Cornwall Education Learning Trust

Attendance Policy

Safeguarding Policy Suite

Cornwall Education Learning Trust Policies
Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), Atlantic Centre, Trenance Leisure Park, Newquay, Cornwall TR7 2LZ

Our Mission

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), our mission is clear: to provide every learner with an **exceptional educational experience.** One that enables them to thrive, achieve and succeed in life. We believe in a **100%** mindset, that every learner, in every classroom, in every school, deserves the very best we can offer. For us, 100% means no compromise: no learner left behind, no community overlooked, and no opportunity wasted.

Our strategic goals reflect this ambition. We are committed to empowering and growing our people, building an ambitious all-through entitlement, forging exceptional relationships with our communities, transforming provision through meaningful partnerships, and leading an ethical, effective and innovative organisation. These are not just aspirations; they are promises that shape the way we work and the culture we are building together.



Our Values

Our values are at the heart of everything we do. We believe in the power of **Collaboration**, building strong relationships and working together as one team to achieve our collective goals. We are committed to **Empowerment**, creating a culture where initiative, innovation and trust flourish, and where every individual feels valued, respected and motivated.

As a Trust, we are grounded in promoting **Leadership**, sharing a moral and ethical purpose to improve the lives of others and make a lasting difference for our learners and communities. And we embrace **Transformation**, approaching change positively so that we can all become our best selves and do our best work.

These values guide every decision we make and every action we take. They are the foundation of our Trust and the reason we can offer such exceptional opportunities for our learners and staff. If you choose to join CELT, you will be part of a values-driven organisation where people are supported to grow, contribute, and thrive.

Policy Contents

1. Policy Overview 5
   1.1 Safeguarding commitment 5
   1.2 Policy Approval and Review 5
   1.3 Policy Version History 5
2. Introduction 6
3. Legal and Statutory Framework 7
   3.1 Legislation 7
   3.2 Statutory Guidance 7
4. Roles and Responsibilities 7
   5.2 Promoting and recognising positive attendance 8
6. Safeguarding 8
   6.1 Safeguarding and attendance 8
   6.2 Responding to Unexplained Absence 8
   6.3 Maintaining contact and home visits. 9
   6.4 Learners with Increased Vulnerability 9
7. Attendance procedures 10
   7.1 Attendance Registers 10
   7.2 Punctuality and Lateness 10
8. Absences 11
   8.1 Reporting Absence 11
   8.2 Response to unexplained absence 11
   8.3 Authorised absence 11
   8.4 Unauthorised absence 12
   8.5 Illness 12
   8.6 Learners taken ill during the day 12
   8.7 Long term illness 12
   8.8 Medical Evidence 13
   8.9 Absence for medical and dental appointments 13
   8.10 Absence for religious observation 13
   8.11 Mobile learner – parent travelling for occupational purposes 14
   8.12 Exceptional Circumstances Leave of absence 14
9. Using data to support improvements in attendance 15
   9.1 Monitoring Attendance 15
   9.2 When Attendance Becomes a Concern 15
   9.3 Responding to Attendance Concerns 16
   9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence 16
   9.5 Parents/Carers who live separately 16

9.6 Learners requiring additional support 17
10. Formal support and legal intervention 17
10.1 Formal non-attendance process 17
10.2 Penalty notices, prosecutions and education supervision orders 17
10.3 Legal Intervention for Unauthorised absence 18
11. Alternative Education Arrangements 20
11.1 Alternative Provision 20
11.2 Learners requiring a temporary part time timetable 20
11.3 Flexi- Schooling 20
11.4 Remote Education 21
12. Children missing in education 21
13. Elective home education 21
Appendix A: Roles, responsibilities and contact details 23
A1.1 Trust Lead Attendance Champion 23
A1.2 Headteacher 23
A1.3 Senior Attendance Champion 23
A1.4 Attendance Champions 24
A1.5 All Staff 24
A1.6 Parents and Carers 24
A1.7 Learners 25
A1.8 Trust Oversight 25
Appendix 2: Exceptional circumstance leave request notice for parents and carers 26

1. Policy Overview

1.1 Safeguarding commitment

"It could happen here." We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We make every effort to provide an environment in which children and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to talk if they are worried, believing they will be effectively listened to. The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and governors with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure at Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT). The policy also informs parents and carers how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.
children whilst they are in our care.

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all trustees, community champions, staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy is part of the following suite of annually updated safeguarding policies.

