LDBS Academies Trust
LAT and LAT 2

ADOPTION GUIDANCE AND POLICY CHANGE LOG
Attendance Policy 2026-27

PLEASE REMOVE THIS PAGE UPON ADOPTION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY AND BEFORE PUBLICATION ON THE WEBSITE / SHARED DRIVE AND COMMUNICATION TO STAFF / OTHER RELEVANT PARTIES. AFTER DOING SO, PLEASE UPDATE THE TABLE OF CONTENTS!

General guidance for Headteachers and Local Governing Bodies (LGBs):

- This Policy sets minimum compliance requirements for all LATMAT (LAT and LAT 2) schools.
- A space has been foreseen in the header of this Policy, for the school can add its own name and logo.
- A box has been foreseen below the Trust vision, for the school to add its school-specific vision.
- Annex 1 must be completed by the school with the school-specific information before it is submitted to the LGB for adoption.
- It is the responsibility of the LGB to:
  - Approve this Policy (with Annex 1 - School-specific details completed);
  - Ensure local implementation complies with this template.

Any concerns regarding the Policy should be raised with the Trust via the local Governance Professional.

Please do not change the formatting of titles etc as the document contains cross-references.

Generic changes to all policy documents in 2026 -27:

- Change of the registered address of both LDBS Academies Trust and LDBS Academies Trust 2. The registered address is now: Park Lane, London, England N17 0HH
- New Articles of Association, approved by the DfE in Aug 2026 (to be ratified by Members) changes the name of the Local Academy Committees (and LAC members) to Local Governing Bodies (and local governors). The terminology in this policy has been updated to reflect the new Articles.
- Name of new Chair of the Board of Directors, Peter King

Changes to this policy document since its last revision:

- Model Attendance Policy content inserted for 2026-27.
- Trust-wide graduated response and early-intervention thresholds introduced.
- Safeguarding and educational-neglect escalation strengthened.
- Trust monitoring, governance assurance and Ofsted-aligned expectations expanded.
  Missing operational provisions from the January 2026 policy reinstated: register records and amendments, statutory notifications, parent reporting and reintegration following absence.
- School-specific operational information consolidated in Annex I.
- Attendance case checklist and key definitions retained as Annexes II and III.

[Add school logo and name]
part of the

LDBS Academies Trust
LAT and LAT 2

Attendance Policy 2026-27

Document type	School Policy	**Statutory DfE / Trust**	DfE / Trust
Approval Level	Trust Board of Directors	**Review Frequency**	Annual
Approval date	1 October 2026	**Next Review Date**	30 September 2027
On behalf of the Trust Board of Directors			
Name	Peter King	**Name**	Christalla Jamil
Position	Chair of the Board of Directors	**Position**	CEO
On behalf of the Local Governing Body			
Name	[name]	**Name**	[name]
Position	Chair of the Local Governing Board	**Position**	Headteacher
Publication to	☒ GovHub	☐ Staff info site	☒ Website

Trust Vision Statement

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." (Matthew 13: 31-32)

Trust Vision

In the parable of The Mustard Seed, Jesus reminds us that even the smallest of seeds has the potential to grow into the fullness of itself. We aim to provide the right environment for our children, and all whom we serve, to flourish into the fullness of themselves. He tells us these seeds grow into trees, capable of providing a home for a rich diversity of life; our work is to ensure all in our communities grow into people of compassion and wisdom with a deep spiritual understanding of how to support the needs of others.

School Vision [Insert school vision]

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1 Purpose and principles

Excellent attendance is fundamental to pupils' achievement, belonging, safety, wellbeing and future life chances. Attendance is everybody's business. The Trust expects every school to create a welcoming, calm, safe and inclusive environment in which pupils want to attend, while acting early and proportionately where attendance begins to deteriorate.

- Build strong, respectful relationships with pupils and families and understand barriers before deciding the response.
- Expect high attendance for every pupil while recognising that some pupils, including pupils with SEND, health needs, young carers and pupils with a social worker, may require additional support and reasonable adjustments.
- Use attendance data intelligently to identify emerging patterns before persistent absence becomes entrenched.
- Work collaboratively with families, the local authority, health, social care and other partners.

- Escalate support as absence intensifies and use formal/legal intervention where voluntary support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or inappropriate.
- Treat severe and sustained absence as a potential safeguarding concern and respond through safeguarding procedures where neglect, abuse or exploitation may be indicated.

2 Statutory and national framework

This policy should be read alongside the current versions of:

- DfE Working together to improve school attendance (statutory guidance, July 2026).
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and local safeguarding partnership thresholds/procedures.
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.
- SEND Code of Practice and Equality Act 2010 duties, including reasonable adjustments.
- DfE National Framework for penalty notices, as contained in attendance guidance, and the relevant local authority code of conduct.
- Academy trusts: governance guide (2026) and Academy Trust Handbook 2026.
- Ofsted state-funded schools inspection toolkit and operating guidance for use from September 2026.

3 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Trust minimum expectation
Trust Board	Promotes attendance as a strategic priority; monitors patterns across schools; assures itself that schools fulfil statutory duties; challenges variation, persistent/severe absence and outcomes for vulnerable groups; ensures appropriate training and Trust-wide support.
Local Academy Committee	Reviews attendance data and trends, including disadvantaged pupils, SEND and other vulnerable groups; challenges leaders on pupils/cohorts needing most improvement; seeks assurance on safeguarding, support and escalation; acts within the Trust Scheme of Delegation.
Headteacher	Accountable for implementation of this policy, culture and statutory compliance; ensures sufficient staffing/capacity and effective partnership working.

Role	Trust minimum expectation
Senior Attendance Champion	A senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance, analysing data, leading targeted support, convening formal meetings and working with the LA/partners.
Attendance staff	Maintain accurate registers; first-day response; daily follow-up; data monitoring; family contact; records of support/action; escalation to senior leaders/DSL.
DSL / safeguarding team	Ensures absence is considered in the wider safeguarding picture; responds immediately to welfare concerns; leads/coordinates social care referrals where safeguarding thresholds are met.
All staff	Promote attendance and belonging; notice emerging patterns; accurately follow registration procedures; share concerns promptly.
Parents/carers	Ensure their child attends every day the school is open unless an allowable reason applies; inform school promptly of absence; engage with support and meetings.
Pupils	Attend regularly and punctually; engage with support; tell a trusted adult about barriers to attendance.

4 Daily attendance procedures

- Registers must be taken accurately at the same time for all pupils at the start of each morning and afternoon session and coded in accordance with current DfE guidance.

  Schools must maintain the admission and attendance registers in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Any amendment to an attendance-register entry must preserve the original entry and record the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and position of the person making it. Attendance-register entries must be retained for six years after the date on which the entry was made.

  Schools must provide attendance and admission-register information to the Department for Education and the local authority as required, including statutory notifications when a pupil is added to or removed from the admission register outside standard transition points, fails to attend regularly, has 10 continuous school days of unauthorised absence, or is expected to miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Where falling attendance or barriers relate to a pupil with an EHC plan, the school must notify the local authority.

- Unexplained absence must be followed up promptly on the first day. Schools must seek to establish contact with parents/carers on the morning of the first day of absence and, in all cases, by 9:45am, using more than one contact route where necessary. Contact must be prioritised and escalated by 9:45am where the pupil is subject to Children's Social Care, has a social worker, is looked-after or previously looked-after, or is otherwise deemed vulnerable by the school.

- If contact has not been established by 9:45am for a pupil in a priority vulnerable group, attendance staff must escalate immediately to the Senior Attendance Champion and DSL/safeguarding team. The DSL will consider the child's wider safeguarding context, whether a welfare check, social worker contact, Early Help/MASH consultation or police contact is required, and will ensure all actions and attempted contacts are recorded.
- Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, the school will make reasonable enquiries. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, the school will refer to children's social care and contact police where appropriate.
- Schools must follow children-missing-education procedures where applicable and must not remove a pupil from roll except in accordance with the School Attendance Regulations.
- Late arrival is monitored. Arrival after the register closes is recorded using the appropriate unauthorised late code and contributes to the national penalty-notice threshold where applicable.

  Schools will inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels at least once each term, and more frequently where attendance is causing concern or is subject to an attendance support plan.

5 Trust graduated response to absence

Important. Persistent absence is missing 10% or more of possible sessions (attendance of 90% or below in common percentage reporting). Severe absence is missing 50% or more. The 97%, 95% and 92% bands below are Trust early-warning triggers, not statutory DfE categories. Schools must intervene earlier where the pattern, reason, vulnerability or safeguarding context requires it.

Attendance / stage	Status	Required school action	Oversight
97%–100% **Universal**	**Dark Green**	Promote strong attendance and belonging. Monitor punctuality and emerging patterns. Celebrate improvement appropriately without penalising pupils for unavoidable/authorised absence.	Class/attendance team. No formal plan unless pattern/context indicates concern.
95%–96.9% **Early concern**	**Light Green**	Review pattern and reasons; check for repeated days, lateness or emerging barriers. Contact parent where pattern is concerning. Speak with pupil. Check SEND, health, bullying, family and safeguarding context. Agree light-touch actions and monitor for 2–4 weeks.	Attendance lead / class teacher. Record contact and agreed actions.

92%–94.9% **Targeted support**	**Amber**	Attendance lead reviews case. Meet/contact family and pupil to identify barriers. Put a written attendance support plan in place with clear actions, adjustments/support and review date. Consider Early Help/other services. For SEND/health needs, involve SENCO/DSL and ensure reasonable adjustments and appropriate medical/education guidance are followed.	Senior Attendance Champion oversees. Review at least fortnightly until improving.
90%–91.9% **At risk of persistent absence**	**Dark Amber**	Formal attendance meeting led by Senior Attendance Champion. Complete a fuller barrier analysis; agree intensive plan and short review cycle. Discuss case with LA School Attendance Support Team where appropriate. Consider voluntary whole-family/Early Help assessment and multi-agency support. Consider formal support if voluntary support is ineffective/not engaged with.	Headteacher/SAC oversight. LAC receives anonymised trend assurance.
Below 90% **Persistent absence**	**Red**	Treat as priority case. Intensify targeted support and partnership working. Review at least fortnightly. Agree or refresh formal attendance plan/contract where appropriate. Work with LA on formal support, including Attendance Contract or Education Supervision Order where appropriate. Consider Notice to Improve/penalty notice/prosecution route in accordance with national framework and LA code where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or inappropriate. DSL must review safeguarding context.	SAC + DSL + LA as appropriate. Clear chronology, support offered, parental engagement, impact and escalation recorded.

Below 75% **High persistent absence**	**Dark Red**	Senior multi-agency review. School must evidence what is preventing attendance, what support/adaptations have been tried and impact. Consider Early Help/statutory services, health/SEND assessment, alternative provision or other education support where appropriate. Increase welfare contact and reintegration planning. Review safeguarding risk explicitly.	Headteacher/SAC/DSL. Trust school-improvement/attendance lead notified under Trust monitoring arrangements.
Below 50% **Severe absence**	**Critical**	Top-priority case requiring intensive, coordinated multi-agency response. Immediate DSL safeguarding review. Work with LA Attendance Support Team and relevant partners. Consider whether absence is an indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation and whether s.17/s.47 social care intervention is required. Where all appropriate support/educational provision has been facilitated but severe unauthorised absence continues, DfE guidance states this is likely to constitute neglect: the school must make/ensure a referral to Children's Social Care in line with local safeguarding procedures, explicitly identifying concern about educational neglect/severe sustained absence and providing the full chronology and impact on the child. Do not wait for 50% where safeguarding concerns arise earlier.	Headteacher + DSL + SAC. Trust notified. Social care referral/consultation recorded; LA attendance/legal pathway progressed as appropriate.

6 Safeguarding and educational neglect

Absence is not automatically evidence of neglect. Schools must distinguish between absence caused by barriers that require support and circumstances in which parental action/inaction, despite appropriate support and provision, may be causing serious and sustained loss of education.

Trust safeguarding rule. A percentage must never be used as the sole safeguarding threshold. Any concern that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm requires action through the school's child-protection procedures immediately, regardless of attendance percentage.

- At every escalation point, staff must consider whether absence is part of a wider pattern of neglect, abuse, exploitation, domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health/substance misuse, unmet SEND/health need, bullying, caring responsibility or other welfare concern.
- For severe absence below 50%, the DSL must complete and record a safeguarding review and consider consultation/referral to Children's Social Care under local thresholds.
- Where all avenues of support have been facilitated, appropriate educational support/provision has been made available, and severe unauthorised absence continues, the school will make/ensure a Children's Social Care referral because DfE attendance guidance states this is likely to constitute neglect.
- The referral should set out attendance history and codes; impact on education/development/wellbeing; pupil voice; parent engagement; support and adjustments offered; Early Help/multi-agency work; SEND/health considerations; legal attendance action; home visits/welfare checks; and why the school believes statutory assessment is now required.
- If Children's Social Care does not accept a referral and the school remains concerned, the DSL will use the local escalation/resolution process and continue safeguarding action. Attendance/legal intervention should continue where appropriate.
- Where a pupil is already open to Children's Social Care, attendance concerns must be shared promptly with the social worker and incorporated into the Child in Need/Child Protection plan where relevant.

7 National penalty notice threshold and legal intervention

The Trust's percentage triggers do not replace the National Framework for penalty notices.

Trigger / route	Trust requirement
National penalty-notice threshold	10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and the period can span terms/school years.
When threshold is met	The school must consider the individual circumstances and whether support is appropriate. Where support is appropriate, continue/strengthen support or use a Notice to Improve where required. Where support is inappropriate (for example, some term-time holiday cases) or has failed/not been engaged with, referral for a penalty notice may be appropriate under the LA code.
Formal support	Schools and LAs should consider Attendance Contracts and, where appropriate, Education Supervision Orders when voluntary support is unsuccessful/not engaged with.

Trigger / route	Trust requirement
Prosecution	A last-resort route led by the local authority where other voluntary/formal support or legal intervention has failed or is inappropriate.
Safeguarding	Legal attendance action does not replace safeguarding action. Where severe absence creates safeguarding concerns, statutory social care involvement may be the more appropriate route or may run alongside attendance action.

8 Pupils requiring additional consideration

- Pupils with SEND: schools must not lower ambition for attendance, but must understand disability-related barriers, make reasonable adjustments and ensure attendance action does not discriminate. SENCO involvement should be early where SEND is a barrier.
- Physical or mental ill health: schools should work with families and health professionals, avoid unnecessary demands for medical evidence, and use support/reintegration plans. Where a child cannot attend because of health needs, schools must work with the local authority regarding its section 19 duties where applicable.
- Pupils with a social worker: attendance must be a priority protective factor. Schools should communicate concerns promptly to the social worker and Virtual School Head arrangements where relevant.
- Looked-after and previously looked-after pupils: work closely with the Designated Teacher, social worker/Virtual School and carers; attendance should be reflected in the PEP where relevant.
- Young carers: identify sensitively and work with local services to reduce caring-related barriers.
- Part-time timetables: may only be used in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest time necessary, with a clear time-limited reintegration plan, regular review, parental agreement and appropriate safeguarding oversight. They must not be used to manage behaviour.
- Alternative provision/off-site education: schools remain responsible for appropriate oversight, coding and safeguarding and must know whether the pupil is attending the provision.

8.1 Reintegration following absence

Schools will plan a pupil's return following lengthy, repeated or otherwise significant absence in partnership with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals. Full-time attendance remains the goal, but any phased return or part-time timetable must be exceptional, time limited, regularly reviewed and supported by a clear route back to full-time attendance.

A written reintegration plan should identify barriers, pupil and parent voice, reasonable adjustments, key adults, curriculum and pastoral support, responsibilities, review dates and the arrangements for stepping support up or down. Where health or SEND is relevant, the plan should align with the pupil's individual healthcare plan, SEN support plan or EHC plan.

Schools will consider learning gaps, relationships, belonging, safeguarding and handover from any hospital education, tuition, alternative provision or other service. The impact of the plan on attendance, participation, wellbeing and learning must be reviewed and recorded, with multi-agency support or escalation where progress is not secured.

9 Attendance data, disadvantaged pupils and Trust monitoring

Schools will analyse attendance at pupil, cohort and whole-school level and will not wait until pupils cross the persistent-absence threshold before acting.

Frequency	Minimum analysis
Daily	Unexplained absence; vulnerable pupils; late arrival; immediate safeguarding/welfare concerns.
Weekly	Pupils moving through Trust trigger bands; new patterns; pupils receiving attendance support; impact of actions.
Half-termly	Whole-school attendance/absence; PA and severe absence; year groups; disadvantaged; SEND/SEND Support/EHCP; pupils with a social worker where data can be handled safely; young carers and other locally significant groups; authorised/unauthorised absence; punctuality.
Termly	Benchmark against Trust, local and national data where available; evaluate strategy and interventions; report strategic information to LAC/Trust.
Annually	Evaluate policy impact, group gaps, use of support/legal intervention, staff training, stakeholder experience and priorities for the next year.

Disadvantaged pupils must be a standing focus. Schools should use Pupil Premium strategically where attendance is an identified barrier and evaluate whether the chosen approach is improving attendance, participation and educational outcomes.

10 Ofsted-aligned expectations

The Trust does not operate this policy for inspection. However, the policy is deliberately aligned with the renewed Ofsted framework. Schools should be able to demonstrate that leaders:

- know their attendance picture, including patterns for different pupil groups;
- identify pupils at risk early and understand the causes of absence;
- work with pupils and families to remove barriers and make appropriate adjustments;
- improve attendance for persistently and severely absent pupils;
- work effectively with local authority and safeguarding partners;
- do not use reduced timetables or remote education as an easy substitute for attendance;
- evaluate whether attendance strategies are working, especially for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and other vulnerable groups;
- ensure governance understands and challenges attendance trends and impact.

11 Governance and Trust assurance

Governance level	Minimum assurance
Local Academy Committee	Termly dashboard: overall attendance, PA, severe absence, disadvantaged and SEND gaps, trends, high-level casework impact, use of formal/legal routes, safeguarding themes and actions. Governors should challenge variation and whether interventions are working.
Trust Board	Trust-wide trends and variation between schools; disadvantaged/SEND/social-care cohorts; persistent/severe absence; capacity and training; effectiveness of Trust support; compliance and strategic risk.
Headteacher / CEO escalation	Schools must notify the Trust in accordance with Trust risk/escalation procedures where severe absence is unusually high, a safeguarding/systemic concern emerges, statutory duties may not be met, or LA partnership/legal processes are not securing progress.

12 Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside relevant Trust and school policies, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education procedures
- Complaints Policy

13 Policy monitoring and review

The Board will review this policy at least annually and sooner where statutory guidance changes.

Annex I – School-specific information related to this policy

Local detail to complete	School entry
Named Senior Attendance Champion	
Named attendance staff / first-day absence arrangements	
Register opening/closing times	
Parent absence reporting route	
Local authority School Attendance Support Team contact/referral route	
Local authority penalty notice / legal intervention route and code of conduct	
Early Help route	
Children's Social Care / MASH consultation and referral route	
Local safeguarding partnership threshold document / escalation route	
CME notification route	
Trust escalation/contact route	
Local attendance target and current baseline	

Annex II – Attendance case checklist

Check	Evidence / date
Attendance pattern and coding checked; percentage alone not relied upon	
Pupil voice gathered and barriers understood	
Parent contact/meeting and views recorded	
SEND, disability, health and reasonable adjustments considered	
Bullying, safeguarding, family and caring factors considered	
Written support/action plan in place and reviewed	
Early Help / multi-agency support considered or initiated	
LA Attendance Support Team discussed/involved where appropriate	
Formal support/legal options considered	
DSL safeguarding review completed at severe absence / earlier if concerns	
Social care referral/consultation made where threshold met; outcome recorded	
Impact on attendance, learning, wellbeing and participation evaluated	

Annex III – Key definitions

Term	Definition / Trust use
Persistent absence (PA)	A pupil missing 10% or more of possible school sessions. Schools should act before this threshold is reached.
Severe absence (SA)	A pupil missing 50% or more of possible school sessions. This group is a top priority for intensive multi-agency support.
Unauthorised absence	Absence recorded using a DfE code classified as unauthorised.
Educational neglect	Not a diagnosis made from an attendance percentage alone. Severe and sustained failure to secure a child's education may constitute neglect, particularly where appropriate support/provision has been facilitated and severe unauthorised absence continues. Safeguarding decisions must follow local statutory thresholds/procedures.
Attendance support plan	A school record of barriers, pupil/parent voice, agreed support/adjustments, responsibilities, targets and review dates.
Attendance contract	A formal voluntary agreement used as part of the statutory attendance intervention framework; schools should work with the local authority on its use.
Notice to Improve	A formal notice within the National Framework for penalty notices where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, subject to the national framework/local code.