



MAIDSTONE  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
FOUNDED 1549

## Attendance Policy 2024-2025

### Key Contacts

Miss R Johnson, Deputy Head Pastoral and Senior Attendance Champion  
Mrs M Spendley, Attendance & Inclusion Manager

Reviewed and ratified by Governors September 2024  
To be reviewed July 2025 or earlier if guidance changes.

This policy will be read in conjunction with the DfE statutory guidance:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated for 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_where\\_a\\_mental\\_health\\_issue\\_is\\_affecting\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf)

The Policy should also be read in conjunction with other school policies including but not limited to the MGS Behaviour Policy.

The school will record attendance accurately in the register and share the required information with the DfE and local authority as required by the statutory guidance.

Miss Johnson, Deputy Headteacher is the School's Senior Attendance Champion. The Senior Attendance Champion is expected to set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff and have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.

## 1. Statement of Intent

Maidstone Grammar School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students.

Good attendance and punctuality is essential for students to be successful and to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Poor attendance and punctuality undermine a student's education, adversely affect progress and can put a student at risk from a safeguarding point of view.

**Improving attendance is everyone's business** - we undertake to work in partnership with parents to support good attendance and punctuality and resolve attendance problems because every lesson counts. Where appropriate we will also engage support from external agencies to help us.

As a school our expectation is that students will achieve attendance at 95% or above and excellent punctuality.

**2. The DfE Attendance Guidance (2024, section 14)** outlines school's responsibilities with regards to attendance as below:

### **Expect**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

### **Monitor**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

### **Listen and understand**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

### **Facilitate support**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

### **Formalise support**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

### **Enforce**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

### 3. Summary of School Action in relation to Attendance

Percentage:	School Action:	Actions may include one or more of the following:
95-100%	Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Policy on school website</li> <li>• Assemblies</li> <li>• SLT/ Duty staff on School Gates meet and greet students supporting good punctuality and attendance on a daily basis.</li> <li>• Morning and afternoon registration for all students / engagement with the form tutor</li> <li>• Lesson by lesson registration – all students and teachers</li> <li>• Parental access to attendance information via Talaxy</li> <li>• School / Home communication regarding absences</li> <li>• If deemed appropriate by the school, sanctioning for punctuality concerns.</li> <li>• Other as deemed appropriate by the school</li> </ul>
90-95%	Early Intervention- Students with attendance between 90% and 95% are at risk of persistent absence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning and afternoon registration for all students / support from the form tutor.</li> <li>• SLT/ Duty staff on School Gates meet and greet students supporting good punctuality and attendance on a daily basis.</li> <li>• Lesson by lesson registration – all students and staff</li> <li>• Pastoral Tracking and Monitoring through the Cause for Concern Process with agreed actions on a case by case basis.</li> <li>• Head of House / Assistant Head of House interventions.</li> <li>• If deemed appropriate by the school, sanctioning for punctuality concerns.</li> <li>• Other as deemed appropriate by the school</li> </ul>
Less than 90%	Targeted Attendance below 90% = persistent absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning and afternoon registration for all students / support from the form tutor.</li> <li>• SLT/ Duty staff on School Gates meet and greet students supporting good punctuality and attendance on a daily basis.</li> <li>• Lesson by lesson registration – individual monitoring</li> <li>• Pastoral Tracking and Monitoring through the Cause for Concern Process with agreed actions on a case by case basis.</li> <li>• Head of House / Assistant Head of House interventions which may include:</li> <li>• Pastoral support for student - understanding barriers / identifying patterns</li> <li>• Parental meetings with parents / carers</li> <li>• Report / Attendance + Punctuality report overseen by designated member of staff</li> <li>• Counselling / MIND referral if appropriate</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanctioning, where deemed appropriate by the school, for ongoing attendance / punctuality concerns</li> <li>• Consideration of Part time timetable (in exceptional circumstances) to support reintegration to school / improved attendance</li> <li>• Involvement of the Local Authority School Liaison Officer (Attendance)</li> <li>• Attendance Contract with agreed targets for attendance for significant and persistent concerns.</li> <li>• Involvement of Early Help / Children’s Social Services/ other agencies</li> <li>• Referral to local authority offsite provision (students with health needs)</li> <li>• Other as deemed appropriate by the school</li> <li>• In addition, while the school prefers to work collaboratively and supportively with parents it may, in exceptional circumstances, issue Fixed Penalty Notices or work with the Local Authority Attendance Service to make use of formal support options including Attendance Contracts, education supervision orders or legal intervention.</li> </ul>
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#### 4. The Role of School Staff

The following provides an indication of key roles and responsibilities within the school.

Role	Responsibility	Including
Headteacher	Whole School	Overall Accountability
Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) Senior Attendance Champion	Whole School- prevention, early intervention and targeted support / staff training.	Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead including Attendance Oversight  SENCo  -Provide updates and training for staff as required.  -Attend Cause for Concern Meetings and formulate actions  -Liaise with Attendance Officer and key pastoral staff -Liaise with Local Authority School Liaison Officer and Inclusion Team -Liaising with external agencies / overseeing referrals - Oversee appropriate interventions in relation to attendance concerns.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ensure that the school informs the child's Youth Offending Team and / or Social Worker of absence as required.</li> <li>-Parental contacts / meetings</li> </ul>
Assistant Headteachers	Oversight of Key Stage- prevention, early intervention and targeted support	<p>Attendance and Punctuality monitoring (key stage) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attend Cause for Concern Meetings and formulate actions</li> <li>-Liaise with Attendance Officer /Deputy Head</li> <li>-Liaising with external agencies</li> <li>-Organisation of reduced timetables</li> <li>-Parent contacts / meetings</li> </ul>
Heads of House / Assistant Heads of House	Oversight of Year 7-13 students in the House- prevention, early intervention and targeted support	<p>Attendance and Punctuality monitoring (House) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attend Cause for Concern Meetings and formulate actions</li> <li>-Liaise with Attendance Officer/ Deputy Head</li> <li>-Liaising with external agencies</li> <li>-Organisation of reduced timetables</li> <li>-Parent contacts / meetings</li> </ul>
Attendance and Inclusion Manager / Attendance Staff	Whole School- prevention, early intervention and targeted support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Data and reporting</li> <li>-Daily attendance calls</li> <li>-Attendance coding</li> <li>-Attendance and punctuality analysis and actions</li> <li>-Parent letters and communications in relation to attendance</li> <li>-Ensure that the school informs the child's Youth Offending Team and / or Social Worker of absence as required.</li> <li>-Reporting of reduced timetables to LA</li> <li>-Liaison with Deputy Head and members of the pastoral team.</li> <li>-Attend Cause for Concern meetings and formulate actions</li> <li>-Liaise with Local Authority School Liaison Officer</li> <li>-Represent the school at Attendance meetings</li> <li>-Liaising with internal and external agencies including supporting the referral process</li> </ul>
Form Tutors	Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Registering students in a timely manner</li> <li>-Ensure registers are up to date and accurate</li> <li>-Delivering key attendance messages</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Identify and report any concerns or noteworthy patterns</li> <li>-Attendance conversations with individual students</li> </ul>
Teachers	Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Registering students in a timely manner every lesson</li> <li>-Ensure registers are up to date and accurate</li> <li>-Identify and report any concerns or noteworthy patterns</li> <li>-parental contacts where required</li> <li>-Providing work for students where required by Deputy Head/ Assistant Head of Head of House.</li> </ul>

## 5. The Role of the Student

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they arrive in school on time and are present every day.

All students in Year 7-13 are required to arrive on time at their form room for statutory morning registration (8.40am) and statutory afternoon registration (1.55pm) every day.

Registers are open from 8.40 – 8.45am at morning registration and 1.55-2pm at afternoon registration.

All students must attend all timetabled lessons; lesson by lesson electronic registration will be taken for all classes.

Students may occasionally be unwell or late to school, but should take all reasonable steps to avoid this and not behave in a manner that increases the frequency of non attendance or lateness.

Any student in Year 7-13 who arrives late to school after morning registration must sign in at the Attendance Office immediately on arrival. Students arriving up until 9am will be marked in as late (L). Students arriving late after 9am without an agreed reason will be marked as an unauthorised late (U).

In the afternoon, students arriving between 2pm and 2.15pm will be marked late (L).

Students who accumulate lateness without an agreed reason will be required to make up the time through the school's sanction system.

All students in Year 7-11 are required to remain on site throughout the whole school day unless permission has been granted by the school, in which case they must sign out at the Attendance Office or front Reception before leaving the site.

In the Sixth Form, students will be permitted to leave the site during free periods once permission has been granted by SLT (which will usually be from after Christmas in Year 12

Year 13 students are permitted to leave the site during free periods.

**Tuesday's only** Sixth Form students need to sign in at the Attendance Office if they have a free period 1, in order to get a statutory AM registration mark. Year 13 (and Y12 after Christmas) students will not be

permitted to leave site before the start of P4. They must sign out either P4 or P5 promptly at the Attendance Office in order to get a PM registration mark.

SLT reserves the right to remove off site privileges at any time for Sixth Form students including for academic underperformance and / or conduct concerns or in relation to attendance / punctuality concerns.

All Sixth Form students must wear their lanyard with photo ID at all times when on site so that they can be identified as members of the school community. They must always present the Lanyard at the electronic reader when signing in or out during the school day for safeguarding reasons.

## 6. The Role of the Parent / Carer

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

**A person begins to be of compulsory school age —**

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

**A person ceases to be of compulsory school age** at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

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.

Parents are also expected to support the school in ensuring their child's good punctuality.

## 7.Punctuality

Good punctuality is very important.

The school day starts at 8.40am sharp. All students are expected to arrive at their form room **from 8.35am** and prior to 8.40am for **morning registration which takes place from 8.40am to 8:45am**. (Except Tuesday's when statutory register is taken in Period 1 lesson). Students arriving after the register is taken by the tutor will be marked in as Late (L code) with the minutes late.

Students arriving after 8.45am must report to the Attendance Office to sign in and give the reason for their lateness.

Attendance staff oversee sanctions applied for lateness to statutory am/pm registrations. Where there is no justified reason agreed by the school, students are required to make up time missed through the detention system. In addition, detentions will be issued for persistent lateness (e.g three or more lates in a two week period) This is monitored on a two week cycle by Attendance.

All students must attend **afternoon registration from 1.55pm-2pm\*** and stay for form time. Students arriving between 2.00 and 2.15 will be marked as late (L) by their tutor with the minutes late. (Except Tuesday's when statutory register is P5 for Year 7-11 and P4 or P5 for Year 13 (and Year 12 from Term 3).

Students are also required to be punctual to lessons and private study periods (6<sup>th</sup> form). Students arriving after the late pips will be marked in Late (L) with minutes late unless the school or teacher agrees there is a genuine and justifiable reason to account for this. This could include (for example only) a student arriving after a music lesson, coming from the medical room or following a meeting with a staff member. Staff will use their professional judgement when recording a justifiable lateness.

The Deputy Head (Inspire to Belong – students) and Headteacher will have the final say in determining whether a late is justified and agreed by the school.

\* please note that the timings for afternoon registration are adjusted in Term 5 and 6 due to public examinations.

### Punctuality Mark

In addition, staff can issue a Punctuality Mark – this falls under the behavior system and can be issued where teachers, form tutors or support staff (e.g. for 6<sup>th</sup> form private study) have concerns about students in relation to one off or persistent lateness to lessons/ Private study without good reason.

Five Punctuality Marks will trigger an automatic lunchtime detention and there is an escalating response through the school sanction system which is laid out in Appendix 6 of the School's Behaviour Policy.

The school carries out regular monitoring of punctuality and attendance, including through its Cause for Concern meetings six times per year. Where persistent late concerns are identified the school will use a further range of strategies to address these including attendance/punctuality report, communications with home and further escalating sanctions where required. Please refer to the School's Behavior Policy and escalation

procedures. Significant concerns in relation to unjustified poor punctuality / attendance will be dealt with at Level 3 or Level 4 or the escalation process on a case by case basis.

Persistent lateness after the morning register has closed could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

## 8. Absence from School

The 2 reasons a student can miss school are:

- The student is too ill to go to school
- the school has authorised the student to be absent.

The Attendance Office will text or email home on a daily basis for those pupils who are absent but whose parents /carers have not made contact with the school. Further contact will be made by the Attendance Office or other pastoral staff where concerns persist.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”.

Parents cannot authorise absence – only the school.

In relation to one day leave of absence requests which are declined, parents can appeal to the Deputy Head (pastoral).

In relation to leave of absence requests for exceptional circumstances of more than one day which are declined, parents can appeal to the Headteacher.

In all cases, the Headteacher will have the final decision.

## 9. Authorised Absence due to illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term. For illness (and any other absence that has not previously been agreed by the school), parents must inform the school at the earliest opportunity as described below:

**It is the responsibility of the parent to contact the school on the first day their child is absent AND on each successive day before 9am for safeguarding reasons. To do this parents should EITHER:**

- **Telephone the MGS Absence Line on: 01622 623922**

Out of hours, parents will hear a recorded message inviting them to leave the following information:

- Child's Name
- Form Group
- Reason for Absence
- Expected Date of Return (if known); if unknown, please communicate daily until your child returns to school.

**OR:**

**Email Attendance on: [Attendance@mgs.kent.sch.uk](mailto:Attendance@mgs.kent.sch.uk)**

Contact details can also be found on the school website at:

<https://www.mgs.kent.sch.uk/contact/student-absence-2/?stage=Stage>

Information about the reason for each absence is always required, either in writing, by email or via a telephone message to the MGS Absence Line. Parents should explain the nature of illness, not just say ‘illness’ or ‘unwell’ or a signed appointment card or prescription/medicine label can be provided where medical attention has been sought.

**OR:** Notify school of absence using Talaxy with full details as specified above.

## **9a Pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities.**

MGS recognises that some students face additional obstacles / barriers to attending school. Where this is evidenced and the school is in agreement, pastoral staff will use their best endeavours to work with the students and parents/carers making reasonable adjustments to support improved attendance.

This can include additional support as laid out in Section 3 of this policy: **Summary of School Action in relation to Attendance.**

## **10. Authorised Absences- including medical and dental appointments during the school day**

Parents are asked to keep to a minimum the occasions when students miss all or part of the school day (e.g. by endeavouring to arrange medical, dental, optician appointments outside school hours or during school holidays).

When medical and dental appointments cannot be arranged for outside school hours, permission for absence should be requested by letter or email in advance via the Attendance email: **Attendance @mgs.kent.sch.uk** Where permission is granted the student will be required to sign out before leaving the school site at either the Front Reception or The Attendance Office for safeguarding purposes. Students returning school during the day must sign back in.

## **11. Authorised Absence- One day requests for a Family Event or Off Site Educational Event**

Parents should seek permission in advance for a single day leave of absence for a family event such as a wedding, christening or funeral. The school's expectation is that for family events such as these, only a single day of leave will be granted. If, however, additional travelling time is needed then please explain this when completing the leave of absence e-form. Ordinarily, the school will only authorise up to three days including travel to and from the event. To request an extraordinary leave of absence for a family event parents must complete the e-form on the school website at: <https://www.mgs.kent.sch.uk/contact/student-absence-2/?stage=Stage>

This should be submitted two weeks prior to the planned event where possible.

Certain educational off site activities such as university visits, educational interviews, representative sporting fixtures, representative musical performances can help a student to develop their skills and become a well rounded individual. However, it should not be expected that participation will automatically be authorised by the school. The specific nature of the event as well as overall attendance, academic progress and attainment and conduct may all be taken into consideration when deciding whether to authorise absence.

Please note that absence requests will only be authorised for driving tests not driving lessons.

To request an extraordinary leave of absence for an educational activity parents must complete the e-form on the school website at <https://www.mgs.kent.sch.uk/contact/student-absence-2/?stage=Stage> This should be submitted two weeks prior to the planned event where possible.

## **12. Leave of Absence – exceptional circumstances during term time**

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

All requests for exceptional circumstances will be considered individually, but the default position is that it will not be granted unless there are exceptional compassionate circumstances for example, bereavement or terminal illness within the family.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance and the default position is that the school will not authorise any holiday in term time.

Holidays which have been accidentally booked during the term time or which have been booked during the term time to take advantage of cheaper booking rates are not considered exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

The DfE's G code will be used for family holiday not agreed or days in excess of agreement.

### **13.Unauthorised Absences**

An absence will not be authorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or where no explanation has been received.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip, theatre trips or "days out"
- Family Holidays (unless the school considers there are exceptional circumstances)

Where there are concerns in relation to attendance, the school will communicate with parents and seek to work with them to address this. See Section 3 above.

### **14.Child Missing From Education (CME)**

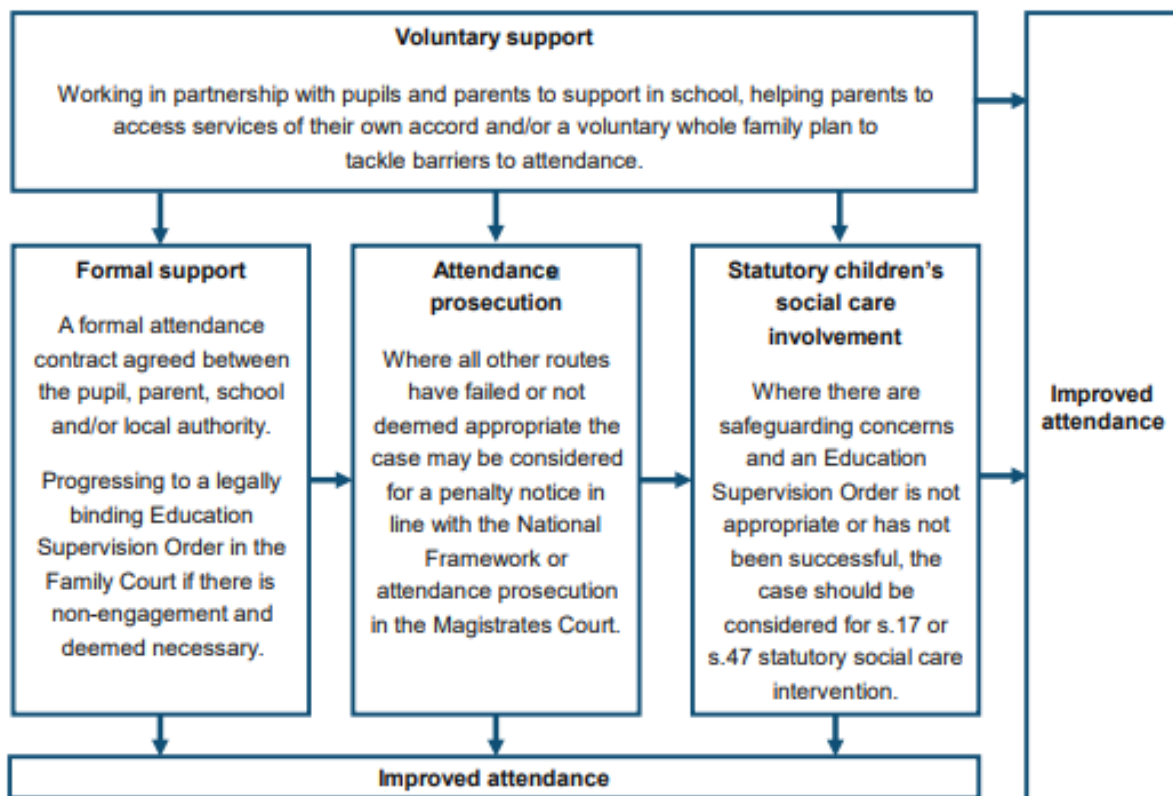
No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher (or Deputy acting on their behalf) and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service. This applies to children with ten (or more) consecutive days of unauthorised (unknown) absence and:

- Children who are moving abroad / away from the area
- Children who are transferring to a different school ( if no official confirmation from the new school is received)

- Children who fail to attend the new academic year/ term (particularly at points of transition)
- Children who suddenly stop attending school
- Children who are removed by their parents for a range of reasons

## 15. Legal Intervention

The DFE Attendance Guidance 2024 section 135 outlines the Legal Action with regards to school attendance:



Persistent unauthorised absence (attendance below 90%) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing. When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all emails and letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings will be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information. Local Authority Action may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

At MGS we aim to work with parents to promote / improve attendance. Penalty Notices will be issued on a case by case basis where we consider it appropriate.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool.

Therefore, 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

Full details of Penalty Notices can be found in the DfE guidance from section 180 onwards at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)