

# **Attendance Policy**

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Due for Review: Autumn Term 2026

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Policy</b>	
1. Contact details and Introduction	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Scope and application	4
4. Legislation and guidance	4
5. Publication and availability	4
6. Definitions and interpretation	4
7. Expectations	5
8. Registers	6
9. Monitoring and improving the attendance of children with a social worker	7
10. Persistent and severe absences	7
11. Legal Intervention	8
12. Responsibilities	8
13. Monitoring attendance	12
14. Additional needs	12
15. Training	13
16. Information and sharing	13
17. Record Keeping and confidentiality	14
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: DFE Attendance codes, definition and meaning	15
Appendix 2: Admission Register	17
Appendix 3: Attendance Registers	18
Appendix 4: Attendance information	20
Appendix 5: Relevant legislation, guidance and advice	21
Appendix 6: Local arrangements	22

## Key Contact Details: The Castle School

<b>School</b>	The Castle School
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr James Lamb
<b>SLT Attendance Champion</b>	Miss Austine Broad
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	Mrs Heidi Penn
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Miss Austine Broad
<b>School Office / Admissions / Absence Line</b>	TCS Office Contact details: office@castle.bep.ac

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Blackdown Education Partnership (BEP) recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to support, and promote, excellent attendance and punctuality at school. BEP are committed to providing the highest quality of education to our pupils, we recognise the clear link between good attendance and the attainment of our pupils, alongside a strong, safe and happy culture of learning.
- 1.2 The law gives the right for every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. Where parents/carers have decided to have their child registered at school, they have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend school every day the school is open, except for a small number of circumstances where the child is too ill to attend, or they have been given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all schools within BEP. The policy details how schools work in partnership with pupils, parents, and relevant external support agencies, to remove any barriers to attendance. This is done through building strong relationships and working collaboratively.

### 2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to enable all schools to provide a consistent approach to improving attendance. Adopting a whole school approach ensures that all members of the school community understand the important contribution they make to:
- promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence, by effectively removing the barriers to attendance
  - ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - acting early to address patterns of absence
  - minimising the disruption caused by late arrivals, or non-attendance, to the quality of the education and provision for all pupils.

### 3 Scope and application

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff (including supply staff), trustees, governors and volunteers. It is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on schools as outlined in [‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ \(DfE August 2024\)](#).
- 3.2 This policy applies to all schools within BEP, including the Early Years (EYFS) and/or sixth form where applicable.
- 3.3 For the purposes of this policy and the procedures, we refer to Section 576 of the Education Act which defines the ‘parent’ of a pupil or young person as:
- both of their natural parents, whether they are married or not
  - any person who, although they are not the natural parent, has parental responsibility for the pupil or young person, as defined in the Children Act (1989)
  - any person who, although not the natural parent, has the care of the pupil or young person i.e., a person with whom the pupil lives, irrespective of their relationship to the pupil.

#### **4 Legislation and guidance**

- 4.1 This policy meets the requirements of the ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.
- 4.2 Appendix 5 outlines the key legislation, guidance and advice that sets out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

#### **5 Publication and availability**

- 5.1 This policy is published on the school and trust website and is available in hard copy on request.
- 5.2 A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the school office during the school day.
- 5.3 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

#### **6 Definitions and interpretation**

- 6.1 References to attendance includes punctuality and attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.
- 6.2 References to parent or parents means the natural or adoptive parents of the pupil (irrespective of whether they are or have ever been married, with whom the pupil lives, or whether they have contact with the pupil), as well as any person who is not the natural or adoptive parent of the pupil, but who has care of, or parental responsibility for, the pupil (e.g., foster carer / legal guardian).
- 6.3 **SLT Attendance Champion** means the schools’ designated senior lead for attendance.
- 6.4 References to **compulsory school age** refers to when a child is required to attend school. This is on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August, then they are

of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

6.5 References to **persistent absence (PA)** means when a child has an absence rate of 10% or more (i.e., attends for less than 90% of the time) and will be defined as a 'persistent absentee'. These pupils are likely to be finding it difficult to be in school, or face significant barriers to their regular attendance, and therefore are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

6.6 References to **severe absence (SA)** means when a child has an absence rate of 50% or more (i.e., attends for less than 50% of the time) and will be defined as a 'severe absentee'. These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

## 7 Expectations

In line with DfE expectations, to manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence straight away.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils, or cohorts, that require support with their attendance and rapidly put effective strategies in place to prevent further absences and secure good attendance.
- Build strong relationships with families by listening to, and understanding, the barriers to attendance and work in partnership with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with relevant local partners, particularly local authorities, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Work with key partners to:

**Expect:** Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

**Monitor:** Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

**Listen and understand:** When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

**Facilitate support:** Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

**Formalise support:** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

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

*Taken from DfE's 'Working Together to Improve Attendance (section 14 page 10)*

## 8 Registers

8.1 In line with DfE requirements, school leaders must ensure the register is taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session (see appendix 6 for exact times). On each occasion there must be a record of whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstance.

8.2 School leaders are expected to ensure that:

- registers are kept up to date
- register closing times are specified and adhered to
- registers are accurately completed using attendance and absence codes as defined by the DfE's statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024). See Appendix 1.
- there are effective day to day processes in place to follow-up all absence quickly.

## 9 Monitoring and improving the attendance of children with a social worker

9.1 In addition to the benefits for all pupils, good attendance at school also provides an additional safeguarding for vulnerable pupils. Historically, the national absence rates for children who have ever needed a social worker are of particular concern.

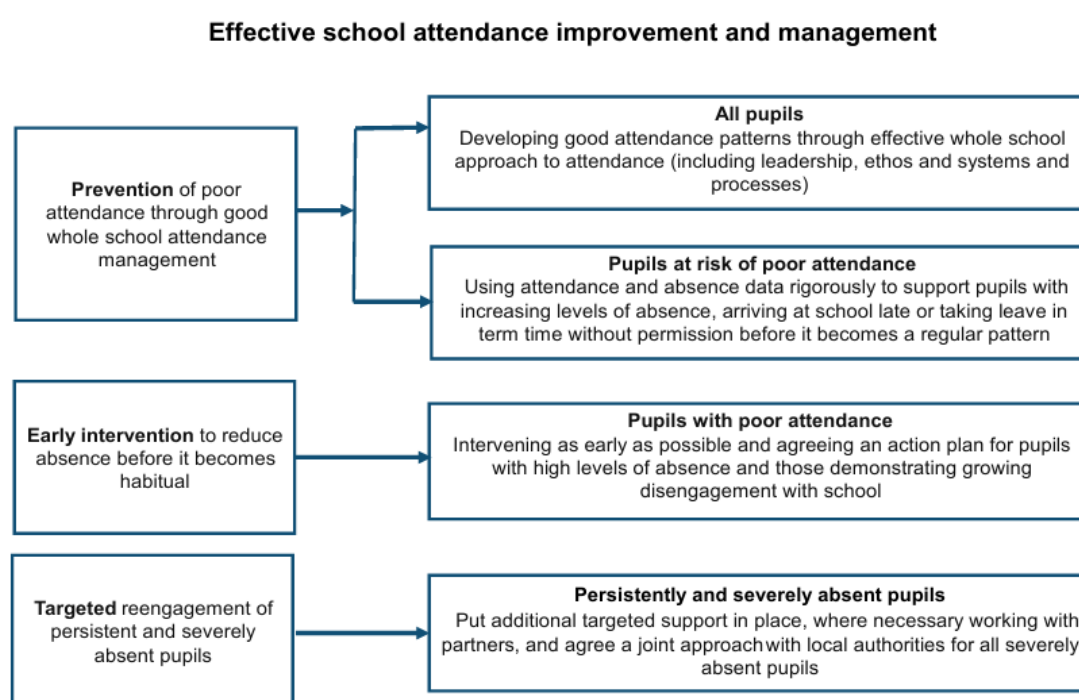
9.2 All schools within the Blackdown Education Partnership will work in partnership with Local Authority and Virtual School Headteachers and, are expected to inform a child's social worker if there are unexplained or unexpected absences from school.

## 10 Persistent and Severe absence

10.1 The most important elements to improving attendance are the everyday strategies to develop a culture of high expectations of attendance and punctuality, and the work with families to prevent absence becoming a concern.

10.2 Schools are expected to implement bespoke strategies to improve the attendance of pupils at risk of 'persistent' or 'severe' absence. Refer to 6.5 and 6.6 for definitions.

10.3 Any pupils who are persistently or severely absent will be closely monitored at both a school and trust level. In line with DfE's statutory guidance, schools are expected to provide information to local partners so that pupils who need targeted attendance support receive it as quickly as possible. This is explained further in figure 1 below:

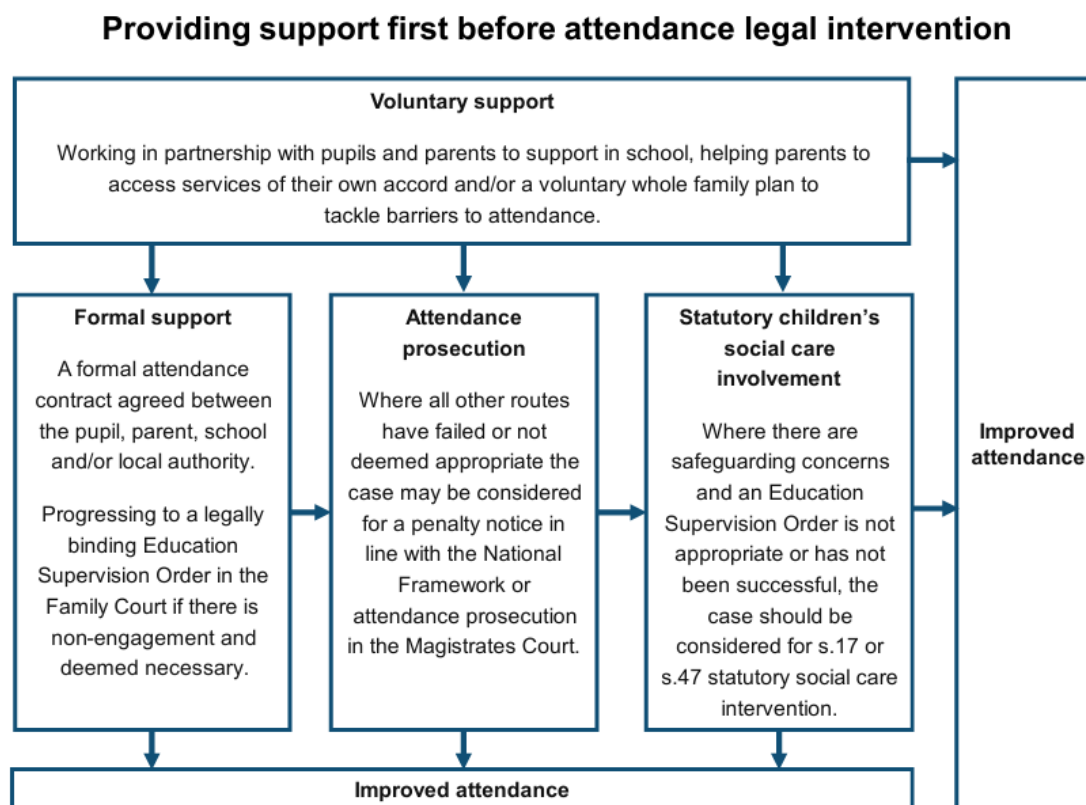


**Figure 1: Taken from DfE's Working together to improve school attendance (page 46)**

## 11 Legal Intervention

11.1 Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful, or are not appropriate (e.g., an unauthorised holiday in term-time), the relevant Local Authority will take forward legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance.

11.2 In line with DfE’s statutory guidance, if informal support is not successful or engaged with, the law protects pupils’ right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, it will be reinforced through prosecution, as outlined in figure 2 below:



**Figure 2: Taken from DfE’s Working together to improve school attendance (page 47)**

11.3 Whilst it is the local authority’s responsibility to take forward ‘parenting contracts’, ‘supervision orders’ or ‘prosecutions’, schools must work closely with the local authority’s School Attendance Support Team to provide appropriate information.

11.4 School leaders are also expected to be familiar with their local authority arrangements so that they can be clear with families, where appropriate, about the process so that this route is avoided wherever possible.

## 12 Responsibilities

12.1 The Trustees have overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

12.2 The Trust Board is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the requirement under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means in carrying out its functions, the Trustees are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act



- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- recognise that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and appoint a designated senior leader to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.

12.3 The School is responsible for implementing this policy in full.

12.4 A summary of responsibilities for Trustees, Governing Committees, staff, parents and pupils are outlined below:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Trustees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote the importance of school attendance.</li> <li>• To ensure that in each school there is a senior member of staff of the school leadership team appointed as the SLT Attendance Champion to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.</li> <li>• Work with Trust leaders to identify areas of focus for improvement.</li> <li>• Monitor the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Governing Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that schools have an Attendance Champion who is a member of the SLT.</li> <li>• To receive reports and monitor the impact of strategies to improve attendance.</li> <li>• To ensure that support for attendance, and improving attendance, is appropriately resourced, including, where applicable, through the effective use of pupil premium funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Director of Student Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that the school leadership team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Fulfil their statutory duties in respect of school attendance, including support and challenge around the trends or areas identified as needing to improve.</li> <li>b) Receive regular training to discharge their duties in respect of attendance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To regularly review the data and reports provided by the schools to identify patterns in attendance, and common issues, and barriers, to pupils attending school using appropriate comparators including data from local authority area, region and nationally.</li> <li>• To identify patterns in attendance and common issues and barriers to pupils attending school to ensure that effective practice can be shared across schools within the Trust.</li> <li>• To report on the impact of Trust and school attendance improvement strategies to Trustees.</li> </ul>
<b>SLT Champion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To lead on and embed a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance, ensuring attendance is everyone's responsibility.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To formulate a clear vision and strategy for attendance and drive improvement.</li> <li>• To evaluate and monitor the impact of the attendance strategy, expectations and school processes (further details can be found in section 13).</li> <li>• To have oversight of, and regularly analyse, attendance data to identify trends/patterns and ensure rapid and robust intervention is in place to secure good attendance.</li> <li>• To communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to staff, pupils, and parents/carers.</li> <li>• To ensure whole school attendance is a standing agenda item in weekly SLT meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To follow the attendance policy and re-enforce expectations through interaction and communication with pupil and families.</li> <li>• To establish a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon.</li> <li>• To ensure that all registers are completed accurately and on time every lesson, every day.</li> <li>• Seek explanations of absences required from pupils, parent/carers and provide support, advice and guidance where required.</li> <li>• To make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupils and parent/carers to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the school. This may be through home visits if the school are unable to contact the parent/carers or if a reason for absence has not been provided.</li> <li>• Inform the SLT Attendance Champion of any known future absences for pupils.</li> <li>• To deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly through robust tracking of registers and inform SLT Attendance Champion of any specific concerns.</li> <li>• To discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality.</li> </ul>
<b>All staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.</li> <li>• Provide consistent communication to pupils and parents about attendance and punctuality.</li> </ul>
<b>Parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure their child attends school on time every day and remains in school for the duration of the school day.</li> <li>• Notify the school of any absence or lateness as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this.</li> <li>• Understand that any appointments where possible need to be made for out of school hours to avoid their child missing any learning (we recognise that orthodontic appointments, specialist medical appointments and hospital appointments cannot always be moved to out of school hours but request that attempts are made).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify the school of any planned absence in advance and understand that this would be approved for exceptional circumstances only. This is in line with the Department for Education guidance which states that holidays and other leave of absence should not be taken during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are a matter of discretion of the Headteacher. All cases would be judged on a case-by-case basis.</li> <li>• Work with the school to explore barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.</li> <li>• Read this policy at the start of each new school year and when any changes are made.</li> </ul>
<b>Pupils</b>	<p>Understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff want every pupil who attends their school to do their best and so have high expectations about attendance.</li> <li>• They are expected to attend school, on time each school day.</li> <li>• They are expected to attend all timetabled lessons on time.</li> <li>• They should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission.</li> <li>• The school has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.</li> <li>• They should engage with the school's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy.</li> <li>• Any unexplained absence will be followed up. Persistent or severe lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the school and may take the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance.</li> <li>○ communication with parents/carers.</li> <li>○ reporting to other agencies such as children's social care.</li> <li>○ Escalation of cases to the local authority which may lead to formal support or attendance prosecution.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they should speak to the school via their class teacher/tutor, or pastoral/safeguarding team. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.</li> </ul>

### 13 Monitoring Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

The school will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. Contact details of relevant staff can be found at the front of the policy.

The school will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education. Where frequent sporadic illness occurs without sufficient justification in relation to health, the school will challenge the veracity of the illness and request that medical evidence be provided by the parent to authorise the absence (I code).

The school will:

- 13.1 monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
- 13.2 use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead).
- 13.3 conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- 13.4 effectively communicate attendance concerns with pupils, parents and carers and work with them to remove any barriers.
- 13.5 benchmark attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- 13.6 devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data considering any reasonable adjustments that may be required to support students with special educational needs or mental health or well-being concerns.
- 13.7 monitor the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented.
- 13.8 provide data and reports to the Trust to support attendance efforts and impact.

#### **14 Additional needs**

- 14.1 The school recognises that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school and will work with those pupils and parents/carers to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- 14.2 The school will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that affects their ability to attend school regularly. These may include considering support or reasonable

adjustments for transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements, and / or time limited phased returns.

- 14.3 The school will work with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and medical conditions as appropriate e.g., ensuring the provision outlined in a pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- 14.4 Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with parents, pupils, and external agencies and partners to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

## **15 Training**

- 15.1 The school will ensure that regular guidance and training about attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter, so that all staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

- the law and requirements of schools including keeping accurate registers.
- the importance of good attendance
- that absence is always a symptom of wider circumstances.
- the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

- 15.2 Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral, or family support staff and senior leaders.

As a minimum this will include

- the law and requirements of schools including keeping accurate registers
- the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it
- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data
- any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts to overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

## **16 Information and sharing**

- 16.1 Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and regard to Government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

## **17 Record keeping and confidentiality**

- 17.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the school's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

- 17.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The school's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The school has published privacy notices on its website which explains how the school will use personal data.

## Appendix 1

### 1. DFE Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meaning

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES
/	Present at the school (AM)	Present	
\	Present at the school (PM)	Present	
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence	
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence	
D	Dual registered at another school	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence	
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Present	
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence	
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence	
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence	
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements		
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence	
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence	
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present

<b>W</b>	Attending work experience	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Y1</b>	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Y2</b>	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Y3</b>	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Y4</b>	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Y5</b>	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Y6</b>	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Y7</b>	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	
<b>#</b>	Planned whole school closure	Not counted in possible attendances	

See Chapter 8: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)  
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## **Appendix 2**

### **1 Admission register**

1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the school will:

- maintain an admission register of pupils admitted to the school (also known as the school roll); and
- inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the schools' admission register at non-standard transition points.

1.2 The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the school, including their date of admission, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school they last attended.

1.3 The school will not 'off-roll' pupils, that is, it will not remove a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal would be primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil.

1.4 Where the school notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the following information:

- the full name of the pupil
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable
- the grounds (set out in regulation 9 (1) or (3) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

## **Appendix 3**

### **1. Attendance register**

- 1.1 Attendance of compulsory school-aged pupils is recorded and monitored in accordance with the statutory requirements and the school has adopted the national codes system to enable it to monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations.
- 1.2 The attendance of non-compulsory school age will be recorded in the same way so that attendance can be monitored, unexplained absences are investigated, and the school can ensure their safety and welfare.
- 1.3 The school will use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.
- 1.4 The school is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- 1.5 On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:
  - present
  - absent
  - attending an approved educational activity
  - unable to attend school due to an exceptional circumstance

### **2. Recording absences**

- 2.1 Absence will be recorded as set out in 3 and 5 below using national absence codes correlating to:
- authorised absence
  - excluded (while still on the admission register)
  - holiday authorised by the school
  - illness
  - medical or dental appointments
  - religious observance
  - study leave
  - Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence

### **3. Absence from school**

- 3.1 All applications for authorised absence from school should be made with reasonable notice and addressed to the Headteacher.
- 3.2 Only exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application for authorised absence individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and the relevant background context behind the request.

- 3.3 If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil is authorised to be away from school.
- 3.4 Absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

#### **4. Remote education**

- 4.1 The school is required to record all absence from in-person lessons.
- 4.2 The school may, in limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the school site, to keep pace with their education.
- 4.3 The school must ensure pupils accessing remote education are marked as absent on the register using the most appropriate absent code (paragraph 311 in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' 2024). Separate records will be maintained to monitor a pupil's engagement with this activity and plans for their reintegration to class.

#### **5. Unauthorised absence**

- 5.1 The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given. It will also be used where the school is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence, or delayed attendance, meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate.

Examples include:

- A holiday that has not been authorised or is more than the period determined by the Headteacher.
- The reason for absence has not been provided.
- A pupil is absent from school without authorisation.
- A pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.
- Frequent sporadic illness without sufficient justification in relation to health.

## Appendix 4

### Attendance Information Sheet for parents and carers

Missing lessons makes it hard to catch up and students need to work harder when they come back. Pupils attend school for 190 days per year; there are 175 non-school days a year for holiday, cultural experiences and family time. Any child with attendance of 90% or below is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) by the Government. Every school is required to take action to work with families to improve attendance. It is useful for you to know what attendance figures mean for your child.

<b>100%</b>	<b>Excellent Attendance</b>
<b>Above 98%</b>	<b>Good Attendance</b> Students with attendance above 98% have had less than 4 days of absence in the year
<b>Below 96%</b>	If your child's attendance drops below 96% you will receive a letter highlighting this
<b>94%</b>	If your child's attendance drops to 94% you will receive a letter and be asked to attend a meeting
<b>92%</b>	If your child's attendance drops to 92% the Pastoral Manager and/or Education Safeguarding Officer (EWS) will become involved
<b>90% and below.</b>	<b>Persistent Absentee (PA) as defined by the Department for Education (DfE).</b> Students with 90% attendance have had 19 days over the year Students with this attendance level are missing a month of school per year and may drop at least one GCSE grade. Parents of students with this level of attendance may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or have legal action taken against them
<b>85%</b>	<b>Exceptionally Low Attendance/Persistent Absentee</b> Students with 85% attendance have had 29 days' absence over the year. These students are missing 6 weeks of a school year; it will be <u>very</u> difficult for them to keep up with work and they are likely to drop more than one GCSE grade. It is highly likely that a Fixed Penalty Notice will have been served and should attendance not improve significantly after this, a referral will be made for legal action to be taken against parents for failure to ensure that their child attends school regularly

### Reporting an Absence:

- All absences must be reported by the required time identified in appendix 6 below (and on each subsequent day) by either calling the absence line or emailing the relevant school.
- If you know your child is going to be absent, please let us know in advance. If your child has been absent due to a medical appointment, please attach or email in a copy of the appointment card/hospital letter.
- Medical evidence may be required where clarification is needed to accurately record absence in the attendance register. Where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness medical evidence may be requested to support the absence.

### Punctuality

Arriving late to school and into lesson is very disruptive for the teacher and other class members. It also means that late student themselves miss important input from teachers.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Legislation, guidance and advice**

This policy has regard to the following legislation, guidance and advice:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, August 2024).
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, March 2021)
- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- Education (Pupil Registration Regulations) 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963 The Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010; and Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2024)
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020)
- Children missing education (DfE, September 2016)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017)
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, September 2022)
- Remote education guidance (DfE, October 2022)
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions (DfE, September 2023)
- SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, January 2015).

## **Appendix 6**

### **Part 1: Local Arrangements: The Castle School**

#### **School times:**

The school gates are open from 8:00am.

The school day starts at 8:40am and all pupils should be in their tutor classroom at this time.

The first (morning) registration session starts at 8:45am

Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their designated classroom by 8:45am

The register closes at 9:30am.

Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that the pupil is on site, (U) but will count as an absent mark. Pupils arriving late should report to the main school office and sign in via the electronic screen

The second (afternoon) registration session starts at: 12:30pm

#### **Absence reporting:**

Parents/carers must contact the attendance officer, Mrs Heidi Penn to notify the school of any absence or lateness and, when doing so, give an accurate explanation for the absence.

Parents are expected to contact the school by 8:30am providing the reason for absence and when their pupil will be returning to school.

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason if we do not receive one.

Unexplained absences will be followed up on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and the school will identify whether the absence is approved or not.

The school will contact parents and/or other listed emergency contacts where no contact has been made. Where required, we may conduct reasonable enquiries with friends or neighbours and will carry out welfare home visits as necessary. If no contact is made, we may request a welfare check from the police.

In the case where the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the school and no reason has been issued for the pupil's absence, the school will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the pupil, following procedures for children missing in education as outlined in the document from the Department of Education. Any pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than one week will be referred to Miss Austine Broad (DDL/SLT Champion) and Mr James Lamb (Headteacher).

The school will identify the correct code to use and will input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained. This will take no longer than 5 working days after the session.

If a pupil needs to leave school during the day, they must sign out at the main reception with a parent once authorisation has been given.

To request a 'Leave of Absence' students must obtain an absence request form for their house from reception. On completion of form, this must be returned directly to the attendance officer.

Pupils educated off-site are monitored daily for their attendance at the off-site/alternative provision. Staff work closely with the staff at the off-site provision, the pupil, and their parents to support the pupil to maintain good attendance.

If parents/carers would like more detailed support about attendance please contact Miss Austine Broad.

## Part 2: School strategy

### Our vision for attendance is:

There is an absolute commitment at The Castle School that all students are well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment, and educated so that they enjoy life, live well and are decent human beings. As leaders and staff at The Castle School, we want every student to access the quality of experiences that we expect for our own children. Therefore, the curriculum and opportunities are ambitious and planned to be accessed universally.

The same approach is given to attendance and ensuring that no child is left behind. TCS is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. The whole school community – students, parents & carers, teaching & support staff and school governors, have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and all have important roles to play.

We know there are some ‘high yield’ actions that schools can implement to create a culture of belonging and therefore high levels of attendance:

- **Strong Classroom and school culture:** Teachers and support staff purposefully developing relationships with students.
- **Attendance Monitoring:** Regularly monitor attendance daily and follow up with weak attendance cases rapidly.
- **Remove barriers:** Address barriers to attendance and facilitate support where needed in a timely manner.
- **Participation:** Create opportunities for students to engage meaningfully in their learning and enrichment.
- **A culture of high expectations and respect:** Adults model with respect and empathy as well as holding firm boundaries; ‘Warm and Strict’.

Our Attendance Strategy Priorities:

#### Priorities Summary

**Priority Area 1: Build a holistic understanding of pupils and families, and diagnose specific needs**

**1.1 Accurate data and tracking 1.2 Strategic analysis of trends 1.3 Early identification of barriers affecting attendance for severely absent students 1.4 Individual student support**

**Priority Area 2: Improve Attendance and punctuality for our disadvantaged, SEND and medical students**

**2.1 Transition planning 2.2 Reduce PA for disadvantaged student 2.3 Reduce PA for SEMH/SEND/ASC/MSI students 2.4 Strong and inspiring young carers programme**

**Priority 3: Communicate effectively with families**

**3.1 Clear and timely communication and escalation systems 3.2 Parental engagement and voice, 3.3 Accessibility and guidance for all**

**Priority 4: Deliver targeted interventions to support universal provision**

**4.1 Consistent and robust ever-developing graduated response 4.2. Strategic planning in use of Part-Time Timetables and AP provision 4.3 Consistent and timely use of Early Help Co-ordinator, multi-agency support and service 4.4 Increase capacity for internal interventions 4.5 Close tracking and review of interventions for effectiveness and impact**

**Priority 5: Attendance is rewarded, celebrated and is everyone’s priority**

**5.1 Attendance at the forefront 5.2 Range of rewards and recognition 5.3 National recognition for school**

**Our targets for attendance are:**

- Increase overall attendance **from 92.9% to at least 94%** by the end of the academic year.
- Reduce persistent absence (PA) **from 16% to below 14%**.

**We will communicate our vision and targets to staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders.**

**We communicate this to our school community via:**

- **Weekly messages** to parents and carers, highlighting attendance goals, progress and benefits.
- **School assemblies** where pupils are reminded of the importance of attendance and celebrated for improvements.
- **Staff briefings and training sessions** to ensure consistent messaging and shared responsibility. Attendance will be a standing item on the weekly bulletin and top form group/most improved will be celebrated.
- **Visual displays** around the school, including posters, digital screens, and attendance boards.
- **Social media platforms** to share updates, celebrate successes, and engage the wider community.
- **Parent meetings and consultations**, especially for those whose children are persistently absent.
- **The school website**, where our attendance policy, targets, and support strategies are clearly outlined.
- **Student voice groups**, who help shape and promote attendance initiatives among peers.

**We recognise that absence from school can pose a safeguarding risk for our pupils. We will make sure that our staff, pupils and families understand these risks by:**

- **Providing information leaflets** that explain the link between attendance and safeguarding, distributed during key events and parent evenings.
- **Delivering workshops** for parents and carers to raise awareness of the risks associated with persistent absence and how to seek support.
- **Offering targeted support** for families and pupils with known attendance concerns, including early help referrals, early help coordinator support and pastoral interventions.
- **Holding regular briefings** led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or other trained staff to ensure all staff understand their role in monitoring attendance and identifying potential safeguarding concerns.
- **Sharing key messages in assemblies and form time**, reinforcing the importance of being in school every day and how absence can affect wellbeing and safety.
- **Implementing a graduated response**, where concerns are escalated appropriately through staged interventions, ensuring early identification and support for at-risk pupils.

**We expect good attendance and punctuality from our pupils. We use the following strategies to ensure that pupils understand this expectation:**

**Rewards and Incentives:**

- Weekly recognition for 100% attendance (certificates, shout-outs in assembly). Weekly recognition of 100% punctuality. Weekly recognition of 'Most Improved'.
- Termly rewards such as cinema afternoons, non-uniform days, pizza party, or prize draws for pupils with excellent or improved attendance.
- Annual celebration events for pupils with outstanding attendance.
- 100% attendance badges awarded, as well as most improved.
- Daily rewards for improved punctuality and attendance – stickers; sweets etc...

**Reminders and Updates in Assemblies and Form Time:**

- Weekly attendance updates shared in tutor time. Daily reminder on the green sheet of importance



of good attendance and impact.

- Half-termly assemblies focused on attendance themes, including the impact of absence and celebrating improvements.
- Attendance slide in half school assemblies to ensure consistent messaging.

**Pastoral Support for Pupils with Poor Attendance:**

- Regular check-ins with form tutors, pastoral leads, or attendance officers.
- Tracking and monitoring of attendance on tutor RAPS and in link meetings.
- Support plans developed in collaboration with families to address barriers to attendance at earliest stage – week 2 of the first half term.

**Personal Attendance Plans:**

- All students approaching PA meet with Attendance Officer and HoH completing a PAP that identifies barriers, what support is needed and to understand full context of each student.
- Tailored plans for pupils with persistent absence, including SMART targets, mentoring, and regular reviews.

**Weekly Tutor and HoH Attendance Focus:**

- Tutors and HoH review attendance and punctuality data with pupils every Monday.
- Pupils reflect on their attendance and set goals for the week.
- Tutors/HoH use assembly time/tutor time to target PA students, or students with sporadic illness/punctuality from the following week.

**Visual Displays and Tracking Boards:**

- Attendance boards in corridors and tutor rooms showing form group standings and improvements.
- “Attendance Champions” wall to celebrate pupils who have made significant progress.
- Posters in tutor rooms highlighting the ‘why’ of good attendance and punctuality.

**Parental Engagement:**

- Regular communication with parents about attendance expectations and updates.
- Attendance discussed during parent evenings and through targeted letters or meetings.

**First-Day Calling and Follow-Up:**

- Immediate contact with home for unexplained absences.
- Home visits or welfare checks where necessary.

**We empower staff to take responsibility for attendance by:**

- Offering relevant training to all staff, including CPD sessions on the link between attendance, safeguarding, and academic outcomes.
- Sharing regular attendance data with form tutors, heads of year, and subject teachers so they can identify and support pupils at risk of poor attendance. The data highlights decreasing or increasing attendance clearly.
- Encouraging and giving time to form tutors, class teachers and HoH to have regular conversations with pupils about their attendance, including weekly check-ins and goal setting.
- Enabling informal conversations with parents/carers, especially during drop-off/pick-up times, parent evenings, and school events.
- Recognising and celebrating staff contributions to improved attendance through staff shout-outs and team-based incentives in briefings and CPD.
- Embedding attendance into pastoral systems, ensuring staff understand their role in early identification and intervention.
- Using a whole-school approach, where all staff see attendance as a shared responsibility and part of the school’s culture of care and high expectations.

**We recognise that attendance is an important area of school improvement. We demonstrate our commitment to this by making sure it is resourced appropriately, to create, build and maintain systems to promote good attendance.**

**We do this by:**

- **Allocating dedicated staff roles**, including an Attendance Officer and pastoral leads, to monitor, support, and intervene where attendance concerns arise.
- **Providing ongoing professional development** for staff, including training on attendance strategies, safeguarding links, and effective communication with families.
- **Using pupil premium funding** to support attendance initiatives, such as:
  - ☐ Offering a free breakfast club to encourage punctuality.
  - ☐ Funding mentoring programmes and/or interventions for pupils with persistent absence.
  - ☐ Supporting transport costs for families facing barriers to getting pupils to school.
- **Investing in digital systems** (Arbor and CPOMS) to track attendance in real time and generate actionable reports.
- **Creating physical spaces** in the pastoral hub where pupils can receive support and guidance.
- **Developing communication materials**, including posters, leaflets, and digital content to promote attendance across the school community.
- **Running incentive programmes**, funded through school budgets or external grants, to reward good and improved attendance.
- **Collaborating with external agencies**, including Early Help, Educational Welfare Officers, and local authority services, to provide wraparound support for families.
- **Ensuring leadership oversight**, with attendance regularly reviewed at SLT meetings and included in the school improvement plan.

**We ensure that our staff are trained to use our attendance systems effectively and promote good attendance in school.**

**Examples of the training offered to our staff include:**

- **Annual Whole-School Attendance Training embedded in Safeguarding**  
Delivered at the start of each academic year (e.g. September INSET day), this session covers:
  - ☐ The importance of attendance and its impact on outcomes.
  - ☐ School attendance policies and procedures.
  - ☐ How to use the school's Management Information System (MIS) to record and monitor attendance.
  - ☐ Safeguarding links and escalation processes.
- **Designated Training for Pastoral and Attendance Leads**  
Termly pastoral leadership sessions focused on:
  - ☐ Data analysis and identifying patterns of concern.
  - ☐ Strategies for engaging families and supporting persistent absentees.
  - ☐ Legal frameworks and working with external agencies.
- **Form Tutor Briefings and Drop-In Clinics**
  - ☐ Half-termly briefings to update tutors on attendance trends and expectations.
  - ☐ Optional drop-in sessions with the Attendance Officer or DSL for support with specific cases.
- **Induction Training for New Staff**
  - ☐ All new staff receive training on attendance systems and expectations as part of their induction.
  - ☐ Includes a walkthrough of the MIS, safeguarding protocols, and how to have effective attendance conversations with pupils and parents.

- **Ongoing CPD Opportunities**
  - ☐ Access to external webinars and courses on attendance and pupil engagement.
  - ☐ Sharing of best practice through staff meetings and professional learning communities.
- **Support Materials**
  - ☐ Staff handbook with attendance procedures.
  - ☐ Quick-reference guides and scripts for conversations with pupils and families.

**We ensure that our governors have an accurate view of attendance at our school so that they can offer effective support and challenge. We keep governors informed by:**

- **Including detailed attendance data in the Headteacher's report** at each full governing body meeting, highlighting trends, concerns, and actions taken.
- **Providing termly attendance updates** during governor meetings, including comparisons to national benchmarks and breakdowns by key pupil groups (e.g. SEND, disadvantaged).
- **Facilitating governor scrutiny of attendance data**, allowing governors to ask questions, challenge patterns, and support strategic planning.
- **Organising link governor visits**, where the designated attendance governor meets with the Attendance Lead or DSL to review systems, interventions, and impact.
- **Sharing anonymised case studies** to help governors understand the barriers some pupils face and how the school is responding.
- **Ensuring attendance is a standing agenda item** at relevant committee meetings, such as the safeguarding or pupil welfare committee.
- **Providing training or briefings** for governors on attendance expectations, legal responsibilities, and the school's approach to improving attendance.

**As a school, we understand that developing a welcoming and positive culture is important in building trust and engagement and therefore promoting good attendance. We do this by:**

- **Offering a wide range of extracurricular activities**, including sports, arts, clubs, and enrichment opportunities, to help pupils build positive relationships with staff and peers.
- **Ensuring strong pastoral systems are in place**, with dedicated pastoral leads, form tutors, and support staff who know pupils well and can respond quickly to emerging needs.
- **Organising regular social events for parents and carers**, such as coffee mornings, open evenings, and cultural celebrations, to foster a sense of belonging and community.
- **Celebrating pupil achievements**, including attendance, through assemblies, newsletters, and displays around the school.
- **Maintaining a warm and welcoming school environment**, where pupils are greeted daily, classrooms are inclusive, and staff are approachable.
- **Making positive phone calls home**, so families hear good news about their child's progress, behaviour, or attendance—not just when there's a concern.
- **Providing transition support**, especially for new pupils or those returning after absence, to help them reintegrate smoothly and feel valued.
- **Encouraging pupil voice**, through school councils and feedback opportunities, so pupils feel heard and involved in shaping their school experience.
- **Using restorative approaches** to resolve issues and rebuild relationships, ensuring that pupils feel safe and supported.

**We strive to communicate effectively with staff, pupils and families so that they understand what to expect**

and what is expected of them.

Our strategies for doing this include:

**Written communications**, such as:

- Letters home regarding attendance expectations, updates, and concerns.
- Information leaflets explaining school policies, support available, and the impact of poor attendance.
- Termly newsletters celebrating attendance achievements and sharing key messages.

**Online communications**, including:

- Regular updates on the school website, including attendance policies and guidance.
- Emails to parents with attendance summaries and reminders.
- Use of social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to share attendance campaigns, celebrate success, and promote events.

**Telephone contact**, such as:

- First-day absence calls to ensure pupil safety and reinforce expectations.
- Welfare calls for pupils with ongoing attendance concerns.
- Text message reminders and updates for parents.

**Face-to-face interactions**, including:

- Parents' evenings where attendance is discussed alongside academic progress.
- Information sessions and workshops to support families in improving attendance.
- Informal conversations at drop-off/pick-up times to build relationships and address concerns early.

**Staff briefings and pupil assemblies**, where attendance expectations are reinforced and celebrated regularly.

**Clear signage and displays** around the school to promote attendance messages and keep expectations visible.

When required, we work with partners to promote good attendance.

Examples include:

- **Local Authority Education Welfare Service (EWS)** – for statutory support, home visits, and legal interventions where necessary.
- **Early Help Services** – to provide family support plans and coordinate multi-agency responses for pupils with complex needs.
- **Social Workers** – to ensure that attendance is prioritised as part of safeguarding and care planning for vulnerable pupils.
- **Local charities and community organisations**, such as:
  - ☐ Food banks or uniform banks to reduce barriers to attendance.
  - ☐ Youth mentoring programmes to support engagement and motivation.
- **School Nursing Team** – to support pupils with medical needs and help families manage health-related attendance issues.
- **Mental Health Support Teams (MHST)** – to provide early intervention for pupils experiencing anxiety or emotional difficulties impacting attendance.
- **Behaviour Support Services** – to help pupils with behavioural challenges reintegrate into school routines.
- **Alternative Provision Providers** – to support pupils at risk of exclusion or disengagement, with a view to reintegration.
- **Police and Safer Schools Officers** – to support with safeguarding concerns and community-based attendance issues.

- **Attendance Network Groups** – collaboration with other schools and professionals to share best practice and coordinate local strategies.

**We strive to model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.**

*All staff members should:*

- Treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and visible kindness
- Take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively;
- Understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity. Consistency is essential;
- Communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and wellbeing.

**Parents and carers are expected to:**

- Treat staff with respect;
- Actively support the work of the school;
- Ask staff for support when this is needed;
- Let us know as soon as possible when there are issues which may affect absence.

**We communicate this expectation by:**

- **Providing a dedicated attendance phone number and email address**, making it easy for families to report absences or ask for support.
- **Ensuring our communication channels are accessible**, including phone, email, text, and in-person conversations, so families can contact us easily when there is an issue.
- **Assigning a designated contact person** (such as the Attendance Officer or Pastoral Lead) for families who need extra support, ensuring consistency and trust.
- **Including attendance expectations in our welcome packs**, newsletters, and on the school website.
- **Reinforcing expectations regularly** through assemblies, tutor time, and parent meetings.
- **Offering translation or interpretation services** where needed, to ensure all families understand our expectations regardless of language barriers.

**We use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and to address absences.**

**Our systems include:**

- **Daily monitoring and tracking** of attendance using digital registers on Arbor to ensure accurate and timely data collection.
- **Automated alerts and follow-ups** for unexplained absences, ensuring swift communication with parents/carers.
- **Tiered intervention strategies** that escalate support based on patterns of absence, including meetings, pastoral care, mentoring, and external agency involvement where necessary.
- **Positive reinforcement initiatives**, such as weekly attendance awards, termly certificates, and recognition

in assemblies and newsletters.

- **Incentive house points** for good attendance, to encourage consistent attendance and to enable students to buy rewards.
- **Clear communication of expectations** through induction materials, parent meetings, and regular updates, ensuring all stakeholders understand the importance of attendance.
- **Staff training and accountability**, ensuring all team members understand their role in promoting and supporting attendance.
- **Data-driven reviews** to identify trends, evaluate the impact of interventions, and inform future planning.

**We use robust school systems to provide useful data at cohort, group and individual levels to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups. These groups include:**

- children who are disadvantaged
- children who have a social worker, including looked-after children;
- young carers;
- children who are eligible for free school meals;
- children who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- children who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

**We analyse attendance data regularly to identify issues and facilitate early intervention. This includes raising concerns with partner agencies that work with families.**

#### **1. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Oversight**

- All concerns raised with external agencies are overseen or approved by the DSL or a deputy DSL, normally in a Student Focused Meeting, to ensure consistency, appropriateness, and safeguarding compliance.
- DSLs maintain detailed records of all referrals and communications with partner agencies.

#### **2. Multi-Agency Meetings and Early Help**

- The school actively participates in **Team Around the Family (TAF)** or **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** meetings to coordinate support.
- Staff are trained to contribute to multi-agency plans and provide updates on attendance and engagement.

#### **3. Threshold and Escalation Protocols**

- Clear internal thresholds are established for when to escalate attendance concerns to agencies such as:
  - ☐ **Children's Social Care**
  - ☐ **Education Welfare Services**
  - ☐ **CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)**
  - ☐ **Youth Offending Teams**
- Escalation is based on patterns such as persistent absence, unexplained absences, or safeguarding concerns.

#### **4. Parental Engagement and Consent**

- Parents/carers are informed and involved in the process wherever appropriate, and consent is sought before referrals unless there is a safeguarding risk.
- Meetings with families are documented and shared with relevant agencies when needed.

#### **5. Chronology and Record-Keeping**

- A **chronology of concern** is maintained for each student, detailing attendance patterns, interventions,

communications, and agency involvement. This would in most cases be maintained on a student's Graduated Response.

- This ensures a clear narrative is available for any agency involvement or case review.

#### **6. Information Sharing Protocols**

- The school follows GDPR-compliant **information sharing agreements** with partner agencies.
- Staff are trained on what information can be shared and how to do so securely and appropriately.

#### **7. Attendance Panels and Case Reviews**

- Regular **attendance reviews** are held with internal staff and external partners to review persistent absence cases and agree on next steps.
- These may include action plans, home visits, or formal referrals.

**Every member of staff in our school has a role in promoting good attendance. We help staff to know and understand this responsibility by:**

- **Embedding attendance expectations into staff roles and responsibilities**, including job descriptions, performance management objectives, and induction materials for new staff.
- **Including attendance as a standing agenda item** in staff meetings, briefings, year group meetings, and pastoral briefings to ensure regular discussion and shared accountability.
- **Using line management meetings** to review attendance data relevant to individual classes or year groups, and to agree on targeted actions where concerns arise.
- **Providing regular training and updates** on attendance procedures, safeguarding links, and the impact of absence on learning outcomes.
- **Sharing attendance data transparently** with staff, including weekly updates and termly reports, so they can monitor patterns and contribute to early intervention.
- **Celebrating improvements and successes** in attendance at staff briefings and through internal communications, reinforcing the collective impact of staff efforts.
- **Encouraging staff to build strong relationships with pupils and families**, recognising that positive engagement is key to improving attendance.