

# Attendance Policy

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Author	(KfSL) CEO
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### 1. Aims

The Propeller Academy Trust is committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The board of trustees**

The board of trustees is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and ethos

#### **3.2 The local governing body**

The local governing body is responsible for:

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.3 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance figures for the trust
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Driving attendance improvement across the trust

#### **3.4 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.5 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school (Deputy headteacher)**

The designated senior leader is the Deputy headteacher, who is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **3.6 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis for both the morning and afternoon session.
- Recording the correct attendance codes on the school MIS system.
- Recording any unknown pupil absence as an N code.
- Class teachers are responsible for working with parents to ensure improved attendance for identified pupils.
- Class teachers are responsible for reporting any concerns about patterns of absence to the Deputy Headteacher, and adding any concerns to CPOMS when it is considered a Safeguarding issue.

### **3.7 School admin/office staff**

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system along with detailed notes.
- Contact parents/carers of absent pupils where an N code has been added to a register by a teacher to confirm the exact reason for absence and update the code accordingly. N codes must not be left on registers for more than 5 days.
- Liaise with the head teacher/deputy headteacher for authorisation when there are circumstances that might require the use of an unauthorised absence or exceptional circumstances code.
- Complete attendance registers on behalf of the class lead where the class teacher is absent.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the deputy headteacher or home school link worker (HSLW) in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

- Record details of pupils coming into school or leaving site during the school day. Record the time and reason on the school MIS as a note on the pupil record as well as the office daily sign in/out sheet.

### **3.8 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

### **3.9 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

Schools will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register via the MIS.

Class teachers will take an attendance register twice each day, at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. Registers will close 30 minutes after the start of each session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (must be agreed by SLT)

Any amendments made to the attendance register will be tracked by the MIS and will include:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by the start of the first session on each school day. Times may vary by school.

The register for the first session will be taken at the very start of the school day and will be kept open for no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins. The register for the second, afternoon, session will be taken at the start of the session and will be kept open for 30 minutes.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

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

Parents/carers should request leaves of absence either by telephone or email to the school office, or by writing a note in the pupil's home schoolbook/diary.

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

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

#### **4.4 Approved educational activity**

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school office will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

#### **4.5 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as late after registers close (absent), using the appropriate code and the number of minutes late recorded.
- Trust schools have local procedures in place to identify and respond to ongoing punctuality issues.

#### **4.6 Following up unexplained absence**

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If we cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, we may take further action e.g. contact police, depending on the level of risk
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and/or complete a home visit.

#### **4.7 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will provide parents/carers with attendance certificates termly (6 times a year).

Parents/carers have access to their child's attendance data via the parent portal of the schools MIS.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

A headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Physical or mental illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’/carers’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Headteachers may put in place local strategies for rewarding and improving attendance.

## **7. Attendance responsibilities**

The following tables outline the responsibilities for parents, schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities to maintain high levels of attendance. These are for:

- All pupils
- Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (attendance between 92% and 90%)
- Persistently absent pupils (attendance less than 90%)
- Severely absent pupils (attendance less than 50%)



## 7.1 All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

## 7.2 Pupils at risk of becoming permanently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p> <p>Individual circumstances to be reviewed by the SLT and a letter sent out highlighting attendance levels (see Appendix B) if required.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

### 7.3 Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p> <p>Individual circumstances to be reviewed and a letter sent out highlighting attendance levels (see Appendix C) if required.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

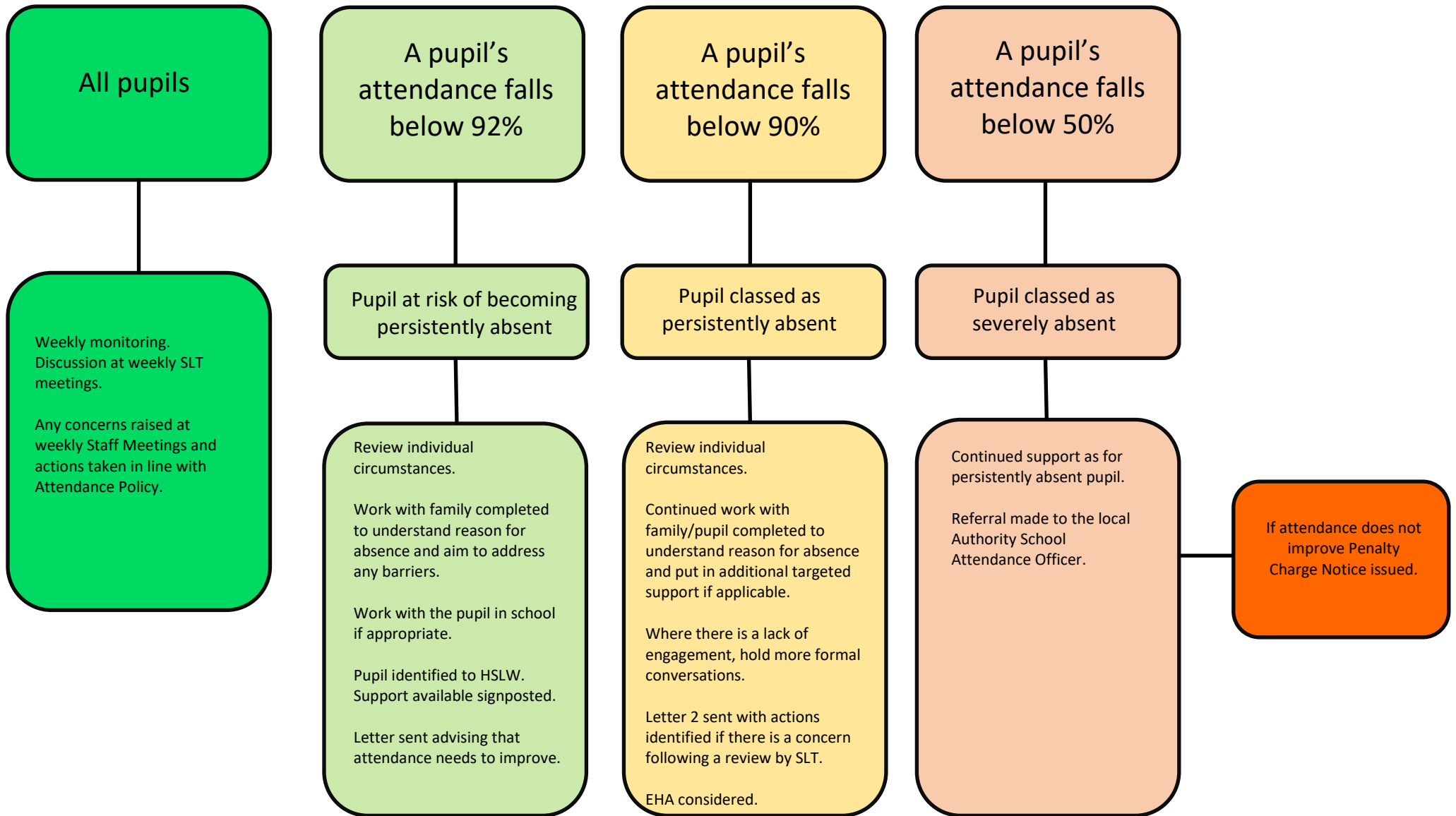
## 7.4 Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p> <p>Implement an individualised parenting contract.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>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 full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

## 7.5 Support for pupils with medical conditions

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

## 7.6 Attendance flow chart



## **8. Attendance monitoring**

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

### **8.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Review data on a weekly basis to look for patterns of absence, with a particular focus on those pupils in danger of being classed as persistent absentees. Senior Leaders will monitor these pupils and work with families to improve attendance.
- Ensure that attendance is a standing agenda item for weekly SLT and staff meetings.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Safeguarding Governor and local governing board. Data is also shared with Trustees via the CEO to ensure the school are keeping persistent absentees to its lowest levels
- Focus on monitoring the attendance of pupils that have a history of poor attendance, who are in receipt of free school meals or are vulnerable.

### **8.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the CEO. At every review, the policy will be approved by the board of trustees.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following school specific policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed. (Office to enter time arrived in notes field along with reason)
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school (school/office to confirm attendance with provider before marking in the register as present)
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances (to be agreed with SLT)
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made (to be agreed with SLT)
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances (absence to be agreed by SLT in advance following a formal request from the parent/carer)
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma, and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school (to be agreed with SLT)
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time (no more than 5 days))
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence (to be agreed with SLT)
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed (30 mins from register opening time). Record number of minutes late. DO NOT use 'U' when a pupil is late due to transport issues, i.e. when whole bus is late. In that instance use code 'L' instead)

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day