Attendance Policy

2026-2027

Introduction

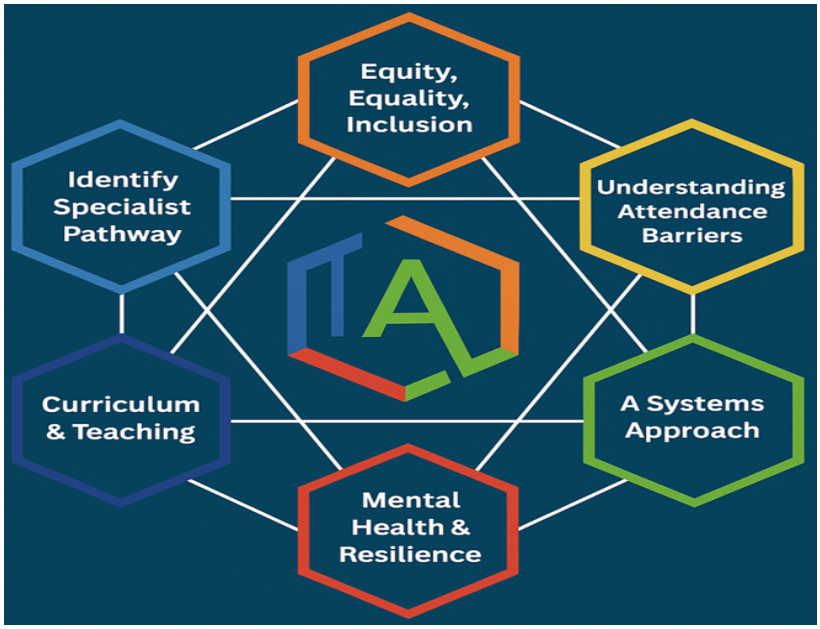
Lowerplace Primary is proudly recognised as an Inclusive Attendance school. Our unwavering commitment to attendance centres around child-centric actions, evidence-informed practices, and a shared understanding of everyone's roles and collective responsibilities to promote exceptional attendance.

- **Name of the Senior Attendance Champion: Asima Jabeen**
- **Name of Attendance Champion: Karen Martin**

At Lowerplace Primary, we are driven by an unwavering commitment to making school attendance a top priority, fully integrated with every aspect of school improvement. Using the Inclusive Attendance Model – the first and only accredited programme providing the pedagogy of practice – we support children and families to connect, belong, and thrive.

Inclusive Attendance Professional Development Model

The Inclusive Attendance professional development model fundamentally guides our attendance approach. Comprising six tailored Learning Modules, this model empowers us to deepen our understanding by facilitating continuous professional learning for all staff. Within this model, the four domains of practice ensure the provision of professional learning, professional development, evidence-based practices, and exemplary leadership and management seamlessly integrate theory into practice.



Inclusive Attendance Implementation Programme

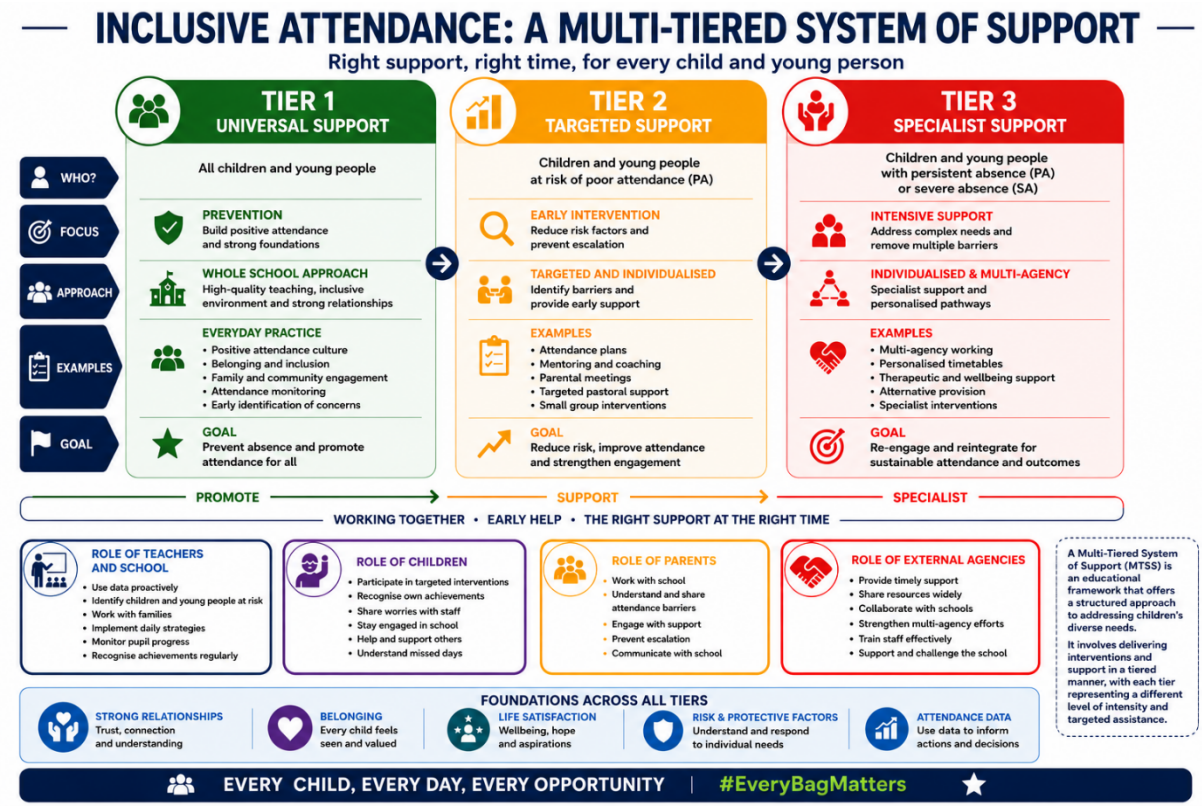
Each year, Lowerplace Primary reviews and further enhances attendance practices through dedicated participation in the Inclusive Attendance 7-month implementation programme. This investment allows us to remain at the forefront of educational change and extends unparalleled support to our children and their families, equipping them with access to the finest possible support.

Impact and Collaboration

Through our ongoing year-long implementation programme, and five-year long-term strategy, we deliver measurable impact by creating an inclusive attendance culture and improving outcomes for children and young people. We are outward-facing in our approach and value working regionally and nationally, through a systems-led model with other schools and external agencies. We continually strengthen and enhance our offer year on year. This work is underpinned by ongoing accredited CPD for staff, ensuring sustainable change, stronger outcomes for children and young people, and a deeply embedded culture of collective responsibility.

A Multi-Tiered System of Support

To guarantee a comprehensive approach to attendance, Lowerplace Primary implements a Multi-Tiered System of Support. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for school attendance involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority. Data-driven decision-making and training requirements are pivotal to the implementation of this system. The system aligns with the Department for Education's (DFE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" statutory paper 2024.



LOWERPLACE PRIMARY Recognition-Based Approach

Our attendance philosophy is rooted in a recognition-based approach that recognises both personal and collective achievements. This approach serves to thwart isolation, prevent victimisation, cultivate positive environments, nurture relationships, foster inclusivity, and ultimately cultivate intrinsic motivation among our children, families, and staff.

In addition to recognising pupils who achieve 100% attendance, the school also celebrates those who demonstrate significant improvements in attendance and those who consistently meet or exceed the school's attendance target. This ensures that all pupils have the opportunity

to be recognised for positive attendance habits and reinforces the message that every day in school matters.

- **Weekly Attendance Bear** awarded to the KS1 class and KS2 with the highest weekly attendance.
- **Attendance Ladder** displayed on classroom doors and shared with families via attendance newsletters.
- **Celebratory letter** is sent to families who are meeting or exceeding the school attendance target on a half termly basis
- **Celebratory** letter is sent to families of children who have 100% attendance on a termly basis
- **Headteacher Attendance Award** each half term for children showing significant improvement in attendance.
- **Attendance Postcards Home** recognising improved attendance, not just perfect attendance.
- **Celebration of resilience and commitment** rather than perfection alone.

The Importance of School Attendance at Lowerplace Primary

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system. Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on:

- ***Academic Achievement:*** Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- ***Knowledge Acquisition:*** School is where children acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Missing days means missing out on valuable learning opportunities.
- ***Social Development:*** School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- ***Building Routine:*** School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.
- ***Teacher Interaction:*** Regular attendance allows for meaningful teacher-child interactions. Teachers can provide personalised support, address questions, and assess individual progress more effectively when children attend regularly.
- ***Preventing Knowledge Gaps:*** Frequent absences can lead to significant knowledge gaps, making it challenging for children to catch up with missed lessons, potentially resulting in long-term academic struggles.
- ***School Engagement:*** Children who attend school regularly are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, sports, and other enriching experiences that contribute to their overall development.
- ***Legal and Parental Responsibility:*** Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. Failing to do so can lead to legal consequences.
- ***Community Well-being:*** High levels of school attendance contribute to the overall well-being of communities.

Factors Influencing Attendance

There are many factors which can impact on a child attending school, if you have any concerns you should contact the school as soon as possible:

- ***Health Issues:*** Children may experience physical or mental health issues that lead to absences. Chronic illnesses, infections, and mental health conditions can impact a pupil's ability to attend school regularly.
- ***Family Circumstances:*** Family-related factors such as bereavement, family illness, or caring responsibilities can result in absences from school. In some cases, pupils may need to take time off to support their families.
- ***Bullying and Safety Concerns:*** Experiences of bullying, harassment, or safety concerns at school can deter pupils from attending. They may fear for their safety or well-being, leading to increased absenteeism.
- ***Socioeconomic Factors:*** Families facing financial difficulties may struggle to provide necessary resources for their children to attend school regularly. Issues such as lack of appropriate clothing, food, or a stable home environment can contribute to absenteeism.
- ***Special Educational Needs (SEN):*** Pupils with special educational needs may require additional support and accommodations to attend school regularly.
- ***Engagement and Motivation:*** Lack of engagement with school activities and a perceived lack of relevance in the curriculum can lead to disinterest in attending. Children who are not motivated may avoid attending school.
- ***Academic Challenges:*** Pupils facing academic difficulties or feeling overwhelmed by class work may avoid school. They may fear falling behind or failing in their studies.
- ***Cultural and Language Barriers:*** Children from diverse backgrounds may face challenges related to language barriers or cultural differences. These challenges can affect their attendance and engagement with school.
- ***Parental Involvement:*** Parental support and involvement in a child's education can positively influence attendance. Lack of parental engagement may lead to increased absenteeism.

Supporting Attendance at Lowerplace Primary

To address any identified attendance issues effectively, Lowerplace Primary will implement a range of strategies such as early intervention, support for vulnerable families, intervention programmes, and creating a positive and inclusive school environment. Understanding the specific factors affecting attendance for individual children and families is crucial for developing any targeted interventions and support systems to improve attendance outcomes.

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations at Lowerplace Primary

Our school aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school. We achieve this by creating a happy, welcoming and secure environment where children feel valued. We believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils so that they can benefit from what our school has to offer. We aim to help the whole school community to appreciate the importance of good attendance.

Our expectation is that every child who is on roll should attend school every day, when the school is in session, if they are healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is developing positive attitudes towards school and learning.

It is expected that all children will have an attendance record of at least 96% (less than 7.5 days absent over the whole year)

Pupils must arrive in school on time each school day:

	Reception	Year 1, 2 & 3	Year 4, 5 & 6
Morning Session	8.40am	8.45am	8.40am

The register will be taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session and will remain open until 9am and 10 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.

- After 8.40/8.45am but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).
- The registers close 30 minutes after the start of the school day.

If a pupil is persistently late, we will meet with the parents/carers to discuss how we can support them.

Contact Details of School Staff at Lowerplace Primary

Name of Staff Member	Roles and Responsibilities	Contact Details
Asima Jabeen	Attendance Champion	ajabeen@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk
Andrea Parker	Attendance Admin Assistant	aparker@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk
Asima Jabeen Karen Martin Ellen Bullock	Safeguarding Leader (DSL)	safeguarding@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk
Karen Martin	Head Teacher – if different to the Attendance Champion	head@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk
Laura McBride	Governor for School Attendance.	governorlmcbride@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk
Ellen Bullock Pete Couldridge Danielle Lomax Paul Mason Corinne Hudson Katie Gorman	Deputy Headteacher Assistant Headteacher Assistant Headteacher SENCo Phase Leader Phase Leader	

The school will:

- Monitor attendance, absence and punctuality data on a weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis. Analysis is undertaken at whole-school, year group, class, group and individual pupil level.
- Use attendance data to identify trends, patterns and emerging concerns, enabling timely intervention and support.
- Analyse attendance data for key pupil groups, including:
    - Year groups
    - Gender
    - Demographic groups (e.g. ethnicity and socio-economic disadvantage)
    - Pupils with SEND
    - Pupils eligible for free school meals

    - Children in care
    - Pupils with a social worker
    - Pupils at risk of persistent absence (below 90%)
    - Pupils at risk of severe absence (below 50%)
- Identify any groups whose attendance is disproportionately low and implement targeted strategies to address barriers to attendance.
- Share individual pupil, cohort and class attendance information, including pupils at risk of persistent absence, with teachers and teaching assistants on a weekly basis to support early intervention.
- Hold fortnightly attendance team meetings to:
    - Analyse attendance and punctuality data
    - Identify pupils requiring additional support
    - Review the impact of interventions and strategies
    - Agree next steps and allocate responsibilities
- Produce regular reports for senior leaders, governors and trustees to enable robust monitoring, challenge and accountability.
- Benchmark attendance data against national, local authority and trust averages where available to evaluate the school's performance and inform improvement planning.
- Use attendance data alongside safeguarding, wellbeing and attainment information to ensure a holistic understanding of attendance barriers and pupil needs.

Attendance data is used proactively to identify emerging concerns, remove barriers to attendance and evaluate the impact of support strategies. Through regular analysis and review, the school ensures that resources and interventions are targeted effectively to secure the best possible attendance outcomes for all pupils.

Pupil-level absence data is collected daily and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

Strategy for Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence at Lowerplace Primary

- **Persistent absence** is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school sessions (equivalent to approximately 19 days across an academic year).
- **Severe absence** is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school sessions (equivalent to approximately 175 sessions across an academic year).

The school will:

- Use attendance data proactively to identify patterns, trends and emerging concerns relating to persistent and severe absence, enabling early intervention and support.
- Monitor pupils whose attendance is approaching the persistent absence threshold to ensure support is implemented before attendance becomes a significant concern.
- Share attendance information weekly with class teachers and teaching assistants, highlighting pupils who are persistently absent or at risk of becoming persistently absent, so that staff can support, monitor and encourage attendance on a daily basis.
- Hold regular attendance review meetings with parents/carers of pupils who are persistently absent, severely absent or at risk of becoming so, to identify barriers to attendance and agree appropriate support and actions.
- Work closely with the Local Authority, Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other relevant agencies to support vulnerable pupils and families where attendance concerns persist.

- Offer access to wider support services to help remove barriers to attendance, including the School Nursing Team, Family Worker, Early Help services and other external agencies where appropriate.
- Provide support through the school's Inclusion Team, which may include the Designated Safeguarding Leads, Family Worker, ELSA Teaching Assistant, external school counsellor and other pastoral staff, depending on the needs of the child and family.
- Maintain a personalised and supportive approach for pupils with medical, emotional wellbeing, SEND or safeguarding needs that may impact attendance.
- Issue personalised attendance letters to parents/carers at least termly where attendance falls below 90%. These letters will provide attendance information, outline concerns and explain the support available to improve attendance.
- Implement a graduated response where attendance concerns continue. This may include increased monitoring, attendance meetings, attendance contracts, referrals to the Education Welfare Officer and any statutory interventions available to the school and Local Authority.
- Hold termly attendance panel meetings involving the DSL for Attendance, Family Worker and EWO to review the attendance of identified pupils and families, evaluate the impact of support strategies and agree further actions where necessary.
- Regularly review the effectiveness of attendance interventions to ensure resources are targeted appropriately and that support leads to improved attendance outcomes.

The school recognises that persistent and severe absence can be a significant safeguarding and educational concern. Through robust monitoring, early identification, strong partnerships with families and targeted support, Lowerplace PrimarySchool seeks to remove barriers to attendance and ensure every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full-time education.

Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices at Lowerplace Primary

The Local Authority has a range of legal powers available to address unauthorised absence and irregular school attendance. These measures are used when support and intervention have not resulted in sufficient improvement.

- **Penalty Notice Fines**

A Penalty Notice may be issued for unauthorised term-time leave or where a pupil accrues **10 or more unauthorised sessions (equivalent to five school days) within a rolling 10-school-week period**.

Under the National Framework for Penalty Notices:

- **First Penalty Notice (within a three-year period)**
  - £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
  - Increasing to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.
- **Second Penalty Notice (within a three-year period)**
  - £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.
  - No reduced payment rate applies.
- **Third offence (within a three-year period)**
  - A further Penalty Notice cannot be issued.
  - The case may be referred directly to the Magistrates' Court where prosecution may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a Parenting Order, a Community Order or a custodial sentence in the most serious cases.

All Penalty Notice payments are made directly to the Local Authority. Schools do not receive any income from Penalty Notices.
Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority, a headteacher (or authorised representative) or the police.

When considering whether to issue a Penalty Notice, the Local Authority may take account of:

- The level and pattern of unauthorised absence within a rolling 12-month period.
- Unauthorised leave taken during term time.
- Repeated incidents of irregular attendance.
- Cases where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority may decide either to withdraw the notice or commence legal proceedings.

- **Parenting Orders**

A Parenting Order may be issued by the court as part of legal proceedings relating to attendance. Parents/carers are required to comply with specific conditions, which may include attendance at parenting programmes or engagement with support services aimed at improving school attendance.

- **Education Supervision Orders**

The Local Authority may apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) when a child is not attending school regularly and additional support is considered necessary. An Education Supervisor is appointed to work with the child, family and school to secure improved attendance and educational outcomes.

- **School Attendance Orders**

A School Attendance Order (SAO) may be issued where the Local Authority believes a child is not receiving a suitable education.

Parents/carers will be required to provide evidence within a specified timeframe that:

- Their child is registered at the school named in the order; or
- Their child is receiving a suitable education through other approved arrangements, such as elective home education.

Failure to comply with a School Attendance Order may result in prosecution and/or financial penalties.

Lowerplace Primary is committed to working in partnership with families to promote excellent attendance. We believe that support, early intervention and positive relationships are the most effective means of improving attendance. However, where attendance concerns persist and unauthorised absence continues, the school will work with the Local Authority and other agencies to implement the statutory attendance framework, including the use of legal interventions where appropriate.

- **Removal from roll**

This refers to the process of a child's name being officially taken off the school's register, typically due to extended non-attendance or other circumstances. Elective Home Education

(EHE) is an option that some parents choose after removal from roll, where they take responsibility for providing education to their child at home.

- **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Parents have a legal right to educate their child at home provided that a suitable full-time education is being delivered. The school recognises and respects this right and will work in partnership with parents and the Local Authority where Elective Home Education is being considered.

The school will:

- Encourage parents/carers considering Elective Home Education to discuss their decision with the Headteacher before making a final decision, so that the implications and available support can be fully explored.
- Signpost parents/carers to the Rochdale Elective Home Education (EHE) team
- Notify the Local Authority promptly when a parent/carer formally requests to electively home educate their child.
- Follow Local Authority guidance and statutory requirements regarding Elective Home Education and removal from roll.
- Offer an exit meeting where appropriate to discuss the reasons for Elective Home Education, consider whether any support could address the family's concerns and ensure parents/carers understand the process.

Removal from roll

This refers to the process of a child's name being officially taken off the school's register, typically due to extended non-attendance or other circumstances. Elective Home Education (EHE) is an option that some parents choose after removal from roll, where they take responsibility for providing education to their child at home.

Day-to-Day Processes for Managing Attendance at Lowerplace

- **Attendance register**

We keep an attendance register for all our pupils at the school.
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, 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 amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment
  - The date on which the amendment was made (if needed)
  - The initials 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.

- **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using an L code (up to 9.30am)
- After the register has closed will be marked as late, using a U code (from 9.31am onwards). This lateness is classed as 1 session of unauthorised absence.

If a pupil is persistently late, we will meet with parents to discuss how we can support them.

First Day Calling and Safeguarding at Lowerplace Primary

Where a pupil who is expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without explanation, Lowerplace Primary School will take prompt and proportionate action to ensure the child is safe and to identify the reason for the absence.

The school will:

- Send an Arbor message to the parent/carer on the first day of an unexplained absence to establish the reason for non-attendance. A telephone call may also be made where appropriate.
- Where the school is unable to establish contact with a parent/carer or any emergency contact, additional safeguarding measures may be taken. These may include a home visit, contact with extended family members or neighbours (where appropriate), consultation with the police and/or Children's Social Care.
- Ensure that all parents/carers provide a minimum of two up-to-date emergency contact numbers. This is an important safeguarding requirement that enables the school to contact someone quickly if a child does not attend as expected.
- Establish whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Record the correct attendance code as soon as the reason for the absence is established and no later than five school days after the relevant session.
- Continue to contact parents/carers on each subsequent day of an unexplained absence to establish the child's whereabouts and ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken.
- Conduct a home visit where concerns remain regarding a child's welfare, whereabouts or attendance. The timing of a home visit will be determined based on the circumstances of the case and any known vulnerabilities.
- Review all unexplained absences on the third day and make a decision regarding further action, including a home visit, attendance meeting, referral to the Education Welfare Officer or other agencies, where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies where attendance concerns indicate a potential safeguarding risk or where additional support is required to secure regular attendance.

Lowerplace PrimarySchool recognises that every unexplained absence is a safeguarding matter. The school will act promptly to establish the reason for a child's absence, ensure the child is safe and provide appropriate support to families where barriers to attendance are identified. Early intervention and effective communication with parents/carers are central to our approach.

School Times of the Day at Lowerplace Primary:

The school day begins at

	Reception	Year 1, 2 & 3	Year 4, 5 & 6
Morning Session	8.40am	8.45am	8.40am
School Closes	3.10pm	3.15pm	3.15pm

Children are expected to arrive on time and attend all scheduled lessons and activities.

Coding of Attendance

Attendance will be recorded using the DFE's statutory attendance codes, please refer to the appendix for coding.

Requesting Absence Leave

Parents or carers must request leave of absence for their child in writing at least **10 school days in advance.**

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Reporting a Child's Absence

- **Unplanned absence**

Parents or carers must contact the school on the first day of their child's absence to provide the reason for the absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible,

Absence can be reported by calling school office staff, who can be contacted via 01706 648174 or emailing the school office at office@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk.

There is no expectation to speak to your child's teacher, a message can be left with the office staff. However, messages regarding absence should not be passed on by other pupils, for example – siblings, who are attending.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will 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.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

If a child's attendance is below 90%, any reported illness will require medical evidence.

- **Planned absence**

Attending **a medical or dental appointment** will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and shows proof of the

appointment. This can be done by visiting the school office, emailing on office@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk, or telephoning on 01706 648174.

