Date of last review:	April 2026	**Review period:**	1 year
Date of next review:	April 2027	**Owner:**	Director of Education

Attendance Policy

Empowering a future generation

History of Policy Changes

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
June 2024	All	Academy procedures removed and now sit outside of the policy. Aligned to DfE school attendance guidance and arrangements from August 2024	Feedback from stakeholders DfE
June 2025	5	What will not be authorised absence	Stakeholders
April 2026	3	Improved policy aims making it more user friendly and providing a clearer rationale.	Aligned to DfE attendance guidance
	3	Legal Framework – More readable	Readability
	All	Improved readability inc. change to order	Readability
	8	Developed EBSNA guidance for parents and schools	Clarity and linked to Section 19
November 2026	4	Insertion of School Day Registration times	DfE

Policy Aims

At Magna Learning Partnership, we want every child to enjoy school, feel safe and supported, and achieve their best. Being in school every day, and arriving on time, plays a vital role in helping pupils learn, build confidence, and develop positive relationships.

Good attendance is everyone's responsibility. Schools, families, and pupils all have a part to play, and we are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to support regular attendance from the earliest stage.

This policy explains how we promote good attendance and punctuality, how we offer help when difficulties arise, and how we act when absence becomes a concern. Our approach is supportive, consistent, and rooted in high expectations for all pupils.

By working together, we aim to create a caring and accountable community where every pupil has the opportunity to succeed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees and Governors

Trustees and governing committees play a key role in promoting good attendance. They will:

- Recognise that regular attendance is essential for pupils' learning and wellbeing
- Ensure school leaders meet their statutory duties relating to attendance
- Review attendance data regularly, asking questions and challenging patterns or concerns
- Support school leaders to focus improvement work on pupils or groups who need it most
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training and support to improve attendance

The Academy

All Magna Learning Partnership Academies will:

- Have high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils
- Set clear attendance expectations from the point of transition into the school
- Ensure that attendance is recorded accurately and consistently, recognising that the attendance register is a legal document
- Monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to identify patterns, trends, and emerging concerns
- Use this information to target support and actions, both for individual pupils and across the whole Academy
- Understand that good attendance is closely linked to the quality of teaching, behaviour, inclusion, and school culture
- Continue to prioritise attendance improvement, even when national averages are met
- Treat attendance as an ongoing priority, not a one-off initiative

Attendance Champion (Senior Leader)

Attendance is a leadership responsibility. Each Academy will have a named Attendance Champion, who is a member of the senior leadership team. The Attendance Champion will:

- Provide a clear and consistent lead on attendance across the school
- Ensure effective systems are in place to identify, track, and respond to absence
- Use attendance data effectively to target support and challenge
- Work with pupils, families, and external agencies where needed
- Regularly review what is working and adapt strategies to improve attendance

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- **Attend every day** the Academy is open, unless they are unwell or have an authorised absence
- **Arrive on time**, ready to learn
- Understand that being late or absent affects not only their own learning, but also that of others

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting good attendance. They are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time
- Inform the Academy as early as possible on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend due to illness or another unavoidable reason
- Follow the Academy's published procedures for reporting absence, which are available on the Academy website
- Work with the school to address any attendance concerns at an early stage

The decision to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher, in line with DfE guidance and Attendance Policy.

The New Forest Primary School Registration Times

Doors open at 8.40am.
Registration at 8.45am.
Lessons start at 8.50am.
Late before registers close L code from 8.50am - 9.00am.
Late after registers close U code after 9.00am.

Legal Framework and Parental Responsibility

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a legal duty to make sure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education that meets their age, ability, and aptitude. By choosing to register your child at a Magna Learning Partnership school, you are agreeing to ensure that your child:

- Attends school regularly – this means every day the school is open, and
- arrives punctually – this means on time for the start of the school day.

We recognise that some absence due to illness may be unavoidable. For this reason, Magna Learning Partnership uses 97% attendance as a benchmark for good attendance, as this allows for occasional illness while still supporting strong learning habits.

When attendance becomes a concern

The law states that a parent may be committing an offence if their child, who is registered at a school or academy, does not attend regularly (Section 444, Education Act 1996). Where a parent is aware that their child is not attending and no acceptable reason is provided, this may lead to legal action under a more serious offence (Section 444(1)(a)).

