# ST. ANDREW'S C. OF E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

# ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PRACTICE

## 'Growing and Learning Together with God'

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| **Approved by:** | Governing Body | **Date:** Autumn 2026 |
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**School Vision/Mission Statement**

At St. Andrew's CofE Primary School we aim to serve our community and provide an education of the highest quality.

**Introduction and Legal Framework**

St. Andrew's CofE Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and excellent attendance are essential to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child the best educational experience possible. This policy has been developed in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' and reflects our legal duties under the Education Act 1996.

Regular school attendance is a safeguarding matter. We recognise that poor attendance can be an indicator that a child is experiencing difficulties, and we will work with families and other agencies to identify and address any barriers to attendance.

**Our Expectations**

We expect all pupils to attend school every day, on time, unless they are genuinely too ill to attend or there are other unavoidable reasons for absence. Our expectation is 100% attendance, and we will work with families to achieve this. At St. Andrew's, we are committed to creating a positive and welcoming environment where every child wants to attend.
This policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, local Headteacher Associations, the Local Authority and parents/carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in school attendance are aware of attendance matters and outlines the school's commitment to attendance.

## 1. Policy Aims

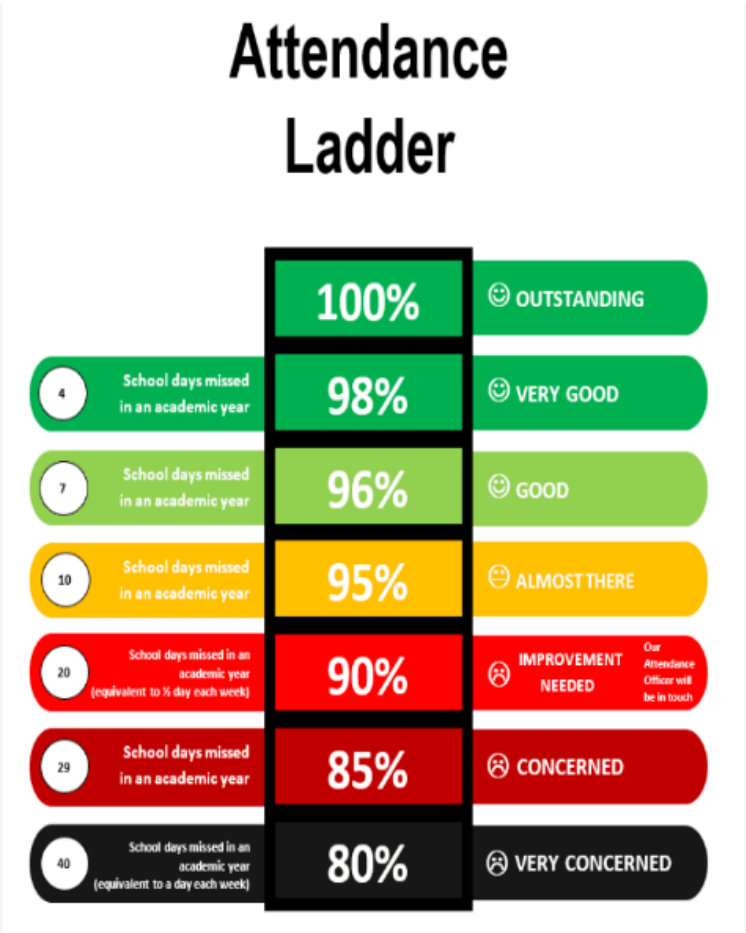
This policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising awareness with pupils and parents/carers of the importance of good attendance and punctuality

- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- Providing early intervention and support for pupils and families who face barriers to regular attendance
- Paying particular attention to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those known to children's social care, and any other pupils who may face barriers to regular attendance

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a child's attainment, and all pupils benefit from regular school attendance.

The graphic and table below show the direct link between attendance and achievement. Research consistently demonstrates that pupils with higher attendance rates achieve better outcomes, while persistent absence significantly impacts on attainment, progress, and pupils' ability to maintain friendships and feel part of the school community.




| Attendance during one school year | Equivalent days missed | Equivalent sessions missed | Equivalent weeks missed | Equivalent lessons missed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 95% | 9 days | 18 sessions | 2 weeks | 50 lessons |
| 90% | 19 days | 38 sessions | 4 weeks | 100 lessons |
| 85% | 29 days | 58 sessions | 6 weeks | 150 lessons |
| 80% | 38 days | 72 sessions | 8 weeks | 200 lessons |

Beyond academic achievement, regular school attendance is crucial for safeguarding. When a child is absent, particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, this can be an indicator that they are experiencing difficulties or are at risk of harm. At St. Andrew's, we monitor attendance closely as part of our commitment to keeping all children safe and ensuring they receive the education they are entitled to.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. We expect all pupils to attend school every day. We recognise that there are times when absence is unavoidable, such as when a child is genuinely too ill to attend.

The decision about whether an absence is authorised rests with the school, not with parents/carers. The headteacher (or authorised member of staff) will consider each absence request or explanation and decide whether it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents/carers will be informed if an absence is recorded as unauthorised.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Maintained schools: Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Issues regarding attendance are reported to governors during formal and informal visits and at every Governing Body meeting. The Chair of Governors can be contacted about matters relating to attendance via chair@standrewsuxbridge.org.uk

**3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Attendance and Admissions Officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:

- Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

**3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance and Senior Attendance Champion is the head teacher and can be contacted via 01895 232768 or office@standrewsuxbridge.org.uk.

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher and governing board
- Working with attendance officers from the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue penalty notices or notices to improve

**3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Daily monitoring of attendance data and first-day response to unexplained absences
- Recording attendance accurately using the correct codes
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Supporting the Senior Attendance Champion in delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Providing regular attendance reports to the Senior Attendance Champion and school staff
- Working with attendance officers from the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence
- Making attendance returns to the Local Authority for pupils with unauthorised absence codes (G, N, O, U) and extended sickness absences as required
- Supporting with Targeting Support Meetings and partnership working with the Local Authority

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer can be contacted via telephone number, 01895 232 768 and/or email address, office@standrewsuxbridge.org.uk.

**3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on Arbor.

**3.6 School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the relevant staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

**3.7 Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email, absence@standrewsuxbridge.org.uk, the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. If the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance officer, who can be contacted via email or telephone

**3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:45am and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school on time on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

**If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9am. The school has an absence email address which can be used any time, day or night to report a child's absence. The school office can be contacted from 8:15am or parents can call into school personally and speak to the office staff. The email address is absence@standrewsuxbridge.org.uk
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence if requested to support the absence.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should call or email the school, providing evidence of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

**4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Parents, or the child if appropriate, should sign their child in using the digital sign in app located in the Reception.

The school will respond to ongoing punctuality issues through the following methods:

**4.4a How we manage lateness:**
The school day starts at 8:40am when children can begin to come into school. Registers are taken at 8:45am and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time. Children arriving after 8:55am are required to come in to school via the school office if accompanied by a parent or carer, the parent/carer will explain to the office staff the reason for the lateness, and this will be recorded on our registers. The school may send home 'late notes' in order to keep parents and carers informed. Members of the Senior Leadership Team will regularly monitor patterns of lateness on the gate and speak to relevant parents as necessary.

At 9:15am registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher, Pastoral Lead and /or the Attendance Officer. however, you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models for our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

**4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact other persons listed on our MIS and/or the police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 7 below), as appropriate

### 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels [e.g. via half-termly written reports].

- Real-time access via the Arbor parent app, where parents can view their child's attendance record at any time
- Immediate contact when we notice any changes or dips in attendance patterns
- Face-to-face conversations at parents' evenings and school gates
- Phone calls or meetings for more serious attendance concerns
- We will talk in terms of days or sessions missed rather than percentages. For example, we'll tell you that your child missed 1 in 10 lessons, rather than saying they have 90% attendance.
- Our approach focuses on partnership and support. We position ourselves and parents/carers as 'on the same team', working together to solve attendance issues."

## 5. Authorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, unavoidable and short unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur. 'Unavoidable' implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Examples include:

- Medical emergencies
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)
- Death or terminal illness of a close relative
- Wedding or funeral of a close relative
- Religious observance
- Bereavement
- Attending external examinations

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### 5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

### 5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At St. Andrew's CofE Primary School, we believe in creating a positive culture where all children can, and want to, be in school. We want to reward high attendance and not just penalize pupils for poor attendance. We use a range of strategies to reward good attendance and support pupils to improve their attendance:

- **Celebrating Good Attendance**
- **Monthly celebrations** in assemblies, recognising classes with excellent attendance
- **Weekly 100% attendance** Dojo rewards
- **Termly certificates and awards** for pupils who have achieved good attendance or shown improvement
- **Visual displays** around school showing attendance achievements by class
- **Regular positive feedback** to pupils and parents/carers when we notice improvements, even if attendance isn't yet at 100%
- **Recognition** in our school newsletter, dojo and on our website
- **Exciting curriculum** - we share what's coming up through newsletters, dojo and the Arbor app, so pupils don't want to miss out
- **Enrichment activities** including clubs, trips and special events, particularly scheduled at times when attendance tends to dip.
- **Breakfast club** to encourage pupils to come to school early, get a nutritious breakfast, and socialise before lessons begin
- **Positive 'meet and greet'** at the school gates every morning by senior staff, ensuring every pupil receives a warm welcome
- **Daily monitoring** of attendance, with swift action when we notice changes

- **Weekly conversations** with pupils and parents/carers when attendance dips, focusing on understanding and removing barriers
- **Personalised support** for pupils who need it, which might include mentoring, adjusted start times, or access to additional pastoral support
- **Home visits** for pupils whose attendance is a concern, to understand challenges and work together on solutions

## 7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

**Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis, taking into account the specific circumstances of each pupil and family.**

**We do not operate a blanket approach to issuing or not issuing penalty notices. Each case is considered individually, and we assess whether a penalty notice is the most appropriate intervention or whether support would be more effective.**

**7.1 Early identification and support**

**We take a proactive approach to attendance, identifying pupils at risk of poor attendance early and putting support in place before absence becomes persistent or severe.**

