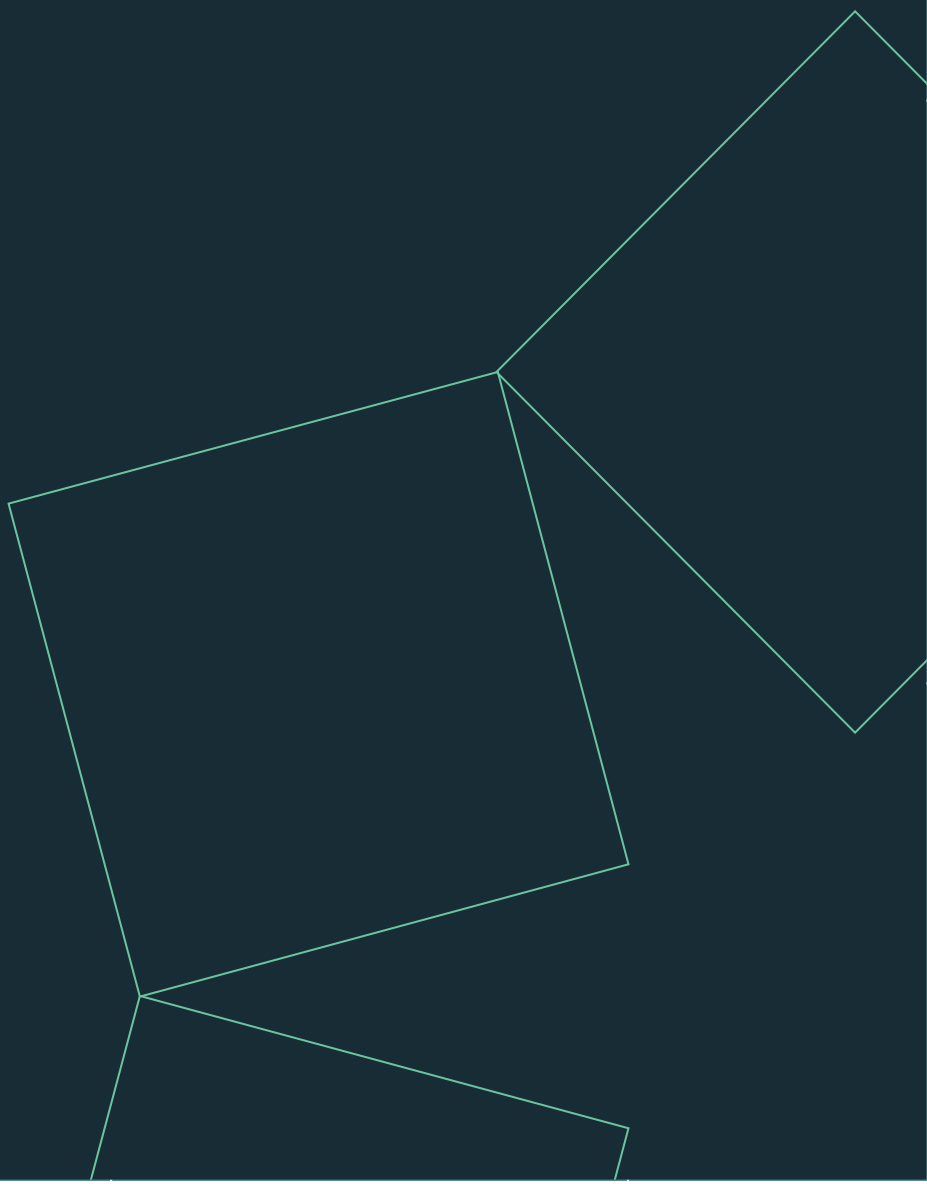
OFG Education

Pupil Attendance Policy

For Acorn Education & Options Autism schools

Acorn Park School



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 3
2.0 AIMS 3
3.0 LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE 5
4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 6
5.0 EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/ CARERS 9
6.0 RECORDING ATTENDANCE 10
7.0 AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE 16
8.0 STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE 19
9.0 CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION 20
11.0 ATTENDANCE ACTION FLOW CHART 27
APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 28
APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 2 30
APPENDIX 3 – INVITATION TO ATTENDANCE MEETING 31
APPENDIX 4 –ATTENDANCE MEETING REVIEW 33
APPENDIX 5 – WORKING TOGETHER: ATTENDANCE MEETING RECORD 35
APPENDIX 6 – ATTENDANCE WARNING LETTER FOR PARENTS 37
APPENDIX 7 – ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PLAN 39
APPENDIX 8 – ACORN PARK SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL 43

This policy applies to all Acorn Education and Options Autism schools.

Terminology

- "Our teams" and" "team member/s" include everyone working in Outcomes First Group's settings and services in a paid or unpaid capacity, including employees, consultants, agency staff, trainees and contractors. For Blenheim schools, volunteers are included in this definition.

- "Parents and carers" refer to the person or -people with legal parental responsibility for the child/young person

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We recognise that the children and young people we educate, and support have often had difficult schooling experiences previously, and that this can create additional challenges for school attendance. An inclusive trauma-informed, neurodivergence-affirming ethos is at the heart of our approach. We seek to understand and support our children and young people to help them enjoy and achieve the best outcomes from school.

We also recognise the importance of understanding the context of a child or young person's absence from school and the impact of language used. We therefore differentiate between:

- Truancy refers to a young person's deliberate or unauthorised absence from school without a valid reason. It is often associated with disengagement or a lack of value placed on education. Addressing truancy typically involves a structured approach that includes understanding underlying barriers, re-engagement strategies, and clear expectations around attendance.
- Barriers to Attendance - We recognise that attendance difficulties are often complex and multifaceted, arising from an interaction of emotional, developmental, relational, health, family, educational and environmental factors. Whilst some children and young people may experience **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**, others may face barriers linked to neurodivergence, trauma, attachment needs, mental or physical health difficulties, adverse childhood experiences, or previous educational experiences. Attendance difficulties should not automatically be viewed as a matter of choice, refusal or disengagement. Instead, schools should adopt a compassionate, trauma-informed and curiosity-led approach that seeks to understand the underlying reasons for non-attendance and work collaboratively with children, young people, families and professionals to identify the most appropriate support

We are committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality to:

- enable and facilitate opportunities for a good education
- provide our children and young people with the support they need.
- Enhance quality of life, well-being and development of life and social skills
- Effectively safeguard our children and young people
- Reduce the likelihood of involvement in anti-social behaviour or other criminal activity

2.0 AIMS

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Address barriers to attendance, including EBSA with a trauma informed and neurodiversity affirming supportive approach
- Promoting a strong sense of belonging, psychological safety and connection to the school community.
- Supporting pupils to feel known, valued, understood and included.
- Identifying and reducing barriers that may prevent pupils from engaging fully in education.

We will support parents and carers recognising their legal duty to ensure regular attendance for children of compulsory school age. At the same time, we recognise the complexity of individual pupil needs and understand that promoting punctuality and regular attendance requires a sensitive and supportive approach. Our commitment includes working collaboratively with families and professionals to identify and address any barriers to attendance, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive within a learning environment that acknowledges and accommodates their unique challenges.

Working together to improve school attendance highlights the benefits of regular attendance at school, particularly:

- the correlation between high academic performance and high attendance
- it is an important protective factor for more vulnerable children and young people

With this in mind, we will consistently work towards the most regular attendance for our children and young people. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance in a supportive way. This policy contains within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Our school is committed to promoting consistent attendance through the implementation of targeted, responsive measures designed to support every pupil's ability to engage fully with their education. These include:

- **Accurate Registration:** Ensuring pupils are registered efficiently and reliably each day
- **Target Setting:** Establishing realistic and motivating attendance targets for individual pupils and year groups
- **Prompt Communication:** Contacting parents/carers on the same day when absences are unauthorised or reasons are unclear
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Regularly reviewing pupil attendance and punctuality data, with timely support meetings following prolonged absence
- **Supportive Reintegration:** Holding 'return to school' meetings to ensure smooth transitions back into the classroom
- **Trauma Informed and Neurodiversity Practice - :** Advancing our approach to barriers to attendance, including Emotion-Based School Avoidance (EBSA), applying it where appropriate and needed.

- **Pattern Tracking and Thematic Analysis:** Monitoring attendance trends, identifying recurring themes such as anxiety, illness, or social barriers, and using this insight to inform tailored support plans
- **Transparent Reporting:** Sharing attendance statistics with parents/carers, local boroughs, and the Department for Education, as appropriate

Our approach is underpinned by empathy, collaboration, and a shared commitment to helping each child and young person to thrive.

3.0 LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

This policy has been developed in line with:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE statutory guidance)
- School Attendance Parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK and
- All Wales attendance framework | GOV.WALES
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE statutory guidance)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE statutory guidance)
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE)
- Attendance: why it matters, key data and guidance (DfE)

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
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which also refers to School census guidance
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
- Education (Scotland) Act 1980

This policy must be read and applied alongside the school's policies, including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Pupil/Carer – School Communication Policy
- Relational and Inclusive Behaviour Policy

Our policies are underpinned by the understanding that attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, belonging, engagement and safeguarding are interconnected and influenced by a range of developmental, relational, environmental and contextual factors. The school therefore adopts a relational, inclusive and trauma-informed approach that prioritises understanding, support, belonging and positive outcomes.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body is responsible for holding the headteacher or equivalent to account for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Setting high expectations of all team members, pupils and parents / carers
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Registers must be taken electronically twice a day—once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session
  - Schools must use standardised national attendance and absence codes issued by the Department for Education (see 10.2)
  - 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 team members and resources
- Ensuring 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
- Ensuring all team members receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that team members understand:
- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- 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
- Ensuring dedicated training is provided to team members with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

4.1 Those responsible may include the team members below, but will be school specific:

4.1.1 The Co- Headteachers is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy at the school
- Designating a senior leader responsible for attendance (sometimes known as the

'Senior Attendance Champion'), who is a member of the senior leadership team and has strategic responsibility for promoting, monitoring and improving attendance across the school (See 4.1.2 for further details)

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting team members with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Reporting persistent absence to the relevant Local Authority for consideration, which may result in a fixed-penalty notice being issued or further action being taken.
- Working with the parents / carers of pupils to develop specific support approaches for attendance impacted by 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 has challenges in 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

4.1.2 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at our school is Jennifer Banol , Senior DSL and attendance champion 01953888656 and 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
- Overseeing the accurate and timely completion of the registers
- Initiating "day-one" follow-ups for unexplained absences
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis including reviewing attendance data fortnightly to identify trends
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all team members
- 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
- Escalating attendance patterns that may indicate safeguarding risk to the DSL promptly, including repeat, part-day, prolonged or unexplained absence

4.1.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer at our school is are **Russell Lewis, Family Liaison Officer 01953 888656, Ricardo Carvalho, Family Liaison Officer 01953 888656**, **Nicola Brassington Family Liaison Officer 01953 888656 and Verity French 01953 888656** and is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to team members and reporting concerns about attendance to the Heads of Key Stage / Assistant Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding lead, Designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
    - Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
    - Ensures registers are pre-coded for known absences and have been completed and coded correctly.
    - Makes daily calls or sends texts to parent/carer of children who have not contacted the school to let us know where they are.
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when it may be appropriate to consider advising a Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Working with the DSL to consider whether attendance concerns indicate need for Family Help, early help, children's social care or other external support

4.1.4 Heads of Key Stage and Assistant Headteachers

- Ensure that tutors are provided with Attendance data weekly
- Ensures that attendance is a standing item during Key Stage Meetings
- Arranges and actions 'return to school' meetings as per appendix
- Takes overall ownership and accountability of Year Group attendance.

4.1.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Classroom teachers have the immediate operational responsibility to **complete the registers accurately** twice a day using the correct national codes. They are legally bound to close the register at the designated time set by the school via iSam. 9.30 and 13.30 each school day.
- Making weekly contact for those pupils who are not present at school for long periods of time and are responsible for collating the educational materials for these students so that they can access education from home should this be required. This could then be provided to the key stage leads to ensure it gets to home.
- Ensuring that any information which they have from the parents/carers should be documented on the register in the notes section to ensure this has been captured on the legal document. This includes information passed to parents/carers through any other agreed communication channel.

Class Teachers will remind parents/carers:

- That they are to follow the school absence policy should they be contacted directly through email or class dojo to remind them that calls should be made

to the school on **01953 888656 Option 2 before 8.30 every day their child will be absent.**

(please do not use DOJO for this purpose).

- Who contact them directly with evidence of appointments, or reasons for their child to be absent for school to **email Swift@acornpark.org.uk**

4.1.6 School office team members

School office team members 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 Swift team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

5.0 EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/ CARERS

To support their child's regular school attendance, parents, carers, and those with parental responsibility are asked to:

- Ensure their child attends every scheduled school day or timetabled session punctually
- Notify the school of their child's absence by 8.30 on the first and each subsequent day of absence, providing an expected date of return
- Supply the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child, where possible
- Arrange medical and other appointments outside the school day whenever feasible
- Adhere to any attendance contracts agreed with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support when needed by contacting [insert role, e.g. Head of Year, Pastoral Lead, Family Liaison Officer] via [insert telephone number/email address]
- Engage proactively with the school's designated contact (e.g. Family Liaison Officer), maintaining open and regular communication to clarify needs and co-develop effective support plans

By working in partnership with the school, families can help ensure their children feel safe, supported, and ready to thrive.

5.1 Registration and Lateness

Electronic registers will be taken at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions.

- **Morning registration** will take place at the start of school at 9:00.
- The registers will remain open for 30 minutes until 9:30.
- The attendance register must close **no later than 30 minutes** after the session officially begins

- Pupils arriving after the registers opens but before it closes will be marked as Late (L).
- Pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) and missing the session of school.
- In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The school will commit to supporting parents/carers should lateness occur through school transport issues, but lateness caused by transport will be marked as late in the registers in line with this policy.

Afternoon registration will take place at 13:00 and close at 13:30

- Where an absence at afternoon registration is authorised, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils are supported to attend school on time every day.

6.0 RECORDING ATTENDANCE

6.1 Attendance Register

The school will keep an attendance register, and all pupils will be listed on this register.

The electronic attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day, and once during the second session using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 or national equivalent

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
- We will keep entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

We will also record:

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

6.2 Unplanned Absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30 or as soon as practically possible.

- Parents/carers should phone the school **01953 888656 option 2** and leave a message or speak to an administrative team member to let them know that their child will not be attending school with the reason.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- Department for Education guidance states that if the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

6.3 Planned Absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence of the appointment.
- Evidence of appointments, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence, should be emailed directly to **Swift@acornpark.org.uk**
- However, we encourage parents/carers 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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. This is addressed later in the policy to find out which term time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Following up absence

When a child is expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason by sending a text, email or a phone call.
- Ensure safeguarding action is taken without delay where absence is unexplained, repeated, prolonged, part-day, or otherwise suggests risk of harm.
- Consider whether the pupil or family may benefit from Family Help, Early Help, local authority children's social care, clinical support, SEND support or other specialist support.
- Share relevant attendance and welfare information with the DSL and other appropriate professionals where necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of the pupil.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and / or their parent / carers to improve attendance

- Identify whether the pupil and / or their family needs support from other organisations as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals
- Conduct home visits where necessary

6.5 Medical or dental appointments

It is the statutory duty of every parent/guardian to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time, (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment may be counted as an authorised absence if advance notice has been given or evidence provided. 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. See below for information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences.

6.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

Parents/carers can request a copy of their child's attendance record at any time.

We report to parents on their child's attendance record in Annual Review's and end-of-year reports.

The school will share attendance information with parents/carers regularly and celebrate positive engagement, progress and successful reintegration where appropriate. We recognise that attendance may be influenced by factors outside a child or young person's control, including SEND, health needs, emotional wellbeing, trauma, safeguarding concerns and other barriers to attendance. Therefore, attendance is not incentivised through rewards, competitions or prizes linked solely to attendance percentages.

In line with this policy, contact could be more frequent if we are working with you to improve your child's attendance.

6.7 Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period and scanned/noted on ISAMS.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

6.8 Local Authority Absence Notification Requirements

Requirements to report absence notifications may vary between local authorities, the school will identify and document the local authority process for reporting pupils recorded with Code I (Illness) who meet the applicable notification threshold.

At the start of each academic year, the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Lead must ensure they are familiar with:

- The local authority's process for submitting sickness notifications and/or returns;
- Any local forms, portals or referral mechanisms that must be used;
- The relevant contact details for attendance, inclusion or education welfare services; and
- Any locally published guidance relating to children who are absent from education due to illness.
- DFE legislation Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026

Schools must maintain a record of the reporting mechanism in use and ensure that notifications are submitted in accordance with current statutory guidance and local authority requirements. Failure to identify the appropriate local authority process does not remove the school's responsibility to make the required notification.

6.9 Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

Each pupil's attendance can be summarised as:

95% +	Excellent attendance. This will **support** all aspects of your child's progress in school. This will give them a good start in life and **encourages** a positive work ethic. Your child's attendance is at or above the school target. **Keep striving for 100%.**
90% - 94%	Good effort. This **attendance rate** is moving towards the target of 95%. Improved attendance will benefit your child both academically and socially. Your child's attendance is almost at the school target.
BELOW 90%	**A pupil whose attendance is below 90% is defined as a 'persistent absentee' by the Department for Education.** **Unauthorised or Unsupported by Medical Evidence** 1) Department for Education views that absence is now a concern and is at risk of significantly affecting your child's attainment and progress. You will receive an initial letter of support and be invited in to meet with the class teacher/Key Stage Leader to establish whether we can offer you any additional support to improve your child's attendance. 2) If attendance does not improve in the next month or falls even further within the academic year, a second letter inviting you to meet with the Assistant Headteacher will be sent. At this second meeting, a support plan and an attendance target will be set across an agreed timescale which will be monitored by the class team/Key Stage Leader. 3) If there is still no improvement or the attendance rate falls further within the academic year, parents will be invited to an attendance support panel meeting will be held where an agreement will be made between the school and the parents for how all parties will work towards improving the attendance of the pupil. 4) If the agreement put into place does not improve attendance a formal request needs to be made to the local authority regarding these concerns and possible legal consequences could follow as set out by the Department for Education. **Medical reasons for absence – If your child has an ongoing medical condition that means they are unable to attend school; we apply their attendance figure with this knowledge. Therefore, discretion may be applied to the process above.**

6.10 Attendance Targets

Our school target is: All pupils attend over 95% of the time.

Where pupils have been identified with specific medical or therapeutic needs who have a high level of absence, they will be supported by the following strategies:

- Daily contact with parents/carers to correctly authorise absences.
- Provide support as part of the Universal approach from the school to support pupils where their reasonable adjustments need supporting with regards to their needs in order to support parents to get their children to school.
- Provide home visits where appropriate.
- Create contracts of agreed actions with parents and children, where possible, to improve their attendance – incorporating an attendance support plan.
- Working with the Local Authorities and other agencies to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these pupils and the school.
- Recognise that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school.
- Recognise that attendance should always be understood within the context of a pupil's individual needs, circumstances and barriers. Success should be measured through engagement, progress towards agreed goals, increased participation and sustained connection with education rather than attendance percentages alone.

6.9 Welcome Back

We recognise the importance of a supportive and inclusive return for all pupils following significant periods of absence. Our approach ensures that individual needs are considered carefully, promoting a smooth transition back into the school environment. This includes:

- **Routine Reintegration:** Supporting pupils as they adjust to the school's daily routines and expectations
- **Curriculum Catch-Up:** Providing opportunities to catch up on missed work and updating pupils on key information shared with peers during their absence
- **Phased Return Planning:** Where appropriate, implementing a phased return tailored to the pupil's circumstances, to ease the transition and promote sustained attendance

Our aim is to help every pupil feel welcomed, valued, and ready to re-engage with their learning community.

Team members should be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils. The school will:

- Inform all team members of the return to school process and involved where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for clinical support if required.
- Consider peer support and mentoring as appropriate.
- Involve parents as far as possible.

- Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
- Include Children's Services, social workers, parents/carers and the pupil in return to school plan if appropriate.

7.0 AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

7.1 Approval for Term Time Absence

The Co-headteachers will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' as set out in The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 or the national equivalent for the school.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. The school considers exception circumstances to be:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Visiting a parent/carer who is imprisoned.
- Where an absence is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- The wedding of a close family member.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's (or equivalent) discretion. Although, if granted the leave would be authorised, the non-attendance would affect the overall percentage attendance for that child for that month.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least Four Weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via **Swift Team (pastoral and safeguarding team).** The Co-headteachers may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

a. Illness and medical/dental appointments where evidence is shown
b. Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set part.
c. Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupils attending educational provision.

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to) attending:

- an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- provision arranged by the local authority
- 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

7.2 Reducing persistent absence

It is outlined in the appendices the school's approach to supporting attendance.

In addition:

a. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee (PA)' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.
b. All absences are monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
c. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance officer, and we also combine this with the progress they make against their EHCP outcomes where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan, and the plan may include; an individual incentive programme, support from the pastoral team, participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Participation team in the local authority.
d. Parents will be expected to make agreements with themselves and their child for how they will be supporting their attendance at school. These will be captured during the attendance panel meeting as the action plan to support improved attendance.

7.3 Legal Sanctions

The Department for Education recommends that our school will make use of the full range of 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.

The local authority may decide a fine for parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Before advising a Local Authority to issue a penalty notice, or take action in line with specific local authority policy and procedure, the school will consider the individual case, including whether:

- the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

- 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 a more appropriate solution
- any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

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).

7.4 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Data and related actions will be reported and monitored using the Termly Head teacher Report to Governors and Governance Meeting formats.

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

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.

7.5 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 indicate additional support is required, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of 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

7.6 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 it has identified whose absences may indicate additional support is required, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 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)
- 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 local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe where appropriate

7.7 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping children safe in education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents / carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to OFG Clinical Support or external support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping children safe in education. The school recognises that repeated, persistent, part-day, prolonged or unexplained absence may be a warning sign of abuse, neglect, exploitation, serious violence, mental health concerns, unmet SEND/medical needs, or other safeguarding risks.

8.0 STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving children the best possible start in life. The aim should be to attend as regularly as possible (recognising illness is inevitable). Students who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and have less progress towards their EHCP outcomes. Good attendance also shows the reliability of pupils in more senior years to show future employers that the pupil is reliable.

Unauthorised absence in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school throughout the year.

To ensure excellent attendance at our school we will:

- Promote a culture of belonging, relational safety and inclusion through trusted adult relationships, pupil voice, co-production with families and emotionally safe learning environments.
- Deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
- Use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure including greeting pupils in the morning and having a consistent morning routine.
- Regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance against EHCP targets through the regular channels of communication on Isams (and Class dojo if appropriate) with team members, pupils and parents/carers.
- Monitor implementation of policy and practice through form time drop ins by the key stage leads and assistant headteachers.
- Monitor whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions.
- Establish, implement and monitor robust arrangements to identify, report and support children who are absent from education.
- Develop good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and their own special educational needs (SEND).
- Engage pupils in consultation on attendance policy and practices through the pupil voice committee and through their own pupil voice in annual review if attendance is of concern.
- Where attendance difficulties are linked to underlying needs or distress, individualised reintegration plans may be implemented as a short-term support measure. These should be clearly planned, regularly reviewed, and focused on gradually increasing engagement, attendance and participation in education. Individualised timetables are not intended to become long-term part-time provision; the expectation remains that all pupils will work towards accessing a full-time education that is appropriate to their needs, with progress towards this monitored collaboratively with families and relevant professionals.

9.0 CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION

DfE Statutory guidance regarding Children absent from education states that children absent from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life.

All team members should be aware of the school's safeguarding response to children absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods. The school will consider repeated, part-day, prolonged or unexplained absence alongside safeguarding information and will escalate concerns to the DSL where appropriate. Where attendance concerns indicate that a child or family may benefit from support,

the school will consider Family Help, Early Help and/or referral to local authority children's social care in accordance with local thresholds and statutory guidance. Information relating to attendance, welfare and safeguarding will be shared with relevant professionals where necessary to protect a child or promote their welfare. Safeguarding is always the highest priority and any concerns about data protection must not delay appropriate safeguarding action.

Our school takes the following steps:

- All pupils are entered on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed that the pupil will attend the school. This register is kept up to date and checked for accuracy, on a monthly basis.
- If a pupil fails to attend the school, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts (following the steps listed in the above DfE guidance) and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity **or at the point that 10 consecutive days have been missed.**
- The school monitors pupils' attendance through daily registration. Daily absence is followed up by the school administration team who attempt contact with home to request a reason for absence. The school monitors attendance closely and addresses poor or irregular attendance. The school notifies local authorities of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission.
- School will work with external agencies including the Local Authority, Participation Teams and Social Care to support families whose children have missed ten consecutive days of education. Whilst meetings and support are being implemented, the school will keep the child on roll. If engagement with home ceases despite support being offered, or support offered is subsequently declined then school will call an emergency Annual Review to discuss the placement and may consider giving its six-week notice period to end the placement subject to confirmation that the Local Authority are aware.
- School will continue to retain contact with pupils who have left the school to monitor the success of the next placement and ensure any relevant records are passed on.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days and when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child, with the full knowledge of the local authority responsible for placing the child with us; and the relevant referrals have been made to the child's safeguarding team; the school reserves the right to consider terminating the placement by giving six weeks' notice to the Local Authority. At this point the pupil would be removed from the admissions register.
- The school remains committed to working with all agencies to establish the safety of the missing child even after their removal from the school roll.
- Where a pupil is already known to local authority children's social care, including a child in need, a child subject to a child protection plan, or a looked after child, absence will be considered in the context of any known safeguarding risks and the school will liaise with the pupil's social worker and/or Virtual School Head where appropriate.

10.0 THE MONITORING SYSTEM

This Policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authorities or government bodies is updated, and as a minimum annually by a member of SLT in liaison with the Designated Lead for Attendance and the Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the C-Headteachers and shared with the governing body.

10.1 Registration Process and Attendance Codes

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The school uses a Management Information System (iSAMS) for keeping the school attendance records.

10.2 The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance and should be used by schools in England. Schools in Scotland and Wales should check with the required codes with local authority:

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		

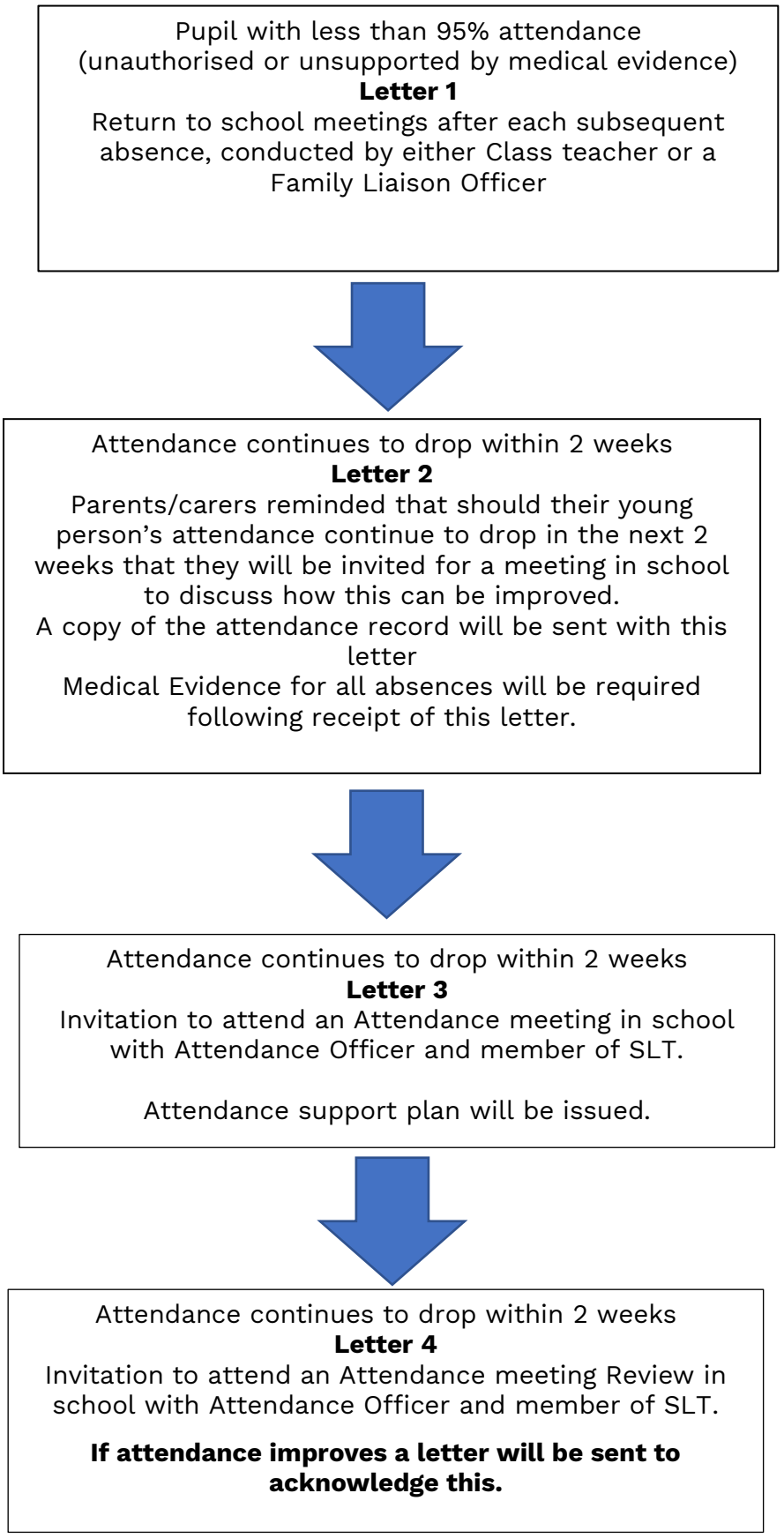
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally 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: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • 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

Important Definitions

- 1 school day = 2 sessions. This means that one day off a week will make a child's attendance for that week 80%.
- If a child has 9 days off over the whole year their attendance will be approximately 95% for the year.
- Authorised Absence means an absence has been classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer.
- Authorised absence still affects overall attendance figure and will impact on qualification for reward trips.
- Unauthorised absences mean an absence when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

11.0 ATTENDANCE ACTION FLOW CHART



APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE LETTER

Dear [INSERT NAME]

Re: [INSERT NAME]

DOB:

Current Attendance Academic Year 2026/27:

At [INSERT SCHOOL], we are committed to giving [INSERT NAME] the best possible education to support [INSERT NAME] to achieve the best outcomes for his future.

To ensure this happens, it is important we support you with [INSERT NAME] attendance by initially making you aware of [INSERT NAME] current attendance level.

We have noticed that [INSERT NAME] attendance has reduced, as it has fallen to [insert %], and we would welcome the opportunity to understand whether there are any barriers we can help with. We are becoming concerned that [INSERT NAME] is missing opportunities doe learning, connection and participation in school life.

No doubt you are aware that regular attendance is important so that [INSERT NAME] can maximise educational opportunities.

To enable us to monitor attendance across the school we use a banding system.
The bands are:

- 95% and above = Green
- 90.1% - 94.9% = Amber
- 90% and below = Red (additional support required)

[INSERT NAME] is currently in our Red (additional support required) banding level.

I will continue to monitor [INSERT NAME] attendance over the next three weeks and will write to you again if there is no improvement. We are aware that some of [INSERT NAME] recent absence has been due to ongoing medical concerns. Please ensure we have any doctor's/medical correspondence, so we can identify if there are any other avenues of support that we can explore with you.

You may be aware of Emotion Based School Avoidance (EBSA) – which describes a young person's difficulty attending school due to overwhelming emotional distress, such as anxiety, sensory sensitivities or past trauma. We recognise that EBSA is not a choice but a response to perceived threat or discomfort, requiring a compassionate, trauma informed approach that prioritises emotion regulation, relationships, and gradual exposure to the school environment.

Our Lead Clinician – [INSERT NAME], is available should you wish to understand more about EBSA, particularly if you think this is something that [INSERT NAME] may be experiencing and could be contributing to [INSERT NAME] feeling like he/she is not able to come to school.

Please find attached along with this letter a copy of [INSERT NAME]2026/27 attendance report so you have an overview since September 2026.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school are not aware of which are having an influence on [INSERT NAME] attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact [INSERT NAME], Attendance Officer – so we can arrange a meeting to discuss your concerns and support you and [INSERT NAME] further.

Yours Sincerely,

Attendance Team

APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 2

Dear (Parent's Name)

Re: (Pupil Name)
DOB: (Pupil DOB)
Attendance:

At [Name of School], we are committed to giving your child the best possible education to support them to achieve the best outcomes for their future. To ensure this happens, it is important we support you with your child's attendance by making you aware that their current level of attendance has not improved since our previous communication. We are now requesting that all further absence must be supported with medical evidence of the reason that your child is not attending school.

You must be reminded that regular attendance is important so that pupils can maximise their educational opportunities. To enable us to monitor attendance across the school we use a banding system.

The bands are:

- 95% and above = Green
- 90.1% - 94.9% = Amber
- 90% and below = Red (additional support required)

[INSERT NAME] is currently in our [Insert band level] banding level.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school are not aware of which is having an influence on (forename) attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact the attendance officer, so we can arrange a meeting to discuss your concerns and support you and (forename).

School will continue to monitor your child's attendance closely for the next 3 weeks and if there is, no significant improvement further correspondence will follow to invite to an attendance panel with a member of the school's SLT. If you require support with anything, please contact us so that a meeting can be arranged beforehand to discuss any concerns.

A copy of your child's attendance record has been attached to this letter for your reference.

Yours faithfully,

[Name of School] Attendance Team

APPENDIX 3 – INVITATION TO ATTENDANCE MEETING

Dear [Parent's Name]

Re: Formal invitation to an Attendance meeting

Re: [Pupil's name]

DOB: [Insert]

Attendance:

An invitation to meet about [CHILD'S NAME]

We would like to invite you to a meeting to talk about [CYP's first name] and school.

We know that things have been hard recently, and that getting into school has not been easy. We would like to understand what is getting in the way and to work it out together.

What the meeting is for

We will use a set of questions that helps us look at the whole picture, not just the attendance figure. Together we will talk about:

What [CYP's first name] finds hard about school and what they enjoy or feel good about.

What you have noticed at home, and what you have already tried.

Anything else going on that might be making school harder right now. This could be about health, learning, friendships, how school feels, or what is happening at home.

What we are going to do about it, and who is doing what.

Some of the questions may feel personal. We ask them of every family, because the things that get in the way of school can come from any part of a child's life, and we do not want to miss something that matters. If something feels too difficult to talk about on the day, tell us and we can come back to it.

Getting this right takes all of us

A child's education is not something a school does on its own, and it is not something a family does on its own. When school becomes hard, the reasons are usually spread across their life: school, home, health, friendships or something none of us has thought of yet. No one person can see all of that. That is why we want to sit down together.

You know [CYP's first name] in ways school never will. We see a part of their day that you do not. Put those two views side by side and we stand a real chance of understanding what is actually getting in the way, and of building a plan that works. Whatever we agree, the plan will be made with you, not done to you.

What [CYP's first name] thinks matters

Before we meet, someone [CYP's first name] trusts will ask for their views, in a way that feels comfortable for them. What they say will be brought to the meeting and will shape the plan. Afterwards, we will go back to them and explain how their views have been used.

The practical details

When: [date and time]

Where: [place]

Who will be there: [names and roles]. You are welcome to bring someone with you.

How long: up to [90] minutes. We would rather take the time to get this right than rush it.

What happens afterwards

We will agree a plan together, with a small number of things we are each going to try. We will meet again in about two to three weeks for a short check-in to see what is working and

change what is not.
If you have any questions before we meet, or if the date and time do not work for you, please contact [name] on [phone] or [email].
We are looking forward to talking with you.

Yours Sincerely,

[Click and type your name]
[Click and type your position]

APPENDIX 4 –ATTENDANCE MEETING REVIEW

Dear (Parent's name)

Re: Pupil's name

DOB:

Attendance:

An invitation to review [CYP's first name]'s support plan

Thank you for meeting with us recently to complete the Barriers to Education assessment and develop a plan to support [CYP's first name].

We would now like to invite you to a review meeting so that we can look together at the progress that has been made, discuss what has been working well, and consider whether any changes are needed to the plan.

What the review meeting is for

The purpose of the meeting is to help understand what has changed since the plan was put in place and whether the support agreed is having the intended impact. Together we will discuss:

- What improvements, successes or positive changes have been noticed.
- What [CYP's first name] thinks about the support they have received.
- Which actions have been completed and whether they have helped.
- Any barriers that remain or any new concerns that have emerged.
- Whether any changes are needed to the plan.
- What the next steps should be and who is responsible for them.

The review is not about judging what has or has not been achieved. It is an opportunity for everyone involved to reflect on what has been tried, what has been learned and what further support may be helpful.

Working together

Your views remain an important part of this process. You know [CYP's first name] best, and your experiences and observations help us understand what is making a difference.

As with the original assessment, we want this meeting to be a conversation where everyone's views are valued. Any changes to the plan will be discussed and agreed with you.

What [CYP's first name] thinks matters

Before the meeting, we will gather [CYP's first name]'s views in a way that feels comfortable for them. Their thoughts and experiences will help us understand what has been helpful and what may need to change.

The practical details

- When: [date and time]
- Where: [location]
- Who will be there: [names and roles]
- How long: Approximately [30-45] minutes

You are welcome to bring someone with you if you would find that helpful.

If you cannot attend

If the date or time is not convenient, please contact [name] on [phone number] or [email address] so that alternative arrangements can be discussed.

We look forward to meeting with you and continuing to work together to support [CYP's first name].

Yours Sincerely,

APPENDIX 5 – WORKING TOGETHER: ATTENDANCE MEETING RECORD

Purpose: This meeting record is for discussions where the barriers to attendance are explored as part of a broader meeting. This can form part of the support first approach if attendance is clearly discussed, actions and outcomes are agreed, and parents are informed.

Type of Meeting	*e.g: CiN/CP/Family network meeting/EHAP/SEND/Reintegration*		
Date of Meeting:		**Location of meeting:**	
Name of pupil/s:		**Name of School:**	
		Year Group:	

Attendee Name:	**DOB:** (parents)	**Role & Organisation:**

Key Issues Discussed: Including discussions regarding or impacting attendance.

Pupil's view:

Identified barrier:	Agreed action to support:	Person responsible:	By when:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

Information Sharing:	
Confirm date shared with parent/s:	
Method:	
By whom:	
Date:	

APPENDIX 6 – ATTENDANCE WARNING LETTER FOR PARENTS

Norfolk County Council: Independent School Absence Guidance for Parents 2026–27

At **Acorn Park**, we work closely with parents and carers to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education and achieve their full potential. Good school attendance is essential for children's learning, wellbeing and future opportunities. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly when they are registered at a school.

Regular school attendance and parents' legal responsibilities

For the purposes of education law, a parent includes:

- A child's natural parent.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for the child; and
- Any person who has day-to-day care of the child, such as a step-parent.

This definition is set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

The Government is clear that children should only miss school in exceptional circumstances. Schools and local authorities are expected to work with families to promote good attendance and reduce avoidable absence.

When can your child can be absent from school?

Absences may be authorised where there is a valid reason, such as:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours; or
- Other exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher.

If your child is unable to attend school, you should notify the school as soon as possible and follow the school's attendance reporting procedures.

Requests for leave of absence during term time.

Government guidance states that schools should only grant leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. Each request will be considered individually, taking account of the specific circumstances presented.

Please be aware that:

- Leave of absence can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Family holidays, trips and other leisure activities taken during term time will not normally be authorised.
- Government guidance states that a need or desire for a holiday or other leisure activity is not considered an exceptional circumstance.
- If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time authorised.
- Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance of the planned absence.
- Requests made after an absence has already been taken cannot normally be considered retrospectively.
- Absences taken without prior approval are likely to be recorded as unauthorised.

The school reserves the right to request evidence in support of absences reported immediately before or after a holiday period.

When could legal intervention be considered?
Under the national framework for school attendance, legal intervention may be considered when a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.
What does this mean?

- A school day consists of two sessions – a morning session and an afternoon session.
- 10 sessions is usually equivalent to 5 school days.
- The unauthorised absences do not need to happen on consecutive days.
- The 10-school-week period can span different terms or school years.

Examples of unauthorised absence may include:
- Holidays taken during term time without authorisation.
- Keeping a child away from school without an accepted reason; or
- Persistent late arrival after the close of registration.

Important information for parents of pupils attending independent schools.

Current legislation does not allow Local Authorities to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences from independent schools.

Where a pupil attending an independent school accumulates 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period, the school may refer the case to Norfolk County Council for consideration of legal intervention.

As Penalty Notices cannot be issued in relation to pupils attending independent schools, Norfolk County Council may consider prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 where the legal threshold is met, and the circumstances indicate that such action is appropriate.

Any decision regarding legal proceedings will take account of:
- The individual circumstances of the case.
- The reasons for the absence.
- Any support offered to the family.
- The pupil's overall attendance history; and
- Any representations made by the parent.

A successful prosecution could result in:
- A criminal conviction.
- A fine of up to £2,500.
- Imprisonment for up to 3 months; and/or
- A Parenting Order.

Support with attendance.

We understand that children and families can sometimes face challenges that affect attendance. If you are experiencing difficulties or require support to help your child attend school regularly, please contact:

We will work with you to understand any barriers to attendance and discuss the support available. We are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that every child attends school regularly and benefits fully from their education.

APPENDIX 7 – ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PLAN

Date of Meeting:	

Enter the name of the pupil(s)			
Name of pupil:		**School:**	
Date of Birth:		**Year Group:**	
Name of pupil:		**School:**	
Date of Birth:		**Year Group:**	

Invitees: (List all at meeting)	**DOB:** (parents)	**Role & Organisation:**	**Attended ?** (Y/N)	**Apologies given?** (Y/N)

Family Information: Details of <u>all</u> parents and siblings should be requested if school does not hold this information.			
Parent(s):			
Name:		**Name:**	
DoB:		**DoB:**	
Address:		**Address:**	
Siblings:			
Name:		**Name:**	
DoB:		**DoB:**	
School:		**School:**	

WHY ARE WE HERE? Please include: Child/young person's current attendance The impact on this CYP's academic progress, social development, behaviour, and emotional well-being – what are we seeing/not seeing in school? The support offered by the school to date?

WHAT SUPPORT HAS WORKED/WOULD WORK/WHY?	**WHAT HAS NOT WORKED/WOULD NOT WORK/WHY?**
•	•
•	•

• •	• •

PARENT/CARER VIEWS – What would they like to happen? What support do they feel is required?	**CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S VIEWS** – How do they feel about school? Can they explain barriers to attendance? What would they like to happen? What support do they feel they need?
• • • •	• • • •

FAMILY NETWORKING:		
Are there friends and family who can support the family?	Yes / No	
Does Family Group Conferencing need to be explored further? **(Contact FNA@norfolk.gov.uk for support and guidance)**	Yes / No	If yes, add to action plan below.
Comments:		

OTHER KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED: (Please ensure you record any other issues/key points not captured above)
•

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?
Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) Ensure actions support the family and child and note all support and actions on-going and new. Additional boxes can be added as required.

	What action will be taken? This plan is the attendance contract	**By When?**	**Who is responsible?**	**How will we know it is working? (Child focused)**
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Review Date:

As parent(s) you have a responsibility in law to ensure your child's regular attendance at school, you should be aware that the only defences available in law are:

1. **That the absences are with leave (i.e. that they have been agreed by the Headteacher);**
2. **That the absences are because of sickness or unavoidable cause;**
3. **That the absences fall on days of religious observance for the religion to which parents belong;**
4. **That the child is entitled to free transport to school and the LEA have failed to provide this;**
5. **That the child has no fixed abode, and the parent proves—**
   (a) that he is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
   (b) that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
   (c) if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

If absences do not fall into any of these categories or the school have not been informed of reasons for absence, absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Education Supervision Order (ESO)
We need to make you aware that, before instituting legal proceedings for an offence under s443/444 Education Act 1996, the LA has a duty to consider whether it would be appropriate to apply for an ESO; an application could be instead of or in addition to a prosecution.

The undersigned confirm that this is an accurate record of the discussions and outcomes agreed within the meeting. All parties agree to comply with the requirements set out in the action plan.					
School Representative(s):					
Name:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	
Name:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	
Other Professional(s) (i.e., Social Worker, Family Practitioner, Medical Professional, etc.):					
Name:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	
Parent/Carers:					
I understand that, as parent, I am legally responsible for ensuring my child's regular attendance at school. I agree with the content of these minutes and the plan, and it has been explained to me that this is an attendance contract, although not legally binding. Failure to adhere to the plan could result in a Notice to Improve being issued.					
Name:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	
I understand that, as parent, I am legally responsible for ensuring my child's regular attendance at school. I agree with the content of these minutes and the plan, and it has been explained to me that this is an attendance contract, although not legally binding. Failure to adhere to the plan could result in					

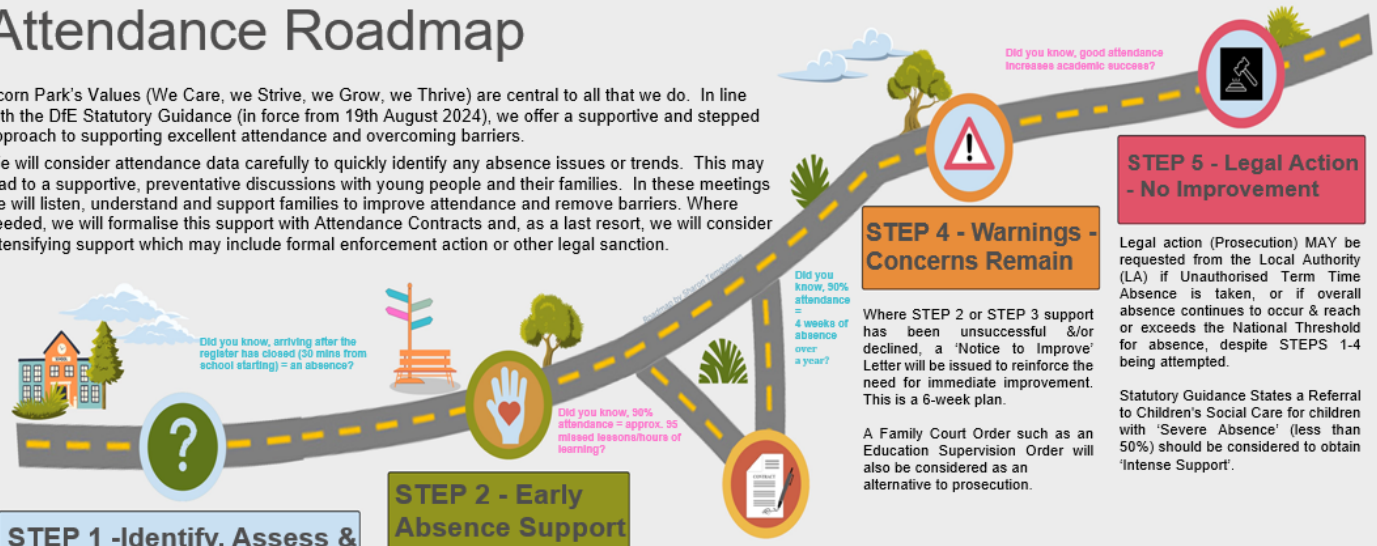
a Notice to Improve being issued.					
Name:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	
Child or Children (this section is voluntary for the child to complete):					
Name:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	
Name:		**Date:**		**Signature:**	

APPENDIX 8 – ACORN PARK SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Attendance Roadmap

Acorn Park's Values (We Care, we Strive, we Grow, we Thrive) are central to all that we do. In line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19th August 2024), we offer a supportive and stepped approach to supporting excellent attendance and overcoming barriers.

We will consider attendance data carefully to quickly identify any absence issues or trends. This may lead to a supportive, preventative discussions with young people and their families. In these meetings we will listen, understand and support families to improve attendance and remove barriers. Where needed, we will formalise this support with Attendance Contracts and, as a last resort, we will consider intensifying support which may include formal enforcement action or other legal sanction.



STEP 1 -Identify, Assess & Prevent

Our daily actions & processes aim to promote relationship building with children & families to prevent absence. This involves monitoring data trends & absence patterns to inform our conversations with you (& your child where age allows). The trigger for conversations is where absence is at risk of reaching the new National Threshold ***10 sessions (10 half days/5 days) within a 10-week rolling period)***.

Other daily actions involve promoting attendance positively, using praise & incentives, swift absence follow up, email &/or letter communication to raise your awareness of emerging concerns, processing requested or unrequested 'Term Time Exceptional Absence' & doing Home Visits to meet our safeguarding duties as required.

STEP 2 - Early Absence Support

We move to this step if the National Threshold for absence is met (authorised or unauthorised) to prevent further absence occurring.

You will be notified by letter when attendance falls below 95%.

Discussions & meetings will be offered to identify if early support or reasonable adjustments are needed. This will be done using discussions &/or meetings to create a supportive action plan.

STEP 3 - Formalised Support

Where absence continues & initial support needs to be increased an Attendance Support plan will be offered to formalise support. This is a nurturing plan of improvement to prevent further escalation.

Achievable & individual targets will be set & reviewed regularly. Medical &/or other information will be actively sought at this point if required to work collaboratively with you & other agencies. An AC can run alongside other meetings e.g., EHAP meeting.

STEP 4 - Warnings - Concerns Remain

Where STEP 2 or STEP 3 support has been unsuccessful &/or declined, a 'Notice to Improve' Letter will be issued to reinforce the need for immediate improvement. This is a 6-week plan.

A Family Court Order such as an Education Supervision Order will also be considered as an alternative to prosecution.

STEP 5 - Legal Action - No Improvement

Legal action (Prosecution) MAY be requested from the Local Authority (LA) if Unauthorised Term Time Absence is taken, or if overall absence continues to occur & reach or exceeds the National Threshold for absence, despite STEPS 1-4 being attempted.

Statutory Guidance States a Referral to Children's Social Care for children with 'Severe Absence' (less than 50%) should be considered to obtain 'Intense Support'.

LEGAL ACTION

As your child attends an independent setting, please be aware that when addressing unauthorised absence from school a penalty notice **will not** be issued

Legal interventions will only be used where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or inappropriate.

Where new National Threshold ***10 sessions (10 half days/5 days) within a 10-week rolling period)*** has been met and there is no improvement, the case will be presented to the LA for consideration of prosecution in the **Magistrates' Court** under s444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act.

If found guilty, a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be issued. Convictions for s444(1a) offences will show on DBS record.

Please talk to us about how we can support you &/or your child at any time.

OFG Education

