safe in Education. It is created with support and collaboration with The Northants Police, Local Children's Safeguarding Board and West Northants Council

Information relating to Northampton School for Boys

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Information relating to Northampton School

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## 1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential. The Trust believes that regular attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become resilient and confident young people who can make a positive contribution to their community. The importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, is a central part of the Trust's vision, culture, values, ethos and day to day life.

The Trust also recognises that good attendance is a learned behaviour and the barriers to accessing regular education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual students and families. Trust schools will work in partnership with students and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

## 2. Aims

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 ([Working together to improve school attendance \(August 2024\)](#)) through our Trust culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students
- promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensuring every student 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 students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 3. 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 legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

#### 4. Roles and responsibilities: The Local Committee

As part of the Trust's work on attendance, the following roles and responsibilities are crucial to effective implementation and monitoring.

The Local Committee is responsible for:

- setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - making sure their school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and Local Authority
  - making sure their school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- making sure the Trust's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- making sure the Trust has high aspirations for all students, but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it most
- working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- monitoring attendance figures for the Trust and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the Trust's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting students' needs
- where their school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- making sure all Trust staff receive adequate training regarding attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - the importance of good attendance
  - that absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - the school's legal requirements for keeping 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 students, where appropriate
  - making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
  - sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
  - holding the appropriate headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
  - nominating a link Trustee for attendance who meets regularly with the Senior Attendance Lead at each school to discuss and analysis attendance data and trends

## 5. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring:

- the implementation of this policy at their school
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Trustees
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- working with the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers
- communicating with the Local Authority when a student with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs
- communicating the Trust's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents through all available channels

## 6. The Senior Attendance Lead

The Senior Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- supporting students with complex barriers to attendance by working with families and external agencies to remove barriers to school attendance
- supporting students with mental or physical health by working with families and external agencies to provide additional support and to consider reasonable adjustments that can be made to ensure good attendance
- supporting students returning to school following lengthy or unavoidable periods of absence

## 6. Attendance Administrative Support

The Attendance Administrative Support staff in each school within the Trust assist in:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- working with School Attendance Support Service (SASS) officers to tackle persistent absence
- advising the Senior Attendance Lead (authorised by the headteacher) when to refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing fixed-penalty notices



- take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system transfer calls from parents/carers to the Year Team Leaders and Form Tutors where appropriate, to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

## 7. The Form Tutor

The Form Tutor is responsible for:

- keeping an up-to-date and accurate register of attendance and punctuality for morning sessions for each student in the Form Group, and monitoring the accurate completion of the afternoon session register by period 6 class teachers
- essential point of contact for communications about absences
- receiving, recording and filing messages from parents and communicating these to others as appropriate
- contacting parents/carers where information has not been given about absences
- promoting the value of good attendance
- Monitoring student attendance and punctuality weekly and subsequently intervening with students whose attendance is showing cause for concern

## 8. The Year Team Leader

The Year Team Leader is responsible for:

- promoting the values of good attendance to the whole year group
- monitoring Form Tutors and Class teachers in keeping an up-to-date and accurate register of attendance and punctuality for morning sessions for each student in the Form Group and monitoring the accurate completion of the afternoon session register by period 6 class teachers
- monitoring weekly attendance and punctuality statistics for the year group
- overseeing intervention and support for those students whose attendance is starting to show cause for concern
- working directly with the Form Tutor concerning those students who are Persistent Absentees (missing for 10% or more sessions) and those who are in danger of becoming persistent absentees
- setting up School Attendance Contracts and Parent Contracts as necessary and ensures formal records are kept for any SASS involvement
- working with SASS as necessary
- monitoring lesson attendance within sessions to identify patterns of absence within the school day and deal with any students who are on site but not attending lessons through pastoral and special educational needs or disability support or The Behaviour Policy
- supporting students with complex barriers to attendance by working with families and external agencies to remove barriers to school attendance
- supporting students with mental or physical health by working with families and external agencies to provide additional support and to consider reasonable adjustments that can be made to ensure good attendance
- supporting students returning to school following lengthy or unavoidable periods of absence

## 9. The Special Educational Needs and Disability co-ordinator

The SENDCo has responsibility for:

- students with significant SEND and medical issues which adversely affect their attendance at school

- working in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with special educational needs and disabilities, including ensuring the provision outlined in the students Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (where issued) is accessed
- a student has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) if their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the student's needs, the school will inform the Local Authority
- establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers students with SEND face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments
- considering adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of students who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a student has a disability
- ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate
- supporting students with complex barriers to attendance by working with families and external agencies to remove barriers to school attendance
- supporting students with mental or physical health by working with families and external agencies to provide additional support and to consider reasonable adjustments that can be made to ensure good attendance
- supporting students returning to school following lengthy or unavoidable periods of absence

## 9. Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or Local Authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- talk to their child about school and education
- take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- encourage your child to have high aspirations and plan for the future
- follow the Trust Attendance Policy by contacting the school if your child is absent to inform the school of the reason for the absence and expected date of return
- follow up any absence with a note to their Form Tutor, explaining the absence
- try to avoid unnecessary absence, including, wherever possible, making appointments for the doctors or dentist (or similar) outside of school hours
- ask the school for help if your child is experiencing difficulties
- inform the school of any change of circumstances that may impact your child's attendance
- support the school by taking every opportunity to become involved in your child's time at school
- form a positive relationship with the school and acknowledge the importance of your child receiving the same messages from both school and home
- encourage a routine at home which includes bedtimes, home learning, preparing for the next day and school uniform
- avoid taking your child out of school during term time for reasons such as holidays as these absences will be unauthorised
- when requesting authorisation for term time absence, ensure a written letter with the detailed exceptional circumstances is sent to the Headteacher in good time
- ensure the school has a minimum of two telephone contact numbers in case of emergency

## 10. Students

Students are expected to:

- attend school every day
- attend every timetabled lesson
- be punctual to school and attend every lesson on time

Sixth Form students, whilst beyond legislation regarding compulsory attendance at school are, nevertheless, subject to the same high expectations as the rest of the Trust.

## 11. Recording attendance and punctuality

Trust schools use an electronic attendance register (register) and places all students onto this register.

The register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every student is:

- present
- attending an approved off-site educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the register will include:

- the original entry
- the amended entry
- the reason for the amendment
- the date on which the amendment was made
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment

The following will also be recorded:

- whether the absence is authorised or not
- the nature of the activity, where a student is attending an approved educational activity
- the nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:40am and ends at 3:35pm.

Students must arrive to school by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:40am by students attending a Personal Development registration session with their Form Tutor. The morning session register will be kept open until 9:10am.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 2:05pm and will be kept open until 2:35pm. If a student arrives late for a morning session, a late mark will be recorded. There are two possible records depending on circumstances. If a student arrives in the morning session after 8:40am but

before 9:10am, then the code 'L' will be recorded for the session and the time of arrival will be recorded in the register as a comment. This code is statistically a 'present' code and indicates that the student was present for the session.

If a student arrives after 9:10 am, then a code 'U' will be recorded. This code is statistically an 'absent' code.

In the afternoon session, the code 'L' will be used between 2:05pm and 2:35pm and the code U will be entered for a student arriving after 2:35pm.

## 12. Unplanned absence

Parent's must notify their child's school of the reason for the absence of their child on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:40am, or as soon as practically possible, and then on every morning of subsequent absence, by calling or emailing their child's school by telephone or email. They should clearly state the name and Form Group of their child and provide information regarding the nature of the illness. We would also welcome information regarding how long the expected absent is likely to be, and whether the child has seen their GP or another appointment for a specialist service has been made.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

All student absence should then be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent to the Form Tutor upon the students return to school.

If there is a more in-depth discussion needed around the absence reasons or support provisions in place upon the students return to school, contact should be made through the Form Tutor or Year Team Leader.

If the school receives no parent/carers contact on the first day of absence, a phone call will be made to establish a reason for the absence.

If absence continues without explanation the school will attempt further contact and or a home visit to ensure the safeguarding of the student.

Once attempts have been made via telephone and/or email and a home visit has unsuccessfully occurred (or if 10 days has elapsed with no contact) the student will be reported to the Local Authority through the SASS as a 'Child Missing from Education'.

## 12. Planned absence

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

Any request for a leave of absence for a student must be made in writing by a parent/carer, ahead of the period of time requested, addressed to the Headteacher and submitted to the Year Team Leader or Form Tutor.

Each absence request will be looked at as an individual case and therefore any exceptional circumstances should be made clear in any request to the school.

The Headteacher has the authority to exercise discretion to authorise absence based on exceptional circumstances being presented.

Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the school. The Headteacher will consider each request based upon the individual circumstances. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

**The Department for Education (DfE) does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the students parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

### 13. Following up unexplained absences

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

- attempt to call the students parent on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- 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 student was absent
- call the parent 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 the School Attendance Support Service (SASS)
- where relevant, report the unexplained absence to any external agency directly involved in their daily care
- where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- identify whether the student 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, the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority through the SASS who may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention

### 14. Child missing from education (CME)

If a student has not attended for a period of 10 consecutive days, and there has been no explanation from parents/carers, despite attempts by the school to contact home, then the school will report the student as a Child Missing from Education to the Local Authority. This is part of the school's and the Local Authority's responsibility for Safeguarding.

## 15. Reporting to parents

Along with regular parental contact in cases where attendance is a concern, the school will also regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly produced academic reports. An annual Form Tutor report will also detail attendance data and comments.

Parents can also access their child's daily attendance data through our online learning system.

## 16. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#).

These circumstances are:

- taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- attending an interview
- study leave
- a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s); if necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- if the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- attending provision arranged by the Local Authority
- attending work experience
- if there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 16. Professional sport absence

If a student is chosen to be part of a professional academy which requires a regular commitment of time out of school, such as a 'day release programme', then such absences must be formally requested directly to the Headteacher in the first instance. The Headteacher may consider this request under the above guidance.

The Headteacher may use discretion on a case-by-case basis to authorise such an absence and may include a condition of signing an agreement about maintaining good academic progress, a good attendance rate and a good behaviour record. If the Headteacher believes that these conditions are not being met, the school reserves the right to withdraw authorisation, and will notify both the parents and the organisers in writing.

The school will need to be satisfied that the persons in charge of the activity have been trained regarding safeguarding of children's welfare and can be authorised as a suitable person by the school. The school must also be satisfied to all other relevant safeguarding and welfare aspects of the provision by any club or association.

## 17. Irregular attendance – unauthorised absence – term time holidays

The Trust believes that the best place for students to make educational progress, to reach their potential and realise their ambitions is to be in the classroom learning. We strongly discourage holidays from being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. From September 2013 the government regulations changed and to this end **the Headteacher will NOT sanction holidays taken during term time.** This means that any requests from parents for holidays will be rejected and if any parents do take holidays during term time, the register will be marked as an unauthorised absence (code G).

The Local Authority has provided the Trust with the following guidance for parents/carers:

*If a student misses school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten weeks, the Trust will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action. This could include:*

- a Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine
- prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted parents/carers may be fined up to £1,000
- prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted parents/carers may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

Each school's term time dates for the forthcoming year will be available on the respective website or can be sought through that school's reception.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the Headteacher's decision.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider legal sanctions including prosecution.

#### 18. West Northamptonshire Council School Attendance Support Service (SASS)

The School Attendance Support Service (SASS) work with all local education providers in West Northamptonshire to improve the attendance of children and young people and have the power to prosecute parents for not ensuring that their children receive appropriate education at school.

The Trust works closely with the SASS and meets termly with a School Attendance Support Officer to discuss current attendance cases, concerns and referrals.

#### 19. Attendance prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.

Local authorities have the power to prosecute the following:

1. Parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order issued by the Local Authority to require a parent to get their child registered at a named school (under section 443 of the Education Act 1996). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).
2. Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
3. Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the Local Authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
4. Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).



The decision to prosecute rests solely with the Local Authority as an independent prosecuting authority.

## 20. Penalty notices

The schools within the Trust can refer to the Local Authority through the SASS who can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Penalty notices are issued to parents by the Local Authority as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices can be used by Local Authorities where the student's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and are only used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

For a first penalty notice for unauthorised absence the amount is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days. For a second notice relating to the same child within 3 years the amount is £160 payable within 28 days, with no third notice; any further offence may be referred directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty notices are issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and can only be issued by a Local Authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each Local Authority.

## 21. Importance of attendance (promoting good attendance)

Student attendance is a national priority and is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted.

National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high examination performance. Our minimum attendance expectation is 96% for all students.

As good attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all students including their safeguarding and welfare, the school will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance by setting high expectations for every student. These will be communicated clearly and consistently to all students and parents. The school will also systematically analysis internal attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance and to target specific intervention and support to overcome barriers to attendance.

The school will follow the best practice identified in **Working together to improve school attendance (2024)** by:

- building strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them
- developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- having a clear school attendance policy which all staff, students and parents understand
- accurately completing admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence
- regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place
- sharing information and work collaboratively with the Local Authority, and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe
- being particularly mindful of students absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support

It is therefore important that the Trust Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEND.

## 22. Working together to improve attendance

When planning approaches to best meet the needs of all Trust students regarding school attendance, each school within the Trust closely follow the best practice set out by Working together to improve school attendance (2024) which documents that *'successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:*

- **Expect** – *Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school*
- **Monitor** – *Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched*
- **Listen and understand** – *When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them*
- **Facilitate support** – *Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues*

- **Formalise support** – *Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order*
- **Enforce** – *Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.'*

## 23. Supporting good attendance

The Trust sets high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these regularly to students and parents through all available channels. In doing so, our aim through this policy is to help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.

We visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies, Personal Development periods and through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum.

The Trust recognises that absence is often a symptom and that improving student attendance is part of improving students overall welfare. Children regularly missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

The Trust also recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life.

This may be related to problems at home or in school. Where this is the case, 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.

All students with an attendance issue will be supported. **The Trust expects as a minimum 96% attendance from all students** but are aware this may not always be possible due to extenuating circumstances or the need to overcome short- or long-term difficulties to achieve this target.

In any case of attendance concern, we understand that students may be failing to attend school for a variety of reasons. Some reasons may be outside the immediate control of the Trust, but we aim adopt best practice and appropriate responses within the school to identify the needs which can help to improve attendance. The importance of early identification, assessment and intervention cannot be over emphasised.

We may address an attendance concern in the following way:

*In the first instance the school will regularly communicate home regarding any attendance concerns through the Form Tutor or Year Team Leader. This may be a phone call or email. Further to this, a letter home will be sent should a student's attendance continue to be of concern. This may result in inviting parents to a meeting to discuss the issues behind the absences and stress the importance of improved attendance and look to discuss voluntary support the student needs to overcome any barriers to their attendance.*

There may be other methods of communication a school may use, which will be particular to the individual circumstances pertinent to the student on roll.

## 24. Persistent absence

Persistent Absence is defined as a student missing 10% or more of school. This is the equivalent of 1 or more days a fortnight across a full school year.

Recent audits of related data strongly indicate persistent absence is correlated with crime. The Audit Commission reported that a quarter of school age offenders have persistent non-attendance records, and that persistent school non-attendance is associated with child and adolescent mental health difficulties. It is therefore vital that we at the school tackle this issue robustly in order to reduce the number of students missing 10% or more of school over the year, whatever the reason for their absence. Where this is the case, we will intensify our collaborative work with parents/carers to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these students. We will consider all of the possible reasons for absence and try to help the student understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for anyone who might be facing difficulties.

If the attendance rate does not improve over a predetermined period of time, the school may seek to establish more formal support with external agencies and the Local Authority. This could take the form of a formal School Attendance Contract, Parenting Contract, Early Help Assessment or Education Supervision Order with the student having set targets for future attendance.

## 25. Severe absence

Particular focus will be given to students who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These are severely absent students who may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

All relevant parties will work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an Education, Health and Care Plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

Should there still be no improvement or limited engagement with the formal support measures in place, the school would work with the School Attendance Support Service (SASS) in carrying out their statutory duties with regards to promoting regular attendance at school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, Local Authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.

Both persistent and severe absence is a primary focus of our regular data monitoring so that we can identify students and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence is central to the school and trust strategies for improving attendance.

Irregular attendance raises complex issues as it leads to students missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential. It also places children at risk and may result in them being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Therefore, we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our students.

## 26. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Trust's strategy for improving attendance. The Trust will:

- use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- 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 students 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 students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
  - implement sanctions, where necessary

## 27. Emotionally based school avoidance

The Trust recognises the emergence of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) which refers to a situation in which a child or young person has a severe difficulty in attending school often resulting in prolonged absence. Children and young people with emotionally based school avoidance are at home with parental knowledge during school hours. EBSA is accompanied by significant emotional upset which can include internalised difficulties such as feeling ill without organic cause when faced with going to school e.g., stomach ache; feeling miserable; being excessively fearful and externalised difficulties, such as visible displays of anger and overwhelming distress.

The Trust's approach to EBSA is documented in the guidance available in the appendix of this policy. This guidance aims to provide a framework that highlights good practice, recommendations and resources which enables schools within the Trust to work collaboratively with parents/carers to support students with needs relating to anxiety and emotionally based school avoidance.

Detailed explanation and guidance on EBSA can be found in this document as Appendix 4.

## 28. Students with medical conditions and/or SEND

The Trust recognises some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students remains the same as they are for any other student.

The Trust, led by the SENDCo, will aim to have sensitive conversations in developing good support for students with physical or mental health conditions as a priority. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a student has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. These conversations will also feature the range of strategies the school could offer internally to help support the student.

The Trust will also consider whether additional support from external agencies (including the Local Authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

## 29. Managing attendance and punctuality

The vast majority of our students achieve over **96%** attendance, and this is seen as a **minimum target for all of our students**. Student attendance is closely monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

Students with unsatisfactory attendance and/or punctuality will be highlighted by the Form Tutor or Year Team Leader and support will be offered to ensure this is improved in the first instance.

The Trust will seek to avoid students falling into the Persistent Absentee (missing 10% or more) category by identifying students whose attendance is giving cause for concern at statistical thresholds. The school will bring the attendance rate to the attention of the parent/carer and seek ways in which working together the attendance rate can be improved.

As a result of the school's minimum attendance target being 96%, The Trust will use the following guidance in reporting to parents each year in the Form Tutor's report comment on attendance: 100% (Outstanding), 96% – 99.9% (Good), 90% – 95.9% (Satisfactory) and Below 90% (Unsatisfactory). The Form Tutor and Year Team Leader will apply discretion in all cases where absence has been unavoidable but, even so, every absence means lessons missed, learning interrupted and progress dented.

## 30. Attendance monitoring

Schools within the Trust will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

Specific student 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.

Each 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 Trust Board.

## 31. Analysing attendance

The Trust has a robust process for analysing both attendance and absence. It recognises that poor attendance is habitual, and that prevention and early intervention is crucial.

The Trust follows the best practice outlined in the Working Together to Improve Attendance (2024) guidance and regularly analyses internal attendance and absence data to both identify and provide immediate additional support to students or student cohorts that need it. This allows identification of historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. This is achieved through:

- monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and delivery of intervention and support in a targeted way to students and families
- use of this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to Year Team Leaders and Form Tutors to facilitate discussions with students, including with the SENDCo, DSL and Student Premium lead

- undertaking frequent individual level analysis to identify the students who need support and focusing staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmarking school attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement. This is done by using the DfE's VYED (View Your Education Data) analysis platform and the FFT attendance tool
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- monitoring the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented
- providing data and reporting to identified stakeholders including the Local Committee and Trust Board

### 32. Using data to improve attendance

The Trust will:

- develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and student premium leads)
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies
- share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

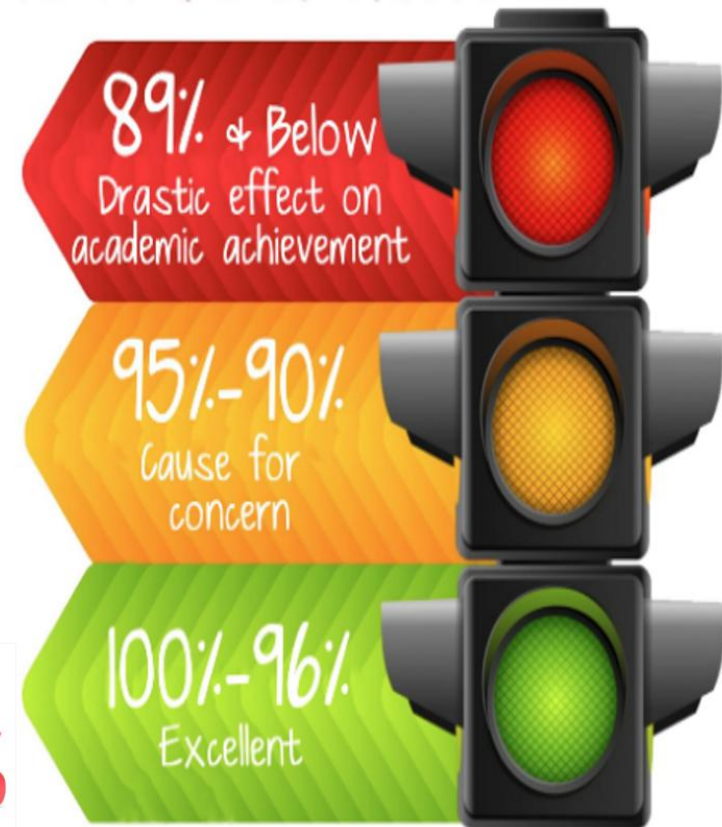


# ATTENDANCE



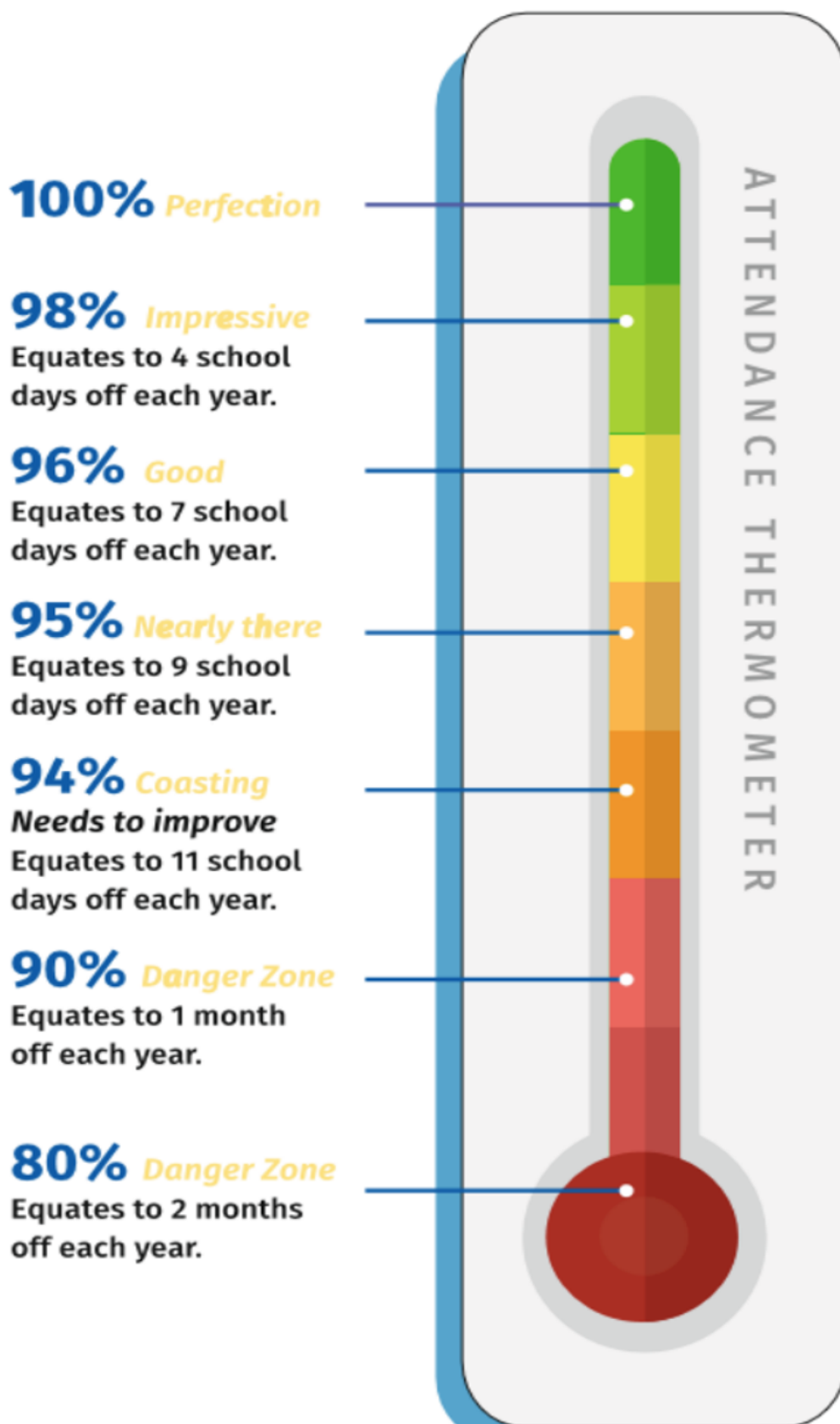
School success starts  
with attendance

ATTENDANCE	DAYS ABSENT	LESSONS MISSED
96%	7	49
90%	19	133
85%	28	196
80%	38	266





## ATTENDANCE THERMOMETER



# PUNCTUALITY

**5 MINUTES  
LATE PER DAY**  
Adds up to 3 days  
lost school time!

10 minutes =  
6.5 school  
days per year

15 minutes =  
10 days lost  
per school year

20 minutes =  
13 lost school  
days per year

30 minutes =  
19 lost school  
days per year

Better late  
than never  
**But never late  
is better**



## Appendix 4. Emotionally based school avoidance guidance

This guidance has been created using updated published local and national guidance for schools 2024.

### What is Emotionally Based School Avoidance?

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) refers to a situation in which a child or young person has a severe difficulty in attending school often resulting in prolonged absence. Children and young people with emotionally based school avoidance are at home with parental knowledge during school hours. EBSA is accompanied by significant emotional upset which can include internalised difficulties such as feeling ill without organic cause when faced with going to school e.g., stomach-ache; feeling miserable; being excessively fearful and externalised difficulties, such as visible displays of anger and overwhelming distress.

This guidance aims to provide a framework that highlights good practice, recommendations and resources which enables Trust staff to work collaboratively with parents/carers to support students with needs relating to anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

It is acknowledged that emotionally based school avoidance is a complex area of need and involvement from other services/professionals can be advantageous, appropriate and, at times, necessary. However, the aims and scope of this guidance is to highlight the early and effective intervention steps that NSB will consider, which could prevent the level of need escalating further and promote positive outcomes for the students. To this end, a key objective of this guidance is to highlight the importance of **planning**, **assessment** and **intervention**, at a school level.

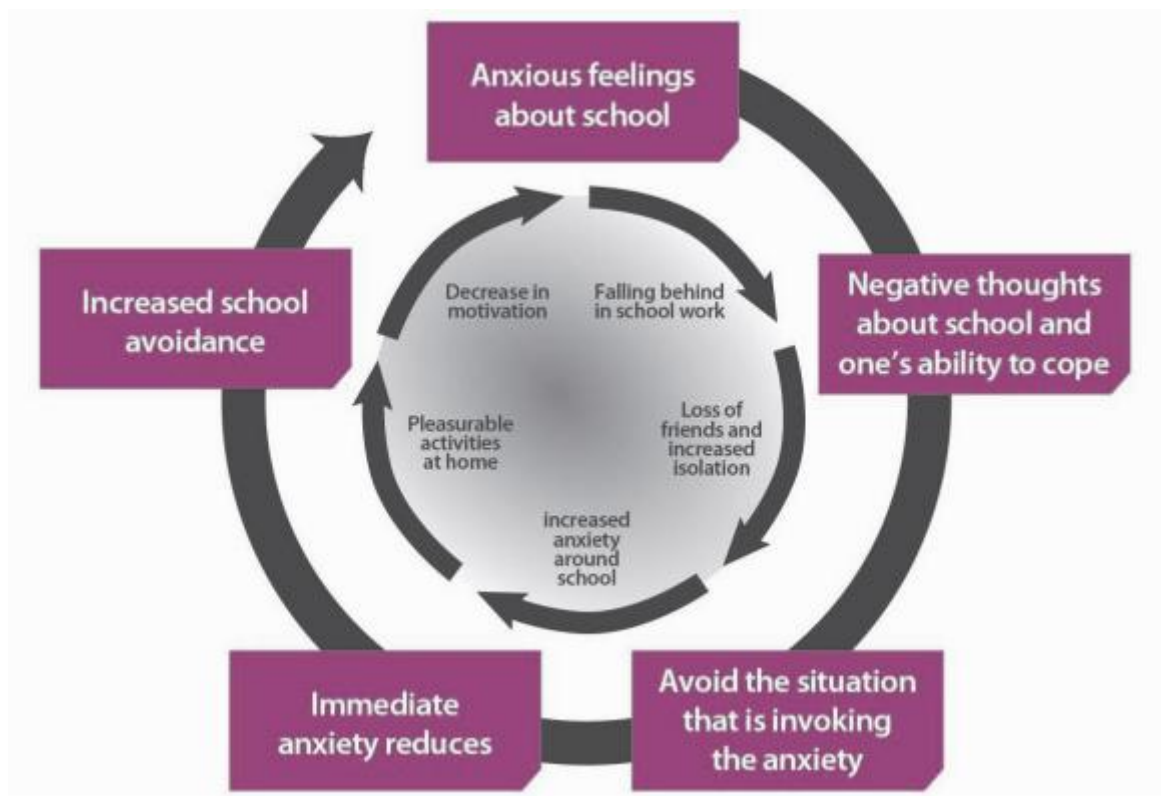
### Anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Anxiety has been identified as a key feature of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), though it is not always evident. A certain level of anxiety is considered a normal and natural part of growing up; however, some young people may experience heightened levels of anxiety which impact on their functioning and school experiences.

When the anxiety is linked to school avoidance, the young person may experience anxious and fearful thoughts around attending school and their ability to cope with school. These feelings may also be accompanied by physiological symptoms of anxiety such as nausea, vomiting, shaking, sweating etc, and may start the night before, or even a few days before school.

To avoid these overwhelming emotions and the fear associated with school attendance the young person may withdraw from the situation, refusing to get ready for school or to leave the house or enter the school. The young person may also turn to hostile behaviours to avoid what they perceive as a threatening situation and to try and control what feels like a very 'out-of-control' situation.

These behaviours, and the avoidance of school, may then contribute to the maintenance of emotionally based school avoidance over time. It is therefore crucial to consider the child's perceptions of their ability to cope, including perceived social and academic competence, as negative thoughts about one's ability to cope can lead to further feelings of worry and if left unaddressed, may undermine attempts to improve attendance.



### What causes Emotionally Based School Avoidance?

There is no one cause for emotionally based school avoidance and each case is likely to be underpinned by complex and interlinked factors including the young person, the family and the school environment.

At The NSB Trust, we recognise that the key to resolving situations with emotionally based school avoidance successfully is an individual assessment process which considers relevant factors in detail.

### Table to show risk factors associated with Emotionally Based School Avoidance

School Factors	Family Factors	Child Factors
Bullying (most common school factor)	Separation or divorce	Temperamental style
Academic difficulties	Bereavement and loss	Fear of failure/poor self confidence
Academic pressure	Parental health issues	Trauma
Transitions	Conflict within the home	Physical illness
Exams	Being the youngest child	Age (5-6, 11-12 & 13-14 years)
Peer or staff relationships	High levels of stress within the home	Learning difficulties
Transport or journey to school	Young carer	Separation anxiety

*The Well-Being Toolkit for Mental Health Leads, by Dr Tina Rae, Dr Jo Wood and Dr Amy Such*

## What to do when a child is showing signs of Emotionally Based School Avoidance



## **The NSB Trust's stepped approach when a child is showing signs of Emotionally Based School Avoidance**

### **1. Identification**

School plays a vital role in the identification of children and young people who are currently experiencing, or at risk of emotionally based school avoidance. We will therefore develop effective whole school systems to support young people, be vigilant to early indicators and employ a thorough assess, plan, do and review cycle placing the young person at the heart of the interventions.

### **Potential Indicators**

We recognise that it is important to be proactive with emotionally based school avoidance. The longer the issues remain unaddressed the poorer the outcome, as the difficulties and behaviours become entrenched. We will be vigilant in monitoring attendance of young people, noticing any patterns in non-attendance or changes to behaviours.

### **Potential Indicators**

1. Difficulty attending school with periods of prolonged absence
2. Child reluctant to leave home and stays away from school with the knowledge of the parent/carer
3. For younger children reluctance to leave parents or get out of the car
4. Regular absence without indication of anti-social behaviours
5. Frequent absences for minor illnesses
6. Patterns in absences, for example, particular days and/or subjects, after weekends and holidays
7. Reluctance to attend school trips
8. The young person expresses a desire to attend classes but is unable to do so
9. Anxiety on separation and inappropriate dependence on family members e.g., worry expressed about the safety of those at home
10. Evidence of under-achievement of learning potential
11. Social isolation and avoidance of classmates or peer group
12. Challenging behaviours, particularly in relation to specific situations at school
13. Severe emotional upset with excessive fearfulness, outbursts of temper and complaints of feeling ill on school days
14. Depression and sense of isolation resulting in, low self-esteem and lack of confidence
15. Confusion or extreme absent mindedness shown in school due to lack of concentration resulting in, lower attainments
16. Physical changes i.e., sweating, sickness, aching limbs, headaches, panic attacks, abdominal pain, rapid weight loss or gain, increased heart rate, difficulty falling/staying asleep

Where significant risks of emotionally based school avoidance are identified, we will gather further information from the young person, parent and school staff involved with the young person and put into place strategies to support the young person as soon as possible. Swift action can prevent emotionally based school avoidance from becoming entrenched and result in much better outcomes. School should follow a thorough **assess, plan, do and review cycle** placing the young person at the heart of the planning and interventions.



## Assessment

Once a difficulty has been identified, we will ensure a prompt investigation into the reasons for the difficulties. For any intervention or support plan to be successful it is essential to gain an understanding of the various aspects causing and maintaining the emotionally based school avoidance behaviours.

## Plan/Do

Once we have gained an understanding of the various aspects causing and maintaining the emotionally based school avoidance behaviours through our assessment process, we can begin to create a return to school or support plan.

All plans need to be co-produced with parents, the child and any other appropriate agencies. Person-centred planning approaches that promote working with young people and parent/carers are very valuable. Everyone needs to feel genuinely involved and signed up to the plan.

## Interventions/Strategies

Interventions will be bespoke to the individual and based upon the information which was gathered in the assessment and integration stage.

## Review

It is essential that any plan is regularly reviewed. There should be set dates for reviewing how any support plan is progressing and key personnel to attend identified. It is essential that the young people and parents are actively involved in the review.

The review should identify and celebrate any progress made and review whether further information has come to light to help inform clear next steps.

These next steps can include:

- consolidating and maintaining the current support plan
- setting new outcomes and/or actions for the young person, school and parents
- identifying that further consultation with other agencies needs to occur which may, if necessary, lead to a referral to other services



### **What works for children and young people with Emotionally Based School Avoidance?**

Evidence and research suggest that creating a bespoke intervention for each young person based on the assessment of risk and resilience factors can be very effective. Trust schools will attempt to consider the factors that are maintaining the emotionally based school avoidance for any young person and address these as far as we can, whilst looking at how we can highlight and engage the strengths and resilience factors within the situation.

Whatever risk and resilience factors are present, there are some important actions that can be beneficial in many cases of emotionally based school avoidance. As with risk and resilience factors, these are related to the young person themselves, but also their family, school and wider environment.

### **What Works... Supporting the Child / Young Person**

1. Treat the child as an individual and develop a personalised programme that takes account of the push-pull factors in their situation and the function of the school avoidance for the child.
2. Many young people require a high degree of nurture to return to school. Ensure a key member of school staff has time to build a relationship with the young person whilst they are at home, and to check in with the young person as they start to return to school.
3. Show empathy for the young person's distress.
4. Develop feelings of safety, security and belonging, both at home and at school.
5. Normalise the situation – reassure the young person that they are not the only one experiencing emotionally based school avoidance and that there is nothing 'wrong' with them, they are having a difficult time and it will pass.
6. Seek the young person's views about aspects of school that are going well and what is more challenging for them.
7. Seek the young person's viewpoint regarding home and family life to identify positive factors and relationships and any areas of concern or worry.
8. Be positive and optimistic - express hope for the situation and confidence in the young person that they will be able to return to, and enjoy, education.
9. Boost the young person's self-esteem by highlighting areas of strength.
10. Support the young person to develop their aspirations towards learning and future achievement by considering their strengths and interests.
11. Use the child's strengths and interests when developing a plan (e.g., develop a programme which starts with accessing music or sport, or spending time with their friends, if these are protective factors).
12. Provide teaching around anxiety at an age-appropriate level. Support the young person to understand how anxiety works, what it feels like and why avoidance can sometimes make things worse.
13. Teach emotional regulation strategies if appropriate (be mindful that these may be difficult to take on board at a stressful time with lots of change).
14. Don't delay! Start helping the young person to take steps towards returning to school to start as soon as possible to prevent the situation becoming too entrenched.
15. Provide a graded exposure to school, with enough time for the young person to feel comfortable at each stage and for fear to subside. Each young person's steps to engagement with school will be different, as it will need to start with areas they enjoy and can engage with easily before moving onto aspects that are more feared. For some young people this may need to involve very small steps.
16. Hold regular review meetings to monitor progress and plan next steps. Involve the family and other agencies and seek the child's viewpoint on the situation before each review.
17. Expect setbacks and don't reprimand the child when they occur. Instead examine what went wrong to try to learn from it and express confidence that progress is still being made overall. Be persistent!



### **What Works... Involving the Family**

1. School staff to carry out an early home visit (or if unable to do this because of pandemic, a remote meeting or telephone call). If there are already other agencies involved (e.g., Family Support Worker, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS) consider if a joint home visit between school and this agency can be arranged.
2. Provide the family with the contact details of a key member of staff to liaise with regarding the situation over the next few weeks and perhaps months.
3. Provide psychoeducation around anxiety and avoidance.
4. Check whether the family need any further support. Some families may need support to ensure that a clear daily routine and sleep pattern is in place and to adopt clear boundaries to help a return to school.
5. Build a supportive, trusting relationship with parents and carers and avoid blame and criticism. Instead focus on coming to a joint plan for next steps.

### **What Works... School Factors**

1. Seek information from all staff who work with the young person about their strengths and progress in school, and any concerns (academic or social). Consider how to use this information in future plans for support, remembering risk and resilience factors.
2. Identify a keyworker to support return to school and ensure they have the time available to support the child and family
3. Provide consistent support for the young person across the school day. Ensure all staff who interact with the young person are aware of the situation, understand the nature of anxiety and know how the young person would like any difficulties that arise to be handled to avoid situations escalating.
4. Ensure that flexibility to meet the young people's needs is in place in school, including being able to support their emotional needs at short notice if required.
5. Be flexible in addressing any curriculum issues as the return to school process is underway.
6. Address any difficulties with parts of the school (e.g., toilets, changing rooms, busy corridors) that may be stressful for the young person by making adjustments if needed.
7. As a priority before return address any concerns around bullying or friendships.
8. Consider whether the young person needs a safe place to go within school if they are feeling upset or anxious.
9. When a young person returns to school for break and lunchtimes consider whether additional provision is required at these times, e.g., a quieter lunchtime environment. Some children will require support around friendships and social interaction in school as a priority. If this has been a key factor underlying their school avoidance.
10. Ensure that any learning needs are identified and provided for, and the child knows what support will be in place.

### **Other Practitioners/Service Representatives**

1. Involve any professionals who are already involved with the child in regular review meetings.
2. Mental health and wellbeing support may need to be provided by other agencies.
3. Consider if any additional specialist referrals need to be made
4. Consider need for an Early Help Assessment (EHA) as part of targeted intervention support package.