**Early identification:**

- We monitor attendance data weekly to identify any pupils whose attendance is beginning to decline
- We pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, those known to children's social care, young carers, and pupils with mental health needs
- Any drop in attendance band is a concern, not just once absence becomes persistent or severe
- We act quickly when we notice patterns or trends, including increased lateness or specific days of absence

**Attendance action plans:**

When we identify a pupil whose attendance is a cause for concern, we will:

- Meet with the pupil and their family to understand the barriers to attendance
- Work in partnership with the family to develop an attendance action plan that sets out:
    - Clear, achievable targets for improvement
    - Specific support the school will provide
    - Actions the family will take
    - A timeline for review
    - Names of key staff members involved
- Ensure the plan is personalised to the pupil's individual circumstances and needs
- Regularly monitor and review the impact of the plan, adapting it as needed
- Celebrate progress and improvements, however small

**Support for specific groups:**

**Pupils with SEND:**

- We work closely with our SENCO to identify and address any SEND-related barriers to attendance
- We make reasonable adjustments to support pupils with SEND to attend regularly
- We use the graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) to ensure support is effective
- We involve specialist services where appropriate
- Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, we inform the local authority

**Pupils with mental health needs:**

- We recognise that mental health problems can be a barrier to attendance
- We provide access to pastoral support, counselling and our mental health lead
- We work with external mental health services (e.g. CAMHS) where appropriate
- We make reasonable adjustments to support pupils experiencing mental health difficulties
- We follow our safeguarding procedures where mental health concerns may indicate a child is at risk

**Young carers:**

- We are alert to the needs of young carers and the impact caring responsibilities can have on attendance
- We work with families and external agencies to ensure appropriate support is in place
- We make reasonable adjustments where appropriate while maintaining high expectations

**Pupils with a social worker:**

- We work closely with social workers and other professionals to support pupils known to children's social care
- We share information effectively and participate in multi-agency meetings
- We use knowledge of a pupil's social care status to inform decisions about promoting their welfare and reducing barriers to attendance

**Monitoring impact:**

We regularly review the effectiveness of our support by:

- Tracking attendance data for pupils receiving support
- Gathering feedback from pupils, families and staff
- Evaluating whether interventions are having the desired impact
- Adapting our approach where support is not working as intended

**7.2 Targeting Support Meetings and partnership working**

**When attendance concerns continue despite school-based support, or when absence becomes persistent (10% or more) or severe (50% or more), we work in partnership with the Local Authority.**

**Targeting Support Meetings:**

We hold regular Targeting Support Meetings with the Local Authority attendance team to:

- Review pupils with persistent and severe absence
- Share information about support already provided
- Identify additional support that may be needed from wider services
- Agree next steps and actions
- Determine whether legal intervention may be appropriate

**Partnership working:**

We work collaboratively with:

- Local Authority attendance officers
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social workers and early help services
- Health services (including school nurses, CAMHS, GPs)
- Housing and family support services
- Other schools (where pupils are dual registered or transitioning)

We keep our partners informed regarding specific pupils where appropriate, sharing information in line with our safeguarding and data protection obligations.

**7.3 Attendance contract**

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action. Attendance Policy Autumn 25

**7.4 Notice to Improve**

**Where support has been offered and engaged with but attendance concerns continue, we may issue a Notice to Improve.**

A Notice to Improve:

- Is a formal written notice issued by the school or Local Authority
- Sets out the attendance concerns and the support that has been provided
- Explains what improvement is required and by when
- Warns that failure to improve may result in a penalty notice or other legal action
- Gives parents a clear opportunity to improve attendance before further action is taken

We will only issue a Notice to Improve where:

- Support has been appropriate and offered
- The family has engaged with support
- Attendance has not improved sufficiently
- We believe the family needs a formal warning before legal action is considered

**7.5 Penalty notices**

**The headteacher (or a deputy or assistant headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.**

**National threshold:**

A penalty notice may be considered when a pupil has accrued **10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**.

Unauthorised absence includes, but is not limited to:

- **Code G** – Holiday not authorised by the school
- **Code O** – Absent in other or unknown circumstances (where no satisfactory explanation has been provided)
- **Code U** – Arrived after the register closed
- **Code N** – Reason not yet established (if this remains the case after investigation)
- Any combination of unauthorised absence codes

**Individual consideration:**

**We do not operate a blanket approach to penalty notices. Each case is considered individually, taking into account:**

- The specific circumstances of the pupil and family
- Whether support has been offered and engaged with (except in cases of unauthorised term-time holiday)
- Whether a penalty notice is the most appropriate intervention
- Whether the pupil has any vulnerabilities or additional needs that should be considered
- Our obligations under the Equality Act 2010

**Unauthorised term-time holiday:**

**Where a pupil is absent due to unauthorised term-time holiday (Code G), a penalty notice will normally be considered without the need for support to be offered first.** This is because:

- The absence is a deliberate choice by the parent
- The school has already refused the request for leave
- Support is unlikely to address the issue

However, even in holiday cases, we will consider individual circumstances before issuing a penalty notice.

**Before issuing a penalty notice, we will:**

- Check with the local authority
- Send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued
- Consider whether:
    - The national threshold has been met
    - A penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
    - Further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be more appropriate
    - Any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

**Who can be issued with a penalty notice:**

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice. This will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

**A penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child** where the threshold is met.

**Payment and charges:**

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice.