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

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

- **Holiday Request**

It is the school's policy, in line with local authority and government guidance, that leave in term time will not be authorised. A request for a term-time holiday is not a parental right. Arrangements should not be made without informing the school in advance.

Taking unauthorised leave for 10 sessions (5 school days- or more) will qualify for a Penalty Notice fine. No warning will be issued from the Local Authority. School holiday dates are available on the school website, with a reminder that holidays should be planned for school holiday times.

Extended visits, of 20 days or more, may result in the child being removed from the school's roll and being reported as a child who is missing in education. We will work with the local authority and education welfare officer if we are concerned about where the child is or when they will return to the country/school.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory age.

Definitions

In the context of school attendance and education in the UK, the terms "Persistent Absence," "Risk of Persistent Absence," and "Severe Absence" are used to describe different levels of irregular attendance by pupils. These terms are important for tracking and addressing attendance issues.

- **Persistent Absence (PA):**

Definition: Persistent Absence is a term used to describe a level of pupil absence from school that is considered to be a significant cause for concern.

Threshold: In England, a pupil is considered to be persistently absent when they have an attendance rate of 90% or below. This means they have missed 10% or more of their school sessions.

- **Risk of Persistent Absence:**

Definition: The term "Risk of Persistent Absence" refers to a situation in which a pupil's attendance is at a level that suggests they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

Threshold: While there is no specific threshold for "Risk of Persistent Absence," it is typically used to describe pupils whose attendance is consistently low and becoming a concern, as the school communicates to parents in days, we identify 10 days or more as Risk of PA and we will follow internal school procedures.

- **Severe Absence (or Severe Persistent Absence):**

Definition: The term "Severe Absence" or "Severe Persistent Absence" is used to describe the most serious cases of non-attendance.

Threshold: Particular focus and support will be provided to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of external agency partners.

- **Absence Definitions**

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

- **Authorised Absence**

The headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation arising from these circumstances. This is in line with the dictionary definition of 'exceptional circumstances'.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's 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 school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- **Unauthorised Absence**

Under no circumstances will term-time holiday be granted as authorised absence. We understand that many of our school community will have family members abroad, however, whatever the situation no term-time holidays will be sanctioned by the school.

Below are further examples of reasons for absences that will **not** be authorised:

• Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
• Truancy before or during the school day.
• Absences which have never been properly explained..
• Arrival at school after the register has closed.
• Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
• Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
• Leaving school for no reason during the day.

Policies and Practice

This attendance policy operates within the framework of statutory attendance regulations outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments. Lowerplace Primary adheres to the following key attendance acts in the UK:

- ***Education Act 1996*:** The Education Act 1996 is the primary piece of legislation that sets out the legal framework for school attendance in England and Wales. It outlines the responsibilities of parents, carers, and schools in ensuring regular school attendance. Sections 444-447 of the Act deal with offenses related to non-attendance and penalties for parents and carers.
- ***Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006*:** These regulations specify the procedures for registering pupils and maintaining attendance records in schools in England. They also define the circumstances in which a pupil can be marked as absent or present.
- ***Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013:*** These regulations amended the 2006 regulations and introduced stricter rules on authorizing term-time holidays. Under these regulations, headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- ***School Attendance Code of Practice:*** The School Attendance Code of Practice provides guidance to schools, local authorities, and parents on the law and procedures relating to school attendance and absence. It sets out the principles for promoting good attendance and dealing with poor attendance.
- ***Local Authority School Attendance Guidance:*** Each local authority in the UK may provide its own guidance and policies on school attendance. Schools should be aware of and follow the specific guidance issued by their local authority.
- ***Department for Education (DFE) Guidance:*** The DFE periodically issues guidance documents and updates related to school attendance. Schools should stay informed about the latest DFE guidance 2024 and follow any recommendations or requirements outlined in these documents.
- ***Child Employment Legislation:*** Legislation such as the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and the Children (Performances) Regulations 1968 govern the employment and attendance of children involved in performances, modelling, and other activities outside of regular school hours.
- ***Children Missing Education (CME) Statutory Guidance:*** This guidance outlines the responsibilities of local authorities in identifying and tracking children who may be missing education, including those who are not on a school roll or are not receiving suitable education.
- ***Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (England and Wales)*** outlines the duty of local authorities in ensuring that suitable education is provided for children of compulsory school age.

Additional Policies aligned to the Attendance Policy at Lowerplace Primary

- Behaviour Policy
- Teaching and Learning Handbook
- Safeguarding Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers

Teachers play a key role in promoting good attendance and identifying concerns early. They will:

- Maintain accurate attendance records and complete registers promptly.
- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Create a welcoming, engaging classroom environment that encourages attendance.
- Monitor attendance and identify pupils showing patterns of absence or lateness.
- Alert the Attendance Team immediately if a vulnerable child is absent without explanation by emailing **attendance@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk**.
- Maintain communication with parents/carers regarding attendance concerns.
- Support children experiencing barriers to attendance and refer concerns as appropriate.
- Implement attendance procedures consistently and in line with school policy.
- Recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Report any safeguarding concerns related to attendance in line with school procedures.
- Work collaboratively with the Attendance Champion, Attendance Team and Inclusion Team to improve attendance outcomes.

Teaching Assistants and Support Staff

Teaching Assistants and Support Staff play an important role in supporting regular attendance and pupil engagement. They will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality through positive relationships with pupils.
- Encourage and support pupils who may be experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Identify and report emerging attendance concerns to the class teacher or Attendance Team.
- Support attendance interventions and agreed action plans.
- Reinforce the school's attendance expectations and messages.
- Help remove barriers to attendance where appropriate.
- Recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Report safeguarding concerns in line with school procedures.
- Work collaboratively with teachers and the Attendance Team to support pupils and families.

Attendance Champion (Asima Jabeen)

The Attendance Champion provides strategic leadership for attendance and oversees the school's attendance systems and procedures. They will:

- Lead the school's attendance strategy and promote a strong culture of attendance.
- Monitor attendance, persistent absence and severe absence across the school.
- Analyse attendance data to identify trends, vulnerable groups and pupils requiring support.
- Lead the Attendance Team and coordinate attendance interventions.
- Work closely with families to address barriers to attendance.
- Liaise with the Local Authority, Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and external agencies.
- Ensure attendance processes comply with statutory guidance.
- Oversee attendance rewards, recognition and improvement initiatives.
- Report attendance information regularly to senior leaders and governors.
- Evaluate the impact of attendance strategies and adapt approaches where necessary.

Attendance Team

The Attendance Team meets fortnightly to review attendance across the school and coordinate support. The team will:

- Analyse attendance and punctuality data.
- Identify pupils who are persistently absent, severely absent or at risk of becoming so.
- Review attendance trends and emerging concerns.
- Agree targeted strategies and interventions for individual pupils and groups.
- Monitor the impact of support and interventions.
- Coordinate referrals and engagement with external agencies where required.
- Share key attendance information with teaching and support staff.
- Ensure attendance remains a safeguarding priority across the school.

The Attendance Champion and Attendance Team work together to ensure attendance is monitored effectively, barriers are addressed promptly and every pupil receives the support needed to attend school regularly and achieve their full potential.

Governors/Trustees

Governors and Trustees provide strategic oversight and challenge to ensure attendance remains a school priority. They will:

- Ensure the school meets its statutory duties relating to attendance.
- Approve and review the school's Attendance Policy.
- Monitor attendance data, including persistent and severe absence.
- Hold school leaders to account for attendance outcomes and improvement strategies.
- Monitor the effectiveness of attendance interventions and support provided.
- Ensure attendance remains a key safeguarding consideration.
- Support a culture of high expectations for attendance across the school.

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders are responsible for promoting attendance and ensuring effective systems are in place. They will:

- Lead and promote a whole-school culture of good attendance.
- Ensure attendance policies and procedures are implemented consistently.
- Monitor attendance data and identify emerging concerns and trends.
- Support early intervention and targeted attendance strategies.
- Ensure vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support to attend regularly.
- Work with parents, staff and external agencies to remove barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the impact of attendance interventions and drive continuous improvement.
- Promote recognition and celebration of good and improved attendance.
- Ensure attendance concerns are considered as part of safeguarding practice.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. They will:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Notify the school promptly if their child is absent and provide the reason for absence.
- Keep the school informed of any issues that may affect attendance.
- Work in partnership with the school to address attendance concerns.

- Attend meetings and engage with support offered by the school.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- Ensure the school has up-to-date contact and emergency contact details.
- Promote positive attitudes towards attendance and education at home.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to take an active role in their attendance and learning. They will:

- Attend school every day unless they are genuinely unable to do so.
- Arrive on time and be ready to learn.
- Engage positively in lessons and school life.
- Demonstrate the school's values and expectations.
- Speak to a trusted adult if they are worried about attending school.
- Take pride in their attendance and punctuality.
- Work with staff and families to overcome any barriers to attendance.

At Lowerplace Primary, attendance is everyone's responsibility. By working together, we aim to ensure every child attends regularly, feels included and is able to achieve their full potential.

Safeguarding Children and Attendance at Lowerplace Primary

The school has a duty to safeguard the welfare of all pupils. Any concerns about a child's attendance will be investigated promptly to ensure their well-being.

Unexplained or extended absences will trigger safeguarding procedures, including home visits and communication with relevant agencies.

We follow ***Keeping Children Safe In Education 2026*** guidance to ensure safe practices.

Review

This Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually by the school's governing body to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with statutory requirements. Any amendments will be communicated to staff, parents, and carers as necessary.

Appendix 1: Coding Attendance in line with DFE guidance 2024:

Code /\ (Present at the school):

- Pupils must be present during registration to be counted.
- If a pupil leaves after registration, they are still counted as attending for statistical purposes.

Code L (Late arrival before the register is closed):

- The pupil arrives after the register starts but before it closes.
- Schools should discourage late arrival and set a consistent time limit for open registration, not exceeding 30 minutes.
- If a pupil arrives late after the register closes, mark them as absent using code U or another appropriate absence code.

Code K (Attending education provision arranged by the local authority):

- Pupil attends educational provision arranged by the local authority, not by the school.
- Examples include attending courses at college or receiving home tutoring.
- Schools must record the nature of the provision and ensure notification of absences.

Code V (Attending an educational visit or trip):

- Pupil attends a school-arranged educational visit or trip supervised by school staff.
- Must take place during the recorded session.
- If pupil doesn't attend, record absence using relevant absence code.

Code P (Participating in a sporting activity):

- Pupil attends an approved educational sporting activity.
- Criteria for recording attendance include approval by the school, educational nature of the activity, and appropriate supervision.
- Schools must ensure safeguarding measures and record absences with relevant codes.

Code W (Attending work experience):

- Pupil attends work experience as part of their education arranged by the local authority or school.
- Criteria for recording attendance are similar to other approved educational activities.
- Schools must ensure safeguarding measures and record absences with relevant codes.

Code B (Attending any other approved educational activity):

- Pupil attends an approved educational activity other than sports or work experience.
- Criteria for recording attendance are similar to other approved educational activities.
- Schools must record the nature of the activity and ensure safeguarding measures.

Code D (Dual registered at another school):

- Used when a pupil is registered at more than one school, indicating absence with leave to attend the other school.
- Main examples include attendance at a pupil referral unit, hospital school, or special school temporarily.
- Schools must promptly follow up on unexpected or unexplained absences to avoid double counting.

Code C1 (Leave of absence for regulated performance or employment abroad):

- Schools grant leave for pupils to participate in regulated performances or employment abroad under specific circumstances.
- Criteria for granting leave include licenses issued by local authorities or exemptions.

- Schools must record the absence using this code and consider its impact on the pupil's education.

Code M (Leave of absence for medical or dental appointment):

- Schools encourage appointments outside of school hours; otherwise, prior agreement is necessary.
- Leave of absence is granted under specific conditions, including exceptional circumstances.
- Absences for medical or dental appointments are recorded using this code.

Code J (Leave of absence for interview for employment or admission):

- Schools can grant leave for pupils to attend interviews for employment or admission to another educational institution.
- Applications for leave must be made in advance, and leave is granted based on specific criteria.
- The interview must occur during the recorded session, and the absence is classified as authorized.

Code S (Leave of absence for studying for a public examination):

- Schools can grant leave for pupils to study for public examinations under specific conditions, agreed in advance with parents.
- Study leave should be granted sparingly, and provisions must be made for pupils who choose to continue attending school for revision.
- Absences for studying for public examinations are recorded using this code.

Code X (Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school):

- Schools can grant leave for non-compulsory school-age pupils to attend school part-time under certain circumstances.
- Absences for non-compulsory school-age pupils are recorded using this code, with exceptions noted.
- For pupils subject to a part-time timetable, this code should not be used, and appropriate absence codes should be applied.

Code C2 (Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable):

- Schools can grant leave for compulsory school-age pupils to temporarily reduce their timetable to part-time in exceptional circumstances, agreed upon with parents.
- Absences for pupils with part-time timetables are recorded using this code, ensuring agreement between the school and parents.

Code C (Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances):

- Schools may grant leave of absence at their discretion, but only for exceptional circumstances.
- Each application is assessed individually, considering specific facts and circumstances.
- Absences for exceptional circumstances are recorded using this code, ensuring compliance with regulations and discretion exercised by the school.

Pregnant pupils:

- Maternity leave for pregnant pupils is treated similarly to other leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.
- Schools should act reasonably and grant an appropriate period of leave considering individual circumstances, at their discretion.

Code T (Parent traveling for occupational purposes):

- Used when a pupil's parent(s) is traveling for trade or business, and the pupil is traveling with them.
- Schools should only request proof of occupational travel when genuine doubt exists about the reason for absence.
- Pupils should ideally attend schools where their parents are traveling, being dual registered at both their main school and the one they're temporarily attending.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code R (Religious observance):

- Used when a pupil is absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by their religious body.
- Schools may seek guidance from the parent's religious body to ascertain such days.
- Strategies such as setting term dates around religious observance days are encouraged.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code I (Illness - not medical or dental appointment):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to illness, both physical and mental health related.
- Schools should not routinely request medical evidence but may do so when necessary.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code E (Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made):

- Used when a pupil is suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision has been arranged.
- Alternative provision should be arranged within six consecutive school days of suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code Q (Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to a failure by the local authority to provide access arrangements.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y1 (Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available):

- Used when a pupil can't attend because the school is beyond walking distance and the usual transport provided by the school or local authority is unavailable.
- Walking distances for different age groups are specified.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y2 (Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to widespread travel disruptions caused by emergencies at the local, national, or international level.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y3 (Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed):

- Used when part of the school premises is unusable, and the pupil cannot practically be accommodated in the remaining usable parts.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y4 (Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed):

- Applied when the entire school site is unexpectedly closed, such as due to adverse weather.
- Attendance registers are not taken, and pupils are marked with this code to signify the closure.
- Not applicable for planned closures like weekends or holidays.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y5 (Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention):

- Used when a pupil is unable to attend due to being in police detention, remanded, or serving a sentence of detention.
- Communication with the Youth Offending Team is encouraged to support educational needs during detention.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y6 (Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law):

- Applied when a pupil's travel or attendance at school would violate public health guidance or legislation related to disease transmission.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause):

- Used for an unavoidable cause preventing a pupil from attending school, not covered by other specific codes.
- The nature of the unavoidable cause must be recorded.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code G (Holiday not granted by the school):

- Used when a pupil is absent for a holiday that the school did not approve in advance.
- Schools cannot retrospectively grant leave of absence, and absence for holidays without prior approval is considered unauthorized.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code N (Reason for absence not yet established):

- Employed when the reason for a pupil's absence has not been determined before the register closes.
- Schools must make efforts to ascertain the reason for absence promptly.
- If the reason cannot be established within five school days, the absence must be amended to Code O.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code O (Absent in other or unknown circumstances):

- Used when no reason for absence is established, or the school is not satisfied with the reason given, which doesn't align with authorized codes.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code U (Arrived in school after registration closed):

- Applied when a pupil arrives late after the register has closed but before the end of the session.
- Schools should discourage late arrival and set a specific time limit for registering attendance.
- Late arrival beyond the specified time results in the pupil being marked as absent.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Administrative Code Z (Prospective pupil not on admission register):

- Utilized to set up registers in advance for prospective pupils who have not yet officially joined the school.
- Aims to streamline administrative processes.

Appendix 2: Actions for Pupils Absent from school

Children who are in school are visible and safeguarded. Any unexplained absence may indicate a safeguarding concern.

The school has a duty of care to know why a pupil is absent and where they are. Parents/carers must inform the school of the reason for absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the period of absence.

- **Unexplained Absence Procedure**

Stage	Contact Attempts	Home Visit	Safeguarding Escalation
Day 1	• Arbor message sent by 10:00am to all pupils absent without explanation. • Phone calls made from 9:00am in priority order where concerns exist: - Child Protection Plan - Child in Need - Children Looked After - Persistent Absentees - Vulnerable Pupils • If no response, alternative contacts listed on Arbor are contacted.	• Priority home visits identified by the Attendance Team and completed as soon as possible. • Calling card left if no response.	• Children's Social Care contacted where safeguarding concerns exist. • Police welfare check requested where appropriate.
Day 2	• Telephone call made by 10:00am if no explanation has been received. • All available Arbor contacts contacted if no response from parent/carer.	• Home visit completed as soon as possible. • Calling card left if no response.	• Further consultation/referral to Children's Social Care where concerns remain. • Police welfare check requested where appropriate.
Day 3	• Telephone call made to parent/carer and all available Arbor contacts if no explanation has been received.	• Home visit completed as soon as possible. • Calling card left if no response.	• Further consultation/referral to Children's Social Care where concerns remain. • Police welfare check requested where appropriate.

Register Coding

Throughout this process:

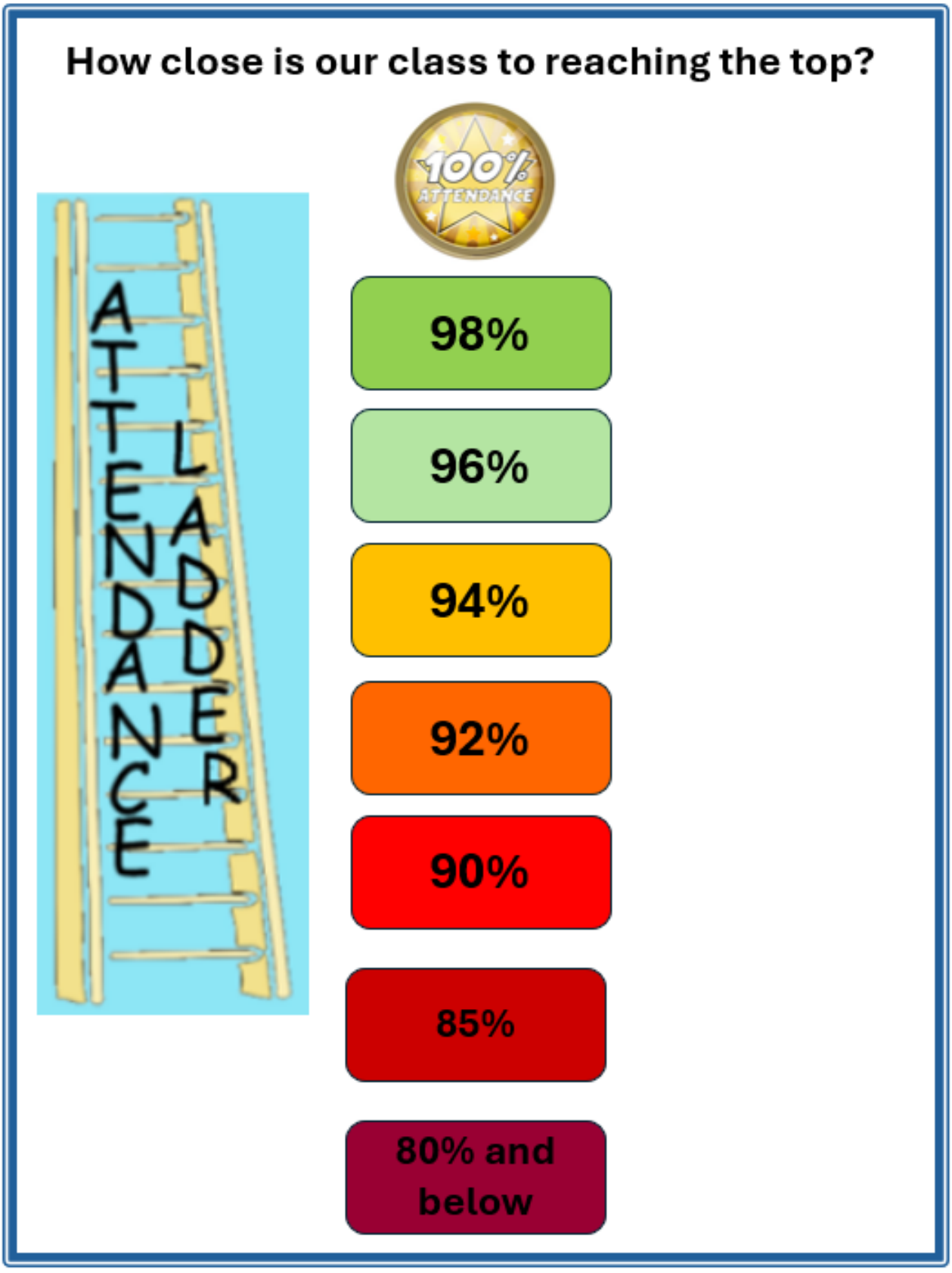
- Where a valid reason for absence is provided, the appropriate attendance code will be entered on Arbor.
- Where no reason has been established, the absence will remain coded as **'O' (Unauthorised Absence)** until sufficient information is received.

Recording and Monitoring

- All telephone calls, correspondence, welfare checks and home visits must be recorded on **CPOMS**.
- Where a parent/carer provides a reason for absence that the school does not believe to be genuine, or a pattern of unauthorised absence emerges, the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** will contact the parent/carer.
- The school may require medical evidence for future absences. Where medical evidence is not provided when requested, subsequent absences may be recorded as unauthorised.

Appendix 3: Ladder Chart used for classroom doors

- At the end of each week, the attendance for each class is recorded on each classroom door.
- Classes with 100% attendance earn an extra playtime.



Appendix 4: Learning Hours Lost

What we are aiming for Average attendance would be around 96% for the year, with outstanding attendance being above 96%.

The percentage attendance of 90% may seem high (we would celebrate this in an exam) but this is 19 days off school, nearly 4 weeks across a full year, even more scary 95 hours of lost learning. This is why attendance impacts on pupil progress.

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days absent	Learning hours lost
Outstanding	100% 99%	190 days 188 days	0 2	0 10
Good	98% 97% 96% 95%	186 days 184 days 182.5 days 180.5 days	4 6 7.5 9.5	20 30 37.5 47.5
Cause for concern	94% 93% 92% 91%	179 days 77 days 175 days 173 days	11 13 15 17	55 65 75 85
Unsatisfactory – classed as persistently absent	90% 89% 88% 87%	171 days 169 days 167 days 165 days	19 21 23 25	95 105 115 125
Serious concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85% 84% 83% 82% 81% 80%	161.5 days 159.5 days 158 days 156 days 154 days 152 days	28.5 30.5 32 34 36 38	142.5 152.5 160 170 180 190
Severely absent	50% and below	95 days +	95+	475

What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE.

In this school, we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96%