ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed by: Emma Thomas, Assistant Headteacher

Approved by: Dan Blundred, Headteacher

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INTRODUCTION

At The Axis Academy, we are dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for our students. We understand that regular attendance is crucial for promoting achievement, progress and safeguarding. Our Attendance Policy is grounded in the principles outlined in the Department for Education's "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" document.

As a Mental Health specialist school, we recognise that there may be times when students do not feel emotionally or mentally able to attend school. In these circumstances, we are committed to supporting both parents/carers and students. We strive to work collaboratively with parents/carers, students, and relevant agencies to ensure that every student has access to the appropriate support.

Our open-door policy and various lines of communication ensure that parents/carers have immediate access to the support and advice they need. We aim to implement strategies that help students feel safe and able to attend school regularly. By fostering a supportive and understanding environment, we encourage regular attendance and ensure that learning and progress can successfully take place.

We are passionate about working in partnership with parents/carers to create a nurturing and inclusive school community where every student can thrive.

Working Together To Improve Attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. We work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from students and build a culture where all can and want to be in school and ready to learn.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is identified, discuss and listen to students and parents to understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, parties should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

EXPECTATIONS

The Axis Academy expects students to:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day
- Arrive to lessons on time
- Conduct themselves approriately
- Respect themselves, each other and all adults, aswell as the school environment

The Axis Academy expects parents/carers to:

- Encourage their children to attend school
- Contact school daily via ClassDojo or telephone the attendance line on (01270 304074) immediately if your child cannot attend school
- Contact the school **immediately** if they become aware that their child is reluctant to attend school so that the pastoral team can support both you and your child

Students and parents/carers can expect The Axis Academy to:

- Ensure that there is regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and time keeping as a statutory and legal requirement
- Contact home on first day of non-attendance
- Establish early contact with the home when a pattern of lateness emerges
- Act immediately on any problem notified to us
- Maintain confidentiality
- Provide positive measures to encourage good attendance
- Provide support for Students - to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum which supports personal, social, emotional, acedemic and moral development
- Provide a welcoming, safe and nurturing environment in which each student valued and supported
- Build and maintain effective partnerships between the school and its parent/carer body, external support agencies and the wider community

HOW WILL THE AXIS ACADEMY DEAL WITH ABSENTEEISM?

The Axis Academy uses Arbor to monitor student attendance. Through this system we will identify students whose attendance is or may potentially become a cause for concern. These students will be targeted to receive additional support from the school and/or relevant external agencies. The following chart shows how The Axis Academy will respond to absence:

FIRST DAY CONTACT

Admin team to contact home by telephone to establish the reason for absence if no contact has been made. This is then documented on Arbor.

SECOND DAY OF ABSENCE

If the Parent/Carer has contacted the school, the Pastoral Team will ensure support is offered for the student to return to school. If no contact has been made, a member of the Pastoral team will conduct a home visit where possible, this welfare check will continue daily until the child has physically been seen.

THREE DAY CONTINUED ABSENCE

The pastoral team will call to offer support for parent and child to expedite return to school. Home visit in line with day 2 protocol.

FIVE DAY CONTINUED ABSENCE

Pastoral Lead to carry out a home visit or call to offer support for parent and child to expedite return to school. Communication with other agencies if required.

Stage 1

STAGE 1: Parents/carers will be sent a letter to inform them that their child's attendance has dropped below 90%.

Stage 2

STAGE 2: An Attendance support plan is implemented and agreed by the team around the student. Student to be discussed at WISPAS (Welfare, Interventions, Safeguarding, Attendance and SEND) Panel. If no improvement is made or attendance continues to decline, a stage two letter is sent.

Stage 3

STAGE 3: Parents/carers invited by Letter to Attendance Panel Meeting to be arranged with Pastoral Lead, SENDCO/Deputy Head and SEN Keyworker

CONTINUED PERSISTENT ABSENCE/80% ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE PLAN TO BE MONITORED AND REVIEWED WITH PARENTS

Support strategies to be offered to parents where appropriate. Support from outside agencies accessed where appropriate

Parents and students to engage with support

COMPLEX NEEDS /PARTNERSHIP PLUS

Targeted Family Help Assessment to be offered, if not already in place.