1.2 Policy Approval and Review

Policy Version Number:	6
Approved By:	Trustees
Approved On (Date):	
Review Period:	Annually

The DfE expects the policy to be accessible, sent to parents when learners join, parents reminded of it annually and when updated, and reviewed as barriers evolve, with views of learners and parents/carers sought

1.3 Policy Version History

Policy Version	Date Issued	Summary of Changes
1	30.11.2022	Original draft
2	11.05.2023	Home visits added
3	30.08.2023	Absence of religious observation
4	19.08.2024	New policy to reflect new laws introduced
5	19.08.2025	Addition of capturing learners voice Role of CELT Lead attendance officer role Z code update
6	07.08.2026	Changes are in blue

2. Introduction

Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) recognises that regular and punctual attendance is fundamental to learners' education, wellbeing, safeguarding and future outcomes. Every learner has the right to access the full educational opportunities available to them. Attending school regularly and on time supports learners to feel connected to their school community, build positive relationships, engage fully in learning and achieve their potential.

CELT has high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of every learner and aspires to 100% attendance wherever possible, while recognising that there will be circumstances where absence is unavoidable or where individual learners experience barriers to attendance.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either through regular attendance at school or otherwise. Where a child is registered at a school, parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure regular attendance.

Attendance is both an educational and safeguarding priority. CELT and its schools will work with learners, parents and carers, the local authority and other agencies to promote good attendance, prevent avoidable absence and act early where concerns emerge. Our approach is support-first, underpinned by high expectations and a commitment to understanding and removing barriers to attendance.

We recognise that barriers to attendance may be complex, interconnected and different for each learner. Schools will listen to learners and families, seek to understand individual circumstances and provide appropriate support. In doing so, CELT and its schools will have due regard to their duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners, and will ensure that attendance approaches are applied appropriately to individual circumstances.

Across CELT, schools will:

- promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance and punctuality;
- ensure every learner can access the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- develop safe, welcoming and supportive environments in which learners can attend, belong and thrive;
- identify emerging attendance concerns and patterns of absence at the earliest opportunity;
- work with learners and families to understand and address barriers to attendance; and
- work collaboratively with the local authority and wider services where additional or coordinated support is required.

This policy applies to all learners registered at CELT schools and sets out the Trust's approach to promoting attendance, preventing absence and responding where attendance becomes a concern. It should be read alongside each school's School Level Context Appendix, which provides school-specific attendance arrangements, including registration times and key contact details. The policy and relevant school-level information are available to parents and carers through each school's website.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance. In particular, this policy has regard to:

3.1 Legislation

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7 and 444 relating to parental responsibility for securing regular school attendance and enforcement where a child fails to attend regularly.
- Education Act 2002, including section 175 relating to the safeguarding and welfare of children.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013, as amended, in relation to the provision and sharing of learner information.

3.2 Statutory Guidance

- Keeping children safe in education (2026)
- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, statutory guidance, July 2026)
- Working together to safeguard children (2026)
- Children missing education (DfE statutory guidance)
- Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance (DfE July 2026)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice
- Alternative Provision: Statutory Guidance

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. CELT schools will ensure that attendance is prioritised across the school and that staff understand their role in promoting good attendance, identifying emerging concerns and supporting learners and families to overcome barriers.

The named Senior Attendance Champion and school attendance contacts are identified in the School Level Context Appendix.

The roles and responsibilities are outlined in appendix 1.

5. Promoting and incentivising good attendance

CELT schools will create a culture in which attendance is recognised as everyone's responsibility and is consistently prioritised across school life. High expectations will be combined with early identification, strong relationships and appropriate support so that learners are enabled to attend regularly and achieve well.

Schools will

- establish clear and consistent expectations for attendance and punctuality and communicate these effectively with learners, families and staff;
- ensure all staff understand their role in promoting attendance and identifying emerging concerns;
- maintain accurate attendance registers and use attendance data to identify patterns, trends and inequalities at individual, cohort and school level;
- act early when absence or persistent lateness emerges, seeking to understand the barriers affecting attendance and working with learners and families to address them;
- listen to learners and families and work collaboratively with relevant professionals and agencies where additional support is required;
- recognise and respond appropriately to persistent and severe absence, including where absence may indicate safeguarding concerns or wider vulnerability;
- ensure approaches to promoting and recognising attendance are inclusive, equitable and sensitive to learners whose attendance may be affected by disability, special educational needs, physical or mental health needs or other circumstances;
- regularly evaluate the impact of attendance strategies and use this information to strengthen practice;
- promote the benefits of good attendance and build learners' understanding of the relationship between attendance, belonging, wellbeing, learning and future outcomes.

5.2 Promoting and recognising positive attendance

Schools may recognise positive attendance, improvement, engagement and efforts to overcome barriers. Any recognition or reward approaches will be carefully considered and regularly reviewed to ensure they are inclusive and do not disadvantage, marginalise or stigmatise learners for absence that may be outside their control.

6. Safeguarding

6.1 Safeguarding and attendance

CELT recognises that absence from education can be an important safeguarding indicator. Patterns of absence, persistent or severe absence, unexplained absence and changes in attendance may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation or other risks to a learner's welfare. Attendance will therefore be considered as part of the school's wider safeguarding arrangements and addressed in accordance with CELT's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Attendance and safeguarding staff will work closely together to identify emerging concerns and ensure appropriate action is taken. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or appropriate deputy, will liaise at least weekly with staff responsible for attendance to review learners where absence may indicate increased vulnerability or safeguarding risk. Information and actions arising from safeguarding concerns will be recorded appropriately.

6.2 Responding to Unexplained Absence

Schools will follow up unexplained or unexpected absence promptly to establish the learner's whereabouts and identify whether safeguarding action is required.

Where we have not received reason for a learner's absence after registration, the school will follow these steps:

- send an absence text message requesting a call to provide a reason
- contact the child's first contact. If call is unsuccessful, a message will be left (where possible) requesting a call to provide a reason
- if no response is received other contacts held for the child will also be contacted, in priority order
- if the school is unable to find out the reason for absence through the process outlined above and unable to have contact, or confirm the learners whereabouts, or is concerned for the welfare, the school will take appropriate action which will depend on the circumstances of each case. This could include, but is not limited to:
    - contacting siblings' schools
    - contacting other professionals
    - home visits to the family address

Where contact cannot be established or there are concerns about a learner's welfare, the school will take proportionate action according to the circumstances and level of risk. This may include escalating concerns to children's social care, the local authority or police in line with safeguarding procedures. The local authority may be notified as a possible child missing education.

Parents and carers are expected to provide the school with at least two emergency contacts wherever possible and to ensure that contact information is kept up to date.

6.3 Maintaining contact and home visits.

Schools will maintain appropriate contact with learners during periods of absence. A home visit may be undertaken where contact cannot be established, there are repeated or unexplained absences, there are concerns about welfare, or the learner has not been seen for 72 hours.

Where a learner has been absent for five consecutive school days, the school will aim to have direct contact through a home visit, telephone or virtual call involving an appropriate trusted adult. Contact will be used to maintain relationships, understand the learner's circumstances and identify any support needed to reduce barriers to their return.

These timescales do not prevent earlier action. Where safeguarding concerns are identified, action will be taken immediately and according to the level of risk.

Home visits will be authorised by the Headteacher or DSL and appropriately recorded in accordance with CELT safeguarding procedures.

6.4 Learners with Increased Vulnerability

Particular consideration will be given to absence where a learner is known to be vulnerable, including children in care, young carers, learners with a social worker and those subject to child protection or child in need arrangements.

Where a learner with a social worker has an unexplained or unexpected absence, the relevant social worker will be informed promptly in accordance with safeguarding procedures and agreed multi-agency arrangements. Where the learner cannot be located or there are concerns for their

immediate safety or welfare, concerns will be escalated without delay, including to the police where appropriate.

7. Attendance procedures

7.1 Attendance Registers

Schools are required by law to maintain an attendance register and take the register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. For each learner, the register will record whether they are:

- present at school
- attending a place other than the school
- absent from school

Attendance registers are legal records and must be completed accurately and in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and relevant DfE guidance. Staff responsible for taking registers must ensure they are completed promptly and accurately, using the appropriate statutory attendance or absence code.

Individual school registration and register closing times are set out in the School Level Context Appendix.

Where a learner is attending an approved educational activity or provision away from the school site, the school will maintain appropriate arrangements with the provider to confirm attendance and absence and ensure the school's attendance register is accurate. Any unexplained or unexpected absence from off-site provision will be followed up promptly in accordance with the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Where a learner is recorded as present at registration but subsequently does not attend an expected lesson or activity, their whereabouts will be established promptly and any safeguarding or attendance concerns addressed in accordance with relevant CELT policies and procedures.

7.2 Punctuality and Lateness

Learners are expected to arrive at school on time and be ready to learn. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and punctually.

Where a learner arrives after the attendance register has been taken:

- L code will be used where the learner arrives after the register has been taken but before it has closed. The learner is recorded as present but late. The registers close 30 minutes after the morning and/or afternoon registration time stated in the Safeguarding Suite School Level Context Appendix.
- U code will be used where the learner arrives after the register has closed without an authorised reason. This is recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session.
- Other absence codes: where a learner arrives after the register has closed for a reason that falls within another statutory attendance or absence code, the appropriate authorised absence code; will be used.

It is important that learners arrive for school on time to ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day and to minimise disruption to other learners, it is the duty of parents and carers to ensure this.

8. Absences

8.1 Reporting Absence

Parents and carers are expected to notify the school as soon as possible when their child will be absent and provide the reason for the absence. Where absence continues for more than one day, parents and carers should provide an update on each day of absence unless otherwise agreed with the school.

School-specific arrangements for reporting absence, including contact details and reporting times, are set out in the School Level Context Appendix. Parents and carers are required to notify the school with the following information

- Parent/carers full name
- Learners full name
- Learners tutor group or class
- Reason for absence

The school may contact parents or carers to clarify the reason for an absence or to discuss the learner's welfare and any support that may be required. The school, not the parent or carer, determines the appropriate statutory attendance or absence code.