**First penalty notice:**

- £80 if paid within 21 days
- £160 if paid within 28 days

**Second penalty notice (issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil):**

- £160 if paid within 28 days

**Limit on penalty notices:**

**A maximum of two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a rolling three-year period.**

**Third offence within three years:**

**If the national threshold is met for a third time within three years of the first penalty notice being issued, a penalty notice cannot be issued. Instead, alternative legal action will be considered, which may include prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.**

**Penalty notices for presence in a public place during exclusion:**

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

In these cases:

- The parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days
- These penalty notices are not subject to the same considerations about support
- They do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process

**If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.**

# 8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

## 8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority.

We take a proactive and preventative approach to attendance, looking at our data and targeting 'at risk' pupil groups before their attendance dips, rather than focusing solely on individual pupils once their attendance gets off track.

We act early as soon as we notice a drop in attendance, before a pupil's attendance issues become entrenched. Any drop in attendance band is a concern, not just once absence becomes persistent or severe.

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority.

**Working with families**

We invite parents/carers into school to talk, focusing on building a trusting relationship with the family and offering empathy and support, while setting clear expectations. We approach conversations with empathy, emphasising that parents/carers aren't in trouble, that we're here to listen, understand, help and support, and that we want to work with them as a team to support their child and come up with a plan together.

We work on building trust with families by using language that feels natural and friendly, acknowledging the challenges that parents/carers are up against, and giving parents/carers agency by asking what they need and how we can help.

**Understanding barriers to attendance**

As soon as we notice a pupil's attendance rate begin to drop, we bring all available information together to help us diagnose the problem. We consider whether pupils have risk factors for persistent absence, including: being eligible for free school meals (FSM), having previously been suspended or excluded, having attended alternative provision (AP), being a looked-after child (LAC), mental health challenges like anxiety.

We assemble a team to support the pupil and their family, with one person responsible for overseeing the whole process. We identify a member of staff to be a 'trusted adult' for the pupil and/or their family, who acts as a point of contact, meets with them as often as needed, builds a relationship with them, and regularly reports back.

We hear directly from the pupil about what they find difficult about attending school. The pupil's trusted adult approaches the pupil when they judge the time is right, being tactful and gentle, framing the issue positively from a place of care and concern, and not dismissing the pupil's worries or telling them off for being absent.

**Strategies for removing in-school barriers**

We work with the pupil and their family to develop bespoke strategies to help overcome each barrier. We seek expertise from relevant staff including our SENCO, designated safeguarding lead (DSL), mental health lead, class teachers, and teaching assistants. Where appropriate, we involve external support such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), our local authority, or other mental health professionals already involved with the pupil.

For pupils who have missed a significant period of school, we consider providing transition activities as part of their reintegration plan. This might include short visits planned outside of lessons, meeting key staff, and reviewing changes to the timetable, curriculum or behaviour policy. We provide photos, visual prompts and a site map for parents/carers to share at home if the pupil is nervous.

We ensure our staff show a united front when welcoming pupils back to school, making sure they are friendly and welcoming. We recognise that if a pupil is made to feel like a problem when they return, or as if nobody noticed, they may find returning to school challenging.

We monitor the impact of our support by tracking the pupil's attendance, wellbeing and academic performance. The pupil's trusted adult checks in with them regularly, and we ask relevant staff and the family for feedback. We update our plans as and when needed based on the feedback we gather.

## 8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

We recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

**Working with families**

When we have a pupil struggling with attendance due to mental or physical ill health, we check in with parents/carers to understand how the pupil's health is affecting their ability to attend school. We work collaboratively with parents/carers and relevant healthcare professionals to:

- Identify the pupil's specific barriers to attendance
- Agree a support package to help them attend as fully as possible
- Decide together how best to tackle these barriers
- Maintain regular communication about the pupil's progress and wellbeing

We communicate our mental health and wellbeing support to parents and carers through our website, newsletters, and workshops or drop-in sessions where parents can come in and ask questions. We point parents and carers to tools and resources so mental health and wellbeing support can continue at home.

**Adjustments the school may make**

We have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities. Where something our school does places a pupil with disabilities at a disadvantage compared to other pupils, we take reasonable steps to try to avoid that disadvantage.

We consider each individual case when deciding what adjustments are reasonable, taking into account factors such as:

- Our resources and the availability of financial or other assistance
- The extent to which taking any particular step would be effective in overcoming the substantial disadvantage experienced by the pupil
- The effect of the disability or health condition on the individual
- Health and safety requirements
- The interests of other pupils

Reasonable adjustments we may make include:

**Modified timetables or part-time attendance** - Where appropriate, we may agree a temporary part-time timetable with a proposed end date, in line with DfE guidance on working together to improve school attendance

- Flexible start times - Allowing pupils to arrive at a different time if mornings are particularly difficult
- Quiet spaces - Providing access to a calm space during break and lunch times for pupils who find socialising overwhelming
- Movement between lessons - Scaffolding transition periods to make sure they aren't chaotic and anxiety-inducing
- Auxiliary aids or services - Providing equipment or support such as hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, or special software where this would alleviate substantial disadvantage
- Access to pastoral support - Regular check-ins with a trusted adult or member of pastoral staff
- Academic adjustments - Working with our SENCO to recommend catch-up interventions or modifications to the curriculum where needed

For pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, we communicate with the local authority at an early stage to agree a package of support that is consistent with the provision set out in the plan. Where the level of support needed may mean the local authority needs to review and amend the EHC plan, we work collaboratively to facilitate this.