Multi-Agency meeting to be held every 6 weeks, regular attendance monitoring meetings to be held

CONTRACT FAILURE, DISGUISED COMPLIENCE OR TARGETED FAMILY HELP REFUSAL AND CONTINUED ABSENCE

Fixed Penalty Notice

FPN Unpaid

=

Prosecution

Responsive Parental/Student Engagement

=

Educational Supervision Order to monitor consistent attendance

LACK OF ENGAGEMENT

=

Prosecution possible (if there continues to be multiple and/or complex needs, a referral can be made by DSL to CHECS)

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Families will NOT be fined and the case will not progress to FPN or the following stages if there are exceptional circumstances resulting in absence, and they are engaging with the school and external agencies. Each case will be assessed and evaluated on a case by case basis and will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

THE SCHOOL DAY

School opens its doors from 8:15am and students will be provided with breakfast on arrival. At 8:30am, students are expected to be ready for Form (registers will be completed by form staff in the Hiub). The register will be closed at 9.00am.

Students who arrive after 9.00am must provide a reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the register. Parents/carers will be notified if a recurring pattern of lateness develops. If lateness persists, we will invite parents/carers to a meeting to discuss the reason for the lateness.

It is expected that parents will inform the school office if their child is going to be late.

As a large number of students are transported to school by taxi, lateness caused by a taxi company will not result in the student receiving a late message. Any issues of this kind will be resolved between school and the LA transport team.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORT

At The Axis Academy, we understand the importance of regular attendance for promoting achievement and progress. All students are expected to have a mark in the register for AM and PM sessions and be present for the duration of lessons, unless they are absent or have other authorised circumstances such as meetings, counselling, mentoring, or medical appointments.

Given the therapeutic nature of our school, we recognise that there may be times when students need to take time out of lessons. Our focus is on re-engagement and ensuring that students feel supported and able to return to their learning environment. Staff and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will assess, evaluate, and monitor each student's needs to ensure they are taken into consideration. Any amendments to timetables or the school day will be made at our discretion, with the student's well-being as our priority.

Internal and external truancy will be monitored daily by staff. Class teachers will raise concerns in the first instance for further action. The school will communicate with parents/carers regarding persistent truancy, and meetings will be organised with the student to discuss their lesson attendance with our Pastoral team.

If truancy continues, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting. Depending on the outcome of these meetings, an action plan will be drawn up and appropriate strategies implemented to support the student. This may include interventions, time-out provisions, or revisions to the timetable, all aimed at fostering a supportive environment and encouraging regular attendance.

POSITIVE MEASURES TO BUILD GOOD ATTENDANCE

Axis will seek to encourage good attendance and punctuality with students through regular updates, celebration, keywork and assemblies. Good attendance and improving attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such with rewards such as certificates and prizes.

Students will be rewarded with certificates termly and annually for achieving 100%, 95% and 90% attendance. Those students who demonstrate improvement in attendance will also be celebrated.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY INTERVENTIONS

The Axis Academy will use a variety of interventions to address issues of attendance and punctuality. The Axis Academy will work both independently and with Cheshire East Local Authority in establishing the correct intervention to be applied. Interventions will include:

- Various academic and emotional wellbeing and mental health interventions in house
- Support from outside agencies, such as CAMHS, Youth Service and NHS
- Pastoral Support
- Parental Support
- Targeted Family Help Assessments and action plans
- Fixed Penalty Notices
- Engagement of the Cheshire East Education Welfare Service

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITES

All Staff

- Communicate any concerns they have with regards to attendance and punctuality at the earliest opportunity for the Pastoral team to follow up
- Remain vigilant of the fact that registers are legal documents and that false or inaccurate recordings may lead to prosecutions in some instances
- Communicate any concerns they have with regards to attendance and punctuality at the earliest opportunity to the Pastoral team, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

School Pastoral Administrator

- Ensure that morning and afternoon registers are completed
- Initial point of contact to parents/carers
- Ensure that truancy calls are completed by the Pastoral Administrator daily to parents/carers of non-attendees
- Inform staff of the reason for non-attendance, if any, via register note and/or email
- Update registers where necessary
- Ensure that the late messages and absences are recorded via CPOMS
- Contact the relevant Local Authority services where necessary
- Support Form Tutors with the monitoring of attendance, punctuality and truancy
- Ensure that periods of non-attendance are shared with relevant staff members
- Communicate regularly with parents/cares of non-attendees and follow up concerns of staff
- Monitor the attendance of offsite provisions and ensure that registers are received

Assistant Head (Culture and Ethos)

- Take a strategic lead on raising levels of attendance
- Be responsible for overseeing all issues regarding attendance and will meet regularly with the relevant Local Authority Services (SEN Team) to review and implement strategies for raising attendance
- Authorise absences and referrals where appropriate alongside the Headteacher
- Communicate regularly with The Axis Academy staff and the Senior Leadership Team regarding all issues of attendance and punctuality
- Prepare formal reports for the Headteacher and The Axis LSB (Local Support Board)

Pastoral Support Officer

- Deliver a service which enhances existing provision in order to support learning, participation and encourage social inclusion
- Organise and attend meetings with parents/carers and students where attendance is a concern
- Work with young people and their families who are referred for attendance reasons to identify strategies and support systems to ensure reintegration and improved attendance
- Work alongside and support other key staff to implement targeted support strategies to address issues of non-attendance and truancy
- Complete home visits to students and their families to ascertain reasons for poor/non-attendance
- Work alongside other key professionals in order to support improved and regular attendance
- Maintain and monitor Student Profiles, documenting trends in absenteeism, lateness or truancy
- Work with Form Tutors to address issues of non-attendance and truancy, implement appropriate strategies to support the students and improve attendance and/or punctuality
- Coordinate and implement any reward scheme that is linked to attendance and punctuality

Form Tutors

- Provide a service which enhances existing provision in order to support learning, participation and encourage social inclusion
- Share any noted trends in absenteeism, lateness or truancy and report to the wider SLT.
- Attend meetings with parents/carers where necessary
- Work with the Pastoral Team to work alongside other key staff to implement targeted support strategies to address issues of non-attendance and truancy

Family Support Services, Cheshire East Services and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs)

- Work with The Axis Academy at a strategic level when appropriate e.g. fines/prosecution

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The school can only authorise any absences in the following circumstances:

- Genuine illness (please note that on the third and subsequent illness of an academic year we will require a Doctor's note)

- Dental/medical appointments. All appointments should be made out of school hours where possible. If the appointment cannot be made outside school hours please provide a copy of the appointment confirmation
- Close family bereavement
- Recognised religious observance
- Examination

Exceptional Circumstances

The Axis Academy understands there may be exceptional circumstances resulting in a child's absence. Circumstances such as a mental health need would always be supported by school staff and students and families would be expected to engage with support offered.

Planned absences

Where possible, organise authorised absences well in advance.

Please try to arrange medical appointments during holiday times or out of school hours.

If you cannot make doctor or dentist appointments out of school hours, wherever possible, the child should come to school before the appointment and return to school afterwards.

Religious Observance

If you wish to take your child out of school for a religious observance, please inform the school.

Family Holidays

Family holidays must not be taken during the school term. The guidelines from the DfE states that schools should not authorise absence for holidays or other circumstances on the grounds of cost.

If you take your child on holiday without authorisation, the Local Education Authority has the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80.00 per parent per child, rising to £160.00 if not paid within 28 days.

You must complete a Holiday Request form if you intend to take your child out of school during term time. This can be accessed by clicking on the link on the main school website.

Leave in Exceptional Circumstances is at the discretion of the Headteacher, and will be considered on a case by case basis. Any parent/carer taking their child out of the school during term, for any reason, without the permission of the Headteacher will result in an unauthorised absence and possible referral to the Localities Services.

Appendix 1

Parent/carer letters

Letter of commendation

Dear (Insert parent/carer name),

I trust this letter finds you well. It is with great pleasure that I take a moment to express my thanks for your continued support and involvement in (INSERT STUDENT NAME) education at Axis. As we move through the academic year, it is essential to acknowledge and celebrate the positive contributions each student brings to our school community.

I am writing to commend (INSERT CHILDS NAME) positive attendance at Axis which is currently (INSERT CURRENT ATTENDANCE)%. Regular attendance is a fundamental aspect of academic success, and your commitment to ensuring your child is present in school has not gone unnoticed. The value you place on education is evident in the dedication you show towards encouraging (INSERT CHILDS NAME) to attend school regularly.

Research consistently demonstrates that regular attendance is a key predictor of academic achievement and overall well-being. It lays the foundation for building strong work habits, essential life skills, and a sense of responsibility. By attending school regularly, your child not only maximises their learning opportunities but also contributes to the vibrant and dynamic atmosphere of our school.

We understand that your partnership in your child's education extends beyond the classroom, and we appreciate the collaborative effort between home and school. It is this shared commitment that allows us to create an environment where each student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. As we move forward in the academic year, I encourage you to continue emphasising the importance of regular attendance with (INSERT CHILDS NAME). Consistent attendance not only supports their academic progress but also fosters a sense of belonging and community within our school.

Once again, I extend my appreciation for your ongoing support and commitment to (INSERT CHILD'S NAME) education at Axis. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Together, we can ensure a positive and enriching educational experience for every student.

Thank you for being valued members of The Keystone Academy family.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dan Blundred
Headteacher

Attendance concerns 1

Dear [Parent/Carer],

RE: Stage 1 Attendance Warning – [Student's Name]

I hope this letter finds you well. We appreciate your ongoing support and involvement in your child's education at Axis. As part of our commitment to ensuring the success and well-being of every student, we regularly monitor attendance to identify and address any concerns that may impact their academic, social and emotional progress.

It has come to our attention that your child, [Student's Name], has recently experienced a decline in attendance, which has fallen below 90%. We understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise, but consistent attendance is crucial for academic success and overall social and emotional development.

Regular attendance is directly linked to a student's ability to fully engage in classroom activities, grasp essential concepts, and build positive relationships with peers and teachers. It also fosters a sense of responsibility and discipline that extends beyond the school setting. Research consistently supports the notion that students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes and greater opportunities beyond school.

In light of the current attendance situation, we want to work collaboratively with you to address any challenges that may be contributing to this decline. We believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential for the success of our students.

To support your child's academic journey and maintain a positive learning environment, we kindly request that you take the necessary steps to improve your child's attendance. If there are specific concerns or circumstances impacting attendance that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help and find solutions that best meet the needs of your child.

It is important to note that this letter serves as a Stage 1 Attendance Warning. If there is no improvement in attendance, it may lead to further interventions, progressing to Stage 2. Our goal is to work together to ensure your child's success in school. We appreciate your immediate attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to support [Student's Name]'s continued academic progress.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at admin@theaxisacademy.org or 01270 304074.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dan Blundred
Headteacher

Attendance concerns 2

Dear [Parent/Carer],

RE: Stage 2 Attendance Warning – [Student's Name]

I hope this letter finds you well. As partners in your child's education at The Axis Academy, our goal is to provide a supportive and enriching learning environment that facilitates the academic success and overall well-being of every student.

It has come to our attention that despite the initial communication regarding attendance concerns, the attendance of your child, [Student's Name], has not shown an improvement and has now dropped below 85%. Regular attendance remains crucial for academic achievement, social development, and overall success in school.

To address this matter, we are initiating Stage 2 of the Attendance Warning process. At this stage, we would like to invite you to participate in an Attendance Review Meeting, which will provide an opportunity to discuss the challenges your child may be facing and explore potential solutions collaboratively.

The Attendance Review Meeting is scheduled for [Date] at [Time] in [Location]. During this meeting, we aim to gain a better understanding of the factors contributing to the decline in attendance and work together to formulate a plan to support your child's consistent attendance.

It is important to emphasise that attendance is a critical factor in academic and wider success. Continued absence from school can significantly impact a student's progress, hindering their ability to engage in learning activities and build important social connections within the school community.

If, following the Attendance Review Meeting there is no significant improvement in attendance, the matter may progress to Stage 3. At Stage 3, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued as per legal regulations. Our primary objective, however, is to collaborate with you to find effective solutions and prevent the need for further intervention.

We understand that each family's situation is unique, and we are committed to working together to support your child's attendance and overall well-being. If you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, please contact us at admin@theaxisacademy.org or 01270 304074 to arrange an alternative time. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure [Student's Name]'s success at Axis.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dan Blundred

Headteacher

Attendance concerns 3

Dear [Parent/Guardian's Name],

RE: Stage 3 Attendance Warning – [Student's Name]

I trust this letter reaches you well. We appreciate your ongoing cooperation and commitment to your child's education at Keystone. As partners in the educational journey, it is crucial that we work together to address any challenges that may impact your child's academic progress.

It is with concern that we note that despite our previous communications and interventions during Stages 1 and 2 of the Attendance Warning process, the attendance of your child, [Student's Name], has not shown the expected improvement and continues to be below the required standard. As a result, we are now entering Stage 3 of the Attendance Warning process.

In Stage 3, a further Attendance Review Meeting will be convened to discuss the ongoing attendance issues. This meeting will be attended by the Education Welfare Officer, who will provide additional support and guidance to help identify and address the underlying factors contributing to the attendance concerns.

The Attendance Review Meeting is scheduled for [Date] at [Time] in [Location]. It is imperative that you attend this meeting to collectively explore strategies to improve your child's attendance. During the meeting, we will discuss the specific challenges your child is facing and collaborate on a plan to support their regular attendance.

It is crucial to reiterate the significance of consistent attendance for academic success and overall well-being. Prolonged absence from school can significantly impact your child's educational progress, social connections, and future opportunities.

If, following the Attendance Review Meeting there is no significant improvement in attendance, it may lead to further legal actions. This could include the issuance of a Fixed Penalty Notice or, in more severe cases, prosecution. Our intention is to work collaboratively with you to prevent the need for such measures.

We understand that circumstances may vary, and we remain committed to supporting your child's success. If you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, please contact us at admin@theaxisacademy.org or 01270 304074 to arrange an alternative time. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure [Student's Name]'s continued success at Axis.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dan Blundred

Headteacher

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Why it is important to attend school regularly?

- To provide your child the best possible start in life
- To achieve consistent academic progress
- To maximise your child's potential
- To encourage the development of friendships and social skills

School attendance is key to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can maximise their potential. The government has set a target of 95% attendance for all students. Whilst we are aware that are context is very different, this is the target that is set across all schools. At Axis, we will always make sure that there is clear narrative around attendance in order to acknowledge improvements that have been made even if attendance is not at this national target.

We want your child to attend school regularly as this supports their learning. If your child is not well or if you have a planned reason why your child cannot attend school, please inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

The Law

Children of compulsory school age must, by law, receive a full-time education.

Each person with day-to-day parental responsibility could be taken to court and fined for each child who is not attending school regularly or who is persistently late.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the local authority to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is failing to ensure their child's attendance at school.

Fines, 'improvement notices' and Penalty Notices
Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised. From Autumn 2024, new "notices to improve" will be introduced, and will be the "final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued".

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court to secure an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

What Are the Costs?
Payment within 28 days of receipt of a Notice is £80 and £160 if paid after this but within 21 days.

From the autumn 2024, only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160.

Extenuating Circumstances

If there are extenuating circumstances resulting in absence and families are engaging with the school and external agencies, families will NOT be fined, and the case will not progress to FPN or following stages.

Progression through each stage will be monitored, assessed, and evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.
From the autumn 2024, only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160.

How close is your child to 100% attendance?

Number of days off school a year	Percentage attendance	Number of lessons missed	Level of concern
0 days	**100%**	**0**	**Perfection**
2 days	**99%**	**10 lessons**	**Excellent**
5 days	**97%**	**25 lessons**	**Good**
10 days	**95%**	**50 lessons**	**Expected**
20 days	**90%**	**100 lessons**	**Concern**
30 days	**85%**	**150 lessons**	**Significant concern**

Unplanned absences

- Please inform the school office before 9.00am on the morning of the first day of absence.
- Keep the school informed if the absence is to continue.
- A written explanation of your child's absence may be required on return to school.

Appendix 3

DfE Summary of updates

Summary of attendance changes from September 2024

1. Fines and 'improvement notices'

Absence fines charged to parents will rise from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid within 21 days. Schools decide whether to issue fines, but councils administer them.

New "notices to improve" will also be the "final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued".

From the autumn 2024, only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160.

2. National fine thresholds

From September, schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. They should "not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices".

The threshold can be met with "any combination of unauthorised absence". For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late.

The period of 10 weeks can also span "different terms or school years". But councils "retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met". This could include where parents "are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events".

3. Councils can use cash for support

Penalty notices are "not a money-making scheme and local authorities should not have income targets", and revenues "must be ringfenced for attendance", guidance says.

However, while councils previously could only use revenues to administer the fines system, they can now use any surplus on "attendance support".

But "any remaining surplus at the end of the year must be paid to the secretary of state."

4. Mandatory daily data sharing

Schools must share daily attendance data with government from September. The "easiest way" to do this is by having an electronic management information system" which DfE can access and allows an automated flow of data. Nearly nine in 10 schools already have this in place.

The "View Your Education Data" dashboard will allow schools to monitor attendance and access "near real time data to understand trends in attendance patterns".

5. Leave for protests

It is up to schools whether they grant absences, but today's updated guidance lists the scenarios this should be restricted to – including study leave or interviews.

The guidance also states that "leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours", which is a new addition to the guidance. You can read more about that here.

6. Flag long-term sick leave with LAs
Schools will have to give councils the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days.

Schools will also be "expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school".

7. Be mindful of mental health
Schools should now be "particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support".

It acknowledges "many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods".

But it is "important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly". Doing so "may serve to help with the underlying issue".

8. Removing pupils from registers
Guidance is now more prescriptive about when pupils should and should not be removed from admissions registers.

It states schools cannot "retrospectively" delete a pupil's name from the admission register or attendance register.

Where pupils have been located but not returned to class, a "joint decision" is needed between schools and LAs, and they can only be removed from a register if there are "no reasonable grounds" to believe the child will return, even with support or enforcement.

9. New restrictions on 'B' codes
Ministers have also shaken up attendance codes, amid concerns they can be misused to send children home.

A new code K will apply to education provision arranged by a council, rather than the school.

And there are greater restrictions on using code B for off-site education arranged by schools, requiring the provision to be "of an educational nature", with their attendance approved by the school.

Schools must record the nature of the education provided and "be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil".

10. Codes C and Y split up
The government has also created additional "C" absence codes. While C will be for "exceptional circumstances", C1 will be for absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad. C2 will be for pupils on part-time timetables.
A new code Q will be for pupils "unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements".
The current code Y will be split up, as follows… Y1: Absence due to transport normally provided not being available Y2: "Widespread disruption to travel" Y3: For when part of a school is closed

Y4: Unexpected whole school closure (different from code # for planned closures) Y5: For pupils in the criminal justice system Y6: Absence due to public health guidance or law Y7: "Any other unavoidable cause"