



GEORGE ABBOT SCHOOL

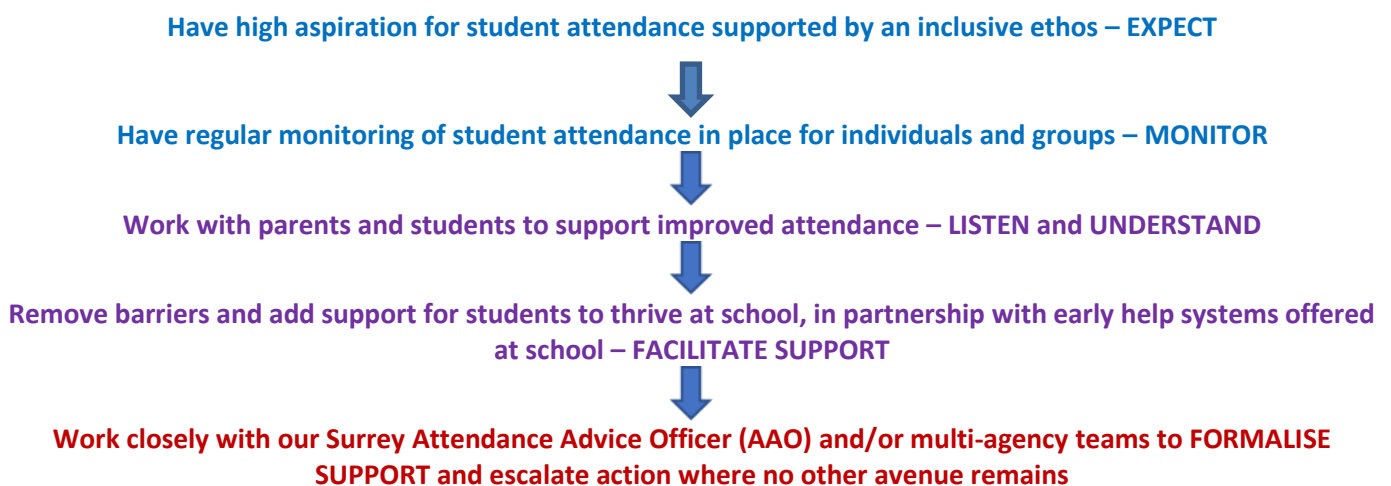
Policy Title:	Attendance Strategy and Learning Partners Academy Trust Attendance Policy	
Author:	Attendance Lead	
Date of most recent review:	January 2024	
Date of next review:	January 2025	
School Mission Statement:	Academic excellence within a strong community of equality and respect, where potential and opportunity are realised.	

George Abbot School Attendance Strategy

We know that regular attendance is essential for students to feel a sense of belonging to the school community and to achieve the best outcomes they are capable of. Fostering a culture of belonging involves creating a welcoming environment, promoting inclusivity, and recognising diverse needs. Attendance and punctuality is a key strategic priority for our school and is a part of our culture development objectives. At George Abbot we work tirelessly to ensure that all members of the school community feel valued and experience a true sense of belonging.

Our strategy is underpinned by the DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance', operational from September 2022. This document emphasises that 'improving attendance is everyone's business.' At George Abbot, we work together to teach that attendance is fundamental to personal success. DfE guidance also emphasises that 'successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.' At George Abbot, we know that our ethos and culture play fundamental parts in ensuring that our students enjoy school, want to attend school and feel able to thrive at school, in an environment of respect. We have a significant emphasis on the role of the Form Tutor welcoming students daily, spotting patterns and liaising with families. We understand that effective safeguarding includes strong attendance to school. The curriculum is designed to be engaging, challenging and support the holistic development of young people. Through the curriculum and extracurricular activities, a sense of belonging and connectedness is developed.

We use the following **strategy stages** to support strong attendance for every child:



This strategy has three clear phases: **Prevention, early intervention, targeted**

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overstated. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to an outstanding education and securing this for our students is high priority. By failing to attend school regularly, students negatively affect their educational achievement and progress and their safeguarding is compromised. We know that when students attend George Abbot, they make very strong progress in relation to the national progress outcomes. We also know, that in the exceptional circumstances where attendance falls to below 90%, their progress and academic outcomes reduce as a direct consequence. Students who do not attend school regularly are the group of young people who achieve least well at our school.

Attendance Strategy Staffing Structure:

- Attendance Officers – day to day attendance systems including off site attendance provision, ensuring data is robust
- Classroom teachers – creating a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment
- Form Tutor – daily warm welcome, promotion of strong attendance, rewarding great attendance, noticing patterns, liaising with parents and supporting students returning to school following absence
- Non-Teaching Head of Year – using data to monitor and support early action for students at risk of poor attendance, extending the work of the Form Tutor where patterns emerge and leading the partnership between school and home
- Year Group Inclusion Manager – rigorous monitoring of data, working with Head of Year and Deputy Headteacher where student attendance is poor
- Deputy Headteacher: Attendance – working closely with our Surrey AAO, escalating action and monitoring impact, discussing enforcement options
- Headteacher – authorising any requests for absence, noticing patterns, liaising with the Deputy Headteacher and Surrey AAO, regularly scrutinising data, ensuring all on roll/off roll processes are compliant and effectively communicated to relevant partners.

Actions to support our attendance strategy include:

Prevention	Early Intervention	Targeted
School culture	HSLW home visit	Surrey AAO referral
Regular attendance data shared with parents, staff and external agencies	Haven provision (EBSNA base)	School Attendance Meeting
Tutor support through building positive relationships	SEN intervention/support	SLT lead adult
Subject teacher support	Counsellor referral	Education supervision or parenting order
Head of Year support	Summer transition visits	Formal Penalty Notice Warning Meeting
Peer mentor assigned	Attendance Action plan	
PP Advocate work with family	School Attendance Panel Meeting	
Rewards and celebration		
Regular information for families		
HSLW home visit		

Absence prevention strategies - areas to consider:

- Behaviour of peers
- Relationship with Teachers/peers
- Meaningful success inside and outside of classroom
- Misconceptions
- Historical experiences
- Social Isolation

- Geographical factors
- Mental/Physical health
- Systemic/attitudinal
- Inclusivity

Monitoring of Attendance:

Internal meetings within year group teams will take place fortnightly with a view to monitor and review the following:

- Students with less than 90% attendance – this level of absence is defined as persistent absence
- Students with broken weeks
- Vulnerable students
- Open cases

Year group teams will also work closely with our allocated Surrey Attendance Advice Officer as and when students have met the required threshold.

Additionally, every week a list of students with less than 60% over the last three weeks is reviewed to ensure that students with previously good attendance are not overlooked. PP leads/ SEN team monitor the attendance of students within these cohorts and Inclusion Managers oversee their year group cases.

The Attendance Advice Officer can take legal action under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children attend school. This may result in a penalty notice fine, a parenting order or an Education Supervision Order.

Flow Chart of processes

Prevention of absence

A positive school culture plays a pivotal role in fostering regular attendance among students. Through our work on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, students feel a sense of belonging and connection. This, in turn, cultivates a desire to actively participate in the educational community. The supportive relationships between students, teachers, and staff creates a safety net, making students more likely to attend consistently. Additionally, our culture values and recognises individual achievements and contributions boosts student wellbeing, encouraging them to be present and engaged. Through our collective effort to celebrate diversity, promote respect, and create a vibrant learning atmosphere, our community significantly contributes to positive attendance patterns. We will consider all areas noted in our Absence Prevention Plan (summary below) when planning support for prevention of absence.

Prevention of further absence

(Threshold up to 10 sessions / 5days)

Attendance Team (Tutor / Head of Year / Pupil Premium Advocate) contact home –
(cause for concern and/or medical evidence)

Ensure that Parent / Carer can access attendance information (Bromcom)

‘Notice to Improve’ letter sent (threshold = 8 sessions missed)

2 Week Improvement window

If no improvement shown – HSLW Deployed for home visit.

Proceed to **SAP (School Attendance Panel)**.

If no improvement and threshold met – Formal Penalty Notice issued.



Early Intervention

(Threshold 20 sessions / 10 days)

Head of Year / Inclusion Manager / SENCo contact home to arrange **SAP Meeting**. Meeting to include HOY, SLT Attendance Practitioner, Parents/Carers and Student.

Construct Attendance Plan, considering all areas noted in our absence prevention strategies plan (summary below).

Consider Haven provision (Emotional Based School Non Attendance - EBSNA), Home School Link Worker, Special Educational Needs, Counsellor.



2 Week Improvement window

If no improvement shown – HSLW Deployed for 2nd home visit.

Proceed to **SAM (School Attendance Meeting)**.

If no improvement and threshold met – Formal Penalty Notice issued.



Monitor for two weeks – **Formal Penalty Notice review meeting**.

Improvement = Monitor under **FPN** review process

No Improvement = refer to **Attendance Advice Officer (AAO)** for interview under caution.

SCC Interview Under Caution with AAO.



Two week improvement window

SCC Prosecution to be considered – Max fine £2500

Penalty Notices

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.
3. Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
4. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
5. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative

education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice to Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

- 1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.*
- 2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.*
- 3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.*

Registration Procedures:

We work hard to support parents in their legal duty to ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually. By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register.

Student attendance is based on attendance to 380 sessions over the school year, this comprises of AM and PM registration. Additionally, the register is taken at the start of every lesson and should be completed within the first 10 minutes. For years 12-13, it is the individual lesson attendance which is used to track a student's attendance.

For students in Years 7-11, the AM register closes 30 minutes after the start of registration – at 09.00. Students who arrive after this time are marked absent for that session. Students who are not present at registration or period 1 are "truancy called". This is an automatic text message which goes to the parent alerting them that the student is not in school. Vulnerable students are prioritised in the checking process.

At George Abbot, the expectation is that if a student is absent, parents/carers must contact the school either by email or telephone by 09.00 at the latest. The Attendance Officers will mark these students as absent and record the reason. Parents may request exceptional absence leave – these applications are considered case by case by the Headteacher and leave is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. Medical or dental appointments will be authorised, as will absence for religious observance

If a student has registered but then is absent from lessons, our internal 'Child missing during the school day' process is followed.

Child Missing During the School Day:

A child "missing" in the context of this process is a child missing from the school site having received a 'present attendance mark' and who cannot subsequently be located.

Surrey Police will always consider a child to be missing if their whereabouts cannot be established.

George Abbot School Process

- Class register is marked 10 minutes into the start of the lesson.
- Student is marked absent in lesson.
- Check is made to ensure that the student was previously recorded as present.
- Alert sent via email to callout.

- On call member of staff checks the current lesson to ensure the register has been taken accurately and the student is not present.
- On call member of staff checks previous lesson to confirm student was present.
- CCTV is checked to see if the student left the school site via Elmslie or Raynham gates.
- Ensure that the child is not on the school premises by searching relevant areas such as toilets, changing rooms, study spaces, music practice rooms etc.
- On call member of staff / HOY checks with friends to attempt to determine where the child has gone or currently is located.
- Contact and inform parents of missing episode and check whether child has returned home from school.
- If the student cannot be located then the police are contacted (see below for information to be shared).
- If the child is found during these enquiries, then the DSL will ensure that the absence is recorded internally to inform safeguarding plans.

However, if there is any cause to believe that the child may have been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, has a history of missing episodes or is known to be at risk of exploitation, then the police must be informed immediately on 999.

Any reporting to the police will be made by a senior member of school staff – typically this would be the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of the safeguarding team such as an Inclusion Manager.

If the child cannot be found the school should contact police, providing as much information as possible, including;

- Name / DOB / Any Alias
- Previous Addresses
- Phone numbers / Email / Social Media details
- Family Details (Names / Addresses etc)
- Contact details for any key worker / Social Worker
- Details of any vulnerability (i.e. Learning Disabilities/ Mental Health / Physical injury or illness / Medication)
- Details of any current concern / issue for the child
- Circumstances of the disappearance

The school must inform Police of any changes to this information, particularly where this may alter the level of risk.

Appendix 1 – Surrey Education Services

If you consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to your request, please let the school have full details. Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis.

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school (absence without the agreement of the school or not covered by a medical note) and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances:-

1. Pupils identified by police and Attendance Advice Officers (formerly Education Welfare Officers) engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more).
 - **Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 01 September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**
 - **The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**
 - In such cases the Headteacher/Governing Body must decide whether there are exceptional circumstances. They may request that Surrey County Council issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised.
 - Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. Finally, the issuing of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance.

This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 10 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you act without delay to secure their regular attendance.

If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement in your child's attendance, please contact your child's school or the Attendance Advice Officer.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours.

This duty applies to the ***first five days of each exclusion***. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice and Consequences for repeat unauthorised absences

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children in a rolling 3 year period since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Advice and support is available from an Attendance Advice Officer by contacting Surrey Attendance Service as follows:-

North West - Tel: 01483 518130 South West - Tel: 01483 517179
North East - Tel: 01372 833588 South East - Tel: 01737 737777