



THE BISHOPS' BLUE COAT CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

All of the policies that shape our lives and daily practice at Bishops` are informed by our Christian vision and values: to know, nurture and inspire our students to be the best version of themselves, so that they can live 'life in all its fullness'

(John 10:10)

Is this policy statutory?	Yes
Review period	3 years
Date of approval	September 2022
Committee	Students

Table of Contents

1. Statement of Intent.....	3
2. Legal Framework.....	3
3. Aims.....	4
4. The Importance of Good Attendance	4
5. Attendance Monitoring and Persistent Absence.....	5
6. Monitoring Attendance.....	5
7. Reporting Absences	5
8. Authorised Absences	6
9. Unauthorised Absences	6
10. Lateness	6
11. Truancy.....	7
12. Rewarding Positive Attendance	7
13. Requesting Time off within Term Time.....	7
14. Fixed Penalty Notices	8
15. Disadvantaged First.....	8
16. Young Carers	8
17. Students with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	9
18. Looked After Children	9
19. Working with Other Agencies	10
20. Part-time Timetables	10
21. Children Missing in Education.....	10
22. Elective Home Education	10
23. Roles and Responsibilities.....	11
Appendix A – Late to School	16

1. Statement of Intent

Our vision statement states that:

The Bishops Blue Coat Church of England High School is an exciting place to be. We know, nurture, and inspire our community to be the best version of themselves through a better understanding of the Christian faith, and a rich set of opportunities that support and challenge our learners, so they are equipped to succeed. Through their engagement in society at Bishops and beyond, students make a positive difference through their wise action and a sense of responsibility. Our student's initiative, drive and resilience will enable them to flourish and live 'live in all its fullness'. (John 10:10)

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School believes that good attendance is vital for all students if they are to gain from the rich set of opportunities, achieve and flourish. We are committed to removing any factor that might represent a hindrance to a child's fulfilment.

We are committed to:

- Building and promoting a culture of good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all
- Intervening early and working with parents/carers and where necessary wider agencies to ensure health and safety of our students.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set in section 7 of the education act 1996 which states that:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- A) To age, ability, and aptitude and
- B) To any special educational needs, he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DFE (2022) Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- DFE (2016) 'Children Missing in Education'
- DFE (2022) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

The policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- BESt Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy

- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Premium Policy
- SEND Policy

3. Aims

To manage and improve attendance effectively, our policy reinforces expectations to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all students are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

4. The Importance of Good Attendance

Good attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. At KS4, students not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of students not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%). For the most vulnerable students, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms.

The charts below document the importance of good attendance.

If a student's attendance over the school year is...	...they will miss these many days	...and these many lessons
95%	9.5	46
90%	19	91
85%	28.5	137
80%	38	182
75%	47.5	228
70%	57	274

5. Attendance Monitoring and Persistent Absence

Attendance is measured by sessions. There are two sessions per day (AM session and PM session), for example, if a child is absent for the whole day, they are absent for two sessions. These 'sessions' will be marked on the register as either authorised or unauthorised dependant on the type of absence.

The school defines a "persistent absence" (PA) when attendance drops below 90% (equivalent to half a day/1 session missed per week, or 1 day/2 sessions or more a fortnight) across a full school year. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to a child's education and future prospects and the school requires the full support and co-operation of parents/carers to take tackle this effectively.

The school monitors attendance closely and parents/carers of children approaching 90% will have had many points of communication with the Attendance Officer. If a student is classified as PA, the schools Pastoral Support Officers will work closely with parents/carers to support them with progress towards improved attendance. For some cases the school will work with multi agencies and will refer to the Local Authority to employ sanctions and/or legal proceedings such as Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) or even legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

6. Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is monitored by the Attendance Officer, Form Tutors and Pastoral Leaders. School monitoring involves regular checks of the attendance of each student and will follow up all absences with appropriate methods. We hope that all parents/carers will assist us by: -

- Informing the school on the days when their child is absent with a reason as to the absence. Failure to provide the school with this in a timely matter may result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.
- Attending meetings regarding their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Providing us with any information regarding a child's medical condition that may have effect on his/hers attendance by completing a [Health Care and Allergy Plan](#).
- Supporting messages of positive attendance. School can support students' attendance; however parents/carers are ultimately responsible for ensuring regular attendance and communicating with the school about their child's absence.

7. Reporting Absences

Parents/carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence and for subsequent days. It is good practice for parents/carers to send any medical letters, appointment cards or any other medical evidence to school to support their child's absence.

You can report your child's absence by calling our main school line on 01244 313 806 and selecting the attendance voicemail or by emailing attendance@bishopschester.co.uk.

The school will email/text all parents/carers for students who have not had their absence reported by parents/carers. If parents/carers don't respond to this further communication, the absence may be marked as an unauthorised absence.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify the reason and whether the absence is unauthorised or not
- Ask for medical evidence or other evidence relating to absence
- Identify the correct code to use to record the data on to the school census system.
- In the case of persistent absence arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to the attendance officer or a pastoral support officer.

Definition of a parent:

The Education Act 1996 defines a parent includes any person (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him/her, or (b) who has care of him/her.

Parents/carers must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details and are responsible for updating the school if the details change. Parents/carers should also provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.

8. Authorised Absences

Authorised absences may be considered as the following (this list is not exhaustive)

- A student is absent for illness which the school grants leave
- A student has a medical or dental appointment (where possible parents/carers/carers should make appointments out of school hours)
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency/ bereavement
- An absence requested for exceptional circumstances which has been approved for a set period of time by the Headteacher (see Section 12)

9. Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences may be considered as the following (this list is not exhaustive)

- Students are absent from school where a reason has not yet been provided, or the school are not satisfied that the reason given is an authorised absence.
- Lateness after the registers have closed (9:15am) if a suitable reason for lateness has not been reached.
- Truancy at any time during the school day
- Absences due to occasions such as shopping, looking after other children etc, will automatically be marked as unauthorised.
- Leaving school for no reason without prior agreement during the school day.

10. Lateness

Punctuality is of utmost importance. Lateness to school and lateness to lessons is considered a community consequence following the BESt Behaviour for Learning Policy. Students who are late due to a school bus arriving late or unforeseen circumstances will be exempt from this consequence. Students with poor punctuality are monitored by their form tutors and pastoral team. Details of learning time lost due to lateness can be found in **Appendix A**.

The school day begins at 8:45am, with a movement bell sounding at 8.40am to allow for students to move to registration. Students arriving in school between 8:45am and 9:15am will be coded as L. If a student arrives after 9:15 and no reason has been given from the student's parent/carer the AM session will then be marked as unauthorised unless a viable reason for the lateness can be given.

11. Truancy

Students are not permitted to leave the school premiss during the school day unless they have permission. Any student with permission to leave the school must sign out at reception and sign back in on their return. Students are not permitted anywhere else on school grounds during learning time without permission.

The school defines truancy as any absences of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. The truancy will be marked as an unauthorised absence and will incur additional school sanctions and/or a fixed notice penalty.

If a student is missing from a session the member of staff will alert the On Call member of staff to investigate. The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search. A thorough search of the school premises will be undertaken. If after undertaking a search and necessary checks the student is still missing, the parents/carers of the student will be notified. The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contacts provided. If the parents/carers have had no contact from the student, and the list (which can include allocated social workers or multi agency personnel) has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.

When the student has been located, a designated member of staff will ensure that the student is safe and well and parents/carers updated.

12. Rewarding Positive Attendance

We set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these regularly to students and parents/carers through all available channels. Termly bulletins and assemblies visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life.

13. Requesting Time off within Term Time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to allow time off for students. Absences for exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Headteacher, these include:

- 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 holiday.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the immediate family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the immediate family.
- Representation for an organisation at the organisations address.
- To attend an educational or sporting opportunity.
- Religious observances. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious celebrations/festivals.

- A student is participating in a performance
- A student is subject to a temporary part-time timetable
- A student is pregnant

The Bishops Blue Coat High School strongly urges parents/carers not to book holiday during term time as this can have a detrimental effect on a student's progress and attainment.

Any request for time off can be made by clicking on [Request for Absence during Term Time](#) and should be made at least 7 days prior to the requested absence.

If your request is not authorised and you still choose to take your child out of school during the requested period, or your child is absent beyond the approved dates, the leave of absence will be recorded on your child's registration record as unauthorised, and a fixed penalty notice (FPN) may be issued to each parent.

14. Fixed Penalty Notices

The Bishops Blue Coat High School may request the local authority to issue 'penalty notices' in respect of a persistent unauthorised absence in accordance with section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A fixed penalty notice (FPN) may be issued if a student has 10 or more unauthorised sessions of absence.

A formal penalty notice warning letter will be issued to parents/carers before any penalty notices are served, unless the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday in term time. In cases of persistent or prolonged absence (known as persistent absence) the school will request that the parental/carer contacts their GP or health professionals to provide medical evidence to the school. More information about fixed penalty notices can be found [Frequently Asked Questions about FPNs](#)

If medical evidence is not provided and the unauthorised absences go in excess of over 10 sessions, the school may ask the local authority to issue a fixed notice penalty. Penalty notices are issued per child to each parent who fails to ensure their child's attendance at school and must pay £60 per parent within 21 days. If unpaid the fine will double to £120 per parent which must be paid within 28 days. In severe cases of persistent unauthorised absence, the local authority may pursue legal action such as prosecution.

15. Disadvantaged First

The school adopts a 'disadvantaged first' approach where disadvantaged students are identified and supported. The attendance of disadvantaged students is monitored through pastoral briefings and social inclusion meetings that allow for the inclusion team to discuss individual students and plan interventions and support to improve attendance and achievement.

16. Young Carers

The school understands the difficulties young carers face and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school. Each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

17. Students with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities.

We are mindful of the barriers these students face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This includes:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for students with physical or mental health conditions.
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents/carers to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Supporting parents/carers with routines that support positive attendance including supporting conversations about uniform, transport, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and other reasonable adjustments as required
- Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

The school understands that medical needs can have an impact on a child's attendance. Parents/carers should provide us with any information regarding a child's medical condition that may have effect on his/hers attendance [Health Care and Allergy Plan](#) . This will be considered by the attendance team.

Students with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

The school aims to support the local authority and ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical need allows to enable them to reach their full potential. Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. The [Students with Additional Medical Needs Policy](#) offers further information regarding this.

18. Looked After Children

Absence for students with a social worker, has been historically higher, with a quarter of children who have ever needed a social worker persistently absent compared to less than 10% of those who had never been in need. School will work with the Virtual School to support looked after children and will notify social workers of any absences.

19. Working with Other Agencies

Poor attendance can be the result of difficulties faced by a child or family, and a cause of other problems such as exclusions. Students with low levels of attendance tend to have other complex issues therefore a co-ordinated approach by several agencies can assist these students and their families. The school will contact and work closely with these agencies where necessary and may offer a [Team around the Family](#) approach to support.

The school's Pastoral Support Officers will work closely with a local authority EWO Case Officer and request support meetings where necessary. This ensures correct and consistent procedures are being applied by the school together with the necessary legal support.

20. Part-time Timetables

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interest, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary, with regular review, and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full time. Part-time timetables can only be authorised in Social Inclusion meetings or by the Headteacher. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

21. Children Missing in Education

Effective information sharing between parents/carers, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who:

- don't have a school place
- aren't receiving a suitable education in any other way

Children aren't missing from education if they:

- have a school place but aren't attending regularly
- are being educated at home
-

Following [Children Missing in Education 2016](#) the Attendance Officer will notify the Local Authority of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive schools days without provision of reasonable explanation.

22. Elective Home Education

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child is included in appropriate full-time education. Elective Home Education (EHE) is when a parent or carer decides to educate their child at home. Where parents/carers orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated, pastoral teams will work with parents/carers to discuss the reasons and consider

additional support. Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they are home educating, the school will delete the child's name from the admission register and inform the local authority.

23. Roles and Responsibilities

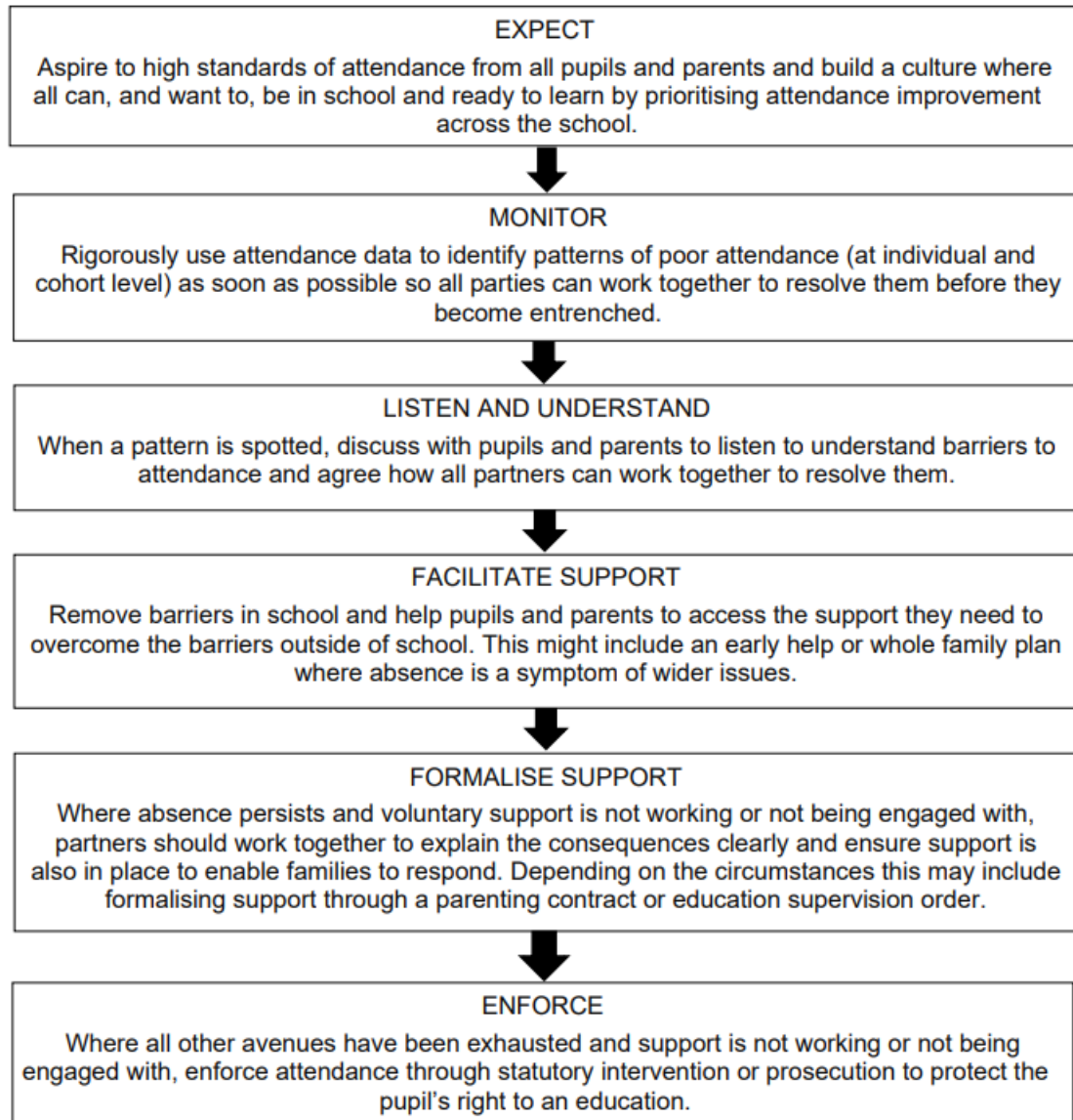
An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, students, and parents/carers understand these expectations, the chart below highlights some of the key responsibilities for all working together to improve school attendance.

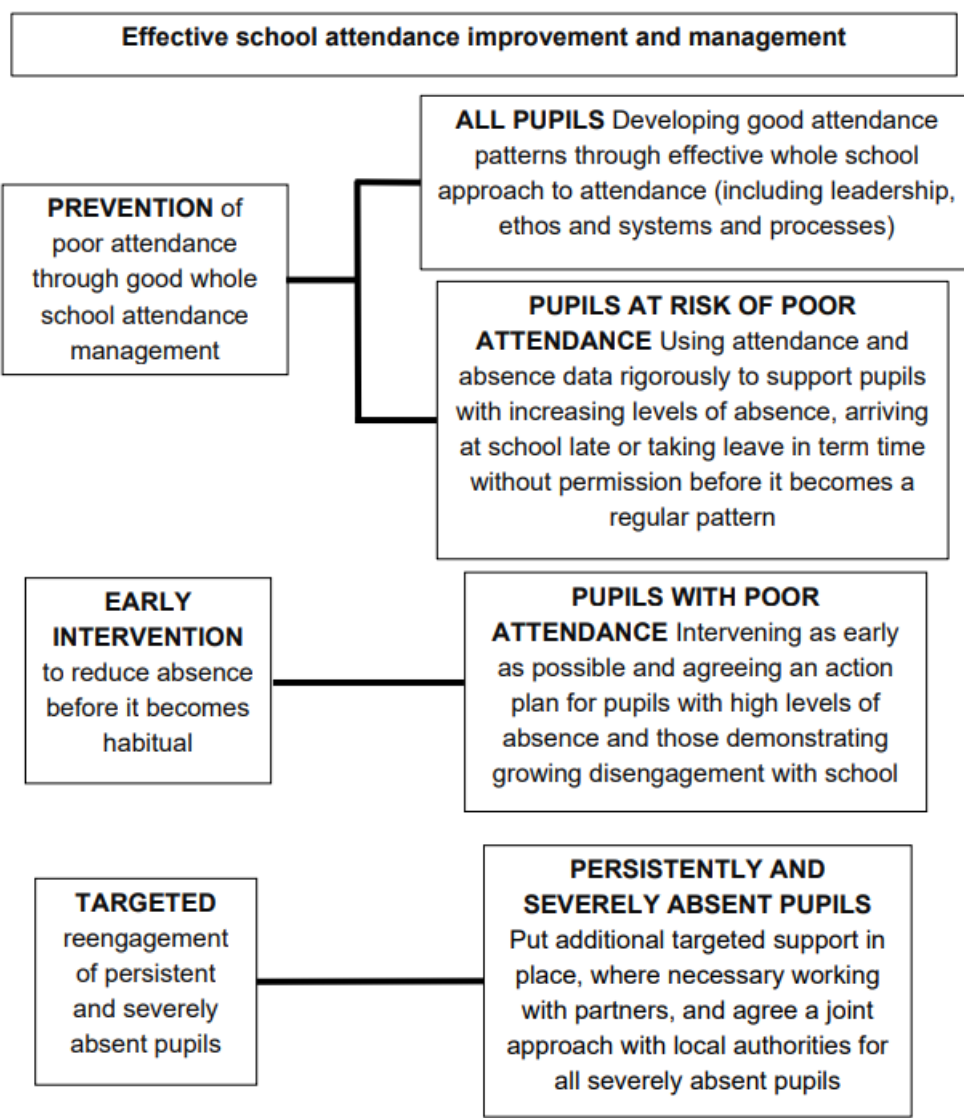
Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/carers/carers are expected to	School is expected to	Governors are expected to	Local Authorities are expected to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their child attends every day on time when the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. • Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. • Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. <p>When a child is at risk of becoming persistently absent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support. • Understand that when parents/carers/carers fail to fulfil their responsibilities can expect legal action, this may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed penalty notices • Prosecutions • Parenting orders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, students and parents/carers understand. • Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. • Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. • Have a dedicated senior leader (Deputy Headteacher) with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. • Training on attendance is included in the school(s)’ continued professional development offer for all staff. • The school will inform the LA of any student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Are being educated from home. 2) No longer live within a reasonable distance of registered school 3) Have an authorised medical note 4) Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning. 5) Have been permanently excluded. • Proactively use data to identify students at risk of poor attendance. • Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with students and parents/carers to maximise attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. • Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. • Ensure school staff receive training on attendance. • Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the students who need it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. • Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. • Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice • Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified student and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. • Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with each identified student and their parents/carers to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. • Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. • Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents/carers and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. • Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. • Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. 		<p>full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans</p>
--	--	--	--

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly, requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:





Appendix A – Late to School

If your child is 5 minutes late a day , they lose:				
25 minutes a week	1 hour 40 minutes a month	2 hours 30 minutes a half term	5 hours a term This is equivalent to 1 full day	16 hours 15 minutes a school year This is equivalent to over 3 days

If your child is 10 minutes late a day , they lose:				
50 minutes a week	3 hours 20 minutes a month	5 hours a half term This is equivalent to 1 full day	10 hours a term This is equivalent to 2 full days	32 hours 30 minutes a school year This is equivalent to over 6 full days

If your child is 15 minutes late a day , they lose:				
1 hour 15 minutes a week	5 hours a month This is equivalent to 1 full day	7 hours 30 minutes a half term This is equivalent to over 1 full day	15 hours a term This is equivalent to 3 full days	48 hours 45 minutes a school year This is equivalent to over 9 full days

If your child is 20 minutes late a day they lose:				
1 hour 40 minutes a week	6 hours 40 minutes a month This is equivalent to over 1 full day	10 hours a half term This is equivalent to over 2 full days	20 hours a term This is equivalent to 4 full days	65 hours a school year This is equivalent to 13 full days

It is important for your child to arrive punctually for school so they do not miss out on valuable learning experiences