Attendance and Absence Policy

Category of Policy: Central Education Policy Adapted by School

Ash Meadow School

Contents

Statement of intent

Ash Meadow school believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some students find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with students and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as student premium – can have on improving student attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, students and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our students.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow 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 them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and students.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is the Pastoral Lead. Staff, parents and students will be expected to contact the Pastoral Lead for queries or concerns about attendance.

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Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*
- DfE (2025) *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- DfE (2024) *Children Missing Education*
- DfE (2024) *Providing Remote Education*

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governance team has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- 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.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with students and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring students do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Students are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

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Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

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

Authorised 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

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

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

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for students' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and students.

Students will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 9:00am.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:30am.
- The morning register will close at 10am.
- The afternoon register will be marked at 1:00pm.
- The afternoon register will close at 1.30pm.

Absence procedures

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Parents/Carers will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:30am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a student is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, pastoral or administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

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

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the 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 school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a student is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, prolonged or persistent illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the headteacher. The school will inform the LA, on a half-termly basis, of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Ash Meadow has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that students' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where students' attendance falls below the standard:

- A report is sent to the SLT and headteacher detailing weekly attendance.
- Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
- Contact is made with parents/carers on the first day of absence for any student absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the student is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and headteacher daily.
- Contact is made to the parents/carers of any students marked using the N code. Any N codes not established by the end of the day are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If a student's attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard.
- The student's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school

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with the classroom teacher, Pastoral Lead or Headteacher and agree targets for their child's attendance. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the Local Authority Attendance Officer, who may then conduct a home visit.

- After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home to congratulate the student and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents/carers continues until attendance stabilises to 96%.
- If targets are not met, the pastoral lead makes a referral to the attendance officer.

Attendance register

The school uses SchoolPod to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether students are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning

- \ = Present in the afternoon

- L = Late arrival before the register has closed

- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances

- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad

- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time timetable (compulsory school age only)

- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made

- G = Holiday (unauthorised)

- I = Illness (physical or mental health)

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- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews

- K = Attending provision arranged by the Local Authority (s.19)

- M = Medical or dental appointment

- N = Reason not yet provided (to be clarified within 5 school days)

- O = Unauthorised absence (other)

- P = Participating in supervised sporting activity (with prior agreement)

- R = Religious observance

- S = Study leave

- T = Traveller absence

- V = Educational visit or trip

- W = Work experience (supervised)

- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

- X = Not required to attend (non-compulsory school age, etc.)

- Q = Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements

- Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

- Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption

- Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of school premises being unexpectedly closed

- Y4 = Unable to attend due to school site being unexpectedly closed

- Y5 = Unable to attend due to criminal justice detention

- Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

- Y7 = Unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause (must directly affect the pupil)

- Z = Pupil not on admission register

- # = Planned whole school closure

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant students who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Students who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent on the school register. Students that have a member of Education Staff assigned to them in person will be allocated a 'B' Code.

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.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a student a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the student can be away from school. The school cannot grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Leave of absence may be considered for the following reasons:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the student normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the student is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the student normally lives with and school agree the student should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the student will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances: This must be requested in advance by a parent who the student normally lives with. The school will then consider applications individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and

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relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of time the student can be away from school.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all students engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for students engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the student.

The student will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the student would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a student receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the student would be required to attend school if they were attending a school specified by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. Where a licence has not

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been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the student's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a student's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for students from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that students with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support students who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a student's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a student that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All students will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a student is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

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- Inform the LA if a student is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the student's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the student reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the student is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the student to stay in contact with other students during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any students with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the student is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of students with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying students' unmet needs.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a student to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a student can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby students can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a student will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

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Students will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the student will be signed out and back in using the sign in app. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the student leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No student will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of students, and understand the importance of continuity in each student's learning.

All students are expected to be in their classes by 9:30am and 1:30pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the student not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the student, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

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The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Missing children

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the student has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the student will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing student's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the student going missing.
- If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the student has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the student to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that students understand they must not leave the premises.

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The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the headteacher, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters to parents.
    - Agreeing attendance plans.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Creating attendance clinics.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the students whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Postcards home
- Certificates of attendance
- Dojo points
- Trips and visits

School trips and events will be considered a privilege. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that students with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with students and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is

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expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each student wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a student where the student is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the headteacher will work collaboratively with the student and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the student from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for student absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the student's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the headteacher will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and deputy heads, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the student's family, the headteacher will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent Absence

There are various groups of students who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Students who are eligible for FSM
- Students with EAL
- Students with SEND
- Students who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support students at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

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- Offering support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with students to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having if they have understanding.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on students who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these students are facing.

Where a student at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the student in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention & Penalty Notices

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve students' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after two terms, the headteacher will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a student reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Where a student accrues unauthorised absences that meet the threshold, the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to each parent with responsibility.

In Warrington, a penalty notice may be issued where one or more of the following apply:

- The student has 10 or more unauthorised sessions (half-day sessions) in any rolling 10-school-week period, including "U" (late after register closed) codes, unless a notice to improve has led to a sustained change in attendance.
- The student has taken two or more term-time holidays in a 12-month period that were not authorised by the school.
- The student has **taken** one block of unauthorised absence exceeding 10 sessions (five full days), for example, an unauthorised holiday.

When a penalty notice is issued:

- The penalty **is** £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- The penalty rises **to** £160 per parent, per child if not paid in the first 21 days (payment must be made in full within 28 days).
- If payment is not received within 28 days, the case may be referred for prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Each parent may receive a maximum of two penalty notices for the same child within a three-year period. After this limit has been reached, no further penalty notices will be issued; instead, the Local Authority will consider alternative enforcement action, such as a parenting order or prosecution.

Where prosecution is pursued under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents may face a fine of up **to** £2,500 and/or up to three months' imprisonment in the most serious cases.

Where earlier interventions have not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be used as a formal legal intervention without resorting to criminal prosecution. ESOs are made by the Family Court under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 and give the local authority a statutory role in supporting the student and their parents to improve attendance.

Before applying for an ESO, the local authority must issue parents with a notice of its intention, hold a meeting with the parent and student, and then decide whether to proceed.

Once an ESO is in place, a supervisor from the local authority will work with the family and may require actions such as:

- Parents attending support or review meetings.

- Parents participating in a parenting programme.

- Parents engaging with support services.

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- The student undergoing an assessment, e.g. by an educational psychologist.

- Regular review meetings involving all parties (at least annually; often held every 3 months).

Failure to comply with the requirements of an ESO is a criminal offence and may result in a fine of up to £1,000, with the court deciding whether further action is required.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The headteacher will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual students.
- Demographic groups, e.g. students from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of students, e.g. students with SEND, LAC and students eligible for FSM.
- Students at risk of PA.

The headteacher, with the pastoral lead and the attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The pastoral lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of students and to implement attendance procedures. The pastoral lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governance team will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional, and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The governance team will ensure staff from different schools within the company regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk students as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governance team will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for students who need it

The governance team will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the headteacher and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting students to overcome barriers to attendance.

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.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed 3-yearly. In the event of changes to guidance or legal frameworks, the policy will be subject to review within that timeframe.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

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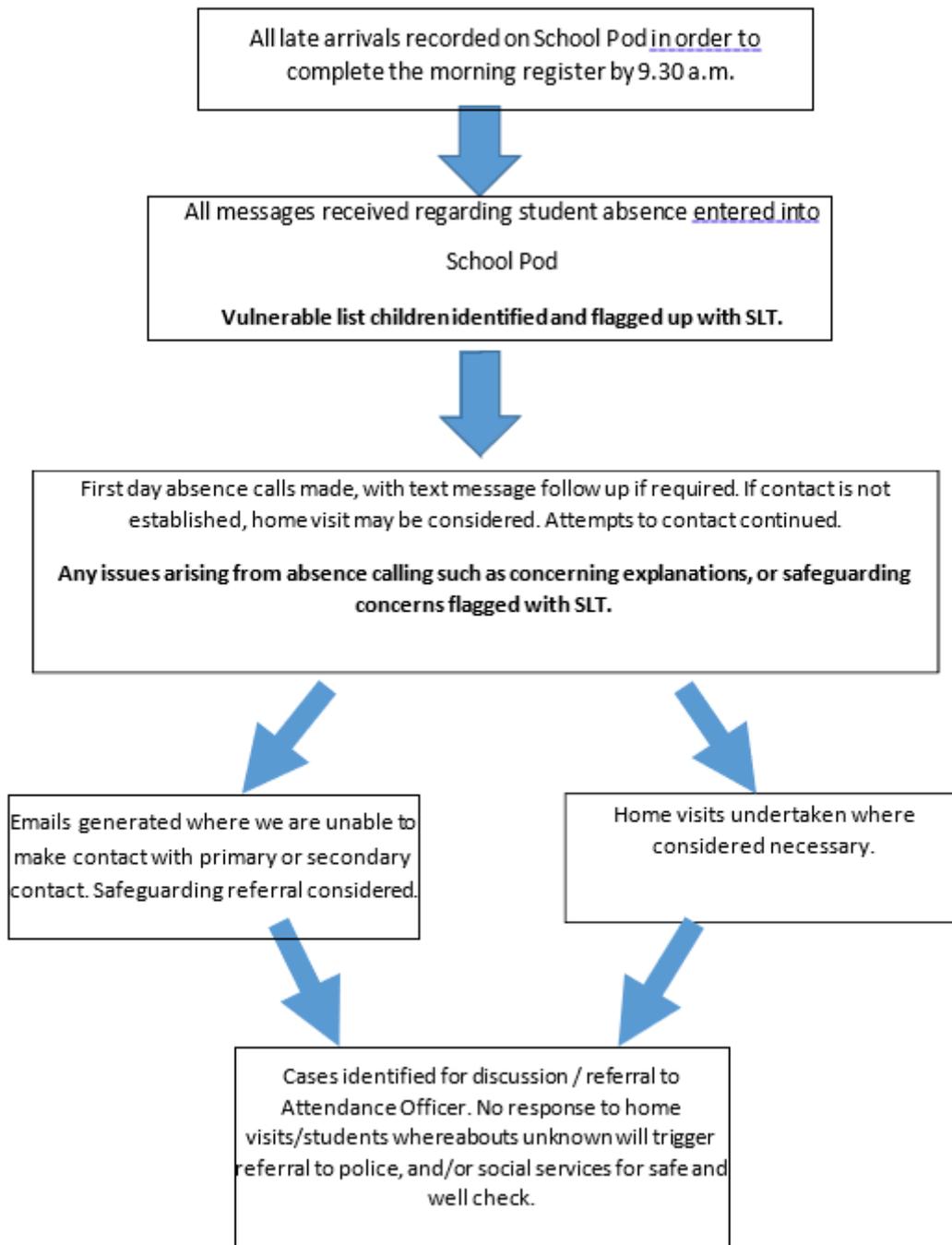Next Review Date: September 2028

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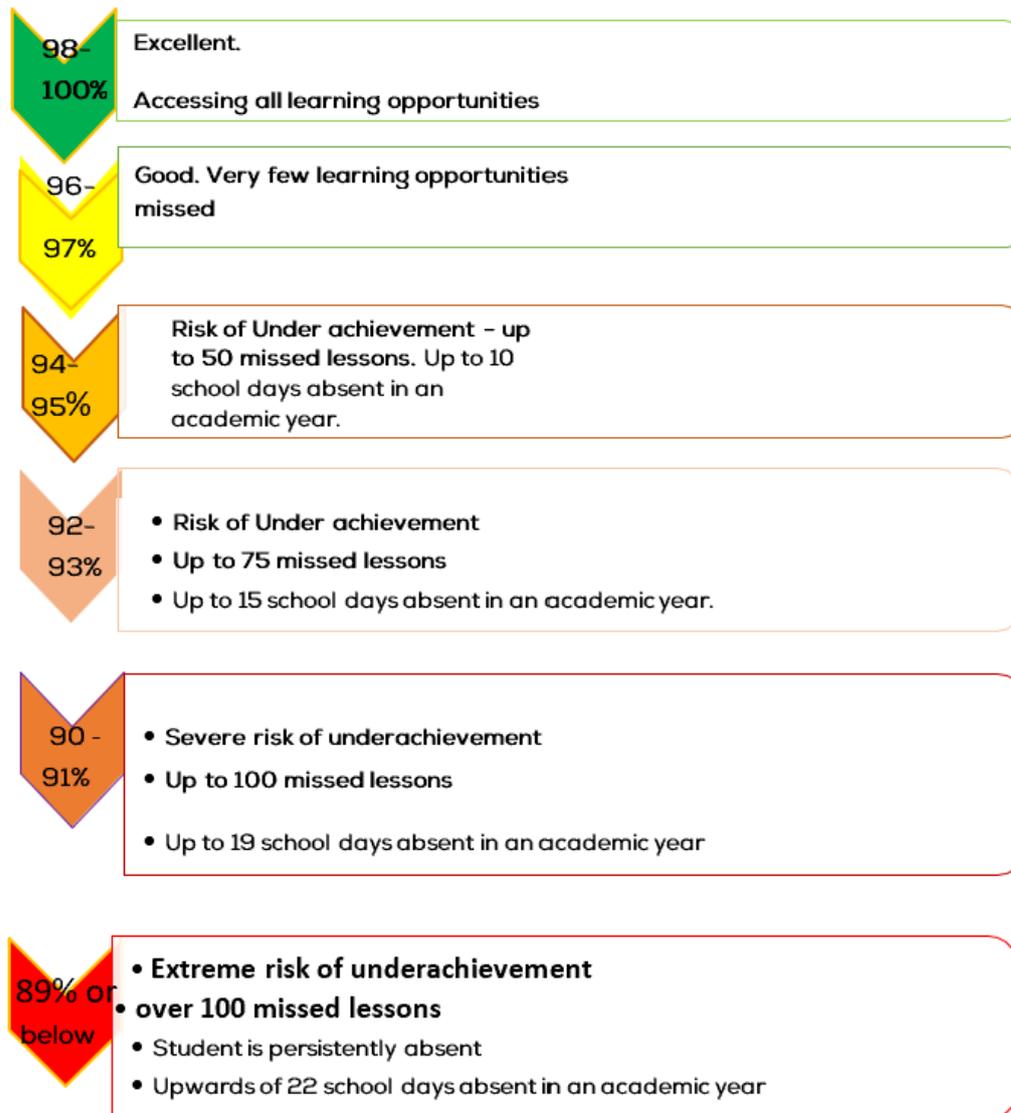Next Review Date: September 2028

Appendix A – Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Bright Futures school has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that students' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where students' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and headteacher detailing monthly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the Pastoral Lead.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any student absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the student is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Pastoral Lead.
4. If contact with a parent where a child has an unreported absence cannot be made via telephone, home visits may be considered.
5. If a student is absent with an 'N' code for more than one day, this will be reported to the Local Authority Attendance Officer, and safeguarding processes will be followed.
6. If a student's attendance falls to 90 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also outlines advice and information around how attendance may be improved.
7. If a student's attendance continues to fall, or consistently stays below 90%, the headteacher may contact parents via phone call home to discuss ways to improve attendance.
8. The student's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents may be required to attend a meeting in school with the headteacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer, who will then conduct a home visit.
9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the headteacher to congratulate the student and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
10. If targets are not met, the Pastoral Lead makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, with the school, Local Authority and parents working together.

All late arrivals recorded on School Pod in order to complete the morning register by 9.30 a.m.

All messages received regarding student absence entered into School Pod

Vulnerable list children identified and flagged up with SLT.

First day absence calls made, with text message follow up if required. If contact is not established, home visit may be considered. Attempts to contact continued.

Any issues arising from absence calling such as concerning explanations, or safeguarding concerns flagged with SLT.

Emails generated where we are unable to make contact with primary or secondary contact. Safeguarding referral considered.

Home visits undertaken where considered necessary.

Cases identified for discussion / referral to Attendance Officer. No response to home visits/students whereabouts unknown will trigger referral to police, and/or social services for safe and well check.

Appendix B – Attendance Impact Analysis

98-100%
Excellent.

Accessing all learning opportunities

96-97%
Good. Very few learning opportunities missed

94-95%
Risk of Under achievement – up to 50 missed lessons. Up to 10 school days absent in an academic year.

92-93%
- Risk of Under achievement
- Up to 75 missed lessons
- Up to 15 school days absent in an academic year.

90-91%
- Severe risk of underachievement
- Up to 100 missed lessons
- Up to 19 school days absent in an academic year

89% or below
- **Extreme risk of underachievement**
- **over 100 missed lessons**
- Student is persistently absent
- Upwards of 22 school days absent in an academic year

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98-100%

Excellent.

– Accessing all learning opportunities

95-97%

Very Good.

– Very few learning opportunities missed

90-95%

Risk of under achievement

Phone call and/or informal meeting with parent to discuss factors impacting attendance and offer support.

86-89%

- Risk of under achievement
- Contact parent/carer to share attendance continues to be a concern and refer to Attendance Officer for support.

  • Letter sent highlighting attendance concern
  • Student added to 'watchlist' for attendance

80-85%

- Severe risk of underachievement
- Further letter sent expressing continued concerns
- Headteacher notified
- Meeting offered with school to discuss/understand reasons for absence concerns and agree a support plan to secure attendance
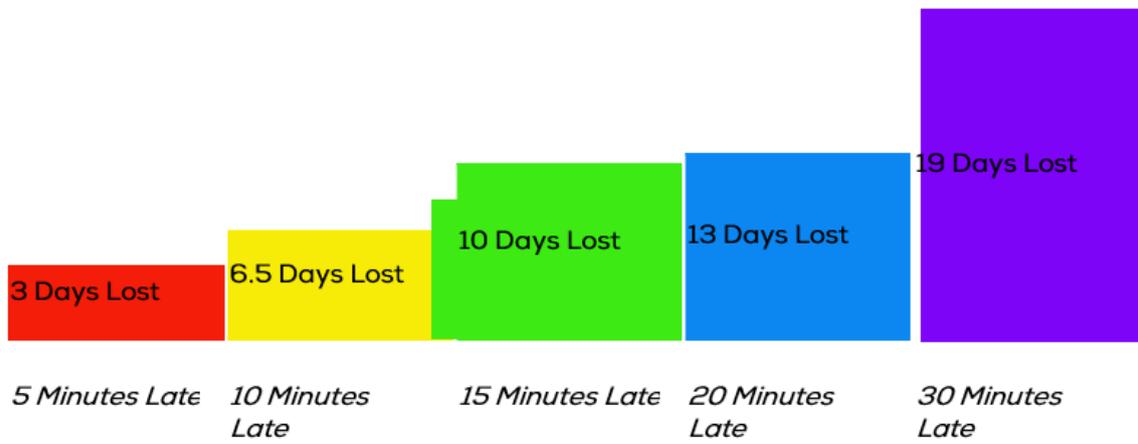
Medical evidence requested if appropriate
- Family encouraged to engage with Early Help
- Home visits if appropriate
- Signposting to relevant support agencies

79% or below

- Extreme risk of underachievement
- Student is persistently absent
- Request Attendance Team intervention including home visits – fast track process if number of unauthorised absences
- Early help explored with family
- Formal Attendance Review Meeting if 10 or more unauthorised absences

Impact of lateness across one academic year:

5 Minutes Late	10 Minutes Late	15 Minutes Late	20 Minutes Late	30 Minutes Late
3 Days Lost	6.5 Days Lost	10 Days Lost	13 Days Lost	19 Days Lost

Policy Revision Log

Policy Revision Log		
Revision Number	Revision Date	Nature of Revision
1	5th September 2024	Full revision of policy with multiple changes in line with new guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'.
2	29/11/2024	Alteration to attendance monitoring procedure, to include home visits and safeguarding procedures.
3.	30/09/2025	Policy review. Update to attendance codes, ensuring correct alignment to 'Working Together to Improve School attendance'

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