It is important that we receive accurate information from parents and carers with reasons for their child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and is recorded on the trust management information system. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. Where the absences are not authorised, we will inform parents and carers of this.

8.2 Response to unexplained absence

Schools will follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence promptly to establish the reason for absence and the learner's whereabouts. Where the reason has not been established when the register closes, the appropriate statutory attendance code will be used and updated once the reason is known.

Where contact cannot be established or there are concerns about a learner's welfare, the safeguarding arrangements set out in Section 6 will be followed.

If a learner has a social worker and/or youth offending team worker, the school will inform the relevant worker/s if a learner has unexplained absences from school. This notification will be made on the first day of unexplained absence and must not be delayed.

8.3 Authorised absence

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a learner of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The school applies the statutory codes while leave requiring approval is decided by an authorised person.

8.4 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a learner is away from school without the permission of the school, or where no reason has been provided (unauthorised holiday constitutes an unauthorised absence.)

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a learner is:

- away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or carer
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; absence will not be authorised in term time for scenarios such as family holidays (unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced), birthday treats, oversleeping due to a late night or visiting relatives

Unauthorised absences may result in legal intervention detailed in section 10.

8.5 Illness

Parents and carers are expected to notify the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related) – see absence reporting and response section, below.

If the child is ill for more than one day, the parent/carer should contact the school each day to provide an update, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised and coded I (Illness).

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first and any subsequent days of absence may not be authorised.

8.6 Learners taken ill during the day

If a learner needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the learner be collected from the school office by a parent/carer or another authorised adult (unless otherwise agreed between the school and the parent/carer) and signed out. No learner will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer confirmation. Even if a family home is relatively close to the school, we do not allow sick children to walk home unaccompanied.

8.7 Long term illness

When learners have an illness, confirmed by a medical professional, that means they will be away from school long term, the school will carry out regular check ins via home visits or video calls will be arranged. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will follow the local authority's processes around learners not in school to ensure arrangements are made for the child to receive their educational entitlement.

Where a learner's long-term illness impacts on their ability to attend school, the school will also consider whether an individual healthcare plan (IHCP) is needed and ensure that any IHCP is in place or updated before the learner returns to school. This will be done in conjunction with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

8.8 Medical Evidence

Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents/carers provide medical evidence to support illness absences and must not operate blanket rules requiring this. In the majority of cases, a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school can be accepted without question. However, the school may request reasonable evidence where it has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or when seeking to support learners with prolonged or repeated patterns of illness. In such cases, medical evidence may help the school to better understand the learner's health needs, inform what reasonable adjustments may need to be made, and/or accurately record absence in the attendance register.

Where medical evidence is considered necessary, the school will not be rigid about the type of evidence requested and will speak to the family about what evidence is available. Where a parent/carer cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, the school will take this into account.

8.9 Absence for medical and dental appointments

Parents/carers should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable, the learner should only be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a learner to miss a whole day for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. The school recognises that learners with a health condition may have a higher number of medical appointments than other learners and it is therefore possible that at least some of these appointments may be during the school day.

If a learner must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent/carer or another authorised adult and signed out. No learner will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it is an emergency appointment. The school reserves the right to request evidence of appointments from parents/ carers. Suitable evidence may include appointment letters or cards, copies of emails from a verifiable address (e.g. NHS) confirming the date and time of the appointment.

8.10 Absence for religious observation

We recognise that learners of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance falls during school time and has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner belongs, the absence from the school will be authorised. We ask that parents and carers notify the school by writing to the headteacher in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

8.11 Mobile learner – parent travelling for occupational purposes

A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile child who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent/carer in the course of their trade or business. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with parents/carers as necessary. Parents/carers should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible.

The school will not unnecessarily ask for proof that a parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this will only happen when there are genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. If there is doubt, the school may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence.

To help ensure continuity of education for mobile children, when their parents are travelling for occupational purposes in England, wherever possible it is expected that children should attend a school where their parents is travelling and be dual registered at that school and at this school, which is their 'main school'.

When their parents are not travelling occupational purposes, mobile children are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

8.12 Exceptional Circumstances Leave of absence

The law does not grant parents and carers the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time for holidays or other absence such as trips and visits. By law, Headteachers are not allowed to authorise absence during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional.

The school will consider each application individually. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the discretion of the school.

Parents and carers are asked not to make plans to take their child out of school without making a request to the school first and the school gives permission for the absence.

Parents and carers wishing to request leave for their child should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school and in Appendix 2 of this policy. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and, wherever possible, at least four school weeks before the absence.

The school will respond to term time leave requests within 10 school days of receipt, by contacting the parent or carer who made the request. Parents and carers may be required to provide the school with additional evidence to support a leave of absence request.

If a parent or carer needs to make an urgent request for leave, they should contact the school by telephone and speak to the School's Attendance Champion in the first instance. The school will aim to give a response as soon as possible.

The school will consider the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

The absence should be for the shortest time possible – if an absence is agreed, the headteacher will decide how many days of absence will be authorised. Where leave is granted, the appropriate statutory attendance code will be used..

If the learner is absent for more days than were authorised by the school, the remaining days absent will be recorded as unauthorised absence, unless there is an exceptional reason for the additional absence.

Any holidays and other absence such as trips and visits which have not been agreed by the school will be recorded as unauthorised.

If the school has been notified a learner's absence is/was due to illness or other reason, but the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given and has reason to believe the learner may have been absent due to a holiday, or other trip/visit, the school may ask for additional information or evidence from parents and carers to support the reason given. If the school is not satisfied with the evidence provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. If the school has any concerns about possible safeguarding risks, staff will follow the necessary protocols. (See section 6).

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

9. Using data to support improvements in attendance

9.1 Monitoring Attendance

CELT schools monitor attendance closely so that emerging concerns are identified early and support can be offered before patterns of absence become established. Attendance patterns and trends will be reviewed at least weekly at individual, cohort and whole-school level, including patterns of absence, broken weeks and punctuality. Schools will also consider attendance for groups of learners who may experience additional barriers to attendance. We would not usually expect that learners would have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern, and we will offer support to families where there are more frequent broken weeks, in line with our attendance procedures.

9.2 When Attendance Becomes a Concern

CELT expects learners to attend school every day they are able to do so. We recognise that occasional absence, through illness, can occur; our focus is therefore on identifying emerging patterns and understanding the reasons behind them. As a CELT early-intervention threshold, additional monitoring and communication with learners and parents/carers will normally begin when a learner has:

- 8 sessions (4 days) of absence; or
- absence across two or more school weeks ('broken weeks').

Schools may act earlier where a pattern of absence or lateness is emerging, there are known barriers to attendance, or there are safeguarding or welfare concerns. Reaching these thresholds does not mean that absence is automatically unauthorised or that formal action will be taken; it means that the school will seek to understand what is happening and whether support is needed.

9.3 Responding to Attendance Concerns

Where concerns emerge, the school will work with the learner and their parents/carers to understand the reasons for absence and identify any barriers to attendance. This may include:

- discussing attendance with the learner and family;
- agreeing actions to improve attendance or punctuality;
- providing appropriate school-based support and reasonable adjustments;
- involving relevant professionals or services where additional support is needed; and
- reviewing the impact of support and adapting it where necessary.

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

A learner is considered persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions, and severely absent when they miss 50% or more.

Schools will identify and prioritise learners who are persistently or severely absent, or at risk of becoming so, and work with the learner and their family to understand the barriers to attendance and agree targeted support.

Where barriers extend beyond the school's capacity to address them, schools will work with the local authority and relevant services to coordinate wider support. This may include education, health, SEND, early help, children's social care or other services according to the learner's individual needs and circumstances.

Learners who are severely absent will be treated as a priority for intensive and coordinated support, with appropriate multi-agency involvement to address barriers and secure their engagement with education.

Where voluntary support has not been successful, has not been engaged with or is not appropriate, the school will work with the local authority to consider formalising support. This may include an attendance contract or other appropriate statutory intervention, with legal action considered in accordance with the National Framework and the formal support and legal intervention section of this policy.

9.5 Parents/Carers who live separately

Where appropriate, the school will involve all parents/carers to ensure each is aware of their child's attendance pattern and is able to support the child's attendance to improve. Where a child lives with different parents/carers on different days, we will take this into consideration when working with the parents/carers.

9.6 Learners requiring additional support

CELT recognises that some learners may experience additional or complex barriers to attendance. High expectations for attendance apply to all learners, while support will reflect individual circumstances and needs. This includes, but is not limited to, learners:

- with disabilities, special educational needs or physical or mental health needs;
- who are young carers or have caring responsibilities;
- who are known to children's social care, including children in care; and
- who are involved with youth justice services.

Schools will monitor the attendance of learners who may experience additional barriers, identify emerging concerns early and work with learners, families and relevant professionals to understand and remove those barriers. Appropriate support and reasonable adjustments will be put in place where required, including in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Good attendance for all learners including and especially those with vulnerabilities is crucial in ensuring academic and social progress.

Schools will identify and monitor the attendance of known young carers and consider whether caring responsibilities are affecting their ability to attend or engage fully in education. Where barriers are identified, schools will work with the learner, their family and relevant services to provide appropriate support and facilitate access to wider help where needed.

Further information about the support available to learners and families can be obtained from the relevant school team.

10. Formal support and legal intervention

10.1 Formal non-attendance process

Where there are continued concerns about a learner's attendance which are not resolved informally, parents and carers may be asked to meet with the school to discuss the matter more formally. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan and/or attendance contract being produced. The school may also invite other involved professionals, where relevant.

To protect the child's right to an education, when considered appropriate and necessary, the school will make referrals to the local authority for legal intervention. When referring for legal intervention, the school will show that the parent or carer has been warned they are at risk of legal action.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and if they fail to do so, may commit an offence under Sections 7 and 444 of the Education Act 1996.

10.2 Penalty notices, prosecutions and education supervision orders

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered learner at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school their parent(s) are guilty of an offence. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal action if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the

parent but may have day to day care of the child. If an absence is not authorised by the school, the learner's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

A learner's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

(a) A penalty notice.
(b) Prosecution,

Penalty notices can be issued if a child has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a period of 10 school weeks. (A morning or afternoon is one session; a whole school day is two sessions.) However, the DfE's national framework for penalty notices allows penalty notices to be issued sooner than this, in some circumstances. Before a penalty notice is issued, where considered appropriate, a notice to improve will be sent to parents and carers to give them a final chance to improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. A notice to improve will not be issued where a warning is not considered appropriate, for example in the case of unauthorised term time holiday absence.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with unauthorised absence. For example, if two siblings have unauthorised absence, and there are two parents/carers with responsibility for the children, four penalty notices would be issued.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the local authority unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. Referrals for penalty notices will include unauthorised absence due to term time holiday or other trips/visits, and other types of unauthorised absence.

When referring to the local authority for legal intervention, the school will show that the parent or carer has been warned they are at risk of a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are issued to parents and carers as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action. A penalty notice may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate sanction for a learner's unauthorised absence.

The local authority will consider the information provided by the school and act in line with their protocols and procedures, following the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance guidance. This will include considering whether an education supervision order should be applied for, as well as, or instead of a prosecution.

10.3 Legal Intervention for Unauthorised absence

See table below and the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance guidance for more information about penalty notices, prosecutions and education supervision orders.

The local authority's penalty notice code of conduct is available from Cornwall County Council.

Penalty notices
Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action. If a learner has frequent, and/or extended period of unauthorised absence, a prosecution may be considered, instead of a penalty notice. Penalty notices cannot be paid in instalments.

Sanction	Outcome
First penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period)	The penalty is £80 (per parent/carer, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will usually result in prosecution.)
Second penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period)	The second time a penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child the amount will be £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days). There is no reduction in the amount if the penalty is paid early. (Failure to pay will usually result in prosecution.)

Prosecutions for unauthorised absence

Local authorities are unable to issue more than two penalty notices to the same parent for the same child, in a rolling 3-year period. Should a third offence of unauthorised absence for the same child be committed during the 3 years (including where a child has moved school and fines have been issued by other local authorities), the local authority may prosecute the parent/carer(s). As penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution, the local authority may decide to proceed straight to prosecution instead of issuing any penalty notice. If prosecuting, it is for the local authority to decide whether a section 444(1) or section 444(1A) prosecution is most appropriate.

Sanction	Outcome
Prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996	Prosecutions If found guilty, parents/ carers may be fined up to £1000 and ordered to pay court costs. The court may also impose a Parenting Order.
Prosecution under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996	If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £2500 and ordered to pay court costs. Other court outcomes include community sentences, such as Curfew Orders, Unpaid Work (Community Payback) or a prison sentence of up to three months. The court may also impose a Parenting Order.

Education Supervision Order (ESO)

The local authority must consider applying for an ESO (under section 36 of the Children Act 1989) before prosecuting under s444 Education Act 1996. A local authority may apply for an ESO instead of, or as well as, proceeding with a prosecution. The order is placed on the child, and a supervisor from the local authority is appointed by the court, to give directions to the child and their parents with a view to securing that the child is properly educated.

11. Alternative Education Arrangements

CELT recognises that, in some circumstances, a learner may receive some or all of their education differently from the usual full-time school offer. Learners accessing alternative provision, temporary part-time timetables, flexi-schooling or remote education may have additional vulnerabilities. Schools will therefore ensure that arrangements are appropriate, safe, regularly reviewed and support the learner's educational entitlement, wellbeing and progress.

11.1 Alternative Provision

Where a learner attends alternative provision (AP), either full or part time, the school will ensure that the provision is suitable and appropriately quality assured, including safeguarding arrangements. The school retains responsibility for the safeguarding and educational oversight of learners who remain on its roll.

Schools will maintain regular communication with providers, including confirmation of attendance daily, and promptly follow up any absence or safeguarding concerns. Where AP is provided for only part of a learner's timetable, the school will ensure that their overall educational offer is appropriate and meets their entitlement to education.

The placement, attendance, progress and continued suitability of the provision will be regularly reviewed with the learner, parents/carers and relevant professionals.

11.2 Learners requiring a temporary part time timetable

All learners of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the learner's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may be agreed to meet their individual needs and support their return to full-time education.

A temporary part-time timetable will:

- be agreed with the parent/carer and learner, taking account of their views;
- have a clear purpose, start and end date and plan for increasing access to full-time education;
- consider the learner's educational entitlement, safeguarding, SEND, health and welfare needs;
- be used for the shortest time necessary and never as a long-term solution or to manage behaviour;
- be reviewed at least fortnightly; and
- where extending beyond six weeks, be reviewed and agreed through a multi-agency meeting including a member of ELT.

Schools will provide parents/carers with clear information about why the timetable is required, when the learner is expected to attend, the support being provided and how and when the arrangement will be reviewed.

11.3 Flexi- Schooling

Flexi-schooling is a parent/carer requested arrangement where a learner remains registered at school but receives part of their education at school and part through education provided by their parent/carer.

There is no automatic right to flexi-schooling and schools are not required to agree to a request. Requests will be considered individually, taking account of the learner's best interests, educational needs, safeguarding, SEND and the suitability of the overall educational arrangements.

Where flexi-schooling is agreed, the arrangements, responsibilities, expected school attendance and review arrangements will be clearly documented. Parents/carers remain responsible for the education provided during the home-educated element of the arrangement. Periods during which a flexi-schooled learner receives education at home will be recorded as absence from school using the appropriate statutory attendance code.

11.4 Remote Education

Remote education will not normally be used as an alternative to attendance. Where used, it will be exceptional, time limited, used only as a last resort and form part of a clear plan to support reintegration into face-to-face education

12. Children missing in education

CELT recognises that children missing education may be at increased risk of safeguarding concerns, poor educational outcomes and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life. Schools will act promptly where a learner's whereabouts or educational destination is unknown and will follow CELT safeguarding procedures and statutory Children Missing Education guidance.

Schools will work with the local authority and other relevant agencies to make reasonable enquiries to establish a learner's whereabouts and ensure appropriate action is taken where a learner may be missing education.

Learners will only be removed from the school's admission register where one of the statutory grounds for deletion is met. Where required, the school and local authority will undertake reasonable enquiries before deletion and the school will notify the local authority in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Schools will maintain accurate admission records and share information about learners joining or leaving the school with the local authority as required by law.

13. Elective home education

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education. This may be provided through attendance at school or through elective home education (EHE).

Where a parent or carer decides to withdraw a learner from a mainstream school to electively home educate, they should notify the school in writing, confirming their intention to educate the child otherwise than at school and the date from which this will take effect. The school will notify the local authority and remove the learner from the admission register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

CELT recognises that elective home education must be a positive and informed parental choice. Where appropriate, schools will offer parents and carers an opportunity to discuss their decision,

any concerns that may have contributed to it and the support available to the learner and family. This will not delay or prevent a parent or carer exercising their legal right to electively home educate.

Schools will never encourage elective home education as an alternative to addressing attendance concerns, meeting a learner's needs or following the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion process.

Where a learner attends a special school under arrangements made by the local authority, or is subject to a School Attendance Order, the relevant statutory requirements must be followed before the learner can be removed from the admission register.

Appendix A: Roles, responsibilities and contact details

Key personnel

Each CELT school has a senior leader responsible for attendance, with additional nominated staff members as appropriate.

A1.1 Trust Lead Attendance Champion

The Trust Lead Attendance Champion provides strategic leadership and oversight of attendance across CELT and will:

- monitor attendance, persistent and severe absence and patterns across schools and key groups;
- identify Trust-wide priorities, variation and emerging areas of concern;
- provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders and Senior Attendance Champions;
- oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of CELT's belong strategy;
- support consistency and effective practice across schools through quality assurance, professional development and collaboration;
- work strategically with the local authority and wider partners to strengthen support and remove barriers to attendance; and
- provide assurance and reporting to Executive Leaders and Trustees on attendance performance, priorities and impact.
- ensure a strategic approach to attendance training and professional development across the Trust, so that teaching and non-teaching staff have the knowledge and skills appropriate to their role to promote attendance, identify emerging concerns, understand barriers and contribute effectively to improving attendance;
- support Senior Attendance Champions and attendance champions to access appropriate development, guidance and opportunities to share effective practice; and
- ensure attendance training and development reflects changes to statutory guidance, legislation and emerging Trust priorities.

A1.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance within the school and will:

- ensure the school meets its statutory responsibilities for attendance and maintains high expectations for all learners;
- ensure attendance is prioritised within school improvement and safeguarding arrangements;
- ensure appropriate staffing, systems and resources are in place to promote and improve attendance;
- ensure teaching and non-teaching staff receive appropriate attendance training and professional development relevant to their role and understand their responsibilities within the school's approach to improving attendance; and
- ensure attendance information is regularly reviewed and appropriate action is taken where concerns arise.

A1.3 Senior Attendance Champion

Each school will have a designated Senior Attendance Champion who is a member of, or reports directly to, the senior leadership team. The Senior Attendance Champion will provide strategic leadership for attendance and will:

- set a clear vision and high expectations for attendance and punctuality;
- follow the trust belong strategy including processes for monitoring, analysing and improving attendance;
- use attendance data to identify patterns, inequalities and learners requiring additional support;
- ensure early and appropriate action is taken to understand and address barriers to attendance;
- coordinate support with families, the local authority and wider services where required;
- prioritise persistent and severe absence and evaluate the impact of attendance strategies; and
- ensure attendance practice is regularly reviewed and improved.

A1.4 Attendance Champions

Staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance will:

- maintain and monitor accurate attendance information;
- follow up unexplained and unexpected absence promptly;
- identify emerging patterns of absence and punctuality and communicate concerns appropriately;
- work with learners and families to understand barriers and identify support;
- liaise with safeguarding, SEND, pastoral and other relevant staff;
- coordinate with the local authority and wider professionals where required; and
- maintain appropriate records of attendance actions and interventions.

A1.5 All Staff

All staff contribute to a positive culture of attendance and will:

- promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality;
- create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments that support learners to attend and belong;
- complete attendance responsibilities accurately and promptly;
- engage with attendance training and professional development appropriate to their role and apply this consistently in practice;
- recognise emerging attendance, welfare or safeguarding concerns and share these with the appropriate staff; and
- support agreed strategies and reasonable adjustments that help learners attend and engage in education.

A1.6 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have an important role in supporting regular attendance and are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time;
- notify the school promptly of absence and provide the reason, in accordance with the school's absence-reporting arrangements;
- keep the school informed of circumstances that may affect their child's attendance;
- maintain up-to-date contact and emergency contact information;
- work with the school and relevant services where barriers to attendance arise; and
- avoid any term time absence requests as these are not automatically authorised.

A1.7 Learners

- aim for high attendance (on average, a learner would be expected to achieve an attendance figure of over 97%)
- be on time for school
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- take pride in attendance and punctuality
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late

A1.8 Trust Oversight

CELT will provide strategic oversight and assurance of attendance across its schools. Trust leaders and those responsible for governance will:

- maintain high expectations for attendance across the Trust;
- monitor attendance, persistent and severe absence and the attendance of groups who may experience additional barriers;
- provide appropriate challenge and support to schools;
- assure themselves that statutory attendance responsibilities are being met;
- evaluate the effectiveness of Trust and school attendance strategies; and
- work with schools, the local authority and wider partners to strengthen attendance practice and outcomes.

Appendix 2: Exceptional circumstance leave request notice for parents and carers

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive during your holiday. Attendance is vital to academic success and lost education poses a potential risk of underachievement. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The Department for Education no longer allows Headteachers to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you consider that your request for absence is exceptional you will need to complete the form attached to this notification. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If leave is not authorised and you nevertheless withdraw your child from school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days.

If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3-year period, you will be committing a further offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices for a second offence are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days.

Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs.

Absence not authorised by the school may also result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs.

Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent,

has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

All requests must be completed on this form; letters will not be accepted. This form should be returned to the Attendance Office at least 15 school days before the start of the absence.

I hope you will support our efforts in raising attendance and attainment at (SCHOOL NAME)

Application by parent/carer (to be completed by each parent/carer)

If you consider an absence during term time to be an exceptional circumstance, please complete this form and return it to the attendance office at least 15 school days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Learner name: _____ DOB:_____

Year/tutor group: _____

Home address: _____

_____

Post code: _____

Name of parent/carer completing this form: _____

First day of absence: _____

Date of return to school: _____

If leaving your home address before the first day of absence, please provide the date on which you will leave

Total number of days missed: _____ days

Reason for absence: _____

_____

I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the school may request that Cornwall Council issue a Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty Notice is issued to each liable parent/carer of each child taken out of school and that this carries a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay the fine, it may result in legal action being taken against me. I understand that parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) and Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Please inform us if you have a child in another Cornwall Education Learning Trust school – we will need to contact the school to discuss the absence request. Please note, we will need to share information about your child with the other school.

Name of child: _____Year: _____

School: _____

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

(Please ensure you give at least 15 school days' notice of the proposed absence)

Below to be completed by the school:

FAO – Headteacher

% current	% last year	comments

Learner name: _____ Tutor: _____ Year: _____

AUTHORISED: request has been authorised for the following dates only:

___ / ___ / _____ to ___ / ___ /_____

UNAUTHORISED: reason why absence is unauthorised:

Signed:

Headteacher:

Date:

Letter sent / Phone call / other	Signed:	Date:
Action: PN Request	Signed:	Date: