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| Date | Changes/ Updates |
|------|------------------|
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| 31/7/2025                    | <p><b>Summary: What Primary Schools in England Need to Know</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th><th>Key Requirement</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Statutory Guidance</td><td>Mandatory application from 19 August 2024</td></tr> <tr> <td>Data Sharing</td><td>Daily attendance registers shared with DfE, LAs, trusts</td></tr> <tr> <td>Registers</td><td>Electronic, kept for 6 years, can't delete retrospectively</td></tr> <tr> <td>Absence Codes</td><td>Use updated national codes; clarified in guidance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Penalty Notices</td><td>Consider at 10 sessions absence; fines increased and capped</td></tr> <tr> <td>Contracts &amp; Roles</td><td>Use "attendance contracts"; appoint Senior Attendance Champion</td></tr> <tr> <td>Support &amp; Safeguarding</td><td>Target persistent/severe absence; escalate to social care if needed</td></tr> <tr> <td>Attendance Hubs &amp; Ambassador</td><td>Hub expansion and national champion to support schools</td></tr> <tr> <td>LA Early Support</td><td>Consistent prevention-focused support expected</td></tr> </tbody> </table>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Area | Key Requirement | Statutory Guidance | Mandatory application from 19 August 2024 | Data Sharing | Daily attendance registers shared with DfE, LAs, trusts | Registers | Electronic, kept for 6 years, can't delete retrospectively | Absence Codes | Use updated national codes; clarified in guidance | Penalty Notices | Consider at 10 sessions absence; fines increased and capped | Contracts & Roles | Use "attendance contracts"; appoint Senior Attendance Champion | Support & Safeguarding | Target persistent/severe absence; escalate to social care if needed | Attendance Hubs & Ambassador | Hub expansion and national champion to support schools | LA Early Support | Consistent prevention-focused support expected |
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| Contracts & Roles            | Use "attendance contracts"; appoint Senior Attendance Champion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |      |                 |                    |                                           |              |                                                         |           |                                                            |               |                                                   |                 |                                                             |                   |                                                                |                        |                                                                     |                              |                                                        |                  |                                                |
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| LA Early Support             | Consistent prevention-focused support expected                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |      |                 |                    |                                           |              |                                                         |           |                                                            |               |                                                   |                 |                                                             |                   |                                                                |                        |                                                                     |                              |                                                        |                  |                                                |
| 15/9/2026                    | <p><b>Key Changes in Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026 vs 2024</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> This briefing summarises the principal changes introduced in the July 2026 edition and highlights implications for schools, academy trusts and local authorities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>OVERVIEW</b><br/>The 2026 update is primarily a clarification and consistency update rather than a major policy reform.</li> <li><b>KEY CHANGES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Registers: Schools must take registers at the same time for all pupils in both morning and afternoon sessions.</li> <li>Attendance Analysis: Stronger expectations on benchmarking attendance data and identifying priority cohorts, including young carers.</li> <li>Illness and Medical Evidence: Clearer guidance on authorising illness absence and when medical evidence may be requested.</li> <li>Remote Education: Reinforces that remote education should only be used as a last resort and as part of a reintegration plan.</li> <li>Leave of Absence: Schools must consider requests individually and avoid blanket policies that automatically grant leave.</li> <li>Roles and System Leadership: Greater emphasis on local authority strategic leadership and partnership working.</li> <li>Attendance Codes: Additional clarification on dual registration, flexi-schooling, no fixed abode arrangements and correct use of codes including Q, D, Y6 and U.</li> <li>Legal and Technical Matters: Clarifications on admissions register errors, reasonable distance provisions and reasonable adjustments.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |      |                 |                    |                                           |              |                                                         |           |                                                            |               |                                                   |                 |                                                             |                   |                                                                |                        |                                                                     |                              |                                                        |                  |                                                |

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|  | <p><b>3. IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>Schools should review attendance policies, registration procedures, staff training, leave of absence processes and attendance monitoring arrangements. Local authorities should ensure attendance strategies reflect the strengthened focus on partnership working and strategic leadership.</p> <p><b>4. HEADLINE MESSAGE</b></p> <p>The 2026 guidance does not fundamentally change attendance policy but <b>strengthens consistency of practice</b>. The most significant operational change is the requirement to take registers at the same time for all pupils, alongside <b>clearer expectations</b> regarding illness absence, attendance monitoring, leave of absence decisions, attendance codes and remote education.</p> <p><i>Sources: DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026); GOV.UK update notes.</i></p> |
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## 1. Introduction – our aims

### 1.1 Our approach to improving attendance.

At APSOL, we believe children will get a well-rounded education if they attend school regularly, by participating in all the educational experiences and the broad curriculum offered at APSOL. We work in partnership with our families so that everyone places a high value in the education being provided including, academic, wellbeing, emotional and social.

### 1.2 Our attendance objectives

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

**Promote good attendance** by establishing a culture in which regular attendance is valued, encouraged and recognised across the school community.

**Reduce absence**, including persistent and severe absence, through early identification, appropriate intervention and targeted support for pupils and families.

**Ensure every pupil has access to their full-time education entitlement** by removing barriers to attendance and responding promptly when attendance concerns arise.

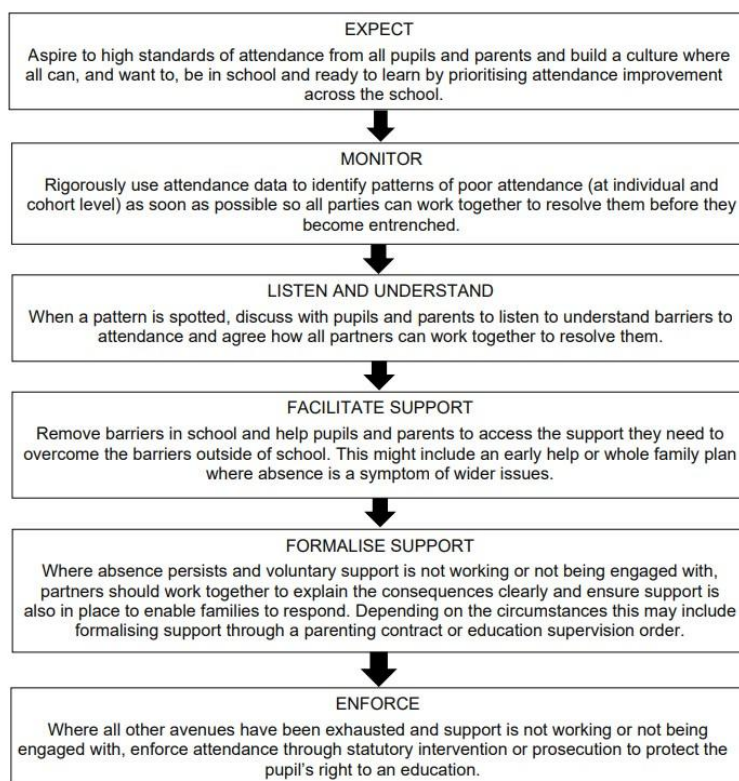
**Identify and address patterns of absence at an early stage**, using attendance data to monitor attendance, identify emerging concerns and implement appropriate support.

**Work in partnership with families** to build strong, supportive relationships and ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate help to improve attendance.

**Promote good punctuality** by encouraging pupils to arrive at school and lessons on time and addressing persistent lateness promptly.

**Ensure attendance procedures are consistently implemented** in line with current statutory guidance, including *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* and the school's attendance policy and procedures.

Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below:



## **2. Key members of staff**

### **2.1 The Governing Board: Trustee committee for safeguarding and attendance**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- 

### **2.2. The headteacher : Marta Correia-Abbott**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- 

### **2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance: Nicola Fleming, SENCO/Inclusion lead**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Andrew Findlater and Oscar Fielder and can be contacted via email: [andrew.findlater@angloportugueseschool.org](mailto:andrew.findlater@angloportugueseschool.org)/  
[oscar.fielder@angloportugueseschool.org](mailto:oscar.fielder@angloportugueseschool.org)

### **2.4 The attendance officer: Susan Spinola, school office**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed penalty notices.
- Take calls/emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer messages from parents to the Class teacher/ Head in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

The attendance officer is Susan Spinola and can be contacted via telephone number 0203 417 0905 or [info@angloportugueseschool.org](mailto:info@angloportugueseschool.org)

## **2.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office: registers must be done at 9am and 1pm daily.

## **2.6 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and keep the school up to date with child's wellbeing on each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where these need to take place during the school day, parents provide the school office with a medical notification email/letter.

## **2.7 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

## **3. Expectations and daily routines**

### **3.1 What we mean by 'good' attendance**

*Our school's attendance target is 96%*

|         |                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 98-100% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent – children are accessing all learning opportunities</li> </ul>                               |
| 96-97%  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good – Very few learning opportunities are missed</li> </ul>                                           |
| 94-95%  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of underachievement</li> <li>• Up to 10 schools absent in an academic year</li> </ul>             |
| 92-93%  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk of underachievement</li> <li>• Up to 15 school days absent in the academic year</li> </ul>   |
| 90-91%  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe risk of underachievement</li> <li>• Up to 19 school days absent in the academic year</li> </ul> |
| <90%    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme risk of underachievement</li> <li>• Upwards of 22 days absent in the academic year</li> </ul>  |

### 3.2 Why regular attendance is important

Pupils who attend regularly (every day) are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes, are safer from risks in the community, such as exploitation and crime, as well as successfully transitioning from primary to secondary school, secondary school to further education, and the world of work.

### 3.3 Our daily processes

- \* We have a soft start at 8:45am, all pupils registered at 9.00am
  - **8:45am:** Soft start/opening of school — pupils can arrive and go to their classrooms.
  - **9:00am:** Formal start of the school day and **morning registration**.
  - **9:00–9:10am:** Registration period.
  - **9:10am:** Morning register closes.
  - Arrival **after 9:10am** should be recorded as **late after the register has closed (U code)**, unless another absence code applies.

Apsol follows Wandsworth guidance which is the same as DfE guidance to all schools, therefore, the register should normally be completed and **closed within 30 minutes of the start of the morning session**.

At APSOL, the register remains open until **9:15am** to allow for any late-arriving pupils to be marked appropriately (L-coded) before being recorded as late after the register has closed (U-coded).

- \* We take an afternoon register at 1:00pm (or immediately after the children's lunch break)
- \* Parents should call the school office or send an email if they are running late, with a reason.
- \* Parents should call the office before 9am on the day of absence, to inform the school about an unexpected absence.

### 3.4 First day of absence school procedures

- **Take the register accurately** at the start of the morning session.
- **Identify all unexplained absences** promptly.

- Check whether a parent/carer has already reported the absence.
- If there is **no explanation**, contact the parent/carer the same day—ideally by phone, with a text/email follow-up if appropriate.
- Record the reason given and whether the absence is authorised.
- If there are **safeguarding concerns**, follow the school's safeguarding procedure immediately rather than waiting for the next day.
- If the child cannot be accounted for and the school has concerns about their whereabouts, escalate according to the school's safeguarding/attendance procedures.

### 3.4.1 Second day of absence

- If the child is still absent and there has been **no satisfactory contact**, make further attempts to contact the parent/carer using the school's available contact details.
- Consider contacting **all listed emergency contacts** if appropriate.
- Review the pupil's attendance history and any known safeguarding, SEND, medical or family circumstances.
- If the absence remains unexplained, **escalate to the designated attendance lead/senior leader** and consider a welfare/home visit in line with the school's policy and local procedures.
- Continue recording every contact attempt and outcome.
- Where the circumstances indicate a safeguarding concern, refer immediately to the **DSL** rather than treating it simply as an attendance issue.

## 4. How we promote and incentivise regular attendance

We will:

- **Celebrate good attendance** regularly through class and whole-school recognition.
- Recognise pupils who demonstrate **improved attendance**, as well as those who maintain consistently good attendance. This ensures that pupils who may have experienced previous attendance difficulties are also encouraged and rewarded for positive progress.
- Use **class-based and individual attendance rewards**, such as certificates, recognition in assemblies, class rewards, praise from staff and opportunities to receive special recognition.
- Celebrate attendance milestones where appropriate, while avoiding an approach that places undue pressure on pupils or families where absence is due to genuine illness or other unavoidable circumstances.
- Encourage a **positive culture around attendance**, ensuring that pupils understand that coming to school every day, wherever possible, helps them to learn, build friendships and participate fully in school life.
- Ensure that rewards are **not used to shame or embarrass pupils** who have difficulties with attendance.
- Communicate attendance successes with parents and carers where appropriate, reinforcing the importance of regular attendance and encouraging continued engagement with school.
- Review the effectiveness of our rewards and recognition systems regularly to ensure that they are having a positive impact on attendance and are equitable for all pupils.

Our approach is based on **encouragement, recognition and support**, rather than punishment. Where attendance is a concern, rewards will be used alongside appropriate early support and intervention to understand and address the barriers preventing regular attendance.

We have a robust system to provide useful data at cohort, to give us an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence, and patterns amongst more vulnerable groups such as:

- Children who have a social worker, including looked after children
- Young carers
- Children who are eligible for free school meals
- Children who speak English as a second language
- Children who have special educational needs and disabilities

## **5. Tailored support**

### **5.1 Our approach**

We monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that interventions are delivered quickly to address absence (e.g. register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking).

We celebrate progress and achievements in improving attendance with certificates, good news emails to parents.

We use attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers.

We create action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families, for example children's social care and early help services.

Where in-house interventions fail to address issues, we identify the reasons why and where appropriate, change or adjust intervention.

We follow the local authority's Code of Conduct and procedures and make referrals for statutory interventions when voluntary interventions have not resulted in improved attendance in-line with our expectations – see section 6.5

## **6. Formalised support**

### **6.1 school attendance panels/ inclusion panels and parenting contracts**

Meetings are organised with families to discuss attendance and parenting contracts are issued.

School attendance panels (SAPs) are meetings which parents are invited to discuss attendance concerns as part of an early intervention approach to improving attendance.

### **6.2 Education supervision orders**

Where a voluntary early help plan, or voluntary parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) may alternatively provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution.

ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping, and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

The supervisor of an ESO will usually be a professional already working closely with the family – or member of school staff.

### 6.3 The role of social care

We recognise that children who have, or have had, a social worker may face additional barriers to regular school attendance. We will work closely with children's social care, the Virtual School and other relevant professionals to promote regular attendance and ensure that attendance concerns are considered alongside the child's wider wellbeing, safeguarding and educational needs.

In line with the Department for Education guidance '**Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements**', we recognise that regular attendance is an important protective factor and that being in school supports children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Where a pupil has a social worker, we will:

- monitor their attendance and punctuality closely and identify emerging patterns of absence at an early stage;
- share relevant attendance information with the child's social worker, particularly where there are unexplained, persistent or severe absences;
- ensure that attendance is considered as part of **Child in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) planning**, where appropriate;
- work collaboratively with social workers, the Virtual School, the local authority attendance team and other professionals to understand and address the barriers affecting attendance;
- contribute relevant attendance information to multi-agency meetings and reviews and ensure that agreed actions are followed up;
- consider whether a change or deterioration in attendance may indicate a wider safeguarding or welfare concern and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where appropriate;
- ensure that the child's voice is considered when identifying barriers to attendance and agreeing support;

- provide appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where needed, taking account of the child's individual circumstances, SEND, health, family circumstances and any safeguarding concerns;
- maintain regular communication with the child's social worker and other professionals involved with the child, subject to appropriate information-sharing arrangements.

Where attendance is causing concern, the school will seek to understand the underlying reasons rather than viewing absence solely as an attendance issue. Where appropriate, attendance support will form part of a wider multi-agency plan designed to improve the child's safety, wellbeing, engagement and educational outcomes.

Our approach will be supportive, child-centred and focused on removing barriers to attendance. Where voluntary support is not successful or is not appropriate, the school will work with the local authority and relevant professionals in accordance with the statutory **Working together to improve school attendance** guidance.

#### 6.4 Unauthorised leave

The school recognises that regular attendance is essential to pupils' education, wellbeing and progress. In accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working together to improve school attendance**, pupils should attend school every day that they are required to do so, unless their absence has been authorised by the school.

Parents and carers should not normally take their child out of school during term time. **Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances**, at the discretion of the Headteacher or a member of staff with delegated authority. Each request will be considered individually, taking account of the circumstances presented and the pupil's overall attendance record.

Requests for leave during term time must be made **in advance and in writing**, using the school's Leave of Absence Request Form. Parents/carers should provide full details of the reason for the request and the dates for which leave is being requested.

The school will consider:

- the reason for the proposed absence and whether it amounts to exceptional circumstances;
- the impact that the absence may have on the pupil's education and progress;
- the length of the proposed absence;
- the pupil's previous attendance and punctuality;
- any previous periods of unauthorised leave;
- the pupil's individual circumstances, including any relevant safeguarding, medical, SEND or family circumstances.

A request for a family holiday during term time will **not normally be considered an exceptional circumstance** and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised if the leave is taken without the Headteacher's approval.

Where a request for leave is refused and the pupil is subsequently absent, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised leave** in accordance with the statutory attendance codes.

The school will inform parents/carers in writing of the outcome of a leave request. Where leave is unauthorised, parents/carers will be advised of the potential consequences, including the possibility of a **Penalty Notice** being requested from the Local Authority.

### **6.5 Penalty Notices and local authority code of conduct**

The point at which penalty notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g unauthorised holiday in term-time), not successful or not engaged with.

Legal action will always be a last resort and the school and other professionals working with families should explore all avenues to engage with parents and maximise opportunities for support available to meet a family's needs first.

Information about the council's code of conduct on penalty notices can be found here:

[Penalty Notice Leaflet](#)

[Wandsworth Code Of Conduct](#)

### **Useful websites**

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[School attendance and absence - childlawadvice.org.uk](#)

[Absence from school | Contact](#)

[Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Behaviour and attendance | Parentkind](#)