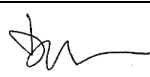




WORK HARD | BE KIND | ASPIRE

Attendance and Absence Policy

Review Period	Recommended Annually		
Date of next review	Spring Term 2026	Author	Mrs S Burdis
Type of Policy	Statutory	Approval	Governing Body
Signed by:			
Head Teacher	Mr D Thompson	Date: 17 February 2025	
Chair of Governors	Mr G Thompson	Date: 17 February 2025	

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Vision and Rationale

Our motto of 'Work Hard, Be Kind, Aspire' is at the heart of all we do.

At Hebburn Comprehensive, we have a shared vision to work together to be the very best we can be, and this starts with excellent attendance. We believe that in order to facilitate the highest standards of education and to secure the best possible outcomes for students, excellent attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

There is an integral link between attendance, good behaviour, feeling safe, effective learning and enjoying and achieving. To ensure the most effective learning, all children have the right to attend school and learn in an environment which is safe and secure.

Regular attendance and good punctuality are essential to the furtherance of the school's vision and aims, by ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity, to reach their full academic potential.

We also understand that attendance at school is central to raising standards in education, as well as helping students to maintain a healthy equilibrium in relation to emotional well-being. Pupils need to attend regularly to benefit from their education, as missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. The achievement of children who are poor attenders tends to be lower.

Statement of Intent

Hebburn Comprehensive School believes that in order to facilitate the highest standards in teaching and learning, good attendance is crucial. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance;
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence, by acting early;
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all;
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils;
- Ensuring that pupils are punctual;
- Rewarding regular attendance;
- Ensuring parents perform their legal duty in relation to the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

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

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

1. Legal Framework

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

- Education Act 1996 – sections 434(1) (3) (4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- DfE (2024) 'School attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2020) 'Improving school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Rewards Policy

2. Definitions

2.1 The school defines "absence" as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

2.2 The school defines an "authorised absence" as an absence which the school has given approval of, in advance, for a pupil to be away, or an absence in which the school has accepted an explanation offered, as justification for absence:

- An absence for sickness, for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.
- The pupil was granted 'Leave of Absence' by the Head Teacher (in exceptional circumstances only).
- There is a family bereavement.

- The pupil is attending an interview with either a prospective employer or in connection with an application for a place at an institute of further education or for a place at another school.
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.
- The pupil is participating in a regulated public performance.
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling.)

2.3 The school defines an “unauthorised absence” as an absence whereby school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the pupil not attending school:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without a valid or permitted reason.
- Truancy.
- Absences which have not been properly explained or evidenced.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips
- Holidays in term time.
- Leaving school, without the permission of key staff, during the day.

Note: this list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

2.4 The school understands the clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement; it also recognises the direct link between persistent absence from school, poor attainment and ‘not in employment, education or training’ (NEET) status.

2.5 The school defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

Improving attendance at Hebburn Comprehensive School is the responsibility of **EVERYONE** in the school community, including pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.

3.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the Attendance and Absence Policy and procedures of the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Scrutinising attendance data: they will require termly reports from the Head Teacher on overall attendance figures, Persistent Absenteeism and progress towards targets.
- Offering practical support with attendance, where appropriate.
- Having regard to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

3.2 The Head Teacher and the SLT Attendance Champion are responsible for:

- Recognising the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognising that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents.
- Recognising that improving attendance is a school leadership issue.

The Senior Attendance Champion, Mrs S Burdis, will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good Attendance
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced
- Work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.
- Ensure clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life, using displays, assemblies and/or morning meetings.
- Praise and reward improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

The Senior Attendance Champion, Mrs Burdis, can be contacted via the school office on 0191 4833199/office@hebburn.net.

3.3 Staff, including teachers, Intervention Managers, Attendance Officers and other support staff will be responsible for:

- Following the attendance policy and ensuring that pupils are. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Taking registers in an accurate and timely way, during Morning Meetings, and every lesson throughout the school day.
- Taking headcounts to ensure the accuracy of registers.

Year Group	Morning Registers Open*	Afternoon Registers Open
7	08:30	12:50-13:20
8	08:30	12:50-13:20
9	08:30	12:50-13:20
10	08:30	12:50-13:20
11	08:30	12:50-13:20

*Note that students are expected to be on site and ready for school by 8:30.

3.4 The school recognises the importance of the register as a legal document and has developed procedures to ensure that class registers are maintained to a high standard. The procedures are well communicated and included in the *Staff Handbook*.

3.5 The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

3.6 Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, from our wider attendance team: Intervention Managers, Attendance Officers and other key members of the pastoral team and support from external agencies will be sought, when required.

3.7 At the end of each term, pupils whose attendance is either very good, or significantly improved, will be recognised by shout-outs in Morning Meetings, and by use of postcards/badges.

3.8 The school will have clearly-defined strategies to give due recognition to good attendance and punctuality, whilst also having strategies to address problems of poor attendance in the short, medium and longer-term, including persistent absenteeism.

3.9 The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and, liaising closely with parents/carers, will promptly investigate all absenteeism. Staff will respond to absenteeism firmly and consistently.

- 3.10 The attendance team and Senior Attendance Champion will monitor whole-school attendance on a daily and weekly basis, including analysis by groups (such as age/gender/PA/PP/SEND). Attendance will be monitored and tracked using the A Star Attendance module, Fisher Family Trust software and DfE data collection. Data will also be shared with the LA authority regularly, especially when seeking support with individual cases.
- 3.11 The Pupil Premium will be used to support vulnerable groups, where problems arise with attendance.
- 3.12 The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
- Are being educated from home.
 - No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
 - Have an authorised medical note.
 - Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
 - Have been permanently excluded.
- 3.13 The school will ensure that absence procedures are understood by pupils, parents and carers.
- 3.14 The school will have robust procedures to reduce Persistent Absenteeism.
- 3.15 A referral to SYP/Attendance Monitoring Team will be made, if it is considered that further support is necessary.
- 3.16 An external attendance officer from *Aim High Attendance* will support the school with home visits and phone calls in relation to unauthorised, unexplained or repeated absences.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- 3.16 Ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually and ready to learn. They have a legal duty to ensure their children attends school on a regular basis and that they are punctual.

ENSURING YOUR CHILD IS ON TIME FOR SCHOOL

All pupils must be on the yard for **8.30am prompt** for morning line-ups. This is the official start of the school day. In order to do this, **pupils should aim to be on the school premises between 8:20-8:25am.** It is crucial that we instil good habits in children from an early age. Future employers want a workforce that is punctual and reliable. Please support the school with this.

3.17 If a child is prevented, for any reason, from attending, or is late, parents/carers are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, on the first day of absence. This is regarded as an essential safeguarding procedure. They should give details of the child, reason for absence and expected date of return.

3.18 Parents/carers should continue to contact school at the start of each new day of absence, for safeguarding reasons.

Where no contact is received about absence, the school will respond in the following ways:

Day 1: School will send a text to the parent/carer to ascertain the reason for absence. One text message will be sent in the morning, then another in the afternoon, if contact has still not been made.

Day 2: If a parent/ carer does not respond to the text message sent, then school will endeavour to make a phone call to ascertain reason for absence.

Day 3: A home visit will be carried out, if the reason for absence has still not been ascertained. If the visit is successful, then the matter will be referred to the safeguarding team. Please note that home visits may be carried out by school staff or by an external Attendance Officer, as part of our service level agreement with Aim High Attendance.

3.19 A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents/carers.

3.20 Parents/carers are also responsible for:

- Providing accurate, up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school without delay, if their contact details change. Parents and carers can update their contact details by contacting the school office on 0191 4833199, or via the My Child At School App.
- Ensuring that the MCaS app is updated when required.

3.21 Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. These matters will be handled with sensitivity.

3.22 Whenever possible, parents/carers should not make medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. It is accepted that parents have no control over hospital appointments but can exercise some control over appointment times at local dentistry or medical practices.

3.23 If there is a genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness, the school can request that parents/carers provide medical evidence. This will help school to code the absence correctly and to make a decision around whether the absence can be authorised. Schools can record the absence as

‘unauthorised’ if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness. Medical evidence could take the form of prescriptions and/or medical appointment cards. Where repeated absences have taken place, medical evidence is likely to be requested. Absence will be authorised in cases where appropriate medical evidence has been submitted, but school have the right to decide what is appropriate and what is not.

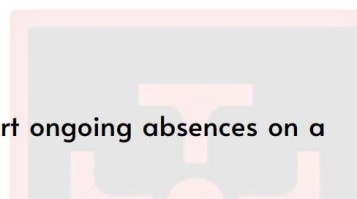
- 3.24 Parents/carers are expected to notify school immediately, if their child is going to be absent from school. They should provide an appropriate reason for absence before 8:30 on the first day of absence, as outlined in the Family Handbook.

REPORTING AN ABSENCE

Parents/carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of an absence. Parents should aim to contact school between 8.00 and 8.30 via one of the following forms of communication:

- Telephone: 0191 4833199 (Select Option #1)
- My Child at School app
- Email: attendance@hebburn.net

For safeguarding reasons, we ask that parents/carers report ongoing absences on a daily basis.



Pupil responsibilities:

- 3.25 Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school. They are expected to attend all of their lessons and any agreed activities throughout the school year, regularly.
- 3.26 Pupils are expected to reach and hopefully surpass the whole school target of 97% attendance.
- 3.27 Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, from our attendance team, including the Senior Attendance Champion, Intervention Managers and other members of the pastoral team.
- 3.28 Pupils will be rewarded and recognised for having good attendance, at the end of each year and at regular intervals throughout the year.
- 3.29 All pupils are also responsible for their punctuality to school and to lessons.

4. Training of Staff

- 4.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent unwanted habits/behaviours. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their inductions and annual refresher training.
- 4.2 Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 4.3 Teachers and support staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.
- 4.4 Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil Expectations

- 5.1 Pupils will be expected to attend school every day.
- 5.2 The school expects all pupils to attend school, and lessons, punctually.

6. Pupils at Risk of Persistent Absence

- 6.1 The Senior Attendance Champion responsible for attendance will:
 - Establish a range of interventions to address barriers to attendance.
 - Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
 - Facilitate, attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
 - Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Rigorous monitoring.
 - Having individual attendance reviews in which pupils update attendance trackers.
 - Letters to parents/carers, at each stage of the attendance process.
 - Attendance meetings.
 - Attendance Reviews.
 - Attendance Meetings (LA in Attendance.)
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using Penalty Notice Warnings and Penalty Notices.

- 6.2 Where necessary, HoKS, the Senior Attendance Champion or Governing Body will engage in attendance reviews to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of outcomes, future training and employment.
- 6.3 Teaching staff will:
- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
 - They will build positive relationships with pupils and encourage good attendance, by adopting the 'warm strict' approach.
- 6.4 Intervention Managers and Attendance Team will:
- Provide staff with support in relation to the process of completing the register.
 - Monitor attendance.
 - Meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
 - Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support or make referrals for intervention, where appropriate.
 - Lead daily and/or weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
 - Make regular contact with families to discuss progress, and to offer support or challenge, where needed.
 - Escalate their concerns, where sufficient progress is not made, in line *Working Together to Improve Attendance, 2024*.
 - Offer praise, encouragement and incentives.
 - Attendance Officers will inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker, if there is one, about unexplained absences from school.
- 6.5 Pupils potentially at greater risk of harm who require a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences.
- 6.6 The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups such as:
- Boys
 - Girls
 - Those eligible for Pupil Premium
 - Children in Need
 - CP
 - LAC
 - Pupils who are eligible for FSM
 - Pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - Pupils with SEND

7. Absence Procedures

- 7.1 Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence. Parents should aim to contact the attendance office between 8:00 and 8:30.
- 7.2 A text message will be sent to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence, on the morning of the first day of absence.
- 7.3 A second text message will be sent out in the afternoon of the first day of absence, if parents/carers have not responded to the first text message.
- 7.4 A phone call will be made on the second day of absence, if texts have not been replied to.
- 7.5 A home visit will be carried out on the third day of absence, by intervention Managers/Attendance Officers/External Attendance Officer (from Aim High Attendance) or a member of the safeguarding team, where no contact has been made regarding absence.

If the home visit is unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Safeguarding team and appropriate action will be taken. This could include a request for a Police Welfare Check and/or a referral to Children's Services.

- 7.6 The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the system.
- 7.7 The school will inform the LA of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 7.8 Holidays during term time will not be authorised. A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- 7.9 If school have evidence to suggest or reason to believe that a family are on holiday without submitting a request for Leave of Absence, a referral will be made to the Local Authority and the onus will be on the parent/carer to prove that they were not on holiday.
- 7.10 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

8. Parental Involvement

- 8.1 The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.
- 8.2 The school will communicate openly and honestly with pupils and their families about their expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- 8.3 The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance.
- 8.4 Parents will be expected to:
- Respond to all communication.
 - Actively support the work of the school.
 - Call on staff for help when they need it.
 - Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

9. Attendance Register

- 9.1 The school day must have two sessions divided by a break. The length of each session, break and the school day is determined by the school's Governing Body.
- 9.2 Form tutors will take the attendance register at the start of each school day, during morning meeting, and Period 5 teachers will do the same at the start of the period.
- 9.3 A register will be taken at the start of Morning Meeting and in every lesson throughout the school day.
- 9.4 The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. Attendance codes will be used in line with the DfE's statutory guidance in 'Working together to improve school attendance' (August 2024). See Appendix D.
- 9.5 All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.
- 9.6 Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for six years.

10 Attendance Officers / Intervention Managers

- 10.1 If attendance drops below the school target of 97%, pupils could be asked to work with their allocated Intervention Manager, who will attempt to identify barriers to good attendance and put appropriate intervention in place.
- 10.2 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officers, working in conjunction with the Senior Attendance Champion will offer support. If progress is not made, they have the power to make referrals to the Local Authority, who will issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents. See Section 21 for the latest information on penalty notices and referrals to the LA.
- 10.3 Working in collaboration, the Attendance Officers and Intervention Managers will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that early intervention is delivered quickly to address absence.
- 10.4 The Attendance Officers will also provide regular data reports to IMs/HOLS/HOKS/Senior Attendance Champion and other members of SLT, who will track the attendance of pupils and implement attendance procedures.
- 10.5 If they are persistently absent, pupils will work with Attendance Officers, who will, in conjunction with HOLS, HOKS and the Senior Attendance Champion, attempt to resolve the situation, through targeted support and attendance reviews and potentially, an Attendance Contract can be put in place.
- 10.6 Attendance Officers will arrange meetings as required, to address poor attendance and offer the necessary level of support or challenge. These meetings might be attended by school staff, parents/carers, the pupil/s and a representative from the Local Authority (SYP) and/or other external agencies. A member of the Governing Body may also be invited to attend, if appropriate.

11. Lateness

- 11.1 Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated. As outlined in the Family Handbook, pupils should aim to be on the premises for 8:20-8:25 in order to be on their yard before 8:30am. Pupils will receive a late mark and a detention if they are late.
- 11.2 Registers open at 8:30.
- 11.3 The register closes 30 minutes after it opens (09:00); pupils will receive a U Code if they arrive after this time, which is an unauthorised absence mark. See Section 21 for the latest information on referrals to the LA for unauthorised absences (which include U codes).

12. Truancy

- 12.1 Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 12.2 All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 12.3 All pupils are expected to be punctual for their morning and afternoon sessions; class teachers will record attendance electronically.
- 12.4 Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again upon their return.
- 12.5 Immediate action will be taken when there are concerns that a pupil might be truanting.
- 12.6 If truancy is suspected, the Attendance Officers will be notified immediately. They will endeavour to identify the whereabouts of the pupil, as a matter of urgency. They will refer the missing pupils to Corridor Support who will check the school site (internal and external.) They will also contact the pupil's parents/carers, to advise that the pupil is no longer on school site. The matter will then be escalated in line with safeguarding procedures, should the students not be located. External agencies and/or Police, will be notified if appropriate.
- 12.7 The following procedures may be taken in the event of a truancy:
- In the first instance and following a quick search of the site, parents will be notified of the truancy.
 - Once the pupil has been located safely, reasons for truancy will be explored and sanctions will be issued, in line with the Behaviour and Rewards Policy.
 - If any further truancy occurs, the school may consider issuing a penalty notice.
 - A penalty notice may be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, unauthorised absence of 10 sessions within a 10 week timescale, holidays in term time and persistent late (after registers have closed) arrival at school.

13. Children Missing and Absent from Education

School understands that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

If the missing pupil has an allocated outreach worker, social worker, youth justice worker, is LAC, or has SEND, then school will work closely with agencies to support the child back into school.

Child Missing in Education (CME) referral will be made to The Attendance Monitoring Team after 20 school days and the child removed from roll.

14. Holidays During Term-Time

Leave of Absence During Term Time:

The Government states that schools are not able to authorise holidays during term time and any unauthorised absence, including for holidays, will result in a Penalty Notice referral, as outlined in the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices, which reflects changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

- 14.1 The current legislation does not give entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Head Teachers cannot authorise absence from school for a family holiday.
- 14.2 An application for a leave of absence can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and must be completed one working month in advance. Only the Head Teacher, or his representative, has the authority to determine 'exceptional circumstances' and school must restrict leave of absence to the specific circumstances, as set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Any requests made will be considered on an individual basis. Please note, family weddings will not be considered as 'exceptional', including when an extended amount of time off school is required to travel abroad; nor is the desire/need for a holiday, or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Government states that a pupil can only be taken out of school during term time in exceptional circumstances. If exceptional circumstances do occur, a Leave of Absence form must be obtained to request permission. This must be done one month in advance and submitted to the Head Teacher. Permission will be granted only in exceptional circumstances and **NEVER FOR HOLIDAYS**.

If a pupil is taken on holiday, their attendance will be marked as unauthorised. In all such cases, the Local Authority are likely to issue a fixed penalty notice, making parents liable to pay a fine for each child involved.

- 14.3 Leave during term-time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. For example, due to bereavement or serious illness.

15. Religious Observances

- 15.1 The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 15.2 Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- 15.3. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

16. Appointments

- 16.1 As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 16.2 Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be checked at the attendance office.
- 16.3 If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out at the reception by a parent, unless other arrangements have been agreed in advance.
- 16.4 Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment, wherever possible.

17. Young Carers

17.1 The school understands the difficulties Young Carers face, and will endeavour to identify Young Carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

17.2 The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of Young Carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

18. Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause;
- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

19. Rewarding Good Attendance

19.1 The school acknowledges outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- 1:1 praise and recognition
- Communication with parents: written and verbal
- Shout-outs in Morning Meetings
- Attendance leagues
- Attendance lottery
- Postcards
- Badges

19.2 Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded and encouraged in the following ways:

- Small prizes awarded on an individual basis when short-term targets are met
- Postcards/letters home
- Termly Attendance Certificates
- Prizes and certificates for the 'Top Class in Year Group' at the end of each term
- Weekly attendance lottery, which rolls over if the 'winner' has been absent that week. (Voucher awarded.)
- End of term attendance draws, with vouchers as incentives for full attendance.

19.3 School trips and events such as prom are a privilege. Attendance and punctuality, alongside behaviour, will be taken into account when making decisions about who is able to attend. Allowances will be made for genuine

medical reasons, where evidence can be provided. Cases will be considered on an individual basis.

20. Monitoring and Review

- 20.1 The extended attendance team, Intervention Managers, Heads of Learning, Heads of Key Stage, and the Senior Attendance Champion, monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 20.2 The school's attendance target is 97% each year.
- 20.3 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Attendance Champion and Head Teacher, in conjunction with Attendance Officers.
- 20.4 Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

21. Prosecutions by Local Authorities:

New legislation came into force on 19th August 2024 regarding the criteria and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance, as summarised below:



Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

The new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example: 2 siblings with unauthorised absence during term time may result in each parent being issued with one penalty notice per child.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

This is a criminal offence and a parent may end up with a criminal record.

The following changes have been made:

- The number of unauthorised absences to 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in the most recent 10 school week period.
- The number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child, to 2 within a 3-year period.
- It increases the amount of the penalty notice to £160 (if paid within 28 days) and £80 (if paid within 21 days) for the first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3-year period.
- It sets the amount of any second penalty notice issued to the same parent, in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice was issued, to £160 to be paid within 28 days. No discount is offered.
- Further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent, in respect of the same child, within 3 years of the date of the first penalty was issued.

Further information can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://southtyneside.gov.uk/article/3782/Code-of-conduct-for-education-related-penalty-notices#:~:text=Penalty%20notices%20are%20issued%20by%20the>

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.

Penalty Notices are one of a number of important interventions available to promote better school attendance. Improving attendance is essential to improve a child's educational prospects and to avoid putting them at risk of criminal or anti-social behaviour.

The Local Authority's Code of Conduct is a requirement of The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 including amendments to the regulations in 2013. The Code ensures that the powers to issue Penalty Notices are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices (in line with South Tyneside Council's Code of Conduct for Education Related Penalty Notices):

Penalty Notices are to be issued by Services for Young People in South Tyneside. This will ensure:

- fair and consistent delivery
- help maintain home-school relationships
- avoid the issue of duplicate notices; and
- ensure that Penalty Notices are used effectively alongside other enforcement sanctions.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notice

Once issued, a Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Where it ought not to have been issued (for example, the issuing of the Penalty Notice did not conform with this Code of Conduct); or
- Where it has been issued to the wrong person; or
- It contains material errors.
- Where after the expiry of 28 days the Penalty Notice remains unpaid and the LA has not started legal proceedings or wishes to take such action under section 444 of the education act.

South Tyneside Local Authority published the following information for parents, regarding Penalty Notices to address unauthorised absence from school:

What is the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003?

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carers is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance. The powers came into force on the 27th February 2004.

Why was it introduced?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction. Further unauthorised absences after two penalty notices have been issued will progress straight to court.

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from September 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn. Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

Who is a “Parent”?

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines “parent” as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

How are they issued?

By post to your home.

When are they used?

South Tyneside LA considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps).
- Inappropriate parentally condoned absence which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher or no request for authorisation has been sought.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed).

The Authority never takes such action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement actions. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that the Authority **will** use the powers if this is the only way of securing a child’s schooling. Only two penalty notices are issued in one academic year.

Is a Warning Given?

Yes, you will receive a notice of improvement written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued, which will tell you the extent of your child’s absences and give you 15 – 30 days, 3 – 6 weeks flexible, to be reviewed on an individual basis at 3 week mark, in which to effect an improvement. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences/have shown improvement from school.

You will not receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued for leave of absence in term time, which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher or where no request for authorisation has been sought.

There is no limit to the number of times formal warning of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by installment is not an option with Penalty Notices. Payments made after 28 days will be deemed unpaid.

What happens if I do not pay?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending upon circumstances.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice - payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Yes, your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance.

It is very important that you speak with the school at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's attendance.

Publicity

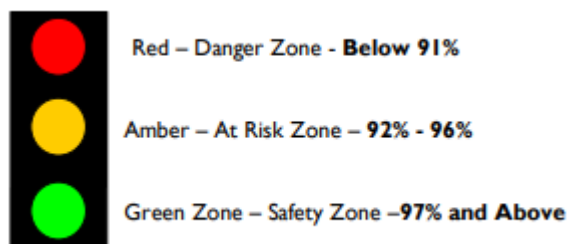
All school Attendance Policies will include information on the deployment of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of all parents.

The Local Authority will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional/public information material.

Appendix A: Attendance Monitoring Procedures

At Hebburn Comprehensive, we believe that in order to facilitate the highest standards of education and to secure the best possible outcomes for students, excellent attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

With this in mind, we will operate under the following traffic light system:



Key information:

This attendance program follows a 4-stage monitoring process, which is intended to improve pupil attendance levels and maximise learning potential. We endeavour to give our pupils the very best start in life and have high standards in relation to expectations about attendance and punctuality.

The 4-stage process will be used to monitor the attendance of pupils:

Stage 1 – If there are emerging concerns about attendance, a letter will be sent out reminding parents/carers of the importance of good attendance.

Stage 2 – If no improvement is made following Stage 1 and there is additional absence, which causes further concern, another letter will be sent home. This letter will include a parent survey, requesting more information regarding the barriers to your child attending school, so that we can identify ways to support your child and put appropriate intervention in place. At this stage, we would encourage parents/carers to arrange to speak to school about any concerns they may have in relation to their child's attendance.

Stage 3 – Pupils continue to show little, or no improvement and attendance has deteriorated even further. A letter will be sent home advising that the pupil is now on a four-week monitoring period. During this monitoring period, 100% attendance is required, unless medical evidence can be provided.

Stage 4 – Pupils who are absent within the four-week time frame, and who, therefore, do not pass the four-week monitoring period, will be moved to Stage 4 and considered for referral to the local authority.

Our aim is for our pupils to have excellent attendance and punctuality.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Pupils in this group will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will get into the habit of good attendance, helping to prepare them for the world of work.

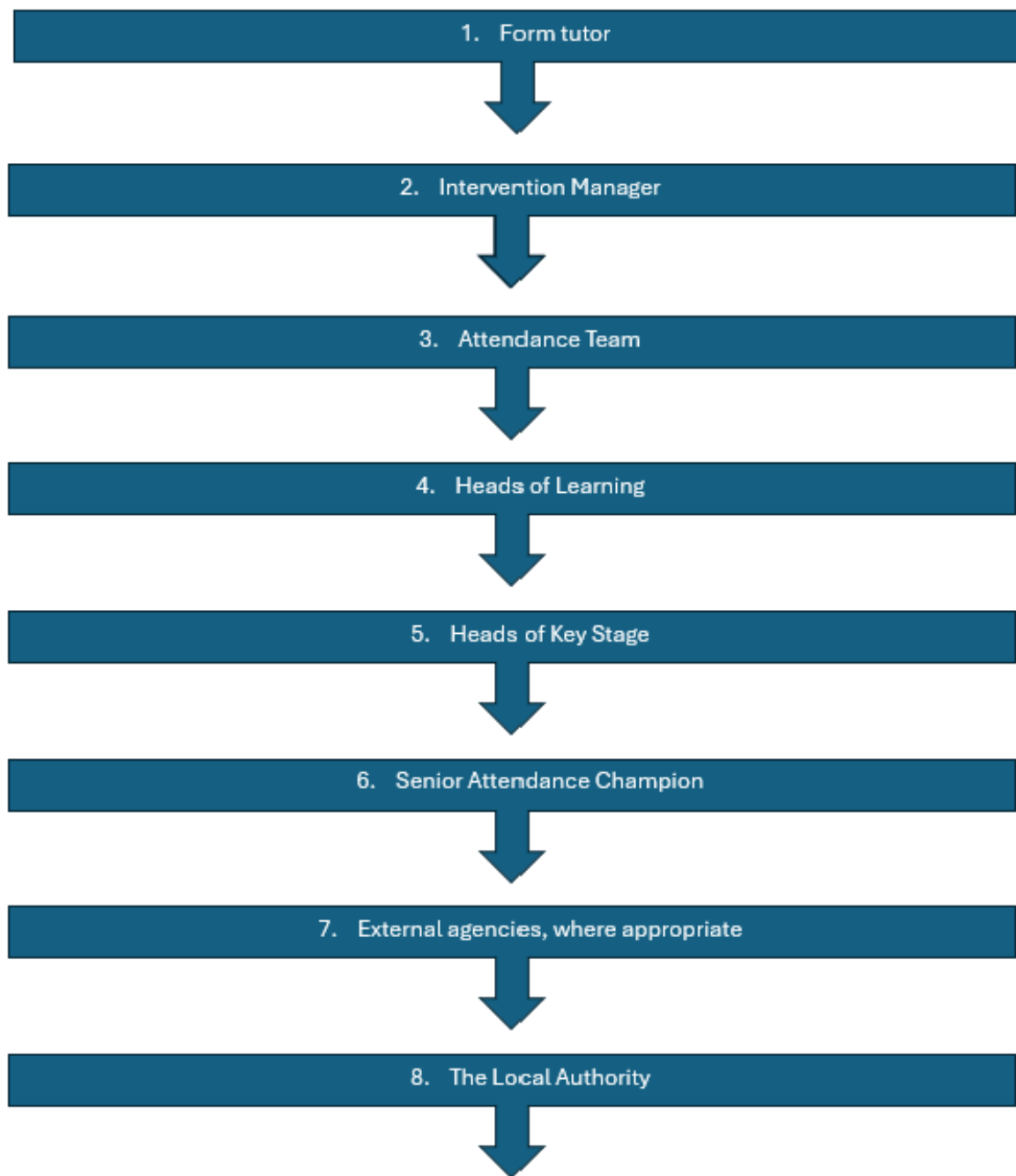
95%:	10 days absence a year
Pupils in this group are likely to reach their target grades and form a habit of attending school regularly.	
92%:	15 days absence a year
Pupils in this group are missing three weeks of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their target grades. The school may consider referring pupils with this level of attendance to the Local Authority.	
90% or below:	19 days (or more) absence a year
The Government categorise pupils in this group as 'Persistent Absentees'. It will be almost impossible for these pupils to keep up with their schoolwork, due to gaps in learning caused by absence. Parents/carers of pupils in this group could face the possibility of legal action from the Local Authority.	

Parents/carers can help us by:

- Encouraging their child/ren to attend school.
- Encouraging them to be punctual.
- Contacting school on the first day of an absence.
- Continuing to notify us of any further absence.
- Informing us of any changes or circumstances which might affect attendance.
- Supporting your child and the school by attending meetings and keeping an open dialogue.
- Ensuring that medical appointments are made outside of school time, wherever possible.
- If medical appointments do need to take place during school hours, pupils should attend school before and after their appointment.
- Ensuring that holidays are not taken during term-time.

Please note that we are not able to grant leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and we ask for your support with this matter: please keep family holidays to outside of term-time.

Appendix B: Attendance Reporting Structure



APPENDIX C: LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM



Hebburn Comprehensive School

Campbell Park Road, Hebburn, Tyne & Wear, NE31 2QU

☎: 0191 4833199 ✉: office@hebburn.net 🌐: www.hebburn.net

Head Teacher: Mr D R Thompson

PARENTAL REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

You should be aware that any absence from school, for whatever reason, will potentially have a detrimental effect on your child's learning and progress.

Authorisation will only be granted in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND NOT FOR THE PURPOSES OF A FAMILY HOLIDAY. YOU MAY BE ISSUED WITH A PENALTY NOTICE OR PROSECUTION IN THE MAGISTRATES COURT SHOULD THE UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE GO AHEAD. WITH EFFECT FROM 19.08.24 NEW LEGISLATION STATES:**

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

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Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn. Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

Should you wish to apply for your child's absence from school you are requested to complete the section below and return the form at least 1 month prior to the planned absence the attendance office.

Work Hard | Be Kind | Aspire

PUPIL NAME:	DOB:
ABSENCE REQUESTED: FROM:	TO:
*REASON FOR THIS REQUEST:	

I/WE request permission for my child to be absent from school on the above dates. I/WE understand that this absence will disrupt my child's learning. I/WE will ensure that my child returns to school immediately after the agreed last date of absence and that all work missed will be completed.

SIGNED (FIRST Parent/Guardian):	DATE:
SIGNED (SECOND Parent/Guardian):	DATE:
Address of both parent/s or guardian/s:	

Work Hard | Be Kind | Aspire

For School Use Only:

Date received:			
Attendance percentage to date over the last 3 years:	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Previous requests:	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
(Please delete as appropriate)	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
Request approved/denied:			
Date parent(s) informed of decision:			
Signed:		Date:	

Appendix D – Attendance Codes (from August 2024)

In line with DfE statutory guidance, the following codes will be used to record 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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays