Connected Futures Partnership

Authoring our story.

Dorothy Gardner Nursery School
Mary Paterson Nursery School
Tachbrook Nursery School
Essendine Primary School
Hallfield Primary School
Oxford Gardens Primary School
Queen's Park Primary School
Queen's Park Family Hub
Bayswater Children's Centre

Attendance Policy

SEPTEMBER 2026

Contribution | Challenge | Inclusivity | Aspiration

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Approved by	Governing Board
Approval date	September 2026
Policy lead	Executive Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champions
Applies to	CPF maintained primary schools; relevant principles apply to nursery schools as set out in section 3
Review due	September 2027, or earlier following material statutory change

1. Purpose and attendance culture

Connected Futures Partnership Federation (CPF) is committed to securing high attendance because regular participation in education supports learning, relationships, wellbeing, safeguarding and future opportunity. Attendance is everyone's business and is approached as a whole-school responsibility.

Our approach is support-first and child-centred: we notice absence early, understand barriers, work with children and families, put appropriate support in place, challenge where attendance does not improve, and use formal intervention where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or is not appropriate.

We maintain high expectations for every pupil while recognising that barriers may be complex. Attendance practice must therefore be rigorous, compassionate, lawful and responsive to individual circumstances.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy reflects the legal framework and statutory guidance in force in England at September 2026, including:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996, including parental duties relating to suitable full-time education;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Working together to improve school attendance, statutory guidance updated July 2026;
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools, updated September 2025;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Equality Act 2010 and duties to make reasonable adjustments;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions statutory guidance; and
- relevant DfE guidance on mental health issues affecting attendance, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision and education for children unable to attend because of health needs.

3. Scope: primary schools and nursery schools

The statutory school-attendance framework applies according to a child's age and the type of provision attended. The compulsory-school-age duties and enforcement provisions in this policy apply where legally relevant.

CPF nursery schools share the Federation's commitment to regular attendance, early identification of barriers, safeguarding response to unexpected absence and strong partnership with families. Nursery settings will maintain appropriate local attendance procedures reflecting the Early Years Foundation Stage, safeguarding requirements, funding/registration arrangements and the fact that children below compulsory school age are not subject to the same parental attendance enforcement framework.

School-specific opening times, register-closing times, absence-reporting contacts and local operational arrangements are not hard-coded into this Federation policy. They are published by each setting and recorded in Appendix 1.

4. Aims

- protect every pupil's entitlement to education and recognise attendance as a safeguarding matter;
- build a positive culture in which pupils feel safe, welcome, known and expected;
- maintain high expectations while understanding and addressing individual barriers;
- identify emerging patterns before absence becomes persistent or severe;
- work constructively with families and partner agencies;
- ensure accurate registers, coding, analysis and statutory returns;
- reduce inequalities in attendance between groups;
- support successful reintegration after absence; and
- use formal intervention fairly, consistently and proportionately when required.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Governing Board

- recognise attendance as a strategic priority and provide support and challenge;
- hold executive and school leaders to account for implementation of this policy;

- review attendance and absence information, including persistent and severe absence and relevant pupil groups;
- consider whether attendance systems are effective, inclusive and appropriately resourced; and
- seek assurance that statutory duties, safeguarding arrangements and local-authority partnership are effective.

5.2 Executive Headteacher and Heads of School / Senior Attendance Champions

- lead, champion and improve attendance;
- establish a strong attendance culture and ensure systems are understood and consistently implemented;
- regularly monitor and evaluate attendance data and the impact of support;
- ensure staff have appropriate training and clear escalation routes;
- ensure families receive early support and appropriate challenge;
- coordinate with safeguarding, SEND, pastoral and curriculum leadership;
- work with local authorities and other partners; and
- authorise or oversee formal attendance action in accordance with law and local arrangements.

5.3 Attendance, welfare and administrative staff

Each school will identify staff responsible for the day-to-day attendance function. Job titles may differ between settings. Local arrangements will ensure that the following functions are covered:

- daily register checks, accurate coding and prompt correction of missing marks;
- first-day response to unexpected or unexplained absence;
- recording and evaluating reasons for absence;
- regular analysis of individual and group patterns;
- communication with pupils and families;
- attendance meetings, support plans and review;
- liaison with safeguarding, SEND, pastoral staff and external agencies;
- reasonable enquiries where whereabouts or education arrangements are unclear; and
- appropriate referral or escalation to the local authority.

5.4 Teachers and wider staff

- complete registers accurately and within local timescales;
- create a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment;
- notice patterns and share concerns promptly;
- reinforce the importance of attendance without shaming pupils or families;
- support reintegration and curriculum catch-up after absence; and
- work with attendance, safeguarding and inclusion colleagues to address barriers.

5.5 Parents and carers

- ensure children of compulsory school age receive suitable full-time education and attend regularly where registered at school;
- ensure their child arrives on time in accordance with the school's published arrangements;
- report absence promptly using the school's published procedure and provide the reason;
- keep contact details and relevant information up to date;
- arrange routine appointments outside school hours wherever reasonably possible and minimise time missed where this is not possible;
- work with the school and relevant services where barriers arise; and
- request any term-time leave in advance wherever practicable and provide information needed for the school to consider the request.

6. Registration and punctuality

Each school will take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session, using the statutory national attendance and absence codes. Each school will publish its opening, start and register-closing times through its local attendance information.

Pupils arriving after the register opens but before it closes will be recorded using the appropriate late code. Arrival after the register closes without an authorised reason will be recorded using the appropriate unauthorised absence code. Persistent lateness will be addressed early through discussion with the pupil and family, support to understand barriers and proportionate escalation where necessary.

7. Responding to absence and safeguarding

Unexpected or unexplained absence will be followed up promptly on the first day. The precise sequence of calls, messages, checks and home visits is set out in each school's local procedure and will reflect the level of risk.

- seek the reason for absence and record the appropriate code;
- use available parent/carer and emergency contacts where necessary;
- consider known safeguarding, medical, SEND, family and contextual information;
- make proportionate welfare enquiries where contact cannot be established or concerns arise;
- involve the DSL and children's social care or police where there is reason to believe a child may be at risk of harm; and
- continue reasonable enquiries and liaise with the relevant local authority where a pupil's whereabouts or future education arrangements become unclear.

There is no fixed number of days that must pass before safeguarding action is taken. Risk, context and known vulnerability determine the response.

8. Children missing education (CME)

Children missing education has a specific statutory meaning: children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. A pupil who remains registered at a CPF school is not, solely because they are persistently or severely absent, a CME child.

However, unexplained or prolonged absence may be a serious safeguarding concern and may indicate that a child is at risk of becoming CME. Schools will immediately make enquiries into unexpected and unexplained absence. Where enquiries indicate that a pupil will no longer attend and suitable education elsewhere has not been evidenced, the school will make the required referral to the child's home local authority CME team and continue reasonable enquiries in partnership with the authority.

9. A support-first graduated response

CPF does not use a rigid percentage-only ladder as a substitute for professional judgement. Attendance percentages are important indicators, but action will also reflect pattern, duration, reason, vulnerability, previous attendance, SEND/medical needs, safeguarding information and family circumstances.

Our common response is:

- **Notice –** identify emerging patterns, changes, lateness and repeated absence early.
- **Understand –** listen to the pupil and family and identify barriers inside and outside school.
- **Support –** agree practical actions, adjustments and help, drawing on wider services where useful.
- **Challenge –** maintain clear expectations, review progress and address non-engagement or avoidable absence.
- **Intensify –** use more formal attendance planning, multi-agency work and local-authority support where absence persists.
- **Formalise –** consider attendance contracts, notices to improve, penalty notices or other legal intervention where statutory criteria are met and support has not worked, has not been engaged with or is not appropriate.

10. Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible school sessions. Severe absence means missing 50% or more. CPF will give particular attention to pupils at risk of reaching these levels and will work jointly with the local authority on severely absent pupils in accordance with statutory guidance.

- use data to identify pupils, groups and patterns early;
- consider safeguarding and vulnerability at every stage;
- meet pupils and families to understand barriers and agree actions;
- coordinate support across education, health, SEND, early help and social care where relevant;
- review the impact of support rather than simply repeating ineffective interventions;
- consider an attendance contract where appropriate; and
- escalate to formal intervention when the statutory framework indicates this is appropriate.

11. SEND, disability, medical and mental-health-related absence

CPF maintains high ambitions for attendance for pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions and mental-health needs while recognising that some pupils face additional barriers. Attendance expectations will be applied lawfully and with appropriate support and reasonable adjustments.

- work closely with the pupil and parents/carers to understand barriers;
- involve the SENCO/Inclusion Lead, DSL and medical/pastoral staff as appropriate;
- review whether reasonable adjustments or changes to provision are required;
- consider whether an EHCP needs early review where significant unmet need is contributing to absence;
- seek appropriate health or specialist advice without requiring unnecessary medical evidence for every episode of illness;
- support reintegration after periods of absence; and
- liaise with the local authority where statutory duties relating to education for children unable to attend because of health needs may be engaged.

12. Reduced or part-time timetables

A reduced or part-time timetable must not be used to manage behaviour informally, avoid suspension or because a school cannot otherwise organise appropriate provision. Any exceptional arrangement will follow current statutory attendance guidance and CPF procedures, be agreed with parents/carers, have a clear purpose, recorded review arrangements and an explicit plan to increase education towards full-time provision as soon as appropriate.

Where a pupil has SEND, an EHCP, health needs or safeguarding involvement, relevant professionals and the local authority will be involved as required. The arrangement will be coded accurately and reviewed frequently. A reduced timetable must never become an open-ended default.

13. Illness and medical appointments

Schools will authorise absence due to illness where satisfied that the pupil is too ill to attend, using the appropriate statutory code. Schools should not routinely request medical evidence for every illness. Evidence may be requested where there are genuine and reasonable doubts about the authenticity of the illness or where it is needed to understand and support a pattern of absence.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where an appointment must take place during the school day, pupils should miss the minimum necessary time and return to school where practicable. Schools may request appropriate evidence of an appointment.

14. Leave of absence during term time

A Headteacher may grant a leave of absence only where the applicable regulations permit it. For leave requested because of exceptional circumstances, each application will be considered individually, taking account of the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background. If leave is granted, the school will determine the period authorised.

There is no CPF blanket entitlement to a fixed number of days of exceptional leave. Family holidays, cheaper travel and convenience are not normally exceptional circumstances. Decisions will be lawful, fair and consistent while allowing genuine individual circumstances to be considered.

Parents/carers should request leave in advance wherever practicable using the school's local process. Taking leave without authorisation may result in unauthorised absence and may contribute to the national threshold for formal intervention.

15. Religious observance and other authorised absence

Absence will be authorised where the statutory attendance framework provides for it, including a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Requests will be considered using the current statutory attendance codes and guidance rather than a blanket Federation allocation of days.

Other circumstances, including approved educational activity, unavoidable causes, transport or access issues and school closure, will be coded in accordance with the statutory regulations and DfE guidance.

16. Attendance contracts, notices to improve and legal intervention

Formal intervention is part of the attendance framework but is not the starting point where support is appropriate. The school and local authority will consider the individual case, support already offered, engagement, equality duties and whether legal action is likely to improve attendance.

16.1 National penalty-notice framework

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Meeting the threshold does not automatically mean a penalty notice must be issued; the circumstances and the appropriateness of support or other intervention must be considered.

At the date of this policy, the national framework provides for a first penalty notice of £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within three years is £160. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within that three-year escalation period; alternative legal action may instead be considered.

Penalty notices are normally administered in partnership with the relevant local authority and its code of conduct. Where statutory amounts or procedures change, the current national and local framework takes precedence over figures reproduced in this policy.

16.2 Notice to improve

Where the national threshold is met, support is appropriate and the family has not engaged sufficiently or attendance has not improved, a notice to improve may be used as a final opportunity to engage before a penalty notice is considered. It will set out the attendance concern, support offered, expected improvement, review period and potential consequences.

17. Promoting attendance without shaming

CPF will promote regular attendance positively, but schools are not required to use identical reward systems. Local approaches may include recognition, class celebrations, communication with families, pupil voice and practical support.

Recognition should be inclusive and carefully designed. Pupils should not be shamed or disadvantaged because of disability, illness or other absence outside their control. Schools should avoid creating incentives that encourage attendance when a child is genuinely too unwell to attend.

18. Reintegration after absence

Returning after prolonged or repeated absence can itself be a barrier. Schools will plan proportionate reintegration with the pupil and family, particularly following health-related absence, anxiety, suspension, safeguarding concerns, change of placement or significant family circumstances.

- a welcoming named adult or check-in;
- support with relationships, routines and missed learning;
- reasonable adjustments or a phased reintegration where lawful and appropriate;

- coordination with SEND, health or external professionals;
- clear review points; and
- attention to the pupil's voice and sense of belonging.

19. Attendance data, monitoring and information sharing

Schools will monitor attendance and absence data regularly at pupil, cohort, group and whole-school level. Leaders will compare patterns over time and, where useful, against local and national information.

- identify pupils and groups requiring additional support;
- monitor persistent and severe absence and pupils at risk of reaching those thresholds;
- analyse attendance of pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and other relevant groups;
- evaluate the impact of interventions and adjust them where needed;
- provide regular information to school and Federation leaders and the Governing Board;
- share required attendance data and returns with the DfE and local authorities; and
- share information lawfully with partner agencies where necessary to safeguard children or improve attendance.

20. Local authority and multi-agency partnership

CPF schools work with the local authority in which the school is located and, where relevant, the child's home local authority. Partnership may include targeted attendance support, early help/family help, SEND, social care, health, housing, CME services and legal attendance intervention.

The school will not delay safeguarding or attendance action simply because another agency is involved. Responsibilities will be clear, actions recorded and progress reviewed.

21. Monitoring and review of this policy

The Governing Board will receive appropriate attendance assurance and review this policy at least annually. School-level operational arrangements may be updated during the year without requiring amendment of the Federation policy, provided they remain consistent with this framework and current statutory requirements.

Appendix 1 – School-Level Attendance Arrangements

The following information is maintained locally so that changes to gates, registration times, contacts or staffing do not require the Federation policy itself to be rewritten. Schools should publish or make these arrangements readily accessible to families.

Setting	Start / arrival arrangements	Register closes	How to report absence	Attendance lead	Local information / website link
Essendine Primary School	[local]	[local]	[local]	[role/name]	[insert link]
Hallfield Primary School	8.40 – 8.55am	9.20am	Call school: 02070874960 Email: attendance@hallfieldschool.org.uk Text message via school comms	Claire Dunnet & Nabila El-Ahmadi	www.hallfieldschool.org.uk
Oxford Gardens Primary School	[local]	[local]	[local]	[role/name]	[insert link]
Queen's Park Primary School	[local]	[local]	[local]	[role/name]	[insert link]

Appendix 2 – CPF Attendance Response Framework

Stage	Purpose	Typical action	Escalation / review
Notice	Identify change or emerging pattern	Data review; teacher/attendance contact; check safeguarding/context	Review promptly; no fixed percentage required
Understand	Establish barriers	Conversation with pupil/family; consider SEND, health, transport, family circumstances	Agree what needs to change and what help is required
Support	Remove or reduce barriers	Attendance support plan; reasonable adjustments; pastoral/SEND/early help input	Set clear outcomes and review date
Challenge	Reinforce expectations where avoidable absence persists	Formal meeting; attendance contract where appropriate; clearer expectations	Review engagement and impact
Intensify	Coordinate persistent/severe absence response	Multi-agency/local-authority work; early EHCP review where relevant; stronger plan	Joint review; consider formal route
Formalise	Use statutory intervention where appropriate	Notice to improve; penalty notice request/issue; other legal intervention	Follow current national/local framework

Appendix 3 – Core Attendance Assurance for Governors and Leaders

- overall attendance and trend over time;
- persistent absence and severe absence;
- attendance of key pupil groups, including SEND and disadvantage;
- patterns of lateness and unauthorised absence;
- effectiveness of support and escalation;
- severely absent pupils and local-authority partnership;
- safeguarding themes arising from absence;
- quality and timeliness of registration/coding;
- reintegration and reduced-timetable oversight; and
- school-level priorities and actions.

Related CPF policies and procedures

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Equality Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy
- Behaviour Policy / Behaviour Principles
- Complaints Policy

- Reduced timetable procedures and local attendance procedures