



# Attendance Policy

## 26/27

|                                        |                                                           |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Date Approved by The Board of Trustees | 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2026                           |
| Effective Period                       | 1 <sup>st</sup> September 26 – 31 <sup>st</sup> August 27 |
| Reviewer                               | J McColl/L Orton                                          |
| Date of Review                         | Sept 26                                                   |
| Next Review Due                        | Sept 27                                                   |

## **HMFA Federation Schools Registration Times**

### **Kings Caple Primary Academy**

School start time: 8.45 am

School end time: 3.15 pm

### **Llangrove CE Academy**

School start time: 8.45 am

School end time: 3.15 pm

### **Lord Scudamore Academy**

School start time: 8.45 am

School end time: 3.15 pm

### **Marden Primary Academy**

School start time: 8.45 am

School end time: 3.15 pm

### **Pencombe CE School**

School start time: 8.45 am

School end time: 3.15 pm

### **St Weonards Primary School**

School start time: 8.45 am

School end time: 3.15 pm

### **Sutton Primary Academy**

School start time: 8.45 am

School end time: 3.15 pm

**Registers close at 9.15am**

## **1.Core principles**

### **The importance of school attendance**

HMFA is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all students. The federation sincerely believes that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the federation will do as much as it can to ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any issues, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Student performance and well-being go hand in hand. Students can't learn if they don't feel safe or if ill health problems are allowed to create barriers.

The law states that parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure that children within their care attend school regularly. Schools and the local authority have a duty to ensure that poor school attendance is dealt with swiftly.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance. This will be achieved by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation. Effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been rewritten following the publication of new Department for Education guidance published in February 2024. The guidance became statutory in September 2024.

Please read this policy along with the guidance at the end of the policy which has been taken from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2026.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2026.pdf)

School, Governors and Parents/Carers should also consider the following document:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
  - any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
  - any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).
- 
- **Persistent** absence refers to pupils who miss 10% or more of school
  - **Severe** absence refers to pupils who miss 50% or more of school.

### **3.Roles and responsibilities**

**HMFA Board of Trustees** - Ensures that the attendance policy is updated annually and monitored through reports to the board.

**Local Committees/Governing Bodies** – are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher/Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher/Head of School in each of the federation schools is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in their school. The CEO has strategic oversight for the whole federation.

#### **The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:**

- Making good attendance a central part of our school's vision, values and ethos.
- Account for attendance in school improvement priorities and regularly reviewing our approach to improving attendance.
- Ensure there is a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for improving attendance.(Attendance Champion)
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents.
- Promote and visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance.
- Recognising that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.
- 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **The School Attendance Officer/Attendance Champion**

- Monitors attendance data across the schools and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher/Head of Schools
- Works with the LA School Attendance Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Liaise with the Headteacher/Head of School and issues fixed-penalty notices requests to the local authority

**Class teachers** are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

#### **Admin staff**

Admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record them on the school system. They will also follow up on any unreported absences by contacting the parent.

#### **Parents/carers are expected to ensure that:**

- their children attend school regularly and punctually;
- pupils report to the school office if they are late;

- they support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- they contact school on every day of absence or give the duration of the absence if known in advance;
- their children arrive at school on time and are collected on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day; and
- they work in partnership with the school, for example, by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities; and
- contact the school immediately if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives.

#### **4. Recording attendance**

We will keep an 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 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 A for the DfE attendance codes.**

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

#### **5. Implementation**

This policy received the full agreement of the Board of Trustees September 2026

#### **6. Procedures**

The Federation's schools' registration times are listed on pages 2 of this document. Pupils arriving after registration time will be recorded as L for late before the register closes and must enter school via the main reception area, where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The class registers will remain open until their school's listed time and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as U for late after the register

closed. This is considered an unauthorised absence. Parents or carers will be asked to explain persistent lateness and will be offered support to help overcome this.

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents or carers are asked to contact the school on each day of absence by 9.00 am. If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation by the close of registration, the office staff will be informed and will contact the parents or carers to establish the reason for the absence.

In cases where the absence at registration is due to an early morning medical appointment, the absence will be recorded as authorised as long as prior notification has been received. Parents may be asked to provide evidence of medical appointments

A written explanation may be sent in advance for absences. Parents will be notified in writing if the absences are unauthorised.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- ascertain the reason;
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not; and
- identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

## **7.Absence from school**

At Herefordshire Marches Federation of Academies we recognise the clear links between attendance and progress, and attendance and safeguarding children. Pupil's attendance rates will be monitored on a weekly basis.

If there is a problem with a pupil's attendance, the parents or carers will be informed of the school's concerns and will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. Support will be offered. The attendance of these pupils will be monitored by the school and if no improvement is noted a further letter will be sent, again expressing concern and offering support. The school will always work with parents and carers and pupils to try to remedy any issues.

At registration each morning and afternoon, any child who is not present will be marked as an "unauthorised absence" (n code) by the class teacher, unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment or correction is distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head Teacher. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Absence from school may be authorised in the following circumstances;

- If a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority.
- If a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion.
- In exceptional circumstances where the parents or carers have sought permission in advance.
- Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend (with medical evidence to support the absence) although persistent illness without medical evidence may not be authorised. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school can request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness. The

school can record the absence as unauthorised if it is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions or appointment cards. *Schools may request reasonable evidence where they have genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or when seeking to support pupils with prolonged or repeated patterns of illness.*

- Where the pupil has a medical appointment. Parents should however be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards, or send them to school beforehand.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong (evidence may be requested).
- In other exceptional circumstances, such as a family bereavement, and for a very limited period.

If absence is required in exceptional circumstances parents or carers must apply in writing to the Headteacher/Head of School for permission for that absence. This must be done in advance of the planned absence and include the reasons for absence. The Headteacher/Head of School will inform the parents or carers of the decision in writing.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. 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 if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by case basis

A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

### **Holidays during Term Time**

The Department for Education does not consider a need or a desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or education to be an exceptional circumstance.

Holidays during term time will not be authorised. Absence for leave in term time may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. The application for leave must be made in advance and the Headteacher/Head of School must be satisfied that there are truly exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher/Head of School will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher/Head of School's discretion. If the Headteacher/Head of School does not authorise the absence and parents or carers still choose to go on holiday this will then be deemed unauthorised absence and, marked as code G. As a result, a referral will be submitted to Herefordshire Council, who may initiate legal proceedings or issue a penalty notice.

### **Penalty notices**

The threshold for issuing a penalty notice request is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can

be met with any combination of unauthorized absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks).

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

From autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Further information can be found below:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/26980/penalty-notice-local-code-of-conduct-2024>

### **Children missing education**

When pupils leave the school and no information has been received by the school regarding their new placement and parents/carers are unable to be contacted, the school has a duty of care regarding safeguarding and must contact the Local Authority. The child will be considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to investigate, which will include liaising with Social Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child. By giving the school details of the child's new school and location, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

The following sections have been taken from **Working Together to improve School attendance August 2026**. This new guidance can be read in full if required. See link at start of this policy.

### **The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is

open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent).

## **Expectations of schools**

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school.

All schools in the federation will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance at school, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically analysing their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. We will also recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive. To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## **Developing a whole school culture to promote the benefit of high attendance**

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance, all schools are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for

attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.

- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority and other partners.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

### **Pupils with medical conditions, special educational needs and disabilities and pupils who are young carers.**

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Young carers are now explicitly named in the statutory guidance as a cohort requiring targeted monitoring. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This should include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, schools should work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including

considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority.

Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see further information on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school.

In all cases, schools should be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and they should talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

### **Part-time timetables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

### **Alternative Provision**

On the rare occasion where one of our schools places a pupil with an alternative provision provider (with parental consent), the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

Without exception, DSL/Headteacher and another member of staff will visit the alternative setting to complete a risk assessment prior to the pupil starting the placement.

### **Expectations of academy trust boards and governing bodies of maintained schools**

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. We therefore expect all trusts and governing bodies to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.

- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Multi-academy trust boards and governing bodies of federations are also expected to:

- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

Whilst it is expected that all trusts and governing bodies will provide support covering these areas, the approach to delivering it should be proportionate to the size of the group of schools and type of school(s) within it.

### **Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies**

Improving school attendance begins at board level, HMFA board of trustees and our governing bodies will take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to set whole school attendance cultures. This will include:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents.
- Recognising that attendance improvement does not happen in isolation and therefore, ensuring it is prioritised in wider improvement strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding. We will work towards having a link governor for attendance in each school.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils. This includes those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of their school(s)' processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve.

In addition, we will identify and monitor attendance patterns across their schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools.

The Attendance Champion may find it helpful to liaise with DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes.

### **Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties**

HMFA board of trustees and our governing bodies are ultimately responsible for ensuring due regard to guidance and compliance with the law on school attendance and will therefore ensure their schools:

- Have an attendance policy in place. (This policy is the trust/federation policy)
- Record attendance accurately in the register and share the required information with DfE and local authorities.
- Work effectively with local partners to help remove the barriers to attendance that go beyond the school gates, including building strong links with local statutory services (including social care, health and police) and the voluntary and community sector.

**Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most**

HMFA board of trustees and governing bodies will provide support and challenge to their schools around current trends on attendance in the school community, by:

- Regularly reviewing attendance data at board meetings. This should include thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the trust, local authority area, region and nationwide.
- Paying particular attention to attendance of pupil cohorts within their school(s) that have historically had poor attendance or that face entrenched barriers to attendance. This should be specific to the school's context, but may include pupils who have a social worker, are from a background or ethnicity where attendance has historically been low, have a long-term medical condition, special educational needs or a disability, or are eligible for free school meals.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those focus areas.

**Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance**

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. HMFA board of trustees and governing bodies should therefore ensure that:

- Training on attendance is included in the school(s)' continued professional development offer for all staff, and that attendance is covered in any trust/federation wide induction packs. As a minimum this should include all staff understanding:
  - ☐ the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
  - ☐ the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers,
  - ☐ the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
  - ☐ and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.
- Dedicated attendance training is provided to any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. In addition, this should include:
  - ☐ the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
  - ☐ and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance. Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

One of the most successful approaches to improving attendance is the sharing of effective practice between schools. We are well placed to provide regular opportunities to bring together staff from our schools to learn from each other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions.

**Annex A**  
**School Attendance Codes From September 2024**

| Present Codes        |                                                                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| / \                  | present during registration                                                          |
| B                    | educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes                  |
| K                    | attending provision arranged by the local authority                                  |
| L                    | arrived after the register has started but before it has closed                      |
| P                    | Sporting activity with prior agreement from school                                   |
| V                    | educational visit or trip                                                            |
| W                    | work experience                                                                      |
| Absent Codes         |                                                                                      |
| Authorised Absences  |                                                                                      |
| C                    | exceptional circumstances                                                            |
| C1                   | in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad                   |
| C2                   | absent due to part-time timetable                                                    |
| D                    | dual registered                                                                      |
| E                    | suspended or permanently excluded                                                    |
| I                    | illness (not medical or dental appointments)                                         |
| J1                   | job/school/college interview                                                         |
| M                    | medical or dental appointment                                                        |
| Q                    | unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements                            |
| R                    | religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)             |
| S                    | study leave                                                                          |
| T                    | parent travelling for occupational purposes                                          |
| X                    | non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school                        |
| Y1                   | unable to attend due to transport provided not being available                       |
| Y2                   | unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption                              |
| Y3                   | unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed                     |
| Y4                   | unable to attend due to whole school closure                                         |
| Y5                   | unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention                           |
| Y6                   | unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law                    |
| Y7                   | unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent) |
| Unauthorised Absence |                                                                                      |
| G                    | holiday (not agreed)                                                                 |
| N                    | reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)             |
| O                    | absent in other or unknown circumstances                                             |
| U                    | late after register has closed                                                       |
| Z                    | pupil not yet on register                                                            |
| #                    | planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)          |