

Attendance Policy

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Lincolnshire Gateway
Academies Trust

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to the Academy attendance through our whole-Academy culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Section 19(4A) and 444B(3) of the Education Act 1996 (chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6)
- Section 175(4) of the Education Act 2002 (all chapters)
- Section 19(9) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (chapters 1-6)
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the School census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE), Mental health and behaviour in Academy (2018)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

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

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

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

3.3 The Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the Academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and barriers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is a member of the Senior Leadership team and can be contacted via the Academy office.

3.4 The Attendance Team

The Academy Attendance Team are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Senior Attendance Lead and the Principal
- Persistent absence
- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The Attendance Lead can be contacted via the Academy office.

3.5 All teachers

All teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the Academy office promptly at the start of the AM and PM registration periods.

3.6 Academy administration attendance staff

Academy administration attendance staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the Academy system
- Make calls to chase absence on a daily basis.

The designated administration assistant for attendance can be contacted via the Academy office.

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the academy to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend the Academy every day on time

4. Training Staff

We recognise that early intervention can prevent continuous poor attendance. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

4.1. Teachers and Support Staff

- Will receive training on the secondary attendance and truancy policy as part of their new starter induction.

- Will receive regular updates on attendance from the Attendance Team.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start AM session of each Academy day and the PM session after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- The reason for illness or medical appointment

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

Pupils must arrive in Academy by 8:45am on each Academy day.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8:50am and 9.00am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The child's parent/carer must notify the Academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the Academy admin staff or messaging on MCAS.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the Academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy may ask the child's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the Academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

5.3 Planned absence

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

Parent/Carer must complete a Leave of Absence form giving at least two full weeks' notice.

The Academy will check legislation and guidance, including what constitutes 'special circumstances' and what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances', and reasons for authorising/not authorising Leave of Absence. The Academy may telephone the parent/carer if insufficient information is submitted. The Principal may grant

or deny the request.

- The Academy will complete the 'Reasons for Refusal' on Leave of Absence form.
- The Academy will return the form to the parent, files copies of all paperwork as evidence
- The Academy will monitor attendance/absence over the appropriate period.
- The Academy will inform the Education Welfare Service of related unauthorised absence.
- The Academy will determine course of action which may include Referral, action towards Penalty Notice, Fast Track to Improving Attendance (up to and including Prosecution).

Please note: All requests for Leave of Absence must be submitted prior to a student's absence, as permission cannot be given retrospectively.

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

The child's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the Academy can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

Student entrance gates in the morning

All relevant staff should be outside on duty approximately 8:30am.
Staff should greet the children at the gates.
As the children come in, they must go out into the main academy areas.

What happens at 8:45am?

All students must enter the Academy and report to their designated tutor group by 8:50am.
Custodian will lock the student entrance gate at 8:45am, leaving the main reception entrance open.

What happens if a child arrives after 8.50am?

If a child is late, students enter via the Main Reception.
It is important that there is a clear routine for any child who is late.
Any child who is late after 8:50am, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (L) as such, and will receive a C2, a half hour after-Academy detention.

What happens if a child arrives after 9:30am?

If a child is late, students enter via the Main Reception.
It is important that there is a clear routine for any child who is late.
Any child who is late after 9:30am, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) as such, and will receive a C3, a forty five minute after Academy detention.

When must registers be completed by teachers?

Registers should be taken and staff should complete a head count upon completion to check the number of students present in the room corresponds to the number marked present on the register.

They must be taken and submitted in the first 5 minutes of each lesson.

The register marks must reflect the children in the class at that time (obviously, this might, on occasions, include a child who has arrived but is out of the classroom for any reason when the register is taken).

How should registers be marked for any child who is not present?

An 'N' mark must always be entered for any child who is not present when the class teacher takes the register. If any reason for absence has been provided, the mark will be edited by the attendance team. If a child arrives late, the teacher must edit and save the mark directly to reflect this and a C2 half hour

detention after school will be issued.

This includes any absence we have been notified about in advance.

What procedures are in place for children who are persistently late?

If a child is persistently late, the office will notify the child's Head of Year. The Head of Year will contact home for the child to discuss the child's lateness with a parent/carers, to ascertain why they have been late, to ensure parents/carers are aware of the persistent lateness, and to outline the importance of good punctuality. They will also escalate the consequence for the behaviour in line with the Academy's behaviour policy. If there is no improvement over an agreed period of time, the Head of Year will consider next steps which may include involvement from the Attendance Team, a formal letter, meeting with parents/carers with the Attendance Team and/or the Head of Year; Early Help support.

5.5 Truancy

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the attendance Team or Head of Year will contact the child's parents/carers, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending Academy.

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

- In the first instance, communication with parents/carers of the pupil, 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 Academy 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.

5.6 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Send a MCAS message to the child's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If the text is not answered, we will follow up with a phone call to give parents a further opportunity to respond. If the Academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the Academy may ask the Attendance Team to visit the family home.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carers on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the Academy will consider involving the Attendance Team.

5.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The Academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels using the MCAS App. Parents can access up to date information regarding their child's attendance.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The Academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 full weeks' notice before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Academy

office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

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

6.2 Legal sanctions

From August 2024, under the new national framework, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child of compulsory Academy age has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons, in a rolling period of 10 Academy weeks. The period of 10 weeks can span different terms or Academy years. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence.

The local authority retains the discretion to issue a fine before the threshold is met. If issued with a fine or penalty notice, each parent is fined £80, which rises to £160 each if not paid within 21 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If a parent is prosecuted and attends court because their child hasn't been attending the Academy, they can be fined up to £2,500.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Principal, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

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

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

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during academy hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the academy has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160.

6.3 Absence related to a mental health issue

Academy staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions or perform mental health interventions, but they are expected to work to ensure regular attendance for every child by ensuring that the Academy is a calm, safe and supportive environment. The Academy has a duty of care to promote children's mental health and wellbeing, and embed this into the whole-Academy ethos and policies.

As part of curriculum coverage, the Academy has a legal responsibility to teach pupils through a high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate curriculum about respectful relationships; emotional wellbeing; mental health. This is in addition to supporting each individual's social and emotional development.

The Academy maintains high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending the Academy and recognise that, in many instances, attendance at the Academy may serve to help with the underlying issue. The Academy recognises that there can be attendance challenges where a

child has an SEMH issue, particularly a severe issue for which the child is receiving clinical treatment.

Parents should notify the Academy on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness, and any absences will be recorded as authorised where it is not possible for a pupil to attend due to illness, both physical and mental.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending the Academy, such as worries about friendships, Academy work, exams, or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend the Academy regularly. Any associated anxieties about attending the Academy should be mitigated as much as possible by creating a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance. These adjustments should be agreed by and regularly reviewed with all parties, including parents/carers.

7 Missing Children

Pupils are not permitted to leave the Academy premises during the Academy day unless they have permission.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the Academy day:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Attendance Team immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- Available pastoral staff members and SLT will conduct a thorough search of the Academy premises.
- If the pupil has not been found after a thorough search, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any special educational needs and/or disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

The Principal will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Principal or designated member of staff will carry out an investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred

8. Appointments

As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of Academy hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the Academy office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the Academy Day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent with parental responsibility or a chosen approved adult whose details are shared with the academy. Pupils must attend the Academy before and after the appointment wherever possible.

9. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance	100% attendance – GOLD 97% attendance - SILVER 95% attendance -BRONZE	Messages home to parents via the MCAS App to praise parents and students
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100% Attendance draw entries every week and ½ term attendance draw for prizes.

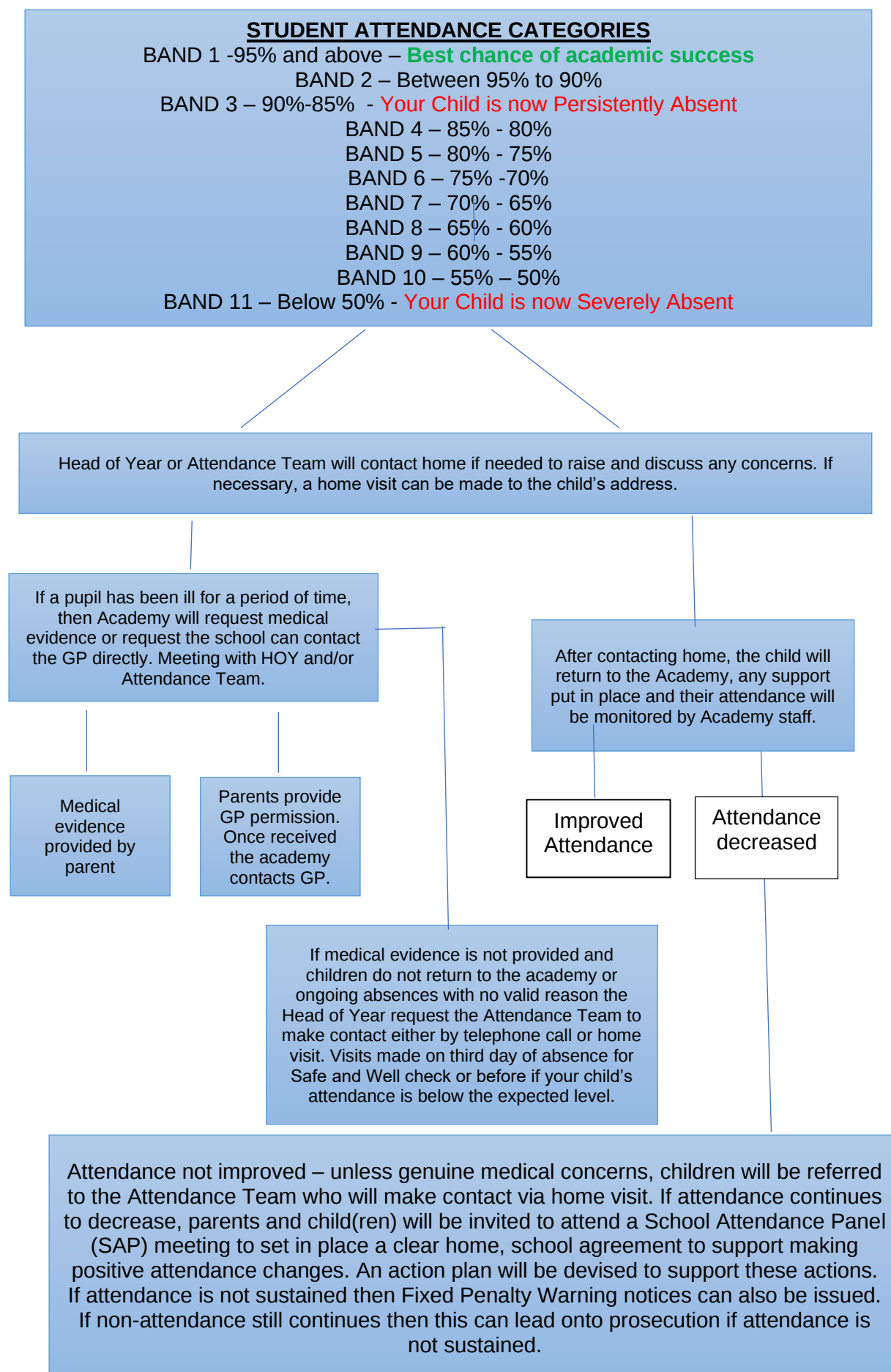
Attendance Year 11 Prom requirement, very good attendance throughout the year.

Rewards trips and events Year 7-10, require very good attendance.

Form group weekly prizes for best attendance

Rewards for improved attendance throughout the year

10. Attendance monitoring



Monitoring attendance

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the Academy and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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

10.2 Analysing attendance

The Academy will:

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

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Academy will:

- Use a banded approach to highlight and add student absences
- Identify for individual students how they can improve absence rates through banded approach
- Provide regular attendance reports to Head of Year and other Academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Inform all staff of whole school attendance rates daily

10.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

- Use a banded approach to highlight and add student absences
- Identify for individual students how they can improve absence rates through banded approach
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the Academy (and/or LA) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently/severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at Academy
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Send notifications to parents that their child has fallen into persistent absence at the end of each half term
- Add students to a daily 'watchlist' so that their attendance can be closely monitored
- A Home Visit will be made where children are absent for 3 days

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Board.

12. Links with other policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)