ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Issue:	September 2025
Member of Staff Responsible:	Mrs Platts
Ratified on:	September 2025
Ratified by:	Full Governing Body: *S.Andrews* Mr S Andrews Co-Chair of Governors
Review Date:	September 2026

Version	Section	Amendments	Date	Authors
1	This is an existing policy based on the changed DfE guidelines, August 2024			
2	Whole Policy	Mark Barker has been replaced with Kerry Platts. Headteacher has been replaced with Head of School		
	Important Contacts	All contacts updated or deleted		
	3.5	Last sentence of this section removed which contained old details for K Platts		
	3.6	Paragraph 1 additional sentence: To build relationships by becoming their advocate and first responder in offering support to eliminate barriers to attendance.		
	4.1	Amendments made to the times of arrival and registers closing		
	4.5	Removed the paragraph Late - If a pupil arrives after 8.40am they will be marked as late for the am session. If a pupil arrives late for their period 4 session they will be marked as late. If a pupil does not arrive before 9.10am they will be marked as absent for the am session using a U code.This is stated in earlier sentences.		
	6.2	Linked removed for the Sheffield Inclusion team as it no longer works.		
	Penalty Notices	Change in paragraph 1 to reflect only the LA can issue penalty notices		

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of all school policies on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Contents

1. Important Contacts

Role/Organisation	Name	Contact Details
Attendance Lead	Kerry Platts	0114 234 8805 kplatts@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk
Community Engagement and Family Support Worker	Katy Walker-Fretwell	0114 234 8805 kwalkerfretwell@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	Liz Hill	0114 234 8805 ehill@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Helen Jackson	0114 234 8805 × 2653 Hjackson3@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk
DSDs	—	0114 234 8805 × 2647
SENCO and DSD	Kate Heaton (PT) Steph Lee	0114 234 8805 kheaton@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk Slee@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	—	0114 273 4850 LADO@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk
Chair of Governors	—	—
Local Authority Attendance Team	—	Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk
Advice around general illness	—	http://sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk/
Sheffield Safeguarding Hub	—	0114 273 4855
North FIS Team	—	0114 250 6865
West FIS Team	—	0114 233 1189
East FIS Team	—	0114 205 3635

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- To promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.

Forge Valley School believes that attendance and punctuality are the key to the success of our pupils and their ability to benefit from all the opportunities available to them in school. Forge Valley School expects every pupil to achieve 100% attendance during an academic year. There is a clear link between good attendance and achievement alongside the development of social, emotional and personal skills.

Forge Valley School is a successful school, and our pupils play a crucial part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education, they must attend regularly. Your child should be at school on time every day, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Pupils should arrive in school before 8.40 am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 am and will remain open until 9:30 am. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of period four. Registers will be taken at the start of every lesson and show if a pupil has arrived late. This will be coded as an L on the register.

This policy outlines how we will achieve this together.

We are committed to meeting our obligations concerning school attendance by: -

- Building strong relationships with families, listening to and understanding the barriers to attendance
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality
- Discussing the link between attendance and educational outcomes and pupil wellbeing, and challenging parents' views where they have misconceptions as to what good attendance looks like
- Treating all pupils and parents with dignity and modelling respectful relationships to build positive relationships between home and school, which are a foundation of good attendance

Core principles, as directed by DFE, working together to improve school attendance

- We have high standards of attendance, which are expected from all pupils
- We monitor all pupils by rigorously using attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible, so that all parties work together to resolve issues before they become entrenched

- We will not tolerate low attendance, we will listen, understand, empathise and support our pupils
- We are relentless in our pursuit of identifying the root causes of absence and removing barriers to a pupil's attendance
- We will Facilitate Support of pupils through the deployment of key staff so that strong relationships can be built and maintained
- We have clear processes as to when attendance should be unauthorised, and we have a keen focus on such absence
- Where barriers to attendance are due to external reasons beyond our control, the school facilitates support by working with external agencies to get the right support at the right time.
- We will **Formalise Support** through the use of Attendance Contracts agreed by pupils, parents and school. These will clearly outline the support that will be in place and the next steps if this fails to secure improved attendance.
- Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support has not been successful, or families do not engage, we will work with the Local Authority (LA) to enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education
- We will share information and work in collaboration with other schools in the area and other partners when absence becomes a concern

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

It also refers to:
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- The Public Sector Equality Duty April 2011
- The Equality Act 2010

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance, and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand: a) The importance of good attendance b) That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues c) The school's legal requirements for keeping registers d) The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools in the Inova Academy Trust
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head of School

The head of school is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance team to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure all staff follow them

Working collaboratively with colleagues across the Trust to share best practise

Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Kerry Platts and can be contacted via 0114 234 8805 or kplatts@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the head of school

Working with education welfare officers / Community and engagement officers to tackle persistent absence

Advising the head of school/attendance and behaviour manager (authorised by the head of school) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Liz Hill and can be contacted via 0114 234 8805 ehill@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk

3.5 The Forge Valley School Attendance Team

The school attendance team:

- Monitor attendance data daily across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Take calls from parents/carers [and pupils] about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the head of year/pastoral lead/attendance team where appropriate, to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Monitor patterns of Persistently Absent and Severely Absent pupils, which is a key focus of the regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts that need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible.
- Benchmark school attendance with Local and National data
- When a child is Persistently Absent (below 90%), the school and the Local Authority will work together and put additional support in place to remove any barriers.
- The school will particularly focus on Severely Absent pupils (50% plus absence) as these pupils face more barriers to being in school. This involves more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is needed across all partners to make this group a top priority for support.
- We will endeavour to understand the causes of poor attendance and will identify appropriate multi-agency support to ensure that the pupil can engage with education full-time.
- Our Attendance Team and the Local Authority's Attendance Support Team, Attendance and Inclusion Officers work together to tackle persistent absence
- The team arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- The Attendance Lead advises the head of school when to issue parenting Contracts and fixed-penalty notices

The school will escalate support using the model of Prevention, Early Intervention, and Targeted Support, which moves from Voluntary support to formal support and then to Statutory enforcement.

3.6 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of each lesson. Form tutors will hold conversations about school attendance and punctuality with pupils during form time. To build relationships by becoming their advocate and first responder in offering support to eliminate barriers to attendance.

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. live with and look after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting a member of our attendance team, who can be contacted via 0114 2348805 Ext 2606

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time, every day
- Sixth Form students should call the school to report their absence before 8:30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils in this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes

We will also record:
- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:40 am and ends at 3 pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 am and will be kept open until 9:30 am.

4.2 Unplanned & Unauthorised absence
The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/ carers must contact the school on Tel: - 0114 2348805 Ext 2606 and continue to call each day that your child remains absent

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the child's attendance is below 96% or the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card or other appropriate forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Unauthorised absences are those which are not evidenced and for which no "leave of absence" has been granted by the school.

Unauthorised absence includes (but is not limited to):
- None evidenced illness absences when a child's attendance is 96% or below
- Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained or no reason has been given
- Children who arrive at school after the morning registers are closed (9:30 am)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time

Unauthorised absence can lead to the issuing of fixed penalty notices and/or prosecution.
Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

The school will complete safe and well visits to children if they have not been physically seen for a period of 5 school days. Where the school has received no communication to report a child's absence for 3 school days, a safe and well visit will be made.
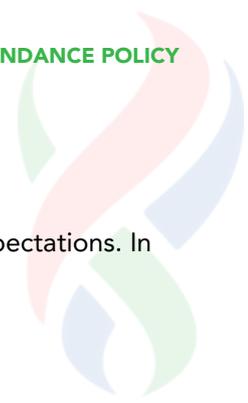
4.3 Historical Poor Attendance

The school will continue to work with families where a child's historical attendance has been below expectations. In deciding this, the school will consider the following;

- The reasons for the historical poor attendance
- The previous actions taken by the school and the resulting engagement from the pupil and family

4.4 Planned Absence

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

Parents must inform the attendance officer of known absences in advance (appointment card or letter)

Pupils must sign in /out at the attendance office if they arrive after 8:40 am and leave before 2.45 pm only with an authorised note from the attendance officer. Pupils are only authorised to leave with a slip from the Attendance Officer.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be absent from school for the minimum amount of time necessary. If the medical appointment is in the morning, we expect the child to return to school for the afternoon periods, and if the appointment is in the afternoon, we would expect your child to attend school for the morning periods.

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

4.5 Lateness and Punctuality

A school day is split into two sessions AM & PM, and a pupil who arrives late:
After the register has closed (9.30 am) pupils will be marked absent, using the U code
Before the register has closed but after the allocated time of arrival, they will be marked as late using the appropriate L code.

Absence - If a child is not present during the period four register and does not arrive late, they will be marked as absent for the pm session.

Form tutors and Heads of Year may call to arrange a meeting with parents to discuss pupils who are regularly marked as late at the start of the school day or to their lessons. We will endeavour to work with pupils and parents/carers where genuine reasons for lateness are identified. Such as being a 'young carer' and supporting pupils to access their education.

4.6 Following up on Unexplained Absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may, e.g. contact the police or social services
- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reasons. This will be done daily
- Conduct a home visit to ascertain the reason for absence if no contact has been made for a period of 3 days
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer and or social worker
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Report your child as missing to the Local Authority CME (Children Missing from Education) team if no contact has been made after a period of 20 school days. This may result in your child being removed from the school roll.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

Children Missing from Education:

- The Community Engagement officer & Attendance Lead, along with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, are the nominated members of school staff to liaise with the CME Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The CME Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

4.7 Reporting to Parents

Parents/carers will be able to monitor their child's attendance by:

- Speaking to their child's Form Tutor, Head of Year or any member of the attendance team
- Receiving letters from the school raising concerns around attendance and punctuality
- Using the MCAS application issued to all parents once on role with Forge Valley school
- Checking their child's planner attendance record page
- Pupil's attendance will be shared on the twice-yearly school report.
- Parent/carers can request a copy of their child's attendance certificate at any time by contacting the attendance team

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time Absence

The head of school will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings. The head of school will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time Absence

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

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in a protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday.

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

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually. Parents/carers who do not request term time leave and take their child on 'unauthorised leave' could be liable for a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution and even potentially lose their place at the school.

Requests for exceptional term-time leave must be made at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangement being made. This will allow sufficient time for the request to be considered by the school. The request must be made in writing (letter or email) by the parent/carer using a Request for Exceptional Leave form.

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

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to)
- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller's family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an off-site approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is classified as a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance drops below 90%. Absence at this level can cause considerable damage to a pupil's educational prospects, and we want to ensure that by working together with parents/carers, good attendance can be maintained. The school will monitor all absences thoroughly, and any pupils who have dropped to become persistently or severely absent will be monitored.

The school will;

- Parents/carers will be contacted by the Attendance Team to discuss the concerns regarding the absences
- Receive a letter home with a registration certificate informing the parent/carer of the current attendance
- Be requested to attend a meeting with either the Head of Year or the Attendance Lead
- Be informed of the procedures and next steps if attendance does not improve
- Receive a home visit from our Community Engagement and Family Support Officer who will complete our Attendance Response Action form.
- To work with the LA to formulate a plan to overcome the barriers to attending school

A pupil is severely absent if their attendance is 50% or less. **As these pupils face more barriers to attending school, the child and parents will be supported by the Local Authority's Attendance Support Team.** This will ensure more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is needed across all partners to make this group a top priority for support. We will sensitively consider the reasons for absence and ensure all parties understand that school is a place of safety and support for children who may be facing difficulties.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

6.1 Identifying the Barriers

When meeting with pupils and family members, we will do the following:

- Capture what is going well, what we are worried about, and what the next steps will be.

For each of these three areas, we will think about the child's education, health and care needs. By breaking it down into these areas, we can:

- See the dominant factors which prevent this child from being in school every day on time.
- Identify the most appropriate next steps.
- Involve the most appropriate agents, which may include Early Help, Attendance & Inclusion or parental support programs.

For children with identified health issues, the school will consult with the local authority and consider using the GP protocol. The school will work in collaboration with any external specialists already working with a child.

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6.2 Strategies we will use to Promote Whole School Attendance

When we have a concern about the amount of absence or the pattern of absence, our first action will be to arrange a meeting between the school, child and family.

This will be to:

- Share a clear vision for attendance underpinned by high expectations
- Whole school approach – every staff member has a role to fulfil in improving attendance.
- Ensure good internal communication/meetings encompassing safeguarding, SEN, behaviour, and attendance to facilitate robust APDR (Assess, Plan, Do, Review response)
- Follow a graduated approach for our irregular attenders to ensure we assess why they are not attending regularly,
- To create a plan to support improvement in attendance. To implement this plan and review it to assess if improvements have been made.

6.2 Strategies we will use to Promote Whole School Attendance
This will be to:
- To work with the local authority Attendance & Inclusion Team.
- Ensure that the pupil and family feel that they have been supported by the school and continue to be supported by our Community Engagement and Family Support worker.
- Routinely apply a robust system that includes incentives, rewards, and consequences, ensuring that all the systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.
- To support pupils who may attend sessions not on the school site at an approved provider or with an educational professional.
- To celebrate attendance in Form Time, Celebration assembly, rewards postcards, letters home and entry into prize draws

6.3 Attendance Monitoring
The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence daily.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parent/carers can call the school on 0114 2348805 Ext 2606 and continue to call each day your child remains absent.

If a pupil's absence goes below 96%, the school will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to fall after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Local Authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The severely absence threshold is 50%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 50%, the pupil will be classified as a severely absent pupil.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics release. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Forge Valley School collects and stores attendance data, and it may be used for the following internal purposes:
- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

Parent/Carers Contact Details:
It is imperative that the school has up-to-date contact details for all parents/carers. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to keep the school informed of current contact details

7. Pupils absent due to Mental or Physical Ill Health

Some pupils have medical conditions which may prevent them from attending school. When the school is notified that a pupil has a medical condition, the process outlined below will be followed to decide whether the pupil requires an IHP (Individual Health Plan). If a pupil does not have an IHP, then the school will consult with the local authority.

If an IHP is in place, the school will make every effort to ensure that arrangements are put into place within 2 weeks, or by the beginning of the relevant term for pupils who are new to our school.

Parents will:
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs
- Be involved in the development and review of their child's IHP and may be involved in its drafting
- Carry out any action they have agreed to as part of the implementation of the IHP, e.g. provide medicines and equipment, and ensure they or another nominated adult is contactable at all times

Pupils will:

Pupils with medical conditions will often be best placed to provide information about how their condition affects them. Pupils should be fully involved in discussions about their medical support needs and contribute as much as possible to the development of their IHPs. They are also expected to comply with their IHPs.

8. Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School
8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance or SEND

The school will endeavour to work closely with pupils and their families to understand the barriers to school attendance. The school will seek to work with external agencies, where appropriate, who will offer support and advice to young people. The school will adjust our processes on a case-by-case basis.

Where a pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

8.2 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a child has been absent from school for an extended period of time. The attendance team will work with the child so that they are best able to catch up on missed learning and get off to a flying start. A reduced timetable or a graduated timetable may be used as a tool to gently reintroduce pupils back into full-time education.

9. Attendance Monitoring

The school monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality data) daily. Systematic and analyses will occur on a weekly, half-termly and yearly basis.

9.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

9.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is when a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

a) Discuss attendance and engagement at school
b) Listen and understand barriers to attendance
c) Explain the available help
d) Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
e) Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

The school will specifically work with pupils who are on the borderline of persistent absence, as we know the impact that attendance below 90% can have. For severely absent pupils, the school will work jointly with the Local Authority-linked Attendance and Inclusion Support Worker to formulate a joint plan of support. In all cases, we will seek the views of the family and child so that all barriers to non-attendance are understood

10. Sanctions
Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Notices to Improve
If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may, with the approval of the Local Authority, send a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:
- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Penalty Notices
Only the Local Authority (LA) can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the Local Authority issues a penalty notice, it will check with the school before doing so.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the LA will consider the individual case, including:
- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is responsible for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice; this is per adult and per child. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.
If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

11. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, yearly by Kerry Platts, Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

12. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection/GDPR
- Reduced Timetable Policy
- Managed Move Policy
- Elective Home Education Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Health and Well Being Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Support Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before the 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 their registered school for LA-arranged educational provision
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 an approved educational activity not classed as sport or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another registered setting
Absent – Leave of Absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking (paid or unpaid) employment 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

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the [DfE's guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) 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 (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 because the local authority has failed to make necessary access arrangements
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance and normal transport is unavailable
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread travel disruption 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 unexpectedly closed (e.g. 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 • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at school is prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by other codes

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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 has been established, or the school considers the given reason insufficient 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