We may also put in place or update an existing individual healthcare plan to support pupils with physical health conditions.

Additional support we provide:

**Monitoring and early identification**

We train our staff to be alert to signs of poor mental or physical health problems. Although only trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis, our staff are well placed to observe pupils day to day and identify those who may be experiencing difficulties.

If staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health and it's also a safeguarding concern, they must take immediate action by following our child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL.

**In-school support**

Once we've identified pupils who need support, we provide targeted interventions which may include:

- Emotional skills interventions - Such as social stories and zones of regulation to help pupils recognise and express their feelings
- Emotional literacy interventions - Such as Lego Therapy
- Personalised support - This might be 1-to-1 intervention with a teaching assistant trained in mental health, or longer-term interventions like nurture groups
- In-school counselling - Where available and appropriate
- Access to our mental health lead - For strategic oversight and coordinated support

**External referrals**

If a pupil's mental or physical health problem is serious, or does not improve after targeted in-school intervention, we refer them to external agencies. We speak to the pupil's parents/carers, who should make an appointment with the GP. The school or the GP can make a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

We make pupils aware of different organisations which may be able to help in their specific scenario, such as Childline, SHOUT, NHS Every Mind Matters, Barnardo's, and YoungMinds. We make this information available through posters on noticeboards, leaflets in open areas, our school newsletter and school website.

**Promoting positive mental health culture**

We promote wellbeing across the school by:

- Using assemblies and circle time as opportunities to talk about mental health and wellbeing
- Normalising conversations about feelings and emotions
- Teaching about mental wellbeing as part of our health education curriculum
- Creating a positive, welcoming and inclusive environment
- Encouraging positive relationships between staff and pupils
- Monitoring pupils' mental health and wellbeing through regular surveys and check-ins

**Supporting return to school**

When a pupil returns to school after a period of absence due to ill health, we:

- Welcome them back warmly and positively
- Ensure staff are aware of any ongoing support needs
- Provide a trusted adult for regular check-ins
- Monitor their wellbeing and academic progress
- Maintain communication with parents/carers about how they're settling back in
- Adjust our support package as needed based on feedback from the pupil, family and staff

We recognise that pupils may need extra time to adjust after returning from absence, and we ensure staff are aware of this and provide appropriate support rather than viewing any difficulties as poor behaviour choices.

## 8.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

**Our approach**

We recognise that certain groups of pupils may face additional barriers to attendance, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, those known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those facing other barriers such as young carers. We are committed to creating a supportive environment where all pupils want to attend and can thrive.

**Understanding barriers**

We understand that low attendance can correlate with various factors, including:

- Being eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- Having a special educational need or disability (SEND)
- Being a looked-after child (LAC) or previously looked-after
- Mental health challenges, such as anxiety

**Identifying pupils and barriers**

We have established a culture where staff understand the range of barriers that pupils may face to their learning and/or well-being. We quickly and accurately identify pupils facing these barriers through:

- Regular monitoring of attendance data for different pupil groups
- Close liaison between our attendance lead, SENCO, designated safeguarding lead, and class teachers
- Day-to-day processes and detailed data analysis

We take action as soon as we notice a drop in attendance, before a pupil's attendance issues become entrenched. Any drop in attendance band is a concern, not just once absence becomes persistent or severe.

**Our support approach**

**Pupils with SEND:**

Our qualified SENCO works closely with the attendance lead and class teachers to:

- Identify pupils' emerging or changing needs quickly and accurately
- Ensure support is effective and draw on specialist advice when necessary
- Use the 'graduated approach' (assess, plan, do and review) to ensure pupils receive appropriate support
- Adapt the environment, teaching and the school's wider offer to support pupils with SEND to access education
- Monitor progress and review adapt

**Disadvantaged pupils:**

We have a secure understanding of our disadvantaged pupils' needs and use the best available evidence, including high-quality research, to inform our approaches. Our pupil premium strategy is:

- Aligned with wider school improvement priorities
- Implemented and monitored effectively, including through training and support for staff
- Regularly reviewed, with timely and effective

**Pupils known to children's social care:**

We work closely with social workers, virtual school headteachers and other professionals to:

- Plan and provide multi-agency support for pupils
- Share information effectively with the local authority

- Use knowledge of a pupil's social care status to inform decisions about promoting their welfare and reducing barriers to attendance

**Young carers and pupils with other barriers:**

We pay close attention to the needs of pupils facing other barriers (such as young carers) so that they attend regularly and come to school on time. We work with parents, local authorities and other agencies to communicate expectations about attendance and improve it.

Reasonable adjustments and interventions

We ensure that:

- Staff have the necessary expertise, confidence and support to adapt behaviour and attendance policies appropriately and consistently for pupils with specific needs
- We make reasonable adjustments when considering pupils' needs, challenges and barriers, while maintaining high expectations for what all pupils can achieve
- We use timely, well-chosen, targeted interventions to support those who need additional help in meeting our
- We ensure that any reasonable adjustments and/or interventions are timely, appropriate, well-chosen and targeted to meet individual needs.

**Working with families**

We approach conversations with families with empathy, recognising that they may be dealing with challenging circumstances. We:

- Frame conversations supportively, emphasising that we want to work with them as a team
- Build trust through regular communication and support
- Acknowledge the challenges parents/carers face
- Give parents/carers agency, asking what they need and how we can help
- Work with parents to understand and address barriers to attendance The Key Leaders
- Monitoring and review

We regularly review the effectiveness of our approach for pupils with barriers to attendance, ensuring that our interventions are having a positive impact and making adjustments where needed.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

## 8.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

**Our approach**

We recognise that some pupils may need to be absent from school for extended periods due to unavoidable circumstances, such as serious illness, medical treatment, bereavement, or other significant life events. We are committed to supporting these pupils to reintegrate successfully back into school life, ensuring they feel welcomed, supported and able to catch up with their learning.

**What we mean by 'lengthy absence'**

For the purposes of this policy, a lengthy absence is typically considered to be:

- More than 2 consecutive weeks
- Any period where a pupil has missed a significant amount of learning
- An absence that has resulted in the pupil feeling anxious about returning to school
- We will assess each situation individually and tailor our support accordingly.

**Planning for return**

**Early communication:**

As soon as we become aware that a pupil will be absent for an extended period, we will:

- Maintain regular contact with the family throughout the absence period
- Discuss the anticipated return date and any concerns the pupil or family may have
- Begin planning for reintegration early to make the process easier for everyone involved

**Gathering information:**

Before the pupil returns, we will:

- Speak with parents/carers to understand the pupil's current situation and any ongoing needs
- Liaise with medical professionals, social workers, or other external agencies as appropriate (with parental consent)
- Consult with the pupil (where appropriate) to understand their concerns and preferences
- Review what academic work has been missed and what support will be needed

**Creating a reintegration plan:**

We will develop a personalised reintegration plan that considers:

- The pupil's age, needs and individual circumstances
- Any medical, emotional or social needs that may affect their return
- Academic catch-up requirements
- The length of time the pupil has been absent
- Whether a phased return would be appropriate

**The reintegration meeting**

**Timing:**

We will arrange a reintegration meeting before the pupil returns to school, or on their first day back (depending on circumstances). This gives families time to prepare and ensures everyone is clear about the support in place.

**Who will attend:**

The meeting will typically include:

The pupil (where appropriate)

- Parents/carers
- The class teacher
- A senior leader or pastoral lead
- Our SENCO (if the pupil has SEND)
- Any other relevant staff members (e.g. teaching assistants who work closely with the pupil)

Where appropriate, we may also invite external professionals who have been supporting the pupil during their absence.

**What we will discuss:**

During the meeting, we will:

Welcome the pupil and family back warmly, communicating that the pupil is valued

Discuss the reasons for the absence and any ongoing needs (sensitively and appropriately)

Explain the support we will provide, including:

- Academic catch-up support and any interventions
- Pastoral support available (e.g. time with a trusted adult, access to our school counsellor or pastoral lead)
- Any reasonable adjustments we will make
- Which staff members will be working with the pupil and how they will help
- Set clear, achievable targets for the pupil's return (both behavioural and academic, as appropriate)

- Agree on a timeline for the reintegration period
- Answer any questions or concerns from the pupil and family
- Discuss support available outside of school (e.g. through the NHS, local authority services)

**Reintegration plan:**

We will create a simple, written reintegration plan that includes:

Clear targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (SMART)

Details of the support we will provide

Names of key staff members the pupil can talk to

Review dates to check on progress

An end date when we expect the pupil to be fully reintegrated

The plan will be shared with the pupil (in age-appropriate language), parents/carers, and relevant staff members.

Phased returns

In some circumstances, a phased return may be appropriate. This might involve:

Starting with shorter days and gradually building up to full-time attendance

Beginning with certain lessons or activities and gradually expanding

Having a quiet space available for the pupil to take breaks if needed

Any phased return will:

Be agreed with parents/carers and appropriate professionals

Be for as short a time as possible

Have a clear end date when the pupil is expected to return to full-time education

Be regularly reviewed

Never be used indefinitely or as a way to manage behaviour

We will only use reduced timetables in very exceptional circumstances, such as when a pupil has a specific medical need that prevents them from attending full-time education.

Supporting the pupil's wellbeing

**Trusted adults:**

We will ensure the pupil has a designated trusted adult they can talk to at any time about:

Worries about being back at school

Concerns about catching up with work

Friendship issues

How they're feeling generally

**Peer relationships:**

We will:

Prepare the pupil's classmates for their return (with the family's permission and in an age-appropriate way)

Support the pupil to reconnect with friends

Be alert to any bullying or unkind comments related to their absence

Help the pupil feel they still belong in the school community

**Emotional support:**

We recognise that returning after a lengthy absence can be emotionally challenging. We will:

Check in regularly with the pupil to see how they're settling back in

Be understanding if the pupil finds the transition difficult

Provide access to pastoral support, counselling or other services as needed

Work with external professionals (e.g. mental health services) where appropriate

Academic support

**Catch-up provision:**

We will:

Identify what learning the pupil has missed

Provide targeted support to help them catch up, which may include:

Small group interventions

One-to-one support

Modified or differentiated work

Additional time to complete tasks

Ensure the pupil doesn't feel overwhelmed by the amount they need to catch up on

Celebrate progress and effort, not just achievement

**Ongoing monitoring:**

We will regularly review the pupil's academic progress and adjust support as needed.

## 8.5 Prolonged absence for children in the EYFS

Our approach

We recognise that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) may experience prolonged absences for various reasons, and that these absences can have a significant impact on their development and learning during this critical stage. We are committed to supporting our youngest pupils and their families to maintain regular attendance and to reintegrate successfully after any unavoidable extended absence.

Understanding attendance in the EYFS

**Attendance is not compulsory until the start of the term following a child's fifth birthday.** However, we strongly encourage regular attendance from the start of reception, as:

Consistent attendance helps children settle into school routines

It supports the development of friendships and social skills

It ensures children don't miss crucial early learning experiences

Regular attendance establishes positive habits for future schooling

What we mean by 'prolonged absence' in the EYFS

For children in reception, we consider a prolonged absence to be:

More than 1 week of consecutive absence

A pattern of frequent short absences that disrupts the child's settling-in period

Any absence that impacts the child's ability to develop key skills in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, or physical development

Common reasons for prolonged absence in the EYFS

We understand that young children may be absent for extended periods due to:

Illness (particularly during the settling-in period when children are exposed to new infections)

Medical appointments or treatment

Family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, family illness)

Extended holidays or travel (which we would not authorise during term time)

Anxiety or difficulty settling into school

Maintaining contact during absence

When a child in the EYFS is absent for a prolonged period, we will:

Make regular contact with the family to check on the child's wellbeing

Discuss the anticipated return date

Understand any ongoing needs or concerns

Provide reassurance and support to parents/carers

Share information about what the class has been learning, where appropriate

We recognise that parents/carers may be anxious about their child's absence, particularly if it occurs during the crucial settling-in period. We will approach all communication with empathy and support.

Supporting children's learning during absence

**For short-term illness:**

We will not send home formal learning activities, as rest and recovery are the priority

We will share general information about topics being covered in class if parents/carers request it

**For longer absences (more than 2 weeks):**

We may provide simple, play-based activities that support learning at home

We will share stories, songs or rhymes that the class is enjoying

We will suggest ways parents/carers can support their child's development at home through everyday activities

We will always ensure that any activities suggested are:

Age-appropriate and play-based

Not overwhelming for families

Optional rather than mandatory

Focused on maintaining the child's connection to school

Planning for the child's return

**Early communication:**

As soon as we know when a child will be returning, we will:

Contact parents/carers to discuss any concerns they or we may have

Arrange a meeting or phone call to plan the return (if appropriate)

Find out if the child has any new needs or anxieties

Discuss whether a phased return would be helpful

**Gathering information:**

Before the child returns, we will:

Speak with parents/carers to understand what the child has experienced during their absence

Find out if there are any medical, emotional or developmental needs we should be aware of

Check whether any external professionals (e.g. health visitors, speech and language therapists) are involved

Review what learning and experiences the child has missed

**Creating a return plan:**

For children who have been absent for an extended period, we will create a simple return plan that includes:

Whether the child will return full-time or on a phased basis

Any adjustments we will make to support the child

Which staff members will be the child's key points of contact

How we will help the child reconnect with their peers

How we will support the child to catch up with any missed learning

Phased returns

For some children, particularly those who were still settling into reception when they became absent, a phased return may be appropriate. This might involve:

Starting with shorter sessions (e.g. mornings only) and gradually building up to full days

Having a parent/carer stay for part of the session initially

Beginning with familiar activities and routines before introducing new experiences

Any phased return will:

Be agreed with parents/carers

Be for as short a time as possible

Have a clear plan for building up to full-time attendance

Be regularly reviewed

Supporting the child's wellbeing on return

**Settling back in:**

We understand that returning after a prolonged absence can be unsettling for young children. We will:

Welcome the child back warmly and positively

Allow time for the child to re-familiarise themselves with the classroom and routines

Pair the child with a friendly classmate to help them settle back in

Be patient if the child shows signs of anxiety or finds it difficult to separate from parents/carers

Provide extra reassurance and comfort as needed

**Key person support:**

The child's key person (or class teacher) will:

Spend extra time with the child during their first few days back

Observe how the child is settling and identify any concerns

Communicate regularly with parents/carers about how the child is doing

Adapt support based on the child's needs

**Monitoring development:**

Following a prolonged absence, we will:

Observe the child carefully to assess their current stage of development

Identify any areas where the child may need additional support

Use our ongoing assessment processes (including the progress check at age 2 for younger children, where applicable)

Work with parents/carers to address any developmental concerns

If we identify that a child has fallen behind in their development, we will:

Discuss this sensitively with parents/carers

Put appropriate support in place using our graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review)

Involve our SENCO if needed

Work with external professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, health visitors) where appropriate

Supporting parents and carers

We recognise that parents/carers of EYFS children may find prolonged absences particularly worrying. We will:

Communicate regularly and reassuringly

Provide information about how we will support their child's return

Listen to and address any concerns they have

Share information about their child's development and progress

Signpost to external support services where appropriate

**Building confidence:**

For parents/carers who are anxious about their child returning, we will:

Invite them to visit the classroom before the child returns

Offer to meet with them to discuss their concerns

Provide reassurance about how we will support their child

Be flexible about settling-in arrangements

Addressing barriers to attendance

If a pattern of prolonged or frequent absences emerges, we will:

Meet with parents/carers to understand the underlying reasons

Work together to identify and address any barriers to attendance

Consider whether the child or family needs additional support

Involve external agencies where appropriate (e.g. health visitors, family support services)

Follow our usual attendance procedures for persistent absence

**Common barriers in the EYFS might include:**

Separation anxiety (for the child or parent/carer)

Difficulty with toileting or self-care

Speech and language delays that make school challenging

Unidentified special educational needs

Family circumstances or challenges

Cultural factors or misunderstandings about the importance of regular attendance

We will approach all discussions with empathy and a focus on partnership with families.

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/690b26c69456634d9795fde0/Schools_inspection_toolkit.pdf and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

# 9. Attendance monitoring

## 9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Attendance Policy Autumn 25

The school will make attendance returns to the Local Authority as required, including:

- Returns for pupils with unauthorised absence codes (G, N, O, U)
- Returns for pupils with extended periods of sickness absence
- Information about pupils who are persistently or severely absent
- Any other returns requested by the Local Authority

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

### 9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil’s absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

### 9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

**Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.**

**Our strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence includes:**

**Early identification and intervention:**

- Weekly monitoring of attendance data to identify pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent
- Immediate action when a pupil's attendance drops below 95%
- Targeted support before absence becomes persistent (below 90%) or severe (below 50%)

**Regular meetings with families:**

**We hold regular meetings with parents/carers of pupils who are persistently or severely absent, or who are at risk of becoming so.** These meetings:

- Take place at least half-termly, or more frequently if needed
- Involve the pupil (where appropriate), parents/carers, class teacher, and Senior Attendance Champion
- Focus on:
    - Discussing attendance and engagement at school
    - Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance
    - Explaining the help that is available
    - Explaining the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Reviewing any existing actions or interventions
    - Agreeing next steps and support
- Result in a clear action plan with specific, measurable targets
- Are followed up with written confirmation of what was agreed

**Targeted support and interventions:**

We provide access to wider support services to remove barriers to attendance, including:

- Early Help services
- Family support workers
- Mental health services (CAMHS, school counsellor)
- Educational psychology
- SEND support
- Social care (where appropriate)
- Housing and welfare support
- Health services

**Partnership working:**

- We work closely with the Local Authority attendance team through regular Targeting Support Meetings
- We share information with relevant partners and keep them informed about specific pupils
- We participate in multi-agency meetings and contribute to coordinated support plans
- We work with other schools where pupils are dual registered or transitioning

**Monitoring impact:**

- We track the attendance of pupils receiving targeted support
- We review the effectiveness of interventions regularly
- We adapt our approach where support is not having the desired impact
- We celebrate improvements and successes

**Escalation where support is not successful:**

Where support has been offered but has not been successful, or where families do not engage with support, we will:

- Issue a Notice to Improve (where appropriate)
- Consider a penalty notice
- Consider other legal interventions, including prosecution
- Continue to work with the Local Authority to determine the most appropriate course of action

**Specific considerations:**

When working with persistently and severely absent pupils, we:

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Sensitively consider the reasons for absence, including:
    - Mental health difficulties
    - Physical health needs
    - SEND
    - Caring responsibilities
    - Family circumstances
    - Bullying or relationship issues
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010
- Maintain high expectations while adapting our approach to individual needs
- Focus on building trust and working in partnership with families

## 10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Senior Attendance Champion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Pupil mental health and wellbeing
- EYFS policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **Attending a place other than the school** | | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| W | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **Absent – leave of absence** | | |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| S | Study leave | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination |
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **C2** | Part-time timetable | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable |
| **C** | Exceptional circumstances | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **Absent – other authorised reasons** | | |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **I** | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) |
| **E** | Suspended or excluded | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made |
| **Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause** | | |
| **Q** | Lack of access arrangements | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school |
| **Y1** | Transport not available | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available |
| **Y2** | Widespread disruption to travel | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| **Y3** | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |
| **Y4** | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |
| **Y5** | Criminal justice detention | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:<br>• In police detention<br>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or<br>• Detained under a sentence of detention |
| **Y6** | Public health guidance or law | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Y7** | Any other unavoidable cause | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes |
| **Absent – unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Holiday not granted by the school | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason for absence not yet established | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes |
| **O** | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| **U** | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session |
| **Administrative codes** | | |
| **Z** | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered |
| **#** | Planned whole-school closure | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |