



Maidstone Grammar School
for Girls

Non sibi sed omnibus

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Governor Policy

2025-2026

History Log

Last Revised	Revised By	Ratified By Governors	Next Review Date	Time Scale
June 2022	A Hart	29.06.22	July 2023	Annual
May 2023	L Morris	24.05.23	July 2024	Annual
September 2024	L Morris		September 2025	Annual
September 2025	L Morris		September 2026	Annual

Contact: Miss L Morris- Assistant Headteacher

A forward-thinking community with a tradition of excellence

Key Staff for 2025-2026

Senior Leader with Strategic Responsibility for Attendance - Miss Lou Morris Assistant Headteacher

Members of staff who contribute to the strategic approach to attendance

Assistant Headteacher - KS3

Assistant Headteacher - KS4

Assistant Headteacher - KS5

Attendance Liaison Officer

Statement of Intent

1. Aims

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls (MGGS) is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. Regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality and the benefits of good attendance
- Maintaining clear systems to promote excellent attendance and punctuality, which is clearly communicated to all school staff, pupils and parents/carers who are all working to agreed routines and standards.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- To put in place an effective and efficient administrative system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support, advice and guidance in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at MGGS.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(August 2024\)](#) and [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) (August 2024). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- Kent County Council's Education [Penalty Notices Code of Conduct](#) Effective from August 2024

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(or children) attends school regularly and arrives on time. Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day
- To ensure their child(ren) arrives at school by 8:40am.
- To be fully supportive of the School with regard to attendance and punctuality.

- Contact the school via Edulink or by emailing attendance@mggs.org to report their child's absence before 8am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence with clear and specific reasons for their child's absence. This applies to all pupils on roll, including Year 12 and 13.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- To support the School and their child(ren) by not requesting leave of absence during term time, and minimising where possible, all other authorised absence i.e. dental appointments, during the school day.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's Head of Year who can be contacted via central@mggs.org

3.2 Pupils

Students are responsible for:

- Aiming for 100% attendance
- Arriving punctually to registration
- Responding clearly when their name is called in registration
- Sitting in silence while registers are taken
- Attending every timetabled session, on time
- Ensuring work missed through absence is caught up as soon as possible, depending on the length of absence but within 2 weeks as a maximum.

3.3 Form Tutor

- To act as role-models by being punctual to every lesson.
- To take the register promptly and accurately for both AM and PM registration periods, using the correct attendance codes (see Appendix 1)
- To ensure registers on SIMS are accurate in terms of any pupils withdrawn for other activities e.g. intervention, rehearsals.
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their Tutor Group e.g. liaising with the Head of Year and Attendance Team, holding informal conversations with individual pupils to address any concerns
- To work in cohesion with the Head of Year to raise the profile of excellent attendance and punctuality with their tutor group.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their tutees after a period of prolonged absence

3.4 Class Teachers

- To act as role-models by being punctual to every lesson.
- To take the register promptly at the beginning of every lesson (within the first 5 minutes)
- To ensure registers on SIMS are accurate in terms of any pupils withdrawn for other activities e.g. intervention, rehearsals.
- To monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality and hold informal conversations with individual pupils to address any concerns
- To raise any individuals' attendance concerns with the Attendance Office, Head of Year and Pastoral Team.

3.5 Heads of Year and Assistant Headteachers

- To raise the profile of excellent attendance through assemblies, and the weekly Tutor Schedule.
- To recognise who have outstanding and significantly improved attendance and punctuality. Attendance recognition and rewards will be done in conjunctions with the whole school recognition and rewards system.
- To monitor and review the attendance of students in their Year group(s), identifying any patterns of groups or individual concerns and taking appropriate action.
- To identify patterns of attendance within a session to ensure students are attending all timetabled lessons.
- To be responsible for regular liaison with the School's Attendance Liaison Officer regarding the poor attendance of students and issues related to poor punctuality.
- To conduct a thorough analysis of termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This will include cohort analysis, days of poor attendance, and where appropriate, subjects which have low attendance.
- To liaise with parents/carers in response to attendance, punctuality and truancy issues, and attend meetings as appropriate, making accurate records and ensuring agreed actions are in place.
- To support tutors to fulfil their duties regarding attendance and punctuality and to take appropriate action when this does not occur
- To ensure that the school's Reward System in relation to attendance and punctuality is used effectively within their Year groups.
- To coordinate the provision of appropriate work for students with an extended period of authorised absence, in liaison with the Attendance Liaison Officer: please note, work should only be provided where there is authorised absence.

3.6 Attendance Team

The Attendance Team consists of an Attendance Liaison Officer and an Attendance Administrator.

The School Attendance Team is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance emails and taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of the school's registration system for attendance and punctuality i.e. processing registers, preparing and distributing attendance data.
- Entering appropriate attendance codes into the register.
- Establishing reasons for absence, to include telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, text messages (Edulink), letters and attendance meetings where necessary.
- Where it has not been possible to contact parents by phone, emails or letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- To keep Heads of Year informed, where appropriate, of any individual attendance issues where further or immediate pastoral support may be required.
- To monitor lesson registers throughout the school day.
- Preparing and distributing attendance data and providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

- To prepare and distribute Attendance letters to parents/carers
- To lead/assist in following-up poor attendance and punctuality e.g. organising attendance meetings with parents/carers and external agencies, ensuring that student targets are agreed and monitored.
- Advising the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices and complete Pathway referrals via the Digital Front Door as appropriate
- To liaise with Kent County Council and make referrals where there is a serious cause for concern e.g. Child Missing in Education (CME).
- To monitor attendance of students on the Child Protection Register and other vulnerable students and alert the Safeguarding Team and Pastoral team of concerns.
- To complete attendance checks on any students in Alternative Provision and to update the School's register accordingly.
- To complete attendance checks on any students on a Managed Move and to update the School's register accordingly.

The attendance team can be contacted via attendance@mggs.org

3.7 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- To ensure that the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality are communicated clearly and regularly to all stakeholders through all available channels
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- To monitor whole-school trends in attendance and punctuality data and identify any patterns in terms of specific groups or individuals e.g., Pupil Premium, SEND.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Lou Morris and can be contacted via lmorris@mggs.org

3.8 School Leadership Team

- To support the work of the Attendance Liaison Officer and Heads of Year to raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality i.e. through the assembly programme and the reward system.
- To use attendance data to work with identified students and their families where attendance is a concern.
- To work with parents to fulfil the agreements set out in the Attendance Contract for students where attendance is a concern.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national level to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Monitor the data and the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented.
- To ensure that school expectations on attendance and punctuality are communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

3.9 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- To provide accurate data on school attendance for Census and Governors.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Deputy/Assistant Headteacher to be able to do so
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

3.10 Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

4. Attendance protocols and procedures

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes (new from September 2024)..

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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.

The school day starts at 08:40 and ends at 15:30.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:40 and will be kept open until 09:10. This is 30 minutes after the register opens each morning. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:20 and will be kept open until 13:50.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parent/carers must contact the school using Edulink or by emailing attendance@mggs.org **before 8am** on each day of absence with clear and specific reasons for their child's absence.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

We will not routinely ask for medical evidence, however where the absence is longer than 5 days, or where further information may be required to better understand the nature of the illness and therefore the needs of the pupil, or where there are genuine doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for some form of medical evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school at least 1 week in advance of the appointment.

All requests for absence should be made to the Attendance Officer via Edulink or attendance@mggs.org

However, we encourage parents 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.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Form Time is 8.40am - 9.00 am and 1.20 pm - 1.25 pm. Students arriving at school after 8.40am must enter school by Student Reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded, along with how many minutes they are late.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed, will be marked as late (Code 'L')
- After the register has closed (at 9:10am) will be marked as absent (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

All students who are late to school once they have signed in via Student Reception are required to collect a punctuality slip. The slip must be given to their form tutor or classroom teacher. The punctuality slip confirms that the student has signed into school via Student Reception. This is a safeguarding requirement to ensure that all students have been recorded as present. Failure to sign into Student Reception and collect a punctuality slip will be marked as a truancy and the student could be issued with a Leadership Detention.

The PM registration is taken at 13:20. Students who are late to afternoon form time at 13.20 pm will be marked as late and issued with an L code. Students who do not attend afternoon form time without a justifiable reason will be marked as absent. The absence will be investigated and students could be issued with a Leadership detention for truancy.

If a student receives three or more lates within a term and without a justifiable reason, then then the following will be applied:

3 x late per term = After school pastoral detention

6 x late per term = After school pastoral detention + letter home

9 x late per term = LT after school Friday detention + letter home

The school will be the sole arbiter of what is a justifiable reason.

Where there are persistent concerns regarding punctuality, this will be referred to the Head of Year for follow up, which may include arranging a meeting with parents and/or placing the student on attendance and punctuality mentoring. If persistent lateness still continues, it is likely to result in a further escalation of sanctions.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Parents/carers of students who are persistently late after the register closes (Code U) may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice warning letter. If punctuality continues to be a concern and a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences (G, O or U code) within a rolling 10 week period, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be requested.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent via Edulink and/or phone call on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may request support from external agencies such as the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Contact the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider whether to undertake a Home Visit, especially on day three if no contact has been made.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's Early Help or Social Worker.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from external agencies as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, referral is made to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Services (PIAS), where an issue of a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below) may be considered.

4.6 Subject Registration, Punctuality & Truancy

The class register must be taken at the start of every lesson. This will ensure that the School is able to monitor any suspected truancy from lessons which is then investigated. If it is found that a student has been truanting, then this will be formally recorded as an unauthorised absence and followed up by the Pastoral team.

Lateness to lessons must be challenged and recorded on the SIMS register. Subject teachers must take appropriate action against students who are late without a valid reason (e.g, logging it in SIMS/Edulink, keep behind after lesson, detention). Students who are late for a genuine reason, must have a signed note from a member of staff, or a late slip from the Attendance Office. Teachers must ensure they enter a timed 'L' into the electronic register should the student be late, so that SIMS records are accurate.

Staff are responsible for updating SIMS if individual or small numbers of students are withdrawn from lessons and advising the Attendance Team in advance of absences of larger groups e.g. school trips, rehearsals etc.

4.7 Reporting to parents

Parents are able to access their child's attendance data through Edulink. In addition, the school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through the Tracking Review reporting process.

Attendance is monitored regularly. If a student's attendance drops below a certain threshold, there is no satisfactory reason for the absence, or a pattern emerges of persistent / intermittent absence, the relevant attendance letter is sent to parents via A Star Attendance. If attendance does not improve or worsens, the parent will receive the next level attendance letter and may be invited into school to discuss the situation and next steps. See below section 4.8 for further details.

4.8 Thresholds of School Action for poor attendance

- Pupils who have below 95% attendance may have an informal conversation from the Form Tutor or Head of Year regarding their attendance and to see if there are any underlying concerns or need for support. Students who have below 93% will receive a Level 1 attendance letter. The school will use its discretion in cases of unavoidable absence for reasons such as prolonged illness.
- Students with attendance below 93% who have any further I, O, U or G code absences will receive a Level 2 attendance letter. Parents will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss ongoing attendance concerns, explore potential barriers to attending school and identify support required.
- Students who have below 90% attendance, who have already received a level 1 and 2 letter and then have any further O, U or G code absences will receive a level 3 letter, which will include a Notice to Improve period.
- If a student's attendance does not improve during this period, they will receive a level 4 letter, which will notify parents that a referral to the local authority for further action will be made. A referral may be considered in the case of unauthorised holiday, even if the overall percentage is not this low, but the threshold for Penalty Notice has been met.

4.9 Illness During the School Day

- Students who become unwell during the school day, where they are too unwell to remain in school, will be looked after in the School's medical room until a parent/carer/other relative is able to collect them in person. This is to ensure student safety and wellbeing. If there are exceptional circumstances that mean a student cannot be collected, arrangements will be made by the Administration and Pastoral team in conjunction with the parent/carer giving full consideration of any safeguarding risks that may arise.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is going to be absent for.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Exceptional Circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

The school will take a student's previous record of attendance into account when considering requests for absence.

It is important to note that only the Headteacher can agree to the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

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

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and at least 1 week before the absence if possible. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If a pupil is over the age of 18, leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with.

If no explanation is received for absence, absences will not be authorised.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent’s religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. If planned absences are not authorised, parents will be notified by letter, which may be sent via email.

Absence during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that **will not** be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Pupil taking part in a protest during school hours
- Family Holidays.

Although each request will be considered individually, Maidstone Grammar School for Girls will not usually authorise leave of absence in term time under the following circumstances:

- At the beginning of school terms
- During examination periods
- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health.

Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Notices to improve

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

Kent schools will issue a notice to improve for parentally-condoned absence and unauthorised absence.

It will not be necessary to issue a notice to improve for term time holidays or leave of absence.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the 20 school day improvement period, detailing to and from dates.
- Details of what sufficient improvement will look like.

Penalty notices

Penalty Notices are issued in Accordance with Kent County Council's [Information on KELS](#) Effective from August 2024.

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Only the headteacher (or a deputy or assistant head authorised by them) can request a penalty notice. Kent County Council is the issuing authority.

Before requesting a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks) with one of, or a combination of the following absence codes:
 - code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday or unauthorised leave of absence.
 - code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies), and
 - code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)
- Whether support is not appropriate (e.g. a term time holiday) or where support has been provided and not engaged with or not worked
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 between 22 and 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At MGGS we use the following strategies to promote and incentivise good attendance:

- Attendance postcards
- Attendance assemblies
- Form time activities
- Gift vouchers
- House points for improved punctuality and attendance

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

A range of strategies are in place to support students and their parents where there are barriers to attending school. These include, but are not limited to:

- Pastoral support through Head of Study, form tutor or Learning Mentor
- Supportive attendance meetings with attendance officer, Heads of Study or Assistant Headteacher
- Reviewing seating plans
- Subject mentoring
- Home visits (where appropriate)
- EBSA mentoring programme
- Support through in school counselling or where appropriate sign posting to external support agencies
- Signposting parents to the Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) service if the child has SEND and they require independent advice.
- Support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL where necessary.
- Reintegration support after extended absence
- Referral to Kent Front Door Service to access support from Early Help
- Referral to Kent Schools Health for CYPMHS
- Temporary personalised time table.
- Referral to Rosewood School
- Referral through Digital Front Door for Formal Attendance meeting with PIAS officer

All support strategies will be regularly reviewed to assess the impact and identify any further support the student may require. Where absence continues despite support the school will work in partnership with the local authority and other relevant agencies such as social services.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students suffering with long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. The school will work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance whilst being mindful of the barriers by putting in additional support where necessary and appropriate to do so. This includes:

- Having sensitive conversations to identify the right support for students with physical or mental health conditions.
- Making reasonable adjustments outlined in the student's Provision Plan.
- EBSA mentoring
- Referral to supportive agencies
- Where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the student's Educational Healthcare Plan (EHCP) is accessed.
- Personalised timetable
- Regular review meetings with parents and external agencies to review and monitor support in place.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

We recognise that returning to school after a period of lengthy or unavoidable absence can be challenging for a young person. A range of supportive strategies are in place to support a pupil returning to school following a period of absence, these include:

- Temporary part-time timetable to support transition back into school
- Pastoral support provided by Head of Study, Form Tutor and Student Support
- Regular check-ins with Learning Mentor and/or SEND and Medical Coordinator
- Access to Student Support
- Implement or review Health Care Plan or Provision Plan
- Time-out card (as appropriate)
- School counselling
- Support from DSL or DDSL as required

8. Attendance monitoring

The school uses SIMS and Edulink to electronically manage attendance data. The school also uses A Star Attendance to monitor attendance and absence data at individual pupil, year group and sub-group level. All attendance letters, home visits and meeting notes are also managed through this programme. The School shares relevant information with the KCC attendance team and the DfE. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) regularly, across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level, via A Star Attendance and the DfE portal.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Ensure attendance data is available to Form Tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including SENCO, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions via referral to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Services Front Door Service, where necessary (see section 5.2, above), but only as a last resort, where Support First has not been effective or been engaged with. The range of sanctions available will be considered, as to what is the most appropriate:
 - Attendance Contracts
 - Education Supervision Orders
 - Parenting Orders
 - Attendance prosecution
 - Penalty Notices

8.5 Home Visits

Home visits may be undertaken by our Attendance and Pastoral teams as a supportive measure to support attendance and remove any barriers to attending school. Under normal circumstances, the school will liaise with parents to arrange a suitable time for the home visits. Under exceptional circumstances only, may it be necessary to undertake an unplanned home visit.

Home visits will normally be carried out after 10 consecutive days of absence (of any absence type)

Welfare visits will normally be carried out after 3 consecutive days of O codes.

However this can and may vary depending on the individual circumstances of the student.

8.6 Children Missing Education

No student should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and PIAS when appropriate.

Where a student is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the student is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (student file) has been requested by another school.

The [DfE guidance](#) and Annex A will be used to determine if a student meets the criteria for removing from the school roll.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually by the Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection policy
- Behaviour Management and Discipline policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs policy

Other policies and information can be found on the school website

Appendix 1: Attendance and Absence Codes

Present in school			
	/\	\ present am, /present pm	attending
	L	late before register closes (no longer	attending

		than 30 min after opens)		
	U	late after register closes		unauthorised absence
		(present elsewhere in school)		not mentioned in guidance
Attending other than school				
	K	Education arranged by LA		attending
	V	educational visit or trip		attending
	P	Participating in a sporting activity		attending
	W	Work experience		attending
	B	Attending any other approved educational activity		attending
	D	Dual rolled		not a possible attendance
Absent- leave of absence				
	C1	Regulated performance or regulated employment abroad		authorised absence
	M	Medical/dentist		authorised absence
	J1	Attending an interview		authorised absence
	S	Study leave for a public exam, needs to be used sparingly		authorised absence
	X	Non compulsory aged student not required to attend school		not a possible attendance
	C2	Leave of absence for compulsory aged student on a temporary part time timetable		?
	C	Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances		authorised absence
Absent- other authorised reasons				
	T	Traveller, no fixed abode		authorised absence
	R	Religious observance		authorised absence
	I	Illness (not medical or dentist)		authorised absence

	E	Suspended or permanent exclusion		authorised absence
Absent- unable to attend to unavoidable cause				
	Q	LA failed to provide access arrangements to attend		not a possible attendance
	Y1	Transport normally provided not available		not a possible attendance
	Y2	Widespread disruption to travel, local, national emergency		not a possible attendance
	Y3	Part of school closes, and cannot take all students		not a possible attendance
	Y4	Whole school unexpectedly closed		not a possible attendance
	Y5	Student in criminal justice detention		not a possible attendance
	Y6	Public health guidance		not a possible attendance
	Y7	Any other unavoidable cause		not a possible attendance
Absent- unauthorised				
	G	Holiday, not granted by the school		unauthorised absence
	N	Absence not yet established		unauthorised absence
	O	No reason for absence, school not authorising absence		unauthorised absence
	U	Late after registers close		unauthorised absence

Internal codes only (for lessons only, not AM/PM reg)				
	1	Student Support		
	2	Medical Room		
	3	Examination		
	4	Meeting/Appointment in school		
	5	Music lesson		
	6	Extra-curricular/practice in school		

Key:

Green – does not affect attendance figure

Red – absent (authorised or unauthorised), decreases attendance figure

Purple – decreases number of sessions so may decrease attendance figure due to proportion of absence increasing