

# Attendance Policy for The Children's Trust School



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<b>Recommended</b>  <b>Educational Governance Committee</b>	<b>Endorsed Date</b>  March 2023
<b>Approved By</b>  <b>Educational Governance Committee</b>	<b>Ratified Date</b>  June 2023
<b>Published Date</b>  September 2025	<b>Next Review Date</b>  June 2025

## 1 Purpose and Objectives

The Children's Trust School is committed to providing an effective education, supporting all children to live the best life possible achieving excellence in Education, Health, Therapy and Care.

Attendance & punctuality is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils have access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

The Children's Trust School has a statutory duty to record daily attendance and is accountable to the DfE through the school census. A register is a legal document and may be required in a court of law in a prosecution for non-school attendance. The register also holds vital data in the event of a fire or any other incidents. If a child is not a school, there is a legal duty to find out the reason.

As a school we acknowledge our pupils' medical complexities that impact hugely on their everyday lives and that can lead to prolonged illness or hospitalisation. However, as a school we have an aspirational target of all pupils attending at least 90%.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.
- How we would address pupils missing from education

Relevant laws and regulations include but are not limited to:

The school & governing body ensures policy meets requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **2 Scope**

This policy applies to:

- To the parents /carers and those holding parental responsibility of a child attending The Children's Trust school
- All colleagues across The Children's Trust residential houses where pupils attend The Children's Trust school
- All school staff

- Local Authorities

### **3 Definitions**

Unless otherwise stated, the words or expressions contained in this document shall have the following meaning:

- DfE - Department for Education
- APIES – Attendance, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Social
- SIMS – School Information Management System
- KCSIE – Keeping Children Safe in Education

### **4 Policy Statement**

This section sets out management’s intent and the guiding principles in relation to attendance at The Children’s Trust School.

#### **4.1 To promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.**

Within our context as a special school for children with complex learning and medical difficulties we need to ensure that we promote maximum attendance.

The school expectation is that all children and young people achieve at least 90% attendance. Attendance over 90% is celebrated and actions taken on % falling below 80%

Attendance data is held electronically on the SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Headteacher and the administrative staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children, groups of children and provide attendance records.

#### **4.2 To ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;**

Children attend school for 190 days / 380 sessions over the 39 weeks of the academic year. Children and young people on a 48- or 52-week contract placement to The Children’s Trust attend an enrichment offer for a further 45 days.

Due to their profound and multiple learning difficulties all pupils are brought to school each day from onsite Residential Houses or by means of funded transport if they are day pupils. We have close collaborative links with both to support them in ensuring pupils access their education.

The school residential shift leader/ house manager or the day pupil - parent/carers are responsible for notifying the school if their child is not able to attend school due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause.

This can be by telephone or email to the school. If the school has not been informed of the absence the school will make contact parents / residential to ascertain the reason for the absence.

Most 'persistent absence' for our pupils will be repeated or short-term hospitalisation for illness or surgery, due to regressive or degenerative conditions or life limiting / threatening conditions.

In the case where prolonged absence is due to illness/surgery or a deterioration in the child's medical condition the school nurse team will initiate discussion to support a safe return to school plan.

There may be a period of time when a phased return is considered to support the safe return of the student back to school. Considerations must include training of staff and correct equipment is obtained to support the young person. This will be carried out on an individual basis and include risk assessments, care planning, good communication with families and care teams. During this time the school will continue to support the pupil's educational need via class teacher.

If a child becomes sick during the school day the residential/parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child. No child will be accepted back into school for 48 hours following an episode of vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

#### 4.3 Holiday requests in term time

Holidays during term time are discouraged and where possible, holidays should be taken during the school closure/enrichment periods. We do however recognise that for some, a holiday is important for enjoying quality time together, particularly if the child has experienced prolonged illness or extended post-operative care. Any family/residential holiday request should be made in writing to the Head of School using the request of leave in term time form. (See appendix 5: - Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances form)

Holiday absences will not usually be authorised in the following circumstances:

- The student's attendance is giving cause for concern and there is no underlying medical problem affecting this.
- The holiday period exceeds 10 school days.

Permission for such absence is made at Headteacher discretion

#### 4.4 Acting early to address patterns of absence

All pupils are registered daily and codes used to identify the reasons for any absence.

Register opens for the am session at **09:30** and for the pm session at **14:00**.

The register does remain open for half an hour to give time for any essential intervention / transport issue. During the half hour of register remaining open the school must have previously acknowledged the reason for the late arrival into school.

A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another code that is more suitable for the individual circumstance. Punctuality times are sporadically monitored and individual cases of concern will be discussed at the School/House manager meeting agenda item - attendance and punctuality. The school is able to reinstate the attendance / punctuality working party if absent rates significantly spikes.

All absence is monitored via the registration process weekly and termly. We report absence rates on our APIES system and we note any particular reasons as we expect that this may have a bearing on pupil progress outcomes but also to look for trends and patterns.

We support 'Welfare call' from many local authorities to report weekly attendance and absences for 'looked after children'. This is reported by the Pupil Services Manager in a number of ways:- telephone call, secure email or secure online portals.

Absence through illness is monitored to pick up on changes in pupil's presentations with an aim to seek medical support and intervention as quickly as possible.

See appendix 2 –attendance monitoring escalation process

See appendix 3 – register codes

#### 4.5 Supporting all pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

It is paramount that all pupils arrive at school on time. Lateness into school causes disruption to the individual's learning and distraction to others in the class.

Arrival times to school are closely monitored and any 'lateness' is addressed on a weekly basis with residential school houses / parent.

The school team will work closely to engage with the family & school house to support the child whose punctuality levels are causing a concern.

Where persistent lateness has been identified (i.e., through total of 60 minutes per week late over a determined period reaching up to one month) then there will be more formal contact with actions set for the relevant local authority / parent / carer / transport provider / School Residential House.

#### 4.6 Supporting parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

The Education Act 1996 outlines the 'meaning of parent'. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person:-

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) who has care of him."

The School is committed to working in partnership with parents and with the residential school houses to enable all children reach their potential and to support their social development (enrichment week) and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible.

#### 4.7 Children at Risk of Missing Education

Schools and Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school.

Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

As a school we adhere to:

Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Where we notify a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information:

- The full name of the pupil;
- The full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- Two telephone numbers of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- The full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- The name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
- The ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make contact with the local authority and place a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls / email to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes)
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the child/family such as respite / community nurse team
- Possible home visits
- Virtual Facetime call

All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file.

Unauthorised absence is generally not an issue in the school and absence is usually due to medical complexity however, we set the term dates for our school year and we expect all pupils to attend at least 380 sessions / 190 days.

#### 4.8 Tracking moving pupils

Where the parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, schools must record the following information:

- (a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live,
- (b) the new address
- (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school we will:

- (a) Record the name of the other school, the date the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school in the pupil’s record file.

## 5 Stakeholder Consultation

Appendix 1 details the stakeholders who were consulted in the development of this policy.

## 6 Related Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures stated below support the effective application of this policy:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- School child protection and safeguarding Procedures
- Adult Safeguarding & Protection Procedures
- Absent Children
- Educational Visits Policy & SOP

## 7 External References and Guidance

The following external resources and guidance were consulted in drafting this policy:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- KCSIE September 2022
- Working Together to safeguard Children 2018
- Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- DfE Working Together to improve school attendance May 2022
- DfE Children missing in education 2016
- DfE Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs 2013

## 8 Document Change Control

Version	Status	Description (of changes)	Reviewed by	Reviewed/ Issued Date
0.1	Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of processes for monitoring attendance – insert flow diagram</li> <li>• Clarification of welfare call process</li> </ul>	Launa Randles / Maz Hanlon Steve Nash Cheryl Barker	March 2021

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of timekeeping &amp; escalation process</li> </ul>		
0.2	Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of names/titles</li> <li>• Updated relevant external references/guides.</li> <li>• Updated appendices 3-5</li> </ul>	Launa Randles	May 2023

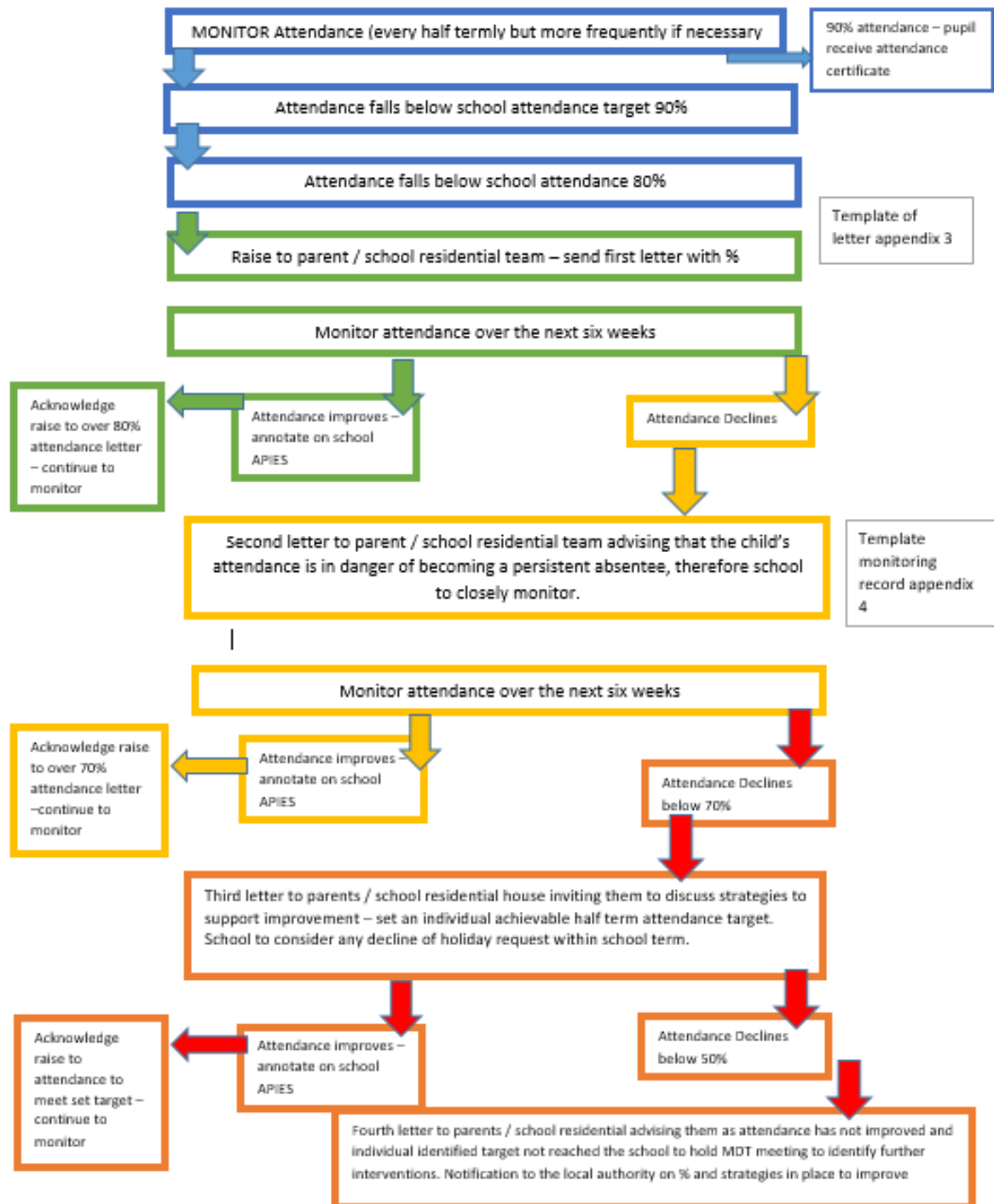


## Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Checklist

Review and complete the following checklist to indicate which stakeholders were consulted in the development of this policy.

#	Question	Yes/ No	Stakeholder(s) to be consulted
1	Is there a statutory requirement to have in place this particular policy/ does the policy need to comply with detailed legislation?	Yes	Director of Therapies / Director of Clinical Services Head & Matron of Nursing & Care School and residential house managers
2	Is implementation of the policy (or any element of it) dependent on the use of new or existing information technology?	Yes (SIMS)	Head of IT
3	Does implementation of the policy (or any element of it) place any demands on/ or affect the activities of the Estates and Facilities teams (e.g. does it impact the provision or maintenance of premises, equipment, vehicles or other TCT assets)?	No	
4	Does implementation of the policy or any element of it involve/ impact the processing of personal data?	Yes	Data Protection Officer
5	Does implementation of the policy require significant unbudgeted operational or capital expenditure?	No	
6	Does implementation of the policy (or any element of it) directly or indirectly impact on the delivery of services / activities in other areas of the organisation? E.g. a policy written by a clinical lead in CF&S might impact on the delivery of care for CYP attending the School.	Yes	Colleagues from residential houses
7	Is there a need to consider Health and Safety or potential environmental impacts in developing and implementing the policy?	Yes	Health and Safety Manager
8	Have you consulted with a representative of those who will be directly impacted by the policy?	Yes	Attendance working party
9	Is there a need to consider Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in developing and implementing the policy?	Yes	EDI Lead
10	Is there a need to consider sustainability and potential environmental impacts in developing and implementing the policy?	No	
11	Please detail any other stakeholder groups consulted, if applicable.		Criteria read request to members of the school attendance working party.

## Appendix 2 –attendance monitoring escalation process



### Appendix 3 – register codes

<b>Register Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
/	Present AM **
\	Present PM **
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present **
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site ( NOT dual registration) **
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - NOT counted in possible attendances **
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview **
P	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity **
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip **
W	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience **
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
X	Non-compulsary school age absence - not counted in possible attendances **
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances **
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances **

## Appendix 4 – Template of absence improvement letter



Tadworth Court, Tadworth  
Surrey KT20 5RU

+44 (0)1737 365 810  
school@thechildrenstrust.org.uk  
thechildrenstrustschool.org.uk  
Head Teacher: Launa Randles

Accredited and Certified by



**Letter to be sent to parent/carer/Residential house where absence is not due to recent short term hospitalisation for illness or surgery. Please delete before sending**

Date

Dear Parent / Carer of **full child's name**,

Maximum attendance is vital for **Preferred Forename** to achieve their full potential.

The school does see 90% attendance or above as the target for pupils.

At the last attendance review it was noted that **Preferred Forename's** attendance is currently **XX%**

It is important that **Preferred Forename** attendance does improve as any absence does interrupt learning routines & progress and may have an effect on their social & emotional wellbeing. You should also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement.

We acknowledge that each child and each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with the parent/residential house team to provide the best education for everyone.

We now need to work in partnership with **name of residential school house or yourself** to monitor daily attendance for the next six weeks. Annotated comments on 'reason of absence' will be maintained and discussions can then be held with **yourself/house manager** on strategies and support to address identified gaps in learning due to absence & means to improve daily attendance to school.

Yours sincerely,

HeadTeacher



## Appendix 5 – Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances form



Tadworth Court, Tadworth  
Surrey KT20 5RU

+44 (0)1737 365 810  
school@thechildrenstrust.org.uk  
thechildrenstrustschool.org.uk  
HeadTeacher: Launa Randlee



### Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that 'Headteachers' may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Deputy Head or HeadTeacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

We may ask for proof to back up your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct .

The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Director of Education/ Head of School will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child	
Tutor Group	
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for	
Leave from – to	
Number of hours	
Number of school days	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year?	Yes No Please give dates and details
Signed	
Date	

To be completed by Director of Education/Head of School: Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:

Our overall school target for attendance this year is %

Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:

Approved and the absence will be recorded as authorised.

Not approved - The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Signed:                      Date:

Page 1 of 2

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