Warwickshire Attendance Service

Approach to Supporting School Attendance

September 2026

Purpose of this document

This document sets out Warwickshire's approach to supporting school attendance. It explains the principles, responsibilities and graduated support model that connect school-led practice, Targeting Support Meetings, Notification of Attendance Intervention and, where necessary, statutory or legal intervention.

1. Executive Summary

Regular attendance is central to children's learning, safeguarding, wellbeing and future opportunities. Warwickshire's approach is built on the principle that attendance is everyone's responsibility and that improvement is most likely when schools, families, the Local Authority and partner services work together to understand and remove barriers.

The Warwickshire Attendance Service provides advice, support and challenge, while schools retain responsibility for day-to-day attendance practice, early identification, family engagement, planning, recording and follow-up. From September 2026, the approach places greater emphasis on early intervention, stronger oversight of severe absence, prolonged sickness absence, purposeful Targeting Support Meetings and an evidence-based Notification of Attendance Intervention pathway.

2. Purpose and Scope

This approach provides a coherent countywide framework for attendance support across Warwickshire. It clarifies how universal, targeted, formal and legal activity fit together and how Warwickshire chooses to organise Local Authority attendance support in line with national expectations and local need.

It does not replace legislation, statutory guidance, Warwickshire's Code of Conduct, school attendance policies or the detailed operational guidance accompanying individual processes.

Requests for leave of absence in term time are considered by individual schools in line with legislation, statutory guidance and their attendance policy. Unauthorised leave of absence is considered separately from the graduated attendance support processes described in this document, in accordance with the national framework for penalty notices and Warwickshire's Code of Conduct. These processes do not mean that a period of support or monitoring must precede a penalty notice where support is not appropriate, such as an unauthorised term-time holiday. Decisions take account of individual circumstances and the relevant legal requirements. Schools can seek advice on leave of absence matters from the Warwickshire Attendance Service via wasstatutoryreferral@warwickshire.gov.uk.

3. Strategic and Statutory Context

The approach aligns with the Warwickshire Education Strategy 2024-2029 and Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026. It operates within the Education Act 1996, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended, the national framework for attendance penalty notices, Warwickshire's Code of Conduct, safeguarding guidance and Section 19 responsibilities.
Local Authority Measures to Support Attendance, known as LAMSA, covers Local Authority attendance support and specified statutory measures. The first LAMSA collection relates to the 2026-27 academic year and will be submitted in September 2027.

4. Vision and Objectives

Our vision

Together we will ensure every child and young person in Warwickshire attends, engages, belongs, achieves and thrives in education.

Our objectives are to:

- Promote attendance as a safeguarding, inclusion and educational priority.
- Identify emerging concerns early and prevent avoidable escalation.
- Ensure children and families receive timely, appropriate and coordinated support.
- Reduce persistent and severe absence, particularly for vulnerable groups.
- Use data and intelligence to target support and review impact.
- Use statutory and legal intervention fairly and proportionately where required.

5. Principles Underpinning Our Approach

Principle	What this means
Attendance is everyone's responsibility	Roles should be clear and action should not drift between organisations.
Support first	Barriers should be explored and appropriate support offered early, unless support is not appropriate in the circumstances.
Child and family focused	Practitioners should listen, understand individual circumstances and keep the child's education and safety central.
Inclusive and responsive	Attendance work should consider SEND, health, safeguarding, disadvantage and reasonable adjustments.
Evidence-informed	Decisions should draw on accurate data, professional knowledge, family engagement and demonstrated impact.
Clear ownership and review	Actions should identify who will do what, by when and how impact will be reviewed.
Proportionate intervention	Responses should reflect individual circumstances and relevant legal and evidential tests.

6. The Warwickshire Attendance Landscape

Persistent and severe absence may reflect overlapping barriers including physical or mental ill health, anxiety, SEND, family circumstances, disadvantage, safeguarding concerns, transport, peer relationships, unmet need and experiences within school. A percentage alone cannot explain the reason for absence.

Warwickshire will use countywide and school-level information to identify variation, target resources, strengthen practice and maintain particular oversight of severely absent children, those at risk of severe absence and pupils experiencing prolonged illness absence.

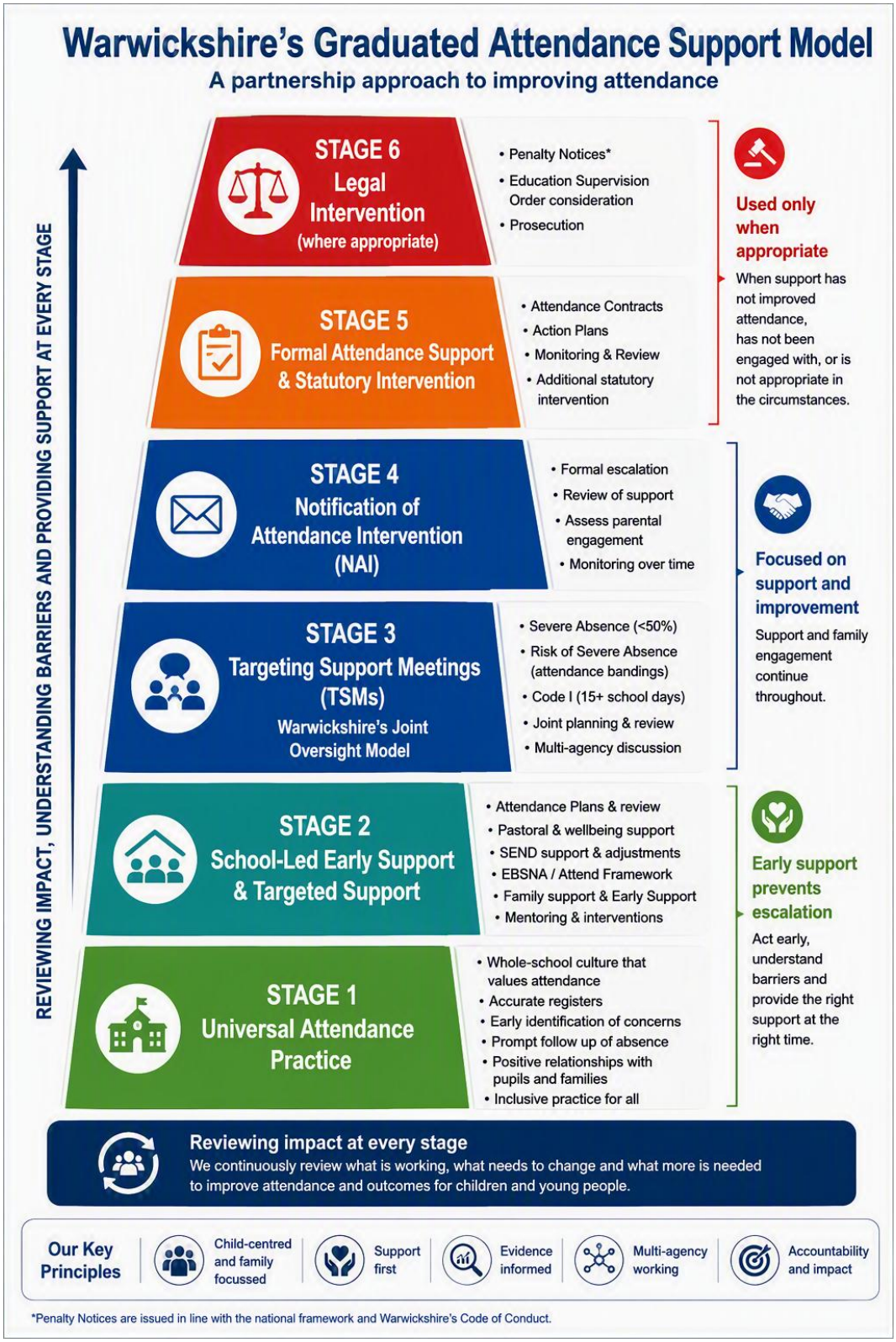
7. Warwickshire's Graduated Attendance Support Model

Warwickshire's approach is aligned to the principles and expectations set out in Working together to improve school attendance. The guidance makes clear that attendance is everyone's responsibility and that support should be provided at the earliest opportunity to prevent absence becoming persistent or severe.

Whilst Working together to improve school attendance sets out the national expectations for schools and local authorities, attendance arrangements may vary between local authorities. Warwickshire's approach has been developed to reflect local need, feedback from schools and the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities. The model below sets out how attendance support is delivered in Warwickshire, from universal attendance practice through to formal intervention where this is required.

The model is not intended to be a rigid sequence. Children may move between stages depending on their needs, circumstances and the level of support required.

Warwickshire's graduated model at a glance



Stage 1: Universal Attendance Practice

Strong attendance begins with a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of regular attendance, values belonging and inclusion, and builds positive relationships with children and families.

- Promote a positive culture that values regular attendance.
- Maintain accurate admission and attendance registers.
- Analyse attendance data and identify emerging concerns.
- Follow up absence promptly and consistently.
- Work positively with children and families.
- Consider attendance alongside safeguarding, SEND and inclusion.
- Ensure staff understand their attendance responsibilities.

Schools remain responsible for leading universal attendance practice and the day-to-day management of attendance within their setting.

Stage 2: School-Led Early Support and Targeted Support

Where attendance begins to decline, schools should act quickly to understand barriers and provide support before absence becomes persistent or severe. Support may include attendance plans, pastoral intervention, SEND support and reasonable adjustments, EBSNA or Attend Framework approaches, family support, Early Support, mentoring, wellbeing support and multi-agency discussion.

The emphasis is on working with the family and reviewing whether support is improving attendance and engagement. Attendance percentages alone should not determine the response.

Stage 3: Targeting Support Meetings (Warwickshire's Joint Oversight Model)

Targeting Support Meetings are Warwickshire's primary mechanism for joint attendance discussion, support, challenge and oversight between schools and the Local Authority. They are a distinctive feature of the Warwickshire model.

Why Warwickshire uses TSMs

The refreshed TSM process provides a structured forum where attendance concerns can be reviewed consistently, support can be evaluated and clear actions agreed. It is designed to focus discussion on children, barriers, support and outcomes, while reducing avoidable duplication of data already available.

- Earlier identification of deteriorating attendance.
- Review of all severely absent children, including where absence is authorised.
- Discussion of children at risk of severe absence using VYED attendance bandings.
- Oversight of children with 15 or more school days of Code I sickness absence.
- Review of children already subject to attendance intervention.
- Joint planning, named actions, due dates and review arrangements.

TSMs complement rather than duplicate existing multi-agency processes. Their purpose is to maintain visibility, avoid drift and ensure the right support, challenge or follow-up is in place.

Stage 4: Notification of Attendance Intervention (NAI)

Where concerns continue despite school-led support, a school may submit a Notification of Attendance Intervention. NAI is Warwickshire's formal route for notifying the Local Authority that additional attendance intervention may be required. It complements ongoing school support rather than replacing it.

- Review the barriers and support already provided.

- Assess family engagement and attendance patterns.
- Monitor progress and impact over time.
- Determine whether further intervention is required.

Notifications should clearly evidence barriers, support, engagement, review and the rationale for escalation. Schools must continue attendance support, monitoring, accurate coding and family engagement throughout the NAI process.

Stage 5: Formal Attendance Support and Statutory Intervention

Where concerns persist following review and monitoring, more formal attendance support may be considered. Possible responses include an Attendance Contract, Attendance Action Plan, continued monitoring, additional multi-agency involvement or another appropriate statutory response.

Support remains central. Decisions should be informed by evidence, professional judgement and the circumstances of the child and family.

Stage 6: Legal Intervention

Where attendance remains a concern and support has not improved attendance, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate in the circumstances, the Local Authority may consider legal intervention.

- Penalty Notices where legally available and appropriate.
- Education Supervision Order consideration.
- Prosecution under the relevant provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Any decision will be made in accordance with legislation, statutory guidance, the national framework, Warwickshire's Code of Conduct and applicable evidential and public interest considerations. Legal intervention is not an end in itself. The primary aim remains improving attendance and ensuring children receive their education.

Reviewing Impact Throughout the Graduated Model

Reviewing impact is central to Warwickshire's approach. At every stage, schools and the Local Authority should ask whether attendance is improving, barriers have reduced, support is having the intended effect, the plan needs to change, or further support, challenge or intervention is required.

Continuous review

The focus is not simply on completing actions. It is on improving attendance, reducing barriers and achieving better outcomes for children and young people.

8. Children Requiring Strengthened Oversight

Severe absence

Every child below 50% attendance will be reviewed through the TSM process, whether absence is authorised or unauthorised. The review should establish barriers, the current plan, support, impact, when the child was last seen and by whom, actions and review arrangements.

Risk of severe absence and persistent absence

VYED bandings, school tracking and professional judgement will support early identification. Persistently absent pupils should be prioritised where attendance is worsening, barriers are complex, support is not having impact or formal intervention is being considered.

Health-related absence and Section 19

Children with 15 or more school days of Code I absence will be considered through the TSM process. Schools should confirm concerns, oversight, the existing plan and whether Medical Education Team advice is needed. Potential Section 19 provision should be raised through the sickness return and discussed promptly with the Medical Education Team.

SEND and vulnerable groups

Schools should consider suitable provision and reasonable adjustments. Oversight should remain alert to children with social workers, children in care, young carers, pupils known to youth justice services and other children whose circumstances increase the risk of educational disengagement.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

Warwickshire will monitor both activity and impact, including attendance trends, vulnerable groups, severe absence oversight and timeliness of support, TSM quality, NAI outcomes, sickness absence oversight, statutory intervention and stakeholder feedback. Quality assurance will include supervision, case sampling, consistency checks and annual evaluation.

10. Governance and Accountability

The Service Manager for Attendance, CME and EHE is responsible for oversight of this approach. Performance, risk and emerging themes will be reported through relevant Education and Children's Services governance arrangements. Schools remain accountable through their leadership, trust and governance arrangements.

11. Review and Implementation

This approach applies from September 2026 and will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, national data requirements, legal advice or Local Authority operating arrangements change.

The approach will be supported by the accompanying TSM and NAI processes, school guidance documents and ongoing engagement with schools and partners. Feedback will continue to inform the future development of Warwickshire's attendance arrangements.

Our commitment

Warwickshire Attendance Service will work with schools and partners through clear expectations, respectful challenge, timely support and proportionate intervention, keeping children and young people at the centre.

Appendix1: Key References and Supporting Documents

This approach should be read alongside the following legislation, statutory guidance and supporting Warwickshire documentation.

National legislation and guidance

- Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)
- Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026
- Education Act 1996
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Warwickshire guidance and supporting documentation

- Headteacher and Attendance Lead Briefing: Changes for 2026-27
- School Attendance Lead Practice Guidance
- Targeting Support Meeting (TSM) documentation
- Notification of Attendance Intervention (NAI) documentation
- WCC FPN code of conduct
- Supporting children who are unable to attend their education setting (Section 19 of the Education Act 1996) policy - Warwickshire County Council
- Part-Time Timetable guidance
- Elective Home Education guidance and notification processes

Related strategies and frameworks

- Warwickshire Education Strategy 2024-2029
- Warwickshire safeguarding arrangements and related guidance

Contact	Details
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School support	Allocated Attendance Adviser