Penalty Notices

All state-funded schools are required to consider whether a penalty notice should be issued when a pupil reaches the national threshold for unauthorised absence. This threshold is:

- 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence
- Within a rolling 10-school-week period
- These sessions do not need to be consecutive and may span across terms or academic years

In line with DfE guidance, schools within Magna Learning Partnership do not take a blanket approach to penalty notices. Each case is considered individually, with fairness and support at the heart of decision-making. Wherever possible, we aim to work with families early to address concerns and provide help before formal action is needed.

Leave of Absence (Term Time)

There is no automatic right to take time off school during term time. At Magna Learning Partnership, regular attendance is essential so that pupils can learn well and make strong progress.

Headteachers will therefore only authorise term-time leave in exceptional circumstances.

What are exceptional circumstances?

Exceptional circumstances are situations that are rare, unavoidable, and significant, where any time away from school is kept as short as possible. Each request is considered individually and sensitively by the Headteacher. As a general rule:

- Holidays or leisure travel will not be authorised, including those linked to work commitments or reduced costs
- If an event can reasonably take place during school holidays, it is unlikely to be authorised
- Requests that extend the start or end of school holidays are very unlikely to be approved

Examples of circumstances that may be considered exceptional include:

- A serious illness or bereavement of a close family member (for essential travel and attendance only)
- The needs of service personnel families, such as when a parent returns from a long operational deployment that prevents contact during school holidays

- Families needing time together to recover from a significant trauma or crisis, including where absence is advised by a health or support professional
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, where time away from school forms part of an agreed support or reintegration plan with the school

How decisions are made

When considering a request, the Headteacher will take into account:

- The pupil's attendance history
- The length and timing of the absence
- Any impact on learning, assessments, exams, or support plans
- Whether similar requests have been made previously

The Headteacher will decide whether the absence is authorised and, if so, for how long.

How to request leave

- Parents must submit a leave of absence request in advance wherever possible
- Permission must be granted before arrangements are made – informing the school does not mean permission has been given
- Leave cannot be approved retrospectively
- In emergencies, parents should contact the school immediately, and evidence may be requested

Any absence taken without permission will be recorded as unauthorised and may lead to further action, including a penalty notice. Extended unauthorised absence may also put a school place at risk.

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, safeguarding procedures will be followed in line with Children Missing Education guidance.

Working with Parents and Pupils

Magna Learning Partnership believes that good attendance is best achieved through strong relationships, clear communication, and early support. We work closely with parents and pupils to remove barriers to attendance and promote positive habits.

The Academy will:

- Communicate attendance expectations clearly and consistently
- Explain why attendance matters and how it supports learning, wellbeing, and achievement
- Offer practical advice and guidance to help families support good attendance
- Keep parents informed about their child's attendance, increasing communication where attendance falls below expectations
- Listen carefully to families to understand the reasons behind absence and work together to find solutions
- Provide appropriate challenge where attendance does not improve, alongside support

- Ensure attendance conversations are led by trained and appropriate staff

Our approach is always supportive and respectful, but attendance expectations remain clear and consistent.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

The Academy will only authorise absence where it is satisfied that the reason is valid and unavoidable, in line with DfE guidance.
Absence may be authorised if:

- A pupil is too unwell to attend, and this is accepted by the school
    - Medical evidence may be requested where illness is frequent or concerns arise
    - GPs do not issue sick notes for children; evidence for long-term conditions is usually provided by a medical specialist
- Advance permission has been granted by the Headteacher (e.g. approved leave of absence)
- The pupil is educated off-site
- The pupil has been suspended
- The absence relates to a recognised religious observance

Absence will not normally be authorised for minor or manageable medical conditions (with reference to current NHS guidance), anxiety where there is no professional advice or support in place (see Emotional Barriers to School Attendance), absence linked to exams or assessments, or absences taken immediately before or after school holidays.

The decision to authorise any absence always rests with the Headteacher.

Unauthorised Absence

If the Academy does not agree that an absence is valid, it will be recorded as unauthorised. Where a pupil accumulates 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period, the Academy must consider further action. This may include referral to the Local Authority and the possible issue of a penalty notice, in line with national guidance.

Learning During Absence

Pupils are responsible for catching up on work missed due to absence. It is not always possible for staff to provide work in advance or during periods of absence.

Supporting Attendance Improvement

We recognise that poor attendance can be a sign of wider difficulties for pupils or families. Parents are encouraged to share any changes or challenges that may be affecting attendance so that the Academy can offer appropriate support. Some pupils may need additional support to attend regularly, including:

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- Pupils with short term physical or mental health needs

- Looked after children and vulnerable pupils

Support strategies may include, for example:

- Individual discussions with pupils and parents
- Mentoring or counselling support
- Attendance action plans or contracts
- Referrals to external support services
- Temporary adjustments to provision or timetables (in exceptional circumstances)
- Reintegration support following suspension or extended absence

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, the Academy will work closely with families to put targeted support in place. Our focus is on understanding barriers and reengaging pupils, with punitive measures used only where support is refused or attendance does not improve.

Managing Ongoing or Excessive Absence

Attendance is monitored regularly. Where concerns arise, parents will be contacted and a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) arranged to agree actions, targets, and review dates.

If parents do not engage, or attendance fails to improve, the Academy may refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance or Welfare Service, which may lead to a penalty notice or legal action.

Leaving School During the Day

Pupils are not normally expected to leave school during the day. Where this is unavoidable:

- Parents must inform the school in advance, giving a clear reason
- Requests must come from the parent with day-to-day care
- Any alternative collection arrangements must be confirmed in writing
- Emergency contact details must be kept up to date

End of Day Collection (Primary)

Where pupils are collected at the end of the day:

- Collection must be prompt
- The Academy must be informed in advance if someone else is collecting

If a pupil is not collected and no contact is made, safeguarding procedures will be followed, including contact with local authority services

Emotional Barriers to School Attendance (EBSNA)

Magna Learning Partnership recognises that some pupils may experience emotional barriers to attending school, often linked to anxiety or mental health difficulties. This is sometimes referred to as Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA).

EBSNA is not a diagnosis and can look different for every child. It may develop gradually and can be difficult for families to understand or describe. We therefore take concerns seriously and respond with care, flexibility, and high expectations for reengagement.

Working in partnership with parents

If you are concerned that your child is struggling emotionally to attend school, you must talk to the Academy as early as possible.

Supporting a child with emotional barriers to attendance works best when there is a strong partnership between:

- the pupil
- parents or carers
- the school, and where appropriate, external professionals

Early honest conversations help us understand what may be happening and allow us to work together to identify the right support before it becomes a significant barrier.

How the Academy responds

Where a pupil is experiencing emotional barriers to attendance:

- The Academy will listen carefully, show empathy, and seek to understand the underlying reasons for the difficulty
- Absence related to these concerns may be recorded and considered in the same way as other health related absences, where appropriate
- The Academy will explore all reasonable adjustments and support options to help the pupil attend school successfully
- A gradual reintegration plan, adjusted timetable, or targeted support may be considered where this supports the pupil's wellbeing and learning

We use professional judgement and a range of information, including behaviour, attendance patterns, pupil voice, and parental insight, to inform our response. We avoid labels and focus instead on needs and solutions.

Links to SEND

Where emotional barriers to attendance are persistent, complex, or linked to an underlying need, the Academy will identify the pupil as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) under the category of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

This reflects that:

- The support required is additional to or different from what is normally provided
- Support needs to be planned, reviewed, and monitored
- Parents and pupils are fully involved in decision making

Support will be documented and reviewed through the school's SEND graduated approach.

When attendance remains significantly affected

Despite strong partnership working and support, there may be occasions where a pupil cannot attend school for a prolonged period due to mental health or emotional needs.

Where all school-based options have been explored and attendance is not possible, the Academy may work with the Local Authority to consider alternative education arrangements under Section 19 of the Education Act, ensuring that:

- Education continues in a form suitable to the pupil's age, ability, and needs
- The arrangement is reviewed regularly
- The long-term aim remains successful reintegration to school, wherever possible

Our commitment

We are committed to:

- Acting early
- Working together
- Balancing empathy with ambition for every child

Emotional barriers to attendance are treated seriously, thoughtfully, and collaboratively, with the child's welfare, dignity, and future success at the centre of all decisions.

Policy Review

This attendance policy is subject to an annual review. This includes gathering the views of stakeholders when and where appropriate. Any significant changes will be communicated to pupils, parents, and staff.