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CHURCH OF ENGLAND LEARNING TRUST
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The Spire Church of England Learning Trust

Trust Attendance Policy (Part 1) 2026 – 2029

To be read in conjunction with Individual School Procedures (Part 2)

This policy is reviewed and updated by the CEO and the Trust Safeguarding Lead.

It will be reviewed and updated as attendance legislation, safeguarding requirements, or guidance from the Local Authority and/or DfE changes. Otherwise, it will be reviewed on a triennial basis and will be approved by the Trust Board (Part 1) and the school's Local Governing Body (Part 2). It will be implemented by all schools within the Trust.

Reviewed:	September 2026
Ratified:	October 2026
Next Review Date:	September 2029

In collaboration with

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Part 2: Individual School Detail and Procedures Contents

Key personnel and procedures to be personalised by each school within the Trust. These are displayed from Page 12 onwards including :

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Part 1 – Trust Wide for all schools

1. Aims

The Spire Church of England Learning Trust believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Part 1 of this policy sets out the Trust's position on attendance. Part 2 details the key personnel and procedures for the relevant specific school.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of pupils and families. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, July 2026) working together to improve school attendance
- The National Framework for Penalty Notices The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amendments
- Worcestershire County Council's local code of conduct for penalty notices https://worcestershire county council code of conduct - education penalty notice

This policy document is drawn from the current versions of the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/contents

It also refers to the current versions of:

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

This policy also complies with our Trust's Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Securing good levels of attendance at school is everyone's shared responsibility.

3.1 The Board of Trustees / Local Governing Body:

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's policies and ethos
- Monitoring attendance figures and patterns of absence across the Trust, including persistent absence, severe absence and attendance of vulnerable groups, and seeking assurance that appropriate systems and interventions are in place to improve attendance.

The Local Governing Body of each school is responsible for:

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher/Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher / Head of School

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Making requests to the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Ensuring home visits take place according to the most relevant DfE guidance

3.3 The designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance at each school

The designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The name and contact details for the designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is provided in Part 2, along with other key attendance personnel for this specific school.

3.4 Key attendance personnel at each school: (these may be administrative staff or Senior Leaders, depending upon individual school context – please see Part 2)

Key attendance personnel at each school are responsible for:

- 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/Head of School
- Working with the Local Authority and other agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher/Head of School when to request that the Local Authority issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Teaching Staff

All Teaching Staff are responsible for recording attendance accurately on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office the same day. In addition, they will proactively promote good attendance, supporting the attendance lead in building positive relationships, and contribute to actions which will improve attendance for all pupils.

3.6 School Administrative Staff

School administrative staff will:

- 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 relevant member of teaching, pastoral or support staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers must:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence as soon as practicable on the day of the absence, providing details regarding the reason(s) for absence and advise when they expect that their child will return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school and lessons every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Each school will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. This includes pupils who remain on roll at the school while attending alternative provision, other educational placements or education arranged by the local authority.

Each school will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance 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

Please see Part 1: appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.

Please see Part 2 for details of this specific school's registration timings.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible. **Please see Part 2 for details of notification expectations and procedures for the specific school.**

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first day of absence may not be authorised. If a child is absent for more than one day, the

parent/carer should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

When appropriate, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent/carer to obtain a letter from a GP or the school may seek parental permission to contact the GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents/carers regarding childhood illness and school: Is my child too ill for school? (NHS – www.nhs.uk)

4.3 Planned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must submit a leave of absence request or apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence, including absence in order to attend medical or dental appointments. **Please see Part 2 for detailed information regarding the notification and procedures for planned absence at the specific school.**

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Arriving before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- Arriving after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U). This code would only be applied to the relevant school session affected by the late arrival, and is counted as an absence.

Please see Part 2 for specific information regarding the school's procedures for responding to punctuality issues.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the schools within the Trust will follow up in a variety of ways. **(See Part 2 for school specific information).** Children's welfare is paramount, and schools will always seek to be assured of a child's whereabouts and safety.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Example attendance letters can be found on Worcestershire County Council's website.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher/Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher/Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated, using the method and timeframes given in **Part 2 of this policy for the specific school**. The Headteacher/Head of School may require additional evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Physical or mental illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
  - Please note that we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
  - Schools within the Trust support pupil's Mental Health and Wellbeing. Parents/carers who have concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing should contact their GP or telephone 111 for advice. In case of emergency parents/carers should dial 999.
  - Online mental health support and advice can be accessed: Children's Mental Health - Every Mind Matters (NHS)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents/carers who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. This also applies to others who may not be the parent, but who have day-to-day care of the child.

Schools in the Trust will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The Trust reserves the right to decide what constitutes 'reasonable grounds' within the context of the individual case. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

For further information please see: DfE Statutory Guidance "School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Schools within the Trust value, recognise and reward good and improving attendance in a variety of ways. **Please see Part 2 for further information about the positive strategies that are used at the specific school.**

7. Attendance monitoring

Schools within the Trust monitor and analyse attendance and absence data and identify pupils and cohorts that require support with their attendance. Each school will tailor its approach to take account of context and the needs of particular cohorts of pupils. **Please see Part 2 for further details regarding school level monitoring of attendance information.**

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Schools within the Trust will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the local governing body.

7.2 Analysing attendance

Schools within the Trust will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Schools within the Trust will monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups, including pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding, pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, young carers and looked after or previously looked after children. Where attendance concerns are identified, appropriate support and intervention will be provided to address any barriers to attendance.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

Schools within the Trust will:

- Provide regular attendance information to relevant staff members, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Schools within the Trust will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- The Trust recognises that poor attendance, persistent absence, severe absence and missing education can be indicators of safeguarding concerns. Attendance concerns will be considered alongside other safeguarding information and, where appropriate, will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

Part 2 of this policy details the specific procedures and approaches used in the specific school to address persistent or severe absence.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes reflect the current School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Present at School		
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late Arrival	Late arrival before the register has closed
Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
Attending Another Approved Place or Educational Activity – The Pupil is counted as Present		
B	Educated Off Site	Pupil is attending an off-site educational activity approved by the school
K	Education Provision provided by the Local Authority	Pupil is attending educational provision arranged by the local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity	Pupil is participating in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school
V	Educational Trip or Visit	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation
W	Work Experience	A pupil in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience
Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
Attending Another Setting – Not Counted as Absent		
D	**Dual Registered**	Pupil is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson, eg attending a pupil referral unit. School should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised Absence – The Pupil is counted as Absent		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded and no alternative provision made	If a pupil is excluded but remains on the admission register, they should be marked E for up to the sixth consecutive day of any suspension or permanent exclusion where no alternative provision has been arranged
I	Illness	This can be used for any form of illness
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admissions to another educational institution
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	Pupil is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made out of school hours
R	Religious Observance	Pupil is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body
S	Study Leave	This should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Pupils should still be able to come into school to revise
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school
Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Family Holiday (Not Authorised)	The holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher/Head of School

N	No Reason	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised Absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unable to Attend in Exceptional Circumstances – Codes will not affect Attendance Figures		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Applies when a pupil is unable to attend because the Local Authority has failed to make the necessary access or home-to-school travel arrangements required to enable attendance
X	Not-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age pupils are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years pupils who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday
Y1 - 7	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances 1. Transport normally provided not being available 2. Widespread travel disruption 3. Partial school closure, eg Year 7 block 4. Unexpected whole school closure (different to # for planned closures) 5. Pupils in the criminal justice system 6. Public Health guidance or law 7. Any other unavoidable circumstance	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	Used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day they should be attending the school
#	Planned School Closure to Pupils	Whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance, such as when the school is used as a polling station

Appendix 2: DfE "Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

This approach is adopted in all schools within the Trust:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents/carers and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

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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.

↓

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents/carers 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.

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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 pupil's right to an education.

Please read in conjunction with Individual School Procedures – Part 2 which will reflect the procedure of the individual school.