Attendance Policy and Procedures

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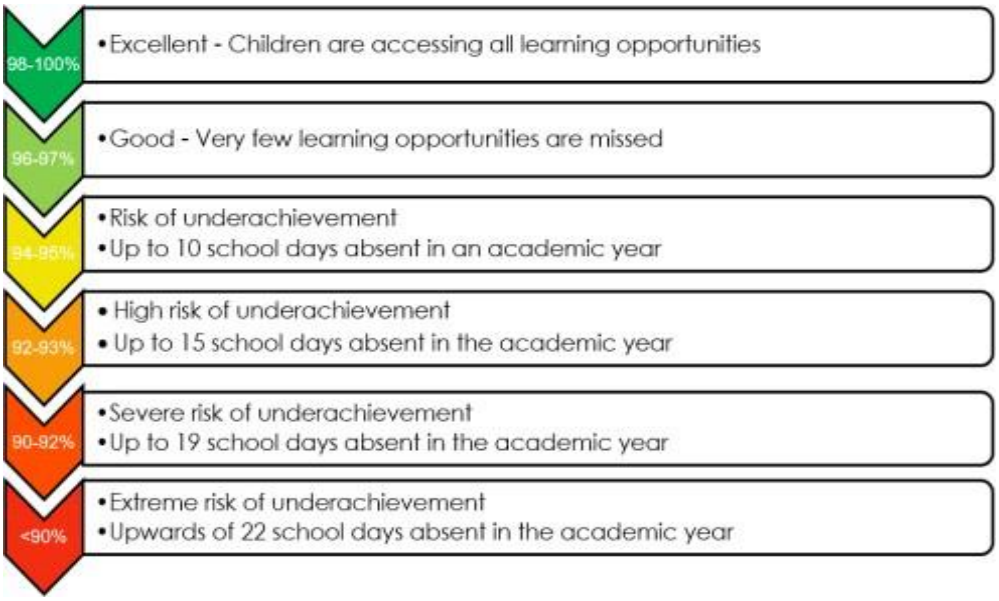

Summary – Attendance at a Glance

Attendance Matters

At North Oxfordshire Academy, we have the highest expectations across all areas of school life including attendance. We value positive relationships between both staff and pupils and want all pupils to feel they belong and are valued. We work with our pupils to ensure that they have the highest possible attendance at school. We believe that this is the best way for them to succeed and to get the most out of all we have to offer.

There is a clear and established link between academic outcomes and school attendance; we recognise the importance of good attendance in enabling pupils to achieve excellent outcomes to give themselves the very best chance in life.

One missed session a week (there are two sessions per day) will result in an attendance figure of 90%. This equates to 19 days of education in a year and risks affecting academic outcomes.

It is vital we work together to teach our pupils the value of attending school every day.

However, we do appreciate that at times, pupils may not be able to attend school. We ask our parents/carers and carers to follow the processes below. They support our safeguarding procedures.

Should a parents/carers have a concern about a child's attendance, they should contact us to discuss this. We believe in strong partnerships across all parts of school life. This includes attending school.

It is important that pupils arrive to school on time; pupils are expected to be in school by 8.45am at the latest.

Absence through illness or unforeseen circumstances

In the event of an absence, parents/carers should call the absence line on 01295 234214 before 8:40am on the first and subsequent days of their child's absence. Parents/carers can also leave a message via the absence line. Parents/carers should expect to receive a call back from the school to discuss a child's absence and to offer support.

Additionally, if pupils suffer any form of injury, then we ask that parents/carers contact the school to make us aware. This is so we can carry out a risk assessment which we do to keep children safe in school. The assessment will identify the impacts of the injury and the support a child may need.

Attending an Appointment

Dental and non-urgent medical appointments should take place outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, we will require a medical letter or appointment card to authorise an appointment in the school day. Pupils must be picked up and returned to school if their appointment ends during the school day.

Known Absence

If a child needs to miss school for exceptional reasons, parents/carers should submit an absence request to the principal. Where possible, this should be made at least four weeks before the required date. To request absence please email enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org

We will consider requests for short absences in exceptional circumstances, and all requests will be considered individually and in context.

Where a request is not authorised, the absence will be classed as 'unauthorised' and may incur a penalty.

We must follow legal rules. Therefore, we cannot approve holiday requests during term time. Additionally, we may issue penalty notices. For more details, please check the Attendance Policy and Procedures (section B, 6.1).

Support

We take absence very seriously. We are committed to supporting any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly. We will target support for children whose attendance falls below 95%. Parents/carers / carers are encouraged to contact us directly to explore what support we can offer.

Punctuality

Registers close at 9:15am. Pupils arriving after this time will normally receive a U code (late after registers close), which is recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an authorised reason for the lateness.

How we manage lateness

Lateness to school
If a child is late for registration, a same day detention will be issued (Monday detentions will be sat on Tuesdays). Parents/carers will be notified.

Lateness to lessons
If a child is late for lessons a same day detention will be issued and sat after school on the same day. Parents/carers will be notified.

The rest of this document outlines our Attendance Policy and Procedures. We encourage all parents/carers to review it. If you are experiencing difficulties around your child's attendance and / or punctuality, please contact us on 01295 224300 and select option 1 for Attendance.

Part A - Policy

1. Introduction

This Attendance Policy outlines the culture and approach to supporting good attendance at our academy. The second part of the document outlines the more detailed procedures, roles and responsibilities related to pupil attendance that operate at our academy. Through all that we do to manage attendance, we are committed to creating a positive learning environment, supporting pupil achievement, and complying with legal requirements.

This is a successful academy, and all pupils play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve their best. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school on time.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling, and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance is a parent's/carer's legal responsibility.

We provide a 'support first approach' to attendance as outlined below.

Support first approach (as set out in DFE Guidance)	
Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents/carers and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
Monitor	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
Listen and understand	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents/carers to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
Facilitate support	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

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

2. Aims

Our aim is to create a school environment where children feel they belong and want to come to school. We believe our school is a great place to learn, and that being in school day in, day out, is in the best interests of all our pupils. However, we recognise that there will be times when there may be barriers that prevent children from attending school. In these instances, we will act early to understand the issue, provide support and work with the child and their family to get them back to regular attendance as quickly as possible.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents/carers.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents/carers, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents/carers[1] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parents' includes parents and carers.

our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning, and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, and to grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school regularly and on time will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017, the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015', 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013' and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) – or ask the school for printed copies.

2.1. Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

[2] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2024 Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures.

These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data, including the DfE's View Your Education Data platform, is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents/carers are treated with dignity, and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents/carers, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents/carers by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents/carers to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

The academy recognises that some groups of pupils may face additional barriers to regular attendance. Attendance data for vulnerable pupils, including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), children in care, previously looked after children, pupils with an allocated social worker, young carers, and pupils experiencing mental or physical health difficulties, will be monitored separately and reviewed regularly by the Attendance Lead and relevant pastoral and safeguarding staff. Where concerns are identified, the academy will work proactively with parents/carers, external agencies and other professionals to understand and remove barriers to attendance. Support plans, reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions will be implemented where appropriate, with progress reviewed frequently to ensure pupils are able to access their education successfully. Attendance information for vulnerable groups will also be reported to governors as part of the school's regular attendance monitoring and evaluation processes. The academy will ensure that attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils are considered alongside safeguarding, SEND and wellbeing needs and that support is coordinated through a multi-agency approach where required.

Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period and to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access full-time provision.

The school is committed to sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand.

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers.
- the school/trust strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.
- the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

Staff with specialist attendance responsibilities will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data.
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Part B - What the Law Says and Our Procedures

1. Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Body

Our lead governor for attendance is Natalie King; she is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (6 times a year). The lead governor will also monitor the headteacher's implementation of this policy.

The Principal

The principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Attendance Champion

Donna Duffy, Assistant Principal, who oversees attendance, along with the attendance team will monitor attendance, the policy and procedures on a day-to-day basis.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is Catherine Tyler. She is responsible for monitoring attendance data at the school and individual pupil level; reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate; Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues; Implementing and overseeing individual support plans.

Form Tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording tutor group attendance daily, using the correct attendance codes, and submitting this information to the school's attendance team.

2. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents/carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parents/carers, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.**

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Parents/carers should inform the school of any changes to their circumstances as soon as possible.

3. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken, the appropriate attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil. Please refer to **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** for the code descriptors and **Appendix 2** of this document. The school must record whether each pupil is:

- Attending

or

- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported using our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made as laid down in statutory guidance.

4. Attending the School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Our pupils must arrive by 8:40am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am

Our afternoon register is taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:45pm

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark.

However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

5. Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- Code K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code W: Attending work experience
- Code B: Attending any other approved education activity
- Code D: Dual registered at another setting

Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Our school should ensure that we have in place

arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school or Pupil Referral Unit for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity).

The school expects the alternative provision (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided daily, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provision (AP).

6. Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the pupil's absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

6.1. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents/carers the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will consider each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parents/carers with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents/carers will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents/carers should complete the absence request form on our school website and email to enquiries enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org.

The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents/carers should try to make appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site to attend a medical appointment during the school day without parents'/carers' confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised. Parents/carers should call on 01295 224300 and select option 1 for Attendance.

6.3 Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parents/carers, and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

7. Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence.' These codes include:

- Code T: Parents/carers travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

7.1. Mobile pupil - Parents/carers travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parents/carers who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents/carers as necessary. Parents/carers should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

7.2. Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends.

In accordance with the law, the school will authorise **one day's absence** for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

7.3. Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported in line with the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)' 2024[3] which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

Where a parents/carers cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a conversation with the parents/carers and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parents/carers to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parents'/carers' permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parents/carers aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parents/carers. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parents/carers on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents/carers should call the attendance team on 01295 224300 and select option 1 to speak to a member of the attendance team. You may need to leave a message, if so, please leave your child's name and reason for absence. If a child is absent for more than one day, the parents/carers should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents/carers who have concerns about their child's mental health or wellbeing can contact our school's Welfare Team on 01295 234300 for further information on the support available.

Parents/carers should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents/carers should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, no pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parents'/carers' confirmation.

[3] Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

7.4. Suspensions (Exclusions)

In this policy, the word 'suspension' is used to refer to what legislation calls an exclusion for a fixed period. Suspensions and permanent exclusions are both types of exclusion, and where this policy uses the word 'exclusion' this includes both suspensions (fixed-period exclusions) and permanent exclusions.

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the principal.

The school will notify the parents/carers of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parents'/carers' confirmation.

8. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

- Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

9. Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents/carers can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips

- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually penalty notices or prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code G – Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N – Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U – Arrived in school after registration closed

10. Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

11. First Day of Absence Response

If a pupil is absent from school either a member of the attendance team or our pupil engagement team will contact parents/carers to see if there is anything we can do to support the pupil coming into school. School will contact parents/carers regardless of if they have already called school to notify us of the absence. This is part of our new procedure to ensure support is offered (if applicable) as soon as possible.

If we have concerns as to why the pupil is not in school or school have not had any contact with parents/carers, the school may complete a 'safe and well' check to the pupil's address. We may also refer to/liaise with external agencies including requesting a welfare check from the police. This would be actioned if the school is unable to contact any of the emergency contacts provided and are concerned as to why the pupil is absent.

12. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

The school is committed to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality through a balanced approach of encouragement, recognition and support. While high levels of attendance are celebrated, we also recognise that for some pupils, improving attendance can require significant effort in overcoming individual barriers. Our rewards programme therefore recognises not only excellent attendance, but also positive improvement, good punctuality and sustained commitment to attending school regularly.

To encourage and celebrate attendance, the school will:

- Award 5 reward points each week to pupils who achieve 100% attendance.
- Award 5 reward points each week to pupils who achieve 100% punctuality, recognising the importance of arriving at school and lessons on time.

- Recognise and celebrate improved attendance, ensuring pupils who make positive progress receive acknowledgement for their efforts, regardless of whether they achieve 100% attendance.
- Provide year-group attendance rewards and celebrations, organised by Heads of Year. These may vary throughout the year to ensure incentives remain engaging and relevant to each cohort.
- Hold attendance celebration events, including celebration mornings with the Headteacher, for pupils who have demonstrated excellent attendance, significant improvement, or a strong commitment to attending school regularly.

The school recognises that attendance improvement is often achieved through resilience, support and positive behavioural change. As a result, rewards will reflect not only outcomes but also effort and progress. This ensures that pupils who are working to overcome barriers to attendance, improve their punctuality, or establish positive attendance habits are appropriately recognised alongside those who maintain consistently high attendance levels.

Through this approach, the school aims to foster a culture where attendance is valued, improvement is celebrated, and every pupil is encouraged to attend school regularly and punctually.

13. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents/carers and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent/carer to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend to be able to support pupils and parents/carers in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parents/carers aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents/carers do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents/carers may be asked to meet with a member of school staff to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show evidence that we have warned the parents/carers that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents/carers fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parents/carers that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

14. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents/carers who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parents/carers but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in several different outcomes for parents/carers and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parents/carers are guilty of an offence. Parents/carers with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

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

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parents/carers, per child payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parents/carers, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.) If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period the penalty is £160 per parents/carers, per child if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.

2. Prosecution. Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or up to 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parents'/carers' responsibility measures for more information.

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents/carers with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools.

We will work together with local authority and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution and will work closely with the local authority to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are: Parents'/carers' contracts, Education supervision orders, Attendance prosecution, Parenting orders, Fixed penalty notices.

15. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the local authority representative responsible for children missing education if unsure about any individual cases:

16. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents/carers by text, email, or telephone to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within one school day, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parents/carers/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

17. Reporting to Parents/carers

A pupil's attendance percentage/record is shared with parents/carers in the weekly pupil report that is sent via email. Parents/carers can also access pupils' attendance via Arbor. This allows parents/carers the opportunity to contact the school if they have any queries.

Where a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, we will write to the parents/carers to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

Stage 0 - Early Identification (Attendance Below 95%)

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, attendance will be reviewed and monitored by the school. The purpose of this stage is to identify any emerging concerns at an early stage and offer support before attendance becomes a significant issue. The school recognises that attendance may fall below this threshold for legitimate reasons, including periods of illness, injury, medical treatment, hospital appointments, or other exceptional circumstances. Any response will therefore be proportionate, taking account of the reasons for absence, the pupil's attendance history, and whether further support or intervention is necessary.

Stage 1 – below 90%

Parent/carer contact or letter sent home explaining that a 4 week monitoring period will now commence where no more absence is expected. Any further unauthorised absence during this period may result in the pupil moving immediately to Stage 2.

Stage 2

If the pupil fails to improve their attendance in the 4 week stage 1 monitoring period, the pupil will move to Stage 2, formal 4 week monitoring period. This will involve a call from the welfare/pastoral team to address any barriers to attending school; support will be offered and a

4 week written plan formulated. An attendance target will be set and agreed. If the pupil does not achieve the agreed target they will move immediately to stage 3.

Stage 3

A meeting with the Attendance Officer or Senior Attendance Lead where legal implications are explained and a fresh attendance target is set.

18. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Once a reason for absence has been established it will be recorded on the pupil's Arbor. If school has concerns regarding the reason for absence or not being able to contact any of the emergency contacts, then it will also be recorded on CPOMS, the school's safeguarding system.

19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Donna Duffy, Assistant Principal, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

20. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Guidance Documents (include but are not limited to):

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024)

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school

Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023)

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023)

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2024)

KCSIE

School attendance parents'/carers' responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance

School census guidance and regulation

https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance

Appendix A – 5 Foundations of Effective Practice

- **Foundation 1**: *The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.*
- **Foundation 2:** *The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.*
- **Foundation 3:** *The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.*
- **Foundation 4:** *Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns; these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.*
- **Foundation 5:** *Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.*

Appendix B – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

Attending	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parents/carers travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	

G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure