



Blue Coat

Church of England School
& Music College

Attendance Policy

Blue Coat CE Secondary School

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Document History

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1. Aims

At Blue Coat Church of England School, our vision is “Living life in all its fullness”. We exist to equip our pupils to ‘live life in all its fullness’ by providing excellent education, which is distinctively Christian and inclusive of all. At the heart of this education are the values of Care, Hard Work, Respect, Integrity and Servanthood, working Together for the good of all individuals, the school and wider communities. The conviction that we are created and sustained by God for living together in families and communities is at the root of our dedication to educating for life together.

The Trust Directors, Governors and staff of Blue Coat School recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality in the development of personal character development, achievement in education and success in employment. Regular school attendance is also a key aspect of safeguarding. Therefore, as our role is to assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, the aim of Governors and staff is to work together with parents and carers to maximise the attendance and punctuality of every student at the school, enabling them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.1 We are fully committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance by: -

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

1.2 The School is committed to ensuring improving attendance is everyone’s business. The School understands that improving attendance cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in the School, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

1.3 We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that the School is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

1.4 However, the School acknowledges some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and understands that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Therefore, at all stages of improving attendance, the School and its partners will work with pupils, parents and carers with the aim of removing any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

1.5 Securing good attendance will not be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close links with the School’s focus on the curriculum, behaviour, special educational needs support, pastoral, mental health and wellbeing support, and effective use of resources, including the Pupil Premium.

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE), working together to improve school attendance and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures (Appendix 2). 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.
- All pupils have an attendance target of 100%. Sometimes absence is unavoidable, however all absence impacts on a student's attainment and progress.

2.2 The Law

Parents/carers are required by law to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance to school. The Governing Body has endorsed the Local Authority use of parenting contracts and penalty notices for parents of persistent truants and for unauthorised absence.

Legal Framework section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of a compulsory school age receive full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Compulsory school age is from the beginning of the term following a child's 5th birthday and continues until the last Friday in the month June in the academic year in which they reach the age of 16 years old.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 if a child of compulsory age registered at school fails to attend regularly then parent/carers are guilty of an offence which may lead to prosecution.

The Government, from September 2013, amended the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 to include the fact that Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents found guilty in a magistrate's court of failing to secure their child's education at school under the provisions of the Education Act of 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of £1,000 fine under section 1 offence and a £2,500 fine and up to 3 months prison sentence under section 1a offence.

3. Strategies for promoting attendance

3.1 At the School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and we set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our School's ethos and values. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

3.2 To help us all to focus on this we will implement a range of strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality, for example:

- Time with tutor to discuss and promote attendance
- Promoting the importance of attendance in Tutor Time and assemblies
- Celebrating excellent attendance by displaying attendance levels for whole school, House, year group and tutor group
- Rewarding individuals and groups for 100% attendance or improving attendance
- Giving parents and carers information about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Reporting attendance levels to parents and carers on academic reports

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body

The Governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Schools' policies, values and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the School
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

4.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading on 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

4.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Taking calls and messages from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Completing first day calling each day and reporting any concerns to safeguarding, House teams and designated SLT
- Updating the weekly attendance tracker monitoring any trends
- Meeting weekly with each House team to discuss any attendance issues
- Providing regular attendance reports to pastoral staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the House team

- Meeting regularly with the designated SLT member and Local Authority officer to discuss ongoing attendance concerns
- Working with the designated senior leader responsible for attendance to improve persistent absence
- Keeping attendance board up to date
- Monitoring punctuality, centrally setting detentions and informing parents via the school communication system
- Administration of leave of absence forms in conjunction with designated SLT and DSL
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

4.5 Form Tutors

All staff including form tutors are expected to take registers audibly, accurately and in a timely manner using coded /, N or L.

Tutors are expected to:

- Be a positive role model
- Contact child and family to see if they can support if a child is absent
- Raise the profile of attendance by sharing attendance data with the form on a weekly basis setting and reviewing targets
- Reward 100% and improved attendance
- Monitor for patterns of absence and to communicate with parents/carers before referring to the House team
- Challenge and sanction punctuality where appropriate e.g. report cards
- Deliver or signpost targeted intervention and support to pupils and families before referring to the House team

4.6 Subject Teachers

Subject Teachers will:

- Be a positive role model
- Be expected to take registers audibly and accurately using coded /, N or L. Registers must be saved within the first 10 minutes of lesson
- Amend or update register to add any student who arrives late, adding minutes late
- Act when pupils are late to lesson in line with the Behaviour Policy
- When entering registers not amend pre-arranged codes
- Inform the Head of Department if attendance is impacting on learning and progress

4.7 House Team (Head of House & Assistant Head of House)

The House team will:

- Monitor attendance of their House, Tutor groups, individuals and discuss patterns of absence/individual concerns with Form Tutor
- Monitor attendance of their House team weekly to highlight any concern with designated SLT
- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality, for example rewards to celebrate good attendance in assemblies, tutor boards
- Provide attendance information for form tutors and ensure it is shared with the pupils
- Work with the team of tutors to improve individual attendance

- Work with parents where there are attendance issues to identify any barriers and provide some early intervention and support to find a solution
- Attend weekly meetings with Attendance Officer to ensure attendance procedure is being followed
- Liaise with Attendance Officer and Attendance officer to ensure attendance letters are sent when an attendance trigger is met
- Work with parents to support attendance especially when having a negative impact on the education of their child
- Support pupils and their families to develop good attendance patterns
- Work with the Family Support Worker, Attendance Officer and other external agencies where appropriate to improve any attendance concerns
- Attend regular meetings with SLT in the RAM meetings to signpost and monitor the effectiveness of any supportive intervention strategies
- Complete home visits where necessary to support pupils and their families

4.8 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually and ready to learn.
- Inform the school of the reason for any absence on the first morning of any absence, and in advance if possible. Parents can contact the school through Arbor, email s.hartup@bluecoatschool.com or call through the school number, choosing option '2'. Parents will be required to call school on every subsequent day of absence and advise when the student is expected to return. The school may require this to be confirmed in writing when a student returns to school.
- Avoid making medical appointments during school hours whenever possible. This includes opticians, dentists, doctors and orthodontist appointments.
- On the rare occasions when an appointment in school hours is unavoidable, make arrangements to collect their child from school and return them to school as soon as possible. Written evidence of the appointment will be submitted.
- Not arrange family holidays or visits during term time.
- Make requests for leave of absence at least two weeks in advance using the form available from the school office.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.

4.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school on time every day
- Attend every lesson on time each day
- If arriving after the start of the school day, sign in with duty staff on the school gate or the main school reception, giving a reason for lateness
- Not leave the school site without permission
- Strive to have excellent school attendance and punctuality

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

It is a legal requirement to keep accurate registers of pupils' attendance and punctuality:

5.1.1 The School will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

5.1.2 The School will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (8.45am) and will close at 9.15am, after which an unauthorised code will be given. The register will also be taken once during the second session. Registers will also be taken by subject teachers in the first 10 minutes of every lesson.

5.1.3 The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am. The register for the second session will be taken at either 12.30pm (students on lunch 2) or 13:10pm (for students on lunch 1).

5.1.4 It will mark whether every student is:

- Present - / code
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity (attendance officer input only)
- Absent - N Code
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (attendance officer input only)
- Late – L code
- Late after registration closed – U code

5.1.5 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The reason for the amendment e.g. late
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

(See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.)

5.1.6 The School will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

5.2 Unauthorised absence

5.2.1 It is the role of schools to decide whether an absence is to be authorised. Parents and carers must inform school of the reason for any absence by phone call (02476 223542) before 8.30am on the first morning of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered authorises the absence. Should any information provided by parents or carers be inaccurate or deliberately false, this will result in an unauthorised absence, which may lead to a penalty notice being served.

5.2.2 A parent/carer needs to state the child's name, tutor group, reason for absence and expected date of return and contact the School at the start of each subsequent day of illness.

5.2.3 Where parents/carers do not notify the school of the child's absence, the School's safeguarding procedures require the School to try and contact parents/carers via text or phone call to ascertain the reason for absence. If contact cannot be made, the School may visit the home address to conduct a safeguarding welfare visit.

5.2.4 The School will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

5.2.5 If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will invite the parents in for an informal meeting to discuss. The parent is expected to fully engage in this process.

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

5.3 Planned absence

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

5.3.2 However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. It is expected that the pupil will attend school prior/after the appointment.

5.3.3 The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

5.3.4 The School expects all correspondence about absences to be directed to the Attendance Officer. Where written communication is sent into the School, the student should hand this in at the Student Reception at the start of the school day.

5.3.5 Where there is a need for a student to leave the School site during the day, the School must have notification of this from a parent or carer. A student will not be permitted to sign out without prior notification. Whilst the School will do its best to try to contact a parent or carer, if they are unable to do this, a student will not be permitted to leave.

5.3.6 Parents and carers do need to understand that if the School has not been made aware that a student has an appointment in advance it may result in a delay in them leaving.

5.3.7 The School will not accept a text message on a student's phone as notification.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

5.4.1 Pupils who arrive late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes). First registration takes place at the start of Form Time at 8.45am. Pupils are expected to be on the School site by 8.40am to avoid them being late for registration.

5.4.2 Pupils who are late will be sanctioned in line with the School Behaviour Policy and parent/carers will be notified. Persistent late arrival will be challenged by form tutors and could result in parents/carers and pupils being asked to attend a meeting with a member of the pastoral, attendance and safeguarding team.

5.4.3 Pupils are recorded as U (late after registration closes) if they arrive after 9.15 am without a valid reason.

5.4.4 Pupils are expected to be punctual to all lessons and if they are late for a lesson, they will receive a sanction in line with the behaviour policy and parent/carers will be notified.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

5.5.1 Where any student we expect to attend the School does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the School will:

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the School cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit or contact, police, MASH, other external services working with the family.
- Identify whether the absence is 'approved' or 'authorised'.
- 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.
- Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues, the School will consider involving the Local Authority. The parent(s)/carers will be invited for an informal meeting. parent(s)/carers will be expected to fully engage with the school.
- If there continues to be no improvement parent(s)/carers will be invited to an attendance improvement plan (AIP) meeting. During this meeting a 6-week plan will be actioned. At this stage a four-week monitoring period by the Local Authority may be requested to run alongside the 6-week AIP.
- Failure to improve attendance will lead to a fixed penalty notice (FPN) or a parenting contract with the Local Authority.

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

5.6.1 The School will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in the following ways:

- Attendance data is available on Arbor
- Attendance updates are included on academic reports
- Attendance letter, certificates
- Tutors will discuss student's attendance with their tutees

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

6.1.1 The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for. A meeting will take place if a leave of absence request is made.

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

6.1.3

Exceptional leave of absence forms are available from reception.

Any request must be submitted by the parent or carer, who will not issue the form to a student without a written or verbal request from their parent or carer.

Parents should explain the full reasons for requesting the absence, in as much detail including places of travel, ticket confirmation (if applicable), address of where staying and include the first day of absence, departure/arrival date and date of return back to school.

The form must be submitted to the School Attendance Officer at least two weeks in advance of the requested date of absence.

Should any information provided by parents/carers be inaccurate or deliberately false, this will result in an unauthorised absence, which may lead to a penalty notice being served.

Decisions on authorising absence requests will be made by the Headteacher, who will inform parents of the decision. Written communication approving requests will state the expected date of return.

Parents/ carers are responsible for notifying the school if anything delays the student's return. If a student fails to return when expected the school will inform the relevant authorities. Written communication refusing requests will explain the reasons.

Refusal to comply will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded, which may lead to a penalty notice being served.

6.1.4 Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- 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 student's parent/carers belong. If necessary, the School will seek advice from the parent/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Family bereavement
- Student attendance at an interview
- Exceptional circumstances, as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher
- Approved educational/sporting activities, as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher
- 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 student is attending educational provision.

6.2 Holiday Absence in Term Time

6.2.1 Parent/carers do not have the right to take their child out of School for holidays. Such holidays will be counted as an unauthorised absence, other than in exceptional circumstances.

6.2.2 If a parent/carer feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time, they must put the request in writing to the Headteacher. Each case will be considered individually and the decision communicated to the parents/carers.

6.2.3 Where 10 consecutive sessions or more holiday is taken without the Headteacher's authorisation, cases will be referred to the Local Authority for the issuing of a Penalty Notice (fine).

6.2.4 If the Local Authority takes action, an initial fixed penalty notice (FPN) of £60 is issued to each parent/carer for each child. The monies collected do not go to the school. If the fixed penalty notice (FPN) is not paid, the Local Authority may prosecute.

6.3 Children missing in education

6.3.1 Where a child is not attending the School, has moved without a forwarding address or school, or cannot be traced, or contact cannot be made with the parent/carer, the School is required to inform the Local Authority that the child is missing.

6.3.2 The School will carry out a home visit, liaise with the Local Authority, refer to relevant agencies and the police to ensure any concerns for the child's welfare have been thoroughly investigated.

6.3.3 The student will not be removed from the School roll until notified by the Local Authority that their enquiries are complete.

6.3.4 A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 5th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point the child will be considered to be "missing from education."

6.4 Home Education

6.4.1 Parents/carers have a right to educate their children at home. If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from school to pursue this option, this decision must be put in writing to the Headteacher stating 'a decision to electively home educate'. The School will then inform the Local Authority. The child will not be removed from the School roll until notification from the Local Authority is received, at which point parents/carers will be informed by the School that their child has been removed from the School roll.

6.5 Legal sanctions

6.5.1 The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

6.5.2 If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority and no funds are received by the School. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority will decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6.5.3 Penalty notices can be issued by the Local Authority officer.

6.5.4 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

7. School Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Procedural Overview

- **High Expectations.** The School will expect high standards of attendance from all pupils and together with parents/carers will build a culture where all pupils can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the School.
- **Monitoring.** The School will 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, the appropriate School staff will discuss with pupils and parents and carers to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- **Facilitate support.** The School will aim to remove barriers in school and help pupils, parents and carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help assessment (EHA) where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
- **Formalise support.** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, the School will work with local partners to explain the consequences clearly and will ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond.
- **Enforce.** Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, the School will enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.

7.2 Monitoring attendance

7.2.1 The School will:

- Monitor attendance at student level daily and produce absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Schools are now required to share daily attendance data online with local authorities and the DfE. This initiative facilitates real-time monitoring of attendance patterns, enabling timely interventions for students exhibiting persistent or severe absenteeism

7.2.2 Student-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.

7.2.3 The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The School will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governing Body on a termly basis.

7.3 School Attendance Monitoring

7.3.1 The School will listen and understand and facilitate support (see section 7.1) prior to any formal procedures being implemented.

7.3.2 The following steps will be initiated:

Support

Pupils who have had previous attendance concerns or are deemed as vulnerable will be placed on the First Day Calling list. The Attendance officer will call parent/carer if the student is not in attendance. Safeguarding and the pastoral team (Head of House & Assistant Head of House) will be informed of the absence.

Pupils with previous attendance concerns will be contacted by the Local authority officer during the summer holidays in preparation for the next Academic year.

Report cards may be used to support positive attendance.

Home visits may be conducted if concerns are raised over attendance/safeguarding.

The Local Authority attendance officer may support at all stages.

Pre-Persistent Absentees Letter - Threshold at 96%

Tutor to discuss attendance concern with pupils and parents. Tutor to monitor and communicate with parent/carers. Parents and carers can contact tutor to discuss intervention for their child by the tutor.

Stage 1: Letter A- Attendance Concern Letter

AHOH will discuss attendance with tutor, student and parent/carers. School letter A will be sent by the attendance officer when a student's attendance falls below school expectation. The tutor/AHOH/Attendance Officer will monitor attendance daily.

Stage 2: Letter B – Medical Evidence Letter

Parent(s)/carers will be invited into school for a documented informal meeting to offer support, addressing the barriers to attendance. In addition, the family will be offered Early Help (EH).

Stage 3: Letter C – Attendance Improvement plan (AIP)

If no improvement is recorded in spite of intervention in place, parents/carers will be requested to attend an AIP with the house team to discuss further strategies to improve attendance and identify barriers. An improvement target will be set over a monitored period of 6 weeks will be set and recorded. There may in addition be a request for a four week monitoring period by the Local Authority to run alongside the 6 week plan.

If parents and carers fail to attend the scheduled attendance improvement plan, the meetings will take place in their absence, with the student, to ensure a support plan is put in place and the monitoring period will commence. The Local Authority will take account of any lack of parental engagement if the process reaches the stage of legal proceedings.

Stage 4: Refer to Local Authority officer

If attendance has not improved or there is a decrease in attendance, a referral will be made to the Local Authority. Legal proceedings may be initiated in the form of a Penalty Notice or parenting contract.

7.4 Analysing attendance

7.4.1 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.

7.5 Using data to improve attendance

7.5.1 The School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, House Teams and other School leaders/appropriate non-teaching staff 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.

7.6 Reducing persistent and severe absence

7.6.1 Persistent absence is defined as when a student misses 10% or more of school sessions, and severe absence is when a student misses 50% or more of school.

7.6.2 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 good attendance.
- In some cases, refer to the Local Authority to work with the family to support improves attendance (casework).

8. Working with Local Partners

The School will work collaboratively with the government attendance hub, local authority and local schools to share best practice and effective strategies.

The School will proactivity work with Primary partner schools to initiate early help and support where required.

9. Monitoring arrangements

9.1 This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the designated senior leader for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

10. Links with other policies

10.1. This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Appendix 1:

Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, Local Authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a student were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

The codes are:

Code /: Present in school

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code B: Off-site educational activity

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

Code V: Educational visit or trip

Code W: Work experience

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Study leave

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Code Z: Student not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

Code Y: Unable to attend due to unavoidable circumstances. This code can be used where a student is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the student's home is not within walking distance
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the student from attending school.

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>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently 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>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>

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>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>

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>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>

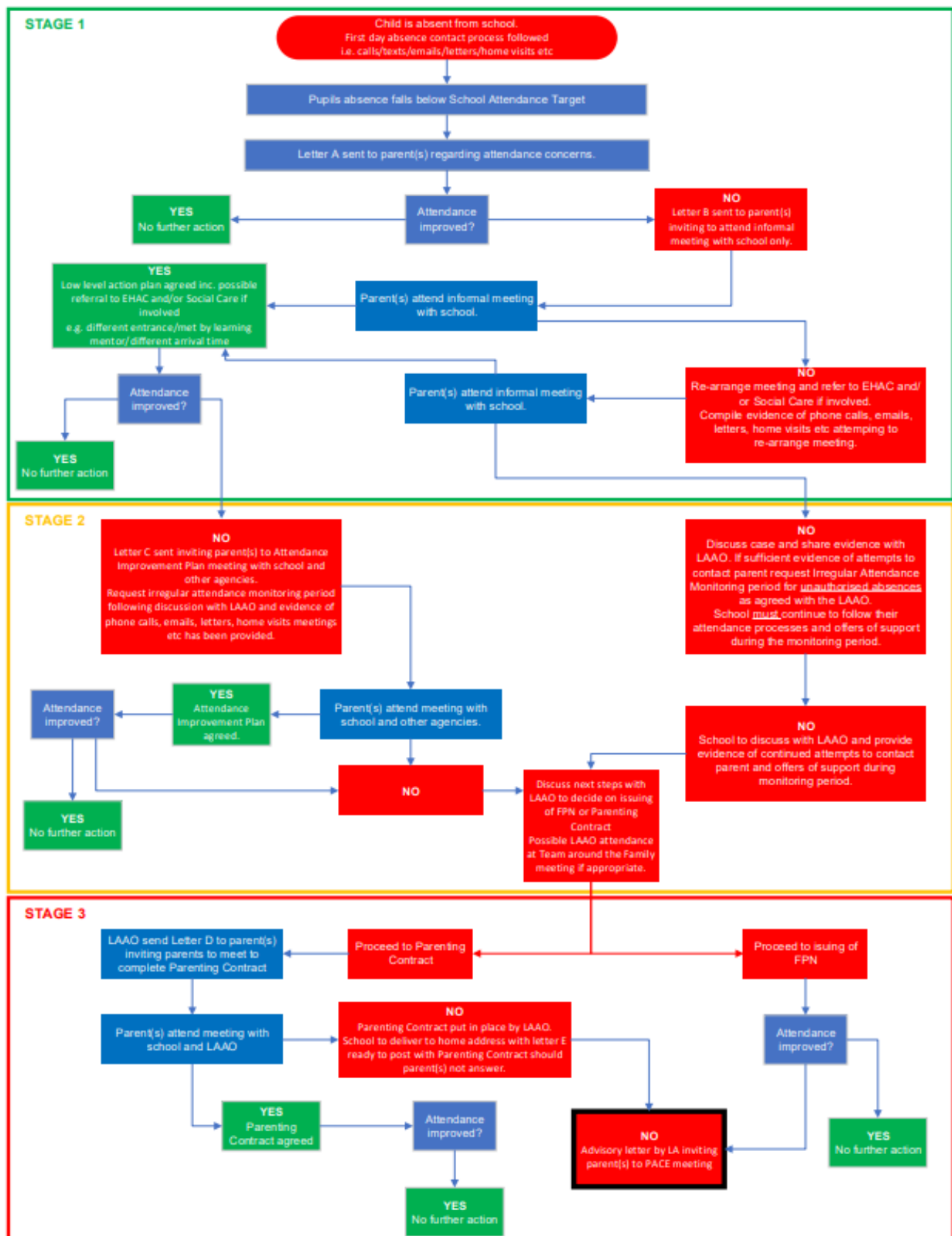
Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

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>

Appendix 3 'Coventry City Council attendance protocol and staged letters April 2024



Attendance Process Flowchart



Letter A
Attendance Concern
Attendance below school target

[Insert school name, address and logo]

[Insert parent name and address]

[Insert date]

Dear [Insert parent(s)/carer(s) name]

Re: School attendance concern for [Insert child's full name, date of birth, year group] at [insert school name].

I am writing to you in relation to your [insert child's name] school attendance which has fallen to [insert attendance percentage, number of days and sessions]. As a result we are becoming concerned that [insert child's name] is missing a significant part of learning. I have enclosed a copy of [insert child's name] attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on children's academic progress, friendships, social skills and life skills. The well-being and progress of our pupils is our priority.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on [insert child's name] attending school regularly or if you are concerned about your child's attendance. Support can be offered through an Early Help Assessment (EHA). Please do not hesitate to contact me.

I will continue to monitor [insert child's name] attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason, please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

Yours sincerely

[insert name of the Headteacher]

Letter B
Invite to informal meeting
Attendance dropped below 90%

|

[Insert school name, address and logo]

[Insert parent name and address]

[Insert date]

Dear [Insert parent(s)/carer(s) name]

Re: Significant school attendance concern for [Insert child's full name, date of birth, year group] at [insert school name].

I am writing to you in relation to significant concerns about [insert child's name] school attendance which is currently at [insert attendance percentage number of days and sessions]. We wrote you on [insert date] regarding our concerns and since then have not seen an improvement in [insert child's name] school attendance.

Poor attendance is often a sign that additional support is needed, and we would like to ensure that this is put in place to support [insert child's name] improved attendance.

I would like to invite you to meet with me on [insert date] at [insert time] to discuss this matter and identify any support that may be required. This meeting may result in an Attendance Support Action Plan being agreed, which will aim to outline any support needed and actions needing to be taken by the school, you as parent(s) and [insert child's name].

Failure to attend this meeting could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Should we continue to see poor attendance following this meeting a School Attendance Improvement Plan meeting will be arranged.

You are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting so we can work together to ensure [insert child's name]'s attendance improves, and such action is not necessary.

Yours sincerely

[insert name of the Headteacher]

Letter C
Invite to School Attendance Improvement Plan Meeting

[Insert school name, address and logo]

[Insert parent name and address]

Invitation to a School Attendance Improvement Plan Meeting

Dear [Insert parent(s)/carer(s) name]

Re: [Insert child's full name, date of birth, year group] at [insert school name].

There have been continuing difficulties concerning the attendance of your child [insert child's name] at [insert school name].

To assist you, the school have tried to engage with you to offer additional support such as Early Help to improve attendance and prevent the need for legal action.

In an attempt to resolve issues regarding attendance, a formal School Attendance Improvement Plan Meeting has been arranged at [insert school name] on [insert appointment date] at [insert appointment time].

Use this paragraph for secondary schools only. Delete for primary school child unless you feel on an individual bases that the primary school child would benefit from attending the meeting.

[insert child's name] should be in school and can join us for the meeting. If [insert child's name] is not in school please bring as [insert child's name] with you.

It is very important that you attend. Your co-operation is essential.

This meeting is an opportunity for you to discuss any matters of concern. If you now require assistance and support via an early help assessment, you must attend the meeting after which an assessment may be arranged.

Failure to attend this meeting and further unauthorised absence could result in you being prosecuted in court or a penalty notice being issued.

I have to advise you as a parent/carers of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 444, Education Act 1996).

Please contact me urgently on the telephone number provided if you are unable to attend. If I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number and I will call you back.

Yours sincerely,

[insert name of person sending the letter on behalf of the school]

Letter E
Parenting Contract Notification

[Insert school name, address and logo]

[Insert parent name and address]

Dear [Insert parent(s)/carer(s) name]

Re: Notification of Parenting Contract for [Insert child's full name, date of birth, year group] at [insert school name].

Your child, [insert child's name] has been identified as having poor attendance at [insert school name].

To assist you, the school and Local Authority Attendance Officer have tried to engage with you to formalise the support that has been offered and initiate a Parenting Contract to improve your child's attendance.

You were invited to a meeting with the Local Authority Attendance Officer on [insert date] at [insert meeting location] which you failed to attend. As a result, the Parenting Contract was discussed and initiated in your absence. A copy of this contract is enclosed for you.

Should you not engage with the school or the Local Authority around the Parenting Contract a request for prosecution will be submitted.

Yours sincerely,

[insert name of person sending the letter on behalf of the school]

Reviewed by: Claire Milbourne May 2025

Senior Lead Review: Rob Darling May 2025

Next Review Date: July 2026

Approved by Directors: 07.07.25

Signed:



Lois Whitehouse
CEO



Nicky Aston
Chair of Standards