Three Spires TRUST

'Life in all its fullness'

Attendance and Absence Policy

This policy is owned by: Director of Safeguarding and SEND

This policy is effective: September 2025

The next review is due: August 2026

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Attendance expectations
5. Absence procedures
6. Attendance register
7. Authorising parental absence requests
8. SEND- and health-related absence
9. Absence in exceptional circumstances
10. Truancy
11. Missing children
12. Attendance intervention
13. Working with parents to improve attendance
14. PA
15. Legal intervention
16. Monitoring and analysing absence
17. Training of staff
18. Monitoring and review

Appendices

1. Start and end times of the school day at each academy
2. Request for leave of absence form for use by parents and carers
3. National Framework for Penalty Notices - summary

Statement of intent

Three Spires Trust and all its academies believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Children and young people cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend their educational setting.

We expect every child and young person to attend their setting every day; however, we understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some children and young people find it harder than others to attend; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at each academy, as well as strong and trusting relationships with children, young people and parents / carers (herein after referred to as parents).

We expect our academies to take an academy-wide approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children and young people.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other academies in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at their educational setting or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify individuals or cohorts that require more support.

In our trust, each academy has a member of staff who is identified as attendance officer. Staff and parents will be expected to contact the relevant attendance officer for queries of concerns about attendance.

Academy	**Name of attendance officer**	**Name of senior attendance champion**
Hanley St Luke's Church of England Academy	Ms N Burton	Mrs E Facey
St Giles' and St George's Church of England Academy	Miss S Cordall	Mrs H Booth
St Peter's Collegiate Academy	Miss K Williams	Mr J Lees
St Michael's Church of England Primary Academy	Mrs V Hallam	Mrs K Jackson
St Regis Church of England Academy	Mrs K Barrett	Mr T Barradas-Lingard
St Thomas' Primary Academy	Mrs K Taylor	Mrs D Cooke
The King's Church of England Academy	Mrs S Bewick-Pepper	Mr M Worthington

Glossary of terms

This policy contains a number of terms used in Education. These terms are listed below alongside their descriptions.

Term	Description
Authorised absence	An absence which is 'approved' by the school – there are a range of absences that are authorised, including funerals, attending entrance examinations, transition events at a new school, medical appointments, attendance at music examinations and much more. Even though an absence is authorised, it does not contribute to a 'present' code.
Unauthorised absence	An absence which is not 'approved' by the school – there are a range of absences that are not authorised, including arrival at school more than 30 minutes after the registers were opened (without an authorised reason for the lateness), holidays taken in term time, shopping days, days off for birthdays and much more.
Persistent absence	This is a DfE threshold: 10% or more absence in an academic year.
Severe absence	This is a DfE threshold: 50% or more absence in an academic year.
DfE	Department for Education
SEND	Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
LAC	Child in Care (DfE terminology of LAC – looked after child)
FSM	Free School Meals
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing From Education Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy-owned policies:

- Behaviour Policy

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

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

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the hours of education, for which the academy has granted leave in advance
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency
- An absence which the academy has authorised

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children at home or otherwise not accessing their education unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the day
- Absences which have never been explained
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time
- Leaving the academy without permission or authorisation during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

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

Severe absence (SA):

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

The trust board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring that the local academy committee of each academy is upholding this policy
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the trust's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for attendance officers and senior leaders that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the academies to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The local academy committee has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the academy.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the academy's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the trust's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The principal is responsible for:

- The implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the academy.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to be strategically responsible for attendance
- Appointing a member of staff to be operationally responsible for attendance.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the academy's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every child and young person has access to full-time education and that senior leaders and attendance officers act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The deletion of any child and young person from the attendance register and the documenting of the grounds for removal.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring children and young people do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual children and young people to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the day.

The senior leader with strategic responsibility for attendance is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in the academy.

- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Ensuring that a support-first approach to remedying absence is promoted and in place in the academy.
- Informing the LA of any child or young person being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with child, young people and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the academy with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the academy if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at the academy.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children.

Children and young people are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when in attendance.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at the academy.

4. Attendance expectations

Each academy has high expectations for attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to the academy community. Each academy strives for 100% attendance for all children and young people.

Children and young people will be expected to:

- Attend every day as per the published calendar, for the full day.
- Attend the academy punctually every day.
- Attend every timetabled lesson punctually.

Appendix 1 indicates the times of the day for each academy.

In secondary settings, teachers will take informal registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that children and young people are attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers in line with the section of this policy.

In all settings, teachers will take formal registers at the start of each session. These will be analysed in line with the section of this policy.

Children and young people will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance, punctuality and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the main office via the electronic reporting system on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one day.

Where a child or young person is absent, and their parent has not contacted the academy by the close of the morning register to report the absence, the attendance officer, supported by administrative staff, will contact the parent via text message and / or telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that the child does not attend the academy.

Academy staff will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the statutory census return.

Where a child is absent for more than three days in a row, or more than 10 days in one term, the child or young person's parent will be expected to provide written communications with an explanation for the absence(s).

The academy will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a child or young person is absent due to illness; however, the academy reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. Where the child is absent from school for more than three consecutive days, due to illness, staff from the academy may visit the home to ensure that connection between home and school continues.

Where a child's medical needs change, it would be helpful for families to share any letters or clinic notes from medical professionals – this ensures that the school can work in partnership with families and wider support teams to provide a joined up support package.

In the case of children who are persistently absent, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The academy will inform the trust, on a termly basis, of the details of all children and young people who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 days or more without authorisation.

Over the course of the academic year, if a child or young person's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will arrange a formal meeting with the child or young person and their parent, as well as the academy's Education Welfare Officer. These meetings will take place as the following thresholds are met:

Half term	Threshold (year to date)
Autumn 1	7 sessions
Autumn 2	14 sessions
Spring 1	21 sessions
Spring 2	28 sessions
Summer 1	32 sessions
Summer 2	38 sessions

Where a child or young person has not returned to the academy for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the academy without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the academy will follow the children missing from education policy.

6. Attendance register

At Three Spires Trust, settings use Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether individuals are:

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

The academy will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used (the information in brackets indicates whether this is a 'present' mark, an 'authorised absence' mark, an 'unauthorised absence' mark, or whether the mark is 'not a possible attendance' and therefore does not contribute to the attendance rate):

- / = Present in the morning (present)
- \ = Present in the afternoon (present)
- B = Attending approved educational activity not covered by other codes (present)
- C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances (authorised absence)
- C1 = Leave of absence for purpose of partaking in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (authorised absence)
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part=time timetable (authorised absence)
- D = dual registered at another school (not a possible attendance)
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded, with no alternative provision made (authorised absence)
- G = Holiday not granted by the school (unauthorised absence)
- I = Illness (authorised absence)
- J1 = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment (present)
- K = Attending education provision arranged by the local authority (present)
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed (present)
- M = Medical or dental appointments (authorised absence)
- N = Reason not yet provided (unauthorised absence)
- O = Absent in other or unknown circumstances (unauthorised absence)
- P = Participating in a sporting activity (present)
- Q = Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements – this is for those children and young people whose transport is arranged by the local authority only (not a possible attendance)
- R = Religious observance (authorised absence)
- S = Leave of absence with the purpose of studying for a public examination (authorised absence)
- T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes – noting that this relates to mobile children only, those with no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place (authorised absence)
- U = Arrived after registration closed (unauthorised absence)
- V = Educational visit or trip (present)
- W = Work experience (present)
- Y1 = unable to attend due to transport normally provided no being available – noting that the child or young person must live outside of the walking distance between home and school, and the transport must be provided by the local authority (not a possible attendance)

- Y2 = not able to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency (not a possible attendance)
- Y3 = not able to attend due to part of the school premises being closed (not a possible attendance)
- Y4 = unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed (not a possible attendance)
- Y5 = unable to attend as the child or young person is in criminal justice detention (not a possible attendance)
- Y6 = unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law, noting that this child or young person would have been well enough to attend, but Government rules or guidance prohibit this in order to limit the spread of infection or disease (not a possible attendance)
- Y7 = unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause, this could include bail conditions or court attendance (not a possible attendance)
- X = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (not a possible attendance)
- Z = Pupil not on admission register (not collected for statistical purposes)
- # = Planned whole school closure (not collected for statistical purposes)

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

All entries under codes B, D, C, J1 and K will be accompanied by a note advising where the child or young person is accessing their education for the session (and in the case of a D code, whether this child or young person is actually in attendance) and a record of the provenance of this information will also be documented. None of these codes will be entered in advance.

Classroom and intervention staff will only use the codes /, \, N and L in registers. Attendance officers, attendance managers and attendance champions will ensure that any other codes are used, as appropriate.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years after the duration of the child or young person's education at the academy.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the attendance officer and DSL and / or principal – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the principal and the DSL, taking the best interests and the impact on the child or young person's education into account. The principal's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the academy will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The academy will only grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the academy will expect parents to contact the academy in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. The leave of absence request form is at the end of this policy.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the child or young person's previous attendance record and any personal circumstances will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the principal will determine the length of time that the child or young person can be away from the academy. In August 2024, the Government disallowed holidays to be authorised during term time.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a child or young person out of the academy will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The academy cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the academy in advance will automatically be recorded as unauthorised, this includes leaves of absence for pre-planned medical appointments.

Illness and healthcare appointments

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

Performances and activities, including paid work, in the United Kingdom and abroad

The academy will ensure that all children and young people engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from the academy, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA where the performance is to be held.

Additional arrangements will be made by the academy for child or young people engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from the educational setting to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this is likely to involve remote learning.

The child or young person will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the child or young person would be required to attend an educational setting.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the academy. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the principal and the DSL to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The principal will not authorise any absences which would mean that a child or young person's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the principal will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to notify the academy that their child will be absent due to religious observance. The Department for Education allows one day per religious festival to be authorised using code R.

The academy will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body.

The academy may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

Three Spires Trust recognises that children and young people with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support any who find attendance difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, each academy will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled children or young people to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or medical care plans that have been implemented. The academy will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the academy has concerns that a child or young person's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child or young person that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All children and young people will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the SEND Policy.

If a child or young person is unable to attend their educational setting for long periods of time due to their health, the academy will:

- Inform the LA if a child or young person is likely to be away from the academy for 15 or more days as a result of the same illness.
- Provide the LA with information about the young person's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the child or young person to reintegrate when they return.
- Make sure the child or young person is kept informed about events and clubs.
- Encourage the child or young person to stay in contact with peers during their absence.

The academy will offer opportunities for a child to engage with extra curricular activities even whilst absent from school, if they believe that this would be of benefit to the child.

The academy will incorporate an action plan to help any children or young people with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending their educational setting may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the child or young person is attending as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement. Emotionally based school anxiety / avoidance materials from the educational psychology service will be used to draw up these plans.

To support the attendance of children and young people with SEND and/or health issues, the academy will consider:

- Holding four-weekly (as a minimum) meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying unmet needs through an Early Help Assessment.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a child or young person to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a child or young person can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby children and young people can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Facilitating temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Facilitating phased returns where there has been a long absence.
- Procuring small group work or 1:1 lessons.
- Offering remote education
- Providing tailored support to meet their individual needs.

All children and young people with an adjusted timetable will have this recorded appropriately on their registers and a concern within the system, noting that reduced timetables are authorised absences.

The academy may reach out to the local authority's designated clinical officer or designated medical officer in order to better understand presenting health needs and to coordinate a multi-disciplinary support team if this is not already in place.

9. Truancy

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

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of children and young people, and understand the importance of continuity in learning.

Any child or young person with permission to leave the academy during the day must sign out at the office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child or young person might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the DSL is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child or young person not attending.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the child or young person, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the academy will consider progression to statutory action and a penalty notice.

10. Missing children

Children and young people will not be permitted to leave the premises during the day unless they have permission from academy staff. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a child or young person going missing whilst at the academy:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing child will inform the attendance officer immediately.
- The DSL will also be contacted immediately as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises as directed by the DSL.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms
  - The library
  - Any outbuildings
  - The grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the child or young has not been found after 5 minutes (primary age) and 15 minutes (secondary age), then the parents of the child or young person must be notified by the DSL or the principal.
- The DSL will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the child or young person, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The class teacher who identified the missing episode will complete a safeguarding referral using the school's referral system (MyConcern or CPOMS), describing all circumstances leading up to the individual going missing.

- If the missing child or young person has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate professionals must be informed.
- When the child or young person has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to them to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the child or young person has been located.

The principal will take the appropriate action to ensure that children and young people understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy for failure to follow instructions.

The DSL will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced and shared with the local safeguarding link governor, the Director of Safeguarding and SEND, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

11. Attendance support

In order to ensure the academy has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the senior leader with responsibility for attendance, will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Having a fortnightly review with heads of year in secondary settings.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Engaging with commissioned Educational Welfare Services
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating attendance clinics.

Staff will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the individuals whom the intervention is designed to target.

12. Working with parents to improve attendance

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

The academy will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each child or young person wherever possible to ensure that there are additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a child or young person where they are absent without notification or authorisation.

The academy will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends the academy regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, eg sickness or absences that have been authorised by the principal in advance. The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the child, young person and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent them from being able to attend regularly. The academy will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the child or young person's experience in the academy, eg bullying, the attendance officer will work with the DSL and any relevant academy staff, eg the SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the academy's control, eg they are related to issues within the child or young person's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, eg children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

13. Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA)

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

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Children and young people who are eligible for FSM
- Children and young people with EAL
- Children and young people with SEND
- Children and young people who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The academy will ensure it provides support to children and young people at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

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

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the child or young person and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading frequent check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the child's parent to discuss progress.
- Considering whether an EHC plan or medical care plan may be appropriate.
- Where a plan is already in place, reviewing whether an EHC plan or medical care plan requires amending.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The academy will focus particularly on children and young people who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these individuals are facing. All children and young people with attendance below 50 percent will be discussed with the Trust central safeguarding team on a termly basis.

Where a child or young person at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the academy will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, eg children's services, to support the child or young person in line with the academy's duty of care. The academy will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

14. Legal intervention

The academy will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve children and young people's attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after six weeks, the attendance officer will consider:

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

Where the above measures are not effective, the principal will request the issue of a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

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

The academy will have regard to the new (2024) National Framework for Penalty Notices – a summary of which is presented in Appendix 3.

15. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

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

- The academy cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual children and young people.
- Demographic groups, eg children and young people from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of children and young people, eg those with SEND, LAC and those eligible for FSM.
- Individuals at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance champion will provide regular reports to staff across the academy to enable them to track the attendance of children and young people and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance champion will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The local academy committee will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the academy leadership teams in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

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

The trust will share attendance data with schools on a weekly basis. The trust will support leadership teams to maximise their use of the DfE attendance data tools.

The trust will facilitate half-termly attendance network meetings. Academies will ensure that their attendance teams are able to engage with these network meetings.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different academies within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

16. Training of staff

The academy will recognise that early intervention through early help can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk children and young people as part of their induction and refresher training.

The local governing body will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on academies, eg the keeping of registers
- The academy's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The academy's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for children and young people who need it

The local governing body will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting children and young people to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from the setting could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

17. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Director of Safeguarding and SEND. The next scheduled review date for this policy is August 2026, unless any legislation requires that this policy must be reviewed earlier.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1

Start and end of the day at each individual academy

Academy	Start of the day	Registers close at	End of the day
Hanley St Luke's Church of England Academy	8:50am	9:20am	Nursery - 3:05pm Reception, Years 1 and 2 - 3:10pm Key Stage 2- 3:15pm
St Giles' and St George's Church of England Primary Academy	8:50am	9:20am	3:15pm
St Peter's Collegiate Academy	8:45am	9:15am	3pm
St Michael's Church of England Primary Academy	8:50am	9:20am	3:20pm
St Regis Church of England Academy	8:55am	9:25am	3:30pm
St Thomas' Church of England Primary Academy	8:40am	9:10am	3:30pm
The King's Church of England Academy	8:40am	9am	3pm

Children who arrive during the morning session after the close of morning registers will be issued with a code U (unauthorised lateness – this is not an attendance code, but an absence code) unless there is another reason provided which means that the absence may be authorised by academy staff.

Appendix 2

Application for leave of absence from school during term time

Important information for parents and carers

Headteachers may, in exceptional circumstances, grant leave of absence in a school year in accordance with the Attendance and Absence policy but parents and carers should not expect such leave to be granted as of right. Please see Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) for more detail about the removal of the authority to authorise absence for holidays. Indeed, following clarification from the Government recently it is likely that in most cases headteachers will be unable to authorise leave.

You are reminded of the following:

- Parents/carers cannot themselves authorise absence.
- Each application is considered individually taking into consideration the age of the child, the nature of the exceptional circumstance, the child's attendance record, any school activities that occur during the proposed period of absence (e.g. examinations) and that parents/carers have given at least 2 weeks' notice.
- If the school does not agree to the absence and the parent still takes the child out of school the absence must, by law, be regarded as unauthorised.
- If the absence is authorised and the child is absent for longer than the agreed time, the extra absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Requests for absence to be authorised must be made in advance of the absence.

Absence from school during term time can seriously disrupt a child's education on a day-to-day basis and students are less prepared for lessons that build on the work they have missed.

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Academy has not given permission for, or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason which is acceptable to the Academy.

The Academy will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

If you would like to proceed with your application, please complete the form overleaf as soon as possible and not less that two full weeks prior to the proposed absence. We will advise you as soon as we can of the outcome of your application.

Name of child: _____ Date of birth of child: _____

Date submitted to the academy: _____

Information about the proposed absence

Proposed first date of absence	
Proposed final date of absence	
Proposed return date	
Number of SCHOOL days of absence requested	
Reason for the absence	

Please confirm the general reason for this request for a leave of absence by ticking the most appropriate box.

Medical reasons	Religious observance	College / apprenticeship interview	Country, region, national sporting event	Other reason, ie funeral

I confirm that the information provided is correct and consent to providing this information to the academy for processing in accordance with the Trust Privacy Policy. I have read the information overleaf and I understand and accept the points contained therein. In particular, I understand that leave of absence may not be granted and that if it is, it will be for no longer than 10 school days. I also understand that any unauthorised absences will be recorded and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service with a recommendation for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice. If the absence is agreed, I will ensure that my child completes any work missed during the period of absence. This form is to be handed to the academy's attendance officer.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Principal's decision Date of receipt of this form in school: _____

EITHER: This absence is authorised using a _____ code.

OR: The absence is not authorised and, if the child is absent on the dates above, a _____ code is to be used.

Parents will be notified of this decision in writing as soon as possible, within one working week of this request.

Date of decision: _____

Letter sent on: _____ by: _____

Admin note: A copy of the decision letter is to be uploaded as a file to MyConcern, saved as "YYYYMMDD Leave of absence request and response and must be accompanied by this request form".

Appendix 3

Three Spires TRUST
'Life in all its fullness'

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes will come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Please note: The 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.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence
(within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Per Parent*, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent*, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

***Parent**

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences
(within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.