



NORTHBROOK PRIMARY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Endeavour Learning Trust

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all Lancashire primary schools within the Endeavour Learning Trust (ELT) family of schools.

Throughout this document, the term Headteacher is used, but may be replaced with the term Executive Headteacher or their designated representative (usually a Head of School), for some schools.

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> from the Department for Education (DfE), This document is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- 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 2013
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour & Policy
- SEND Policy
- Whole School Policy for Safeguarding & Child Protection

2. IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE

For a child to reach their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our Trust successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled.

Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. Our school attendance target is set at 98%, although, we consistently strive to promote an attendance target of 100% for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital all children attend school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are fundamental to their future development. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

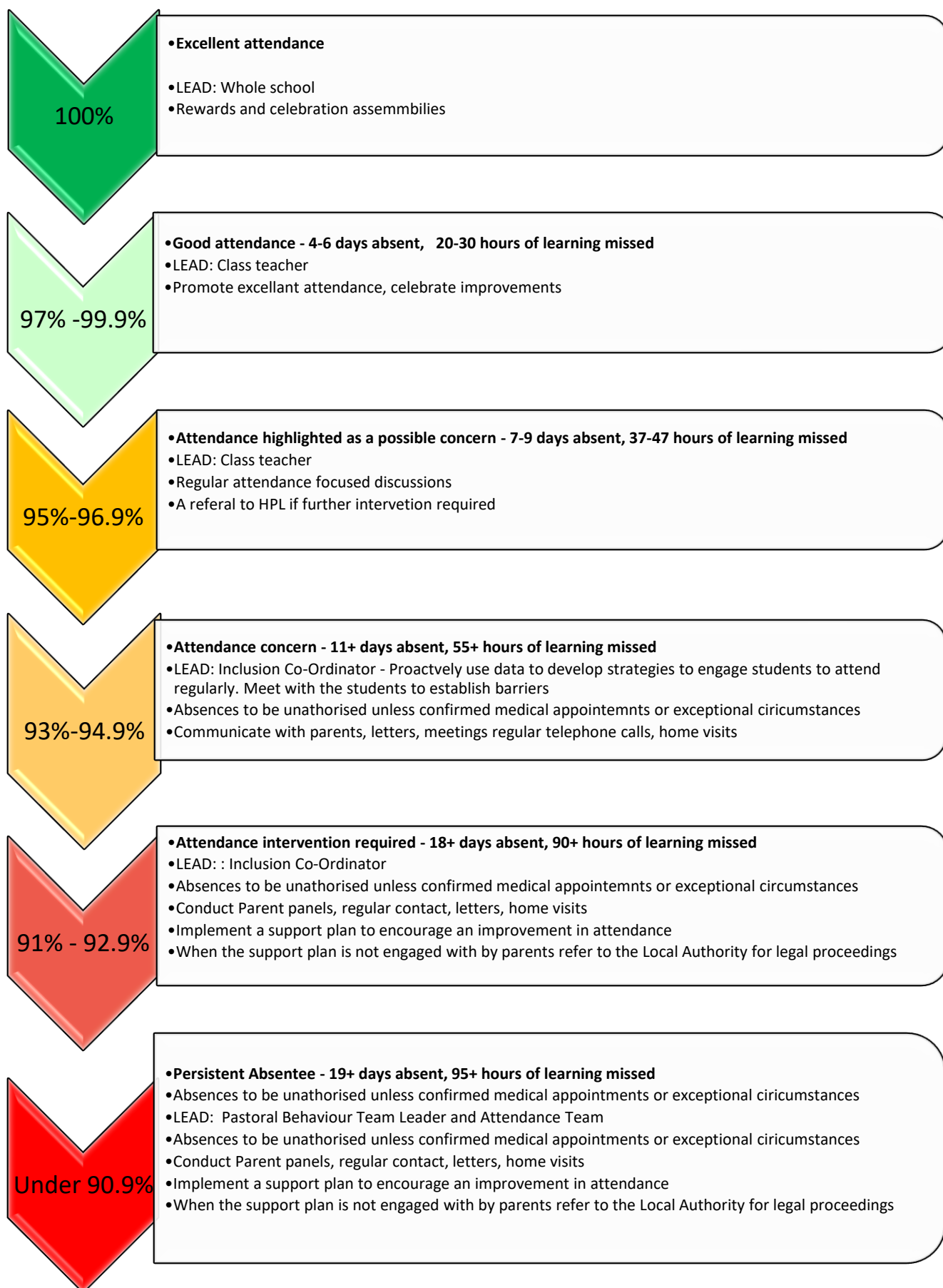
All research shows that pupils who achieve a higher level of attendance, are more likely to achieve. There is a direct link between under-achievement and absences below 95%. Each hour in school is a valuable learning experience that cannot be recovered.

We are committed to building a healthy learning community in which pupils can develop potential. This policy sets out how we can support and encourage high levels of attendance in our school community.

School Start and Finish Times

School	Start	Finish
Northbrook Primary Academy	8.55am – School doors open at 8:45am Breakfast club opens at 8.30am	EYFS/KS1 15:10 KS2 15:15

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3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ALL OUR COMMUNITIES

Parents

Ensuring your child has regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility (**Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act**) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Only a school can determine if an absence is authorised. A child not attending school may be considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

- You are responsible for ensuring that your child has a healthy routine that allows them to have sufficient rest to attend school on time, be dressed in full uniform, be ready to engage in maximum learning and with required equipment i.e. stationery and PE kit
- You are required to make contact with the school by telephoning the main office or parent app before 9:00 am to report your child's absence from school, provide a reason, and maintain regular contact for continuous absences
- You should support regular attendance by requesting medical appointments are made outside of school hours. If this is not possible an appointment card should be presented to the school
- You are required to contact the school Inclusion Co-ordinator and work closely with the Attendance Team to deal with any issues or concerns that may affect attendance at school
- When required you may be requested to attend meetings with the school to discuss attendance concerns
- You should be aware that for unauthorized absences, the school reserves the right to apply to the local authority to issue a penalty notice (fine)
- Support your child's attendance by not taking holidays during term time. If a leave of absence is taken during term time, it will **NOT** be authorised, such absences will be referred to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued. This could result in both parents being issued a fine
- If leave from school during term time is unavoidable, a 'Leave of Absent Request' form must be completed before the leave is taken and submitted with supporting evidence to the Headteacher with 4 weeks' notice. These are available and can be downloaded from the school website
- If required, parents are requested to engage and participate in Parenting Contracts, Early Help Assessments and accept early intervention strategies offered and co-operate with support and interventions offered by the school or other agencies

Pupils

- Aim to attend school every day on time to achieve 100% attendance
- Pupils are better prepared for learning when regular routines are in place, i.e. bedtimes and limited use of game consoles and mobile phones
- Arrive before the school day starts, ready to be engaged at the start of the school day
- Be aware that full attendance at school provides the academic foundations to succeed in school life
- Speak to parents/school for support if they have any worries or concerns that may prevent them from attending regularly and on time
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by the school or other agencies

Headteacher

- Ensure the school ethos promotes and celebrates good attendance and punctuality
- Lead in supporting staff, by ensuring relevant training is provided for all staff to raise the whole school profile of attendance
- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures
- Ensure the Policy is implemented by the whole school community
- Respond within 2 weeks of receiving the Leave of Absence request. After considering each request for exceptional circumstances against the school's criteria

Trustees/Local Academy Council/Governing Body

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Trust Lead for Attendance

- Support schools to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance
- Provide strategic quality assurance of school attendance
- Formulate and promote the Attendance Policy throughout the Trust Schools
- Quality assure attendance has a high profile within the school
- Provide advice and support to individual schools, to ensure they conform to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance
- Working in conjunction with the DfE and Local Authority, to implement any updated guidance to the schools when required
- Ensure quality assure tracking systems are being monitored and provide advice on appropriate levels of support
- Advise and be a point of contact on Government legislation for leave of absence requests during term time
- Implement and support with appropriate and regular training for the school Attendance Officers on all aspects of school attendance

Teaching staff

- Ensure that the statutory attendance registers are accurately marked using SIMS during the first 10 minutes of the first session and once during the second session. Return all paper registers to the Inclusion Co-ordinator
- Amend the register or inform the Inclusion Co-ordinator if a pupil arrives late
- Promote and discuss the importance of maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality with all pupils
- Track attendance and punctuality of pupils within their own group. Record achievement points for pupils with 100% termly attendance and punctuality
- Inform the Inclusion Co-ordinator or the main office staff of absence notifications received
- Report suspected truancy to the attendance officer or main office
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe learning environment
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To regard pupil attendance as the responsibility of all school staff and include it when issuing subject rewards and prizes
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures when required

Inclusion Co-Ordinator

- Work under the leadership of the Headteacher
- Ensure that all registers are recorded in line with legal requirements and the school's Safeguarding policy
- Implement school Attendance Policy in conjunction with the Trust Lead for Attendance
- Monitor the administration of SIMS registrations, and input registers provided by teaching staff. Report anomalies to the Headteacher
- Follow the absence procedure by:
 - Generating an absent pupil list from SIMS
 - Contact the parent to establish the reason for the pupil's absence
 - Liaising with the Headteacher to discuss home visit requirements
 - Follow up where no contact has been made by posting a letter to parents requesting that they provide a reason for unexplained absence
- Ensure all unexplained absence codes are followed up and amended to authorised or unauthorised within 5 days of the absence
- Promote attendance throughout the school by offering support to the teachers
- Monitor and analyse attendance on a daily, weekly, half-termly, and annual basis to generate reports to allow rigorous monitoring and would allow for pupils to be tracked and monitored
- Provide weekly reports to Headteacher to support pupil intervention and the whole school reward system
- Analyse attendance data, and break down priority cohorts for additional intervention
- Liaise with parents to provide support to encourage excellent attendance for pupils with attendance below the school target of 98%, via telephone communication, letters, home visits, and in-school meetings
- Further support can be offered to parents by implementing a referral to the Family Support Worker and external agencies i.e. LCC PAST team, and school nurse as and when required
- Support pupils returning to school following extended absences, provide a re-integration plan

- Collate and return Persistent Absence data to Lancashire County Council
- Submit relevant documentation to Lancashire County Council to advise on the pupil movement and changes to registration for Children Missing Education and those who opted for Elective Home Education
- Refer to the Trust Lead for Attendance to request further support and guidance on the cases that are to be considered for legal intervention

4. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

The High Court has confirmed that **schools, not parents, authorise absence**. Schools must use the National Attendance Codes to ensure consistency in the treatment and recording of attendance and absence. Hence if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, the school may request further evidence from parents before an absence is authorised.

Every half-day is equal to 1 session of absence from school and has to be classified by the school either as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason, where the school has either given approval in advance for the pupil to be absent or when the explanation has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence, such as:

- **Medical / dental appointments** which unavoidably fall in school time - parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should present the appointment card/confirmation to the school
- **Illness** In the case of a 'one-off' absence, parents should make contact with the school to report the nature of the illness. This will usually be acceptable. However, the school reserves the right to question the validity of this if they have a good reason to do so. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness, the school may require further documentation to support the absence. If this is not provided, this could result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised
- **Exceptional circumstances** reasons given by parents will be considered carefully. However, a pupil's absence may or may not be authorised depending on the information provided

Unauthorised

Unauthorised absence is where no expiation has been provided or that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

The type of absence which may not be authorised can include:

- Parents supporting or condoning their child being absent from school unnecessarily e.g. minor illness, or tiredness
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Unexplained absences – no reason provided
- Shopping, looking after other siblings or birthdays

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- Leave of absence during term time for day trips or holidays
- Pupils who are not punctual, arrive at school after the register has closed
- Absence that coincides with important curriculum events (e.g. PSHCE days) for which a satisfactory explanation has not been provided
- Days that exceed leave of absence that exceed the amount of time agreed by the headteacher

Outstanding or unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the school has not received an acceptable explanation within 5 days of the absence.

The following codes will be used for unauthorised absence:

- G** Unauthorised leave of absence
- N** No reason yet provided for absence. This will become unauthorised if a reason is not provided (this code must be altered within 5 days to authorised or unauthorised)
- O** Unauthorised absence
- U** Late (**after** the register closes 9:15am)

Parents should be aware that the decision on whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, the school may request further evidence from parents before a decision is made to authorise the absence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school, causing a pattern of non-attendance. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents, and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend school the parent should contact the school to enable both to work together to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

- If a pupil misses 10% for any reason or more schooling at any time of the school year, whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised, they are deemed to be a persistent absentee. At this point their attendance will be monitored. Absences for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Absences at this level are doing considerable damage to any pupil's educational prospects and we need parents full support and cooperation to tackle this and support an improvement. We monitor absences thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education (DfE).

PA at 10%	Sessions absent	Days absent
Half term 1	7 or more session	3.5 or more days
Half term 1- 2	14 or more session	7 or more days
Half term 1-3	20 or more sessions	10 or more days
Half term 1-4	25 or more sessions	12.5 or more days
Half term 1-5	31 or more sessions	15.5 or more days
Half term 1-6	38 or more sessions	19 or more days

We monitor all absences thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately, with a request to attend a meeting in school to discuss the reasons for the absences and agree on an action plan to support improving engagement with school. This could also include individual incentive programs, parenting contracts, and/or a referral for external family support or Legal intervention.

Alternative provision and the use of a direction:

There is a range of circumstances when pupils may be required to access education provision at a venue other than their main school. Some reasons may be:

- Pupils who have been suspended from school, either for a fixed term, more than 5 days or permanently excluded
- Pupils unable to access provisions at their main school for medical reasons
- Pupils required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour, either on a temporary basis or with the view to making a permanent move to another school on a manager move

When a pupil is required to attend an alternative provision for the purpose of improving behaviour, the main school will issue a written direction or notice informing all parents informing of the alternative provision which their child will be required to attend.

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that schools are notified if their child will be absent from school. Therefore, all absences from school should be reported to the school before 9 am, with a detailed explanation for the absence
- When a parent fails to report the absence, the Inclusion Co-ordinator will telephone the contact numbers of all persons listed on the school data system
- Failure to provide an explanation for 5 days of the start of the absence will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. In these circumstances, legal interventions may be considered
- In addition to the attempts made from school, home visits are also regularly conducted in conjunction with safeguarding
- If attendance is a cause for concern, parents could be invited to attend a meeting at school to discuss the situation
- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, not the parent to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with government regulations and guidance

There are times when we need to contact parents, to keep them informed of school business or if a child is injured or ill. Therefore, it is important that we are updated with contact numbers at all times. Parents are responsible for providing updated contact numbers as and when necessary.

Lateness

It is the expectation that all pupils will arrive at school on time and be prepared for learning. This expectation continues throughout the school day when arriving at lessons. Poor punctuality is not acceptable at any point of the day. Arriving late to school could result in vital information being missed for the lesson/day ahead. It could also have a detrimental effect on the pupil's well-being due to the embarrassment of disturbing the class, which could in turn result in future refusal/reluctance to attend school, (being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the equivalent of missing two weeks of school).

How we Manage Lateness

All pupils are to be in school before 8:45am. Registers are marked at the beginning of the session. If a pupil is not present in the lesson at this time they will receive a late mark. At 9.15am the registers will be closed, in accordance with the regulations, if a pupil arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on-site, this will not count as a 'present mark' and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If a pattern emerges parents will be invited to meet with the Attendance Team, alternatively parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time. All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the Court, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered an unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action. Parents of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time timekeeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and where support may be offered. If support is not appropriate or is refused and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness or unauthorised absences, then a request will be submitted to Lancashire County Council to issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

Performances and activities, including paid work

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

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, the headteacher will authorise these dates. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least four weeks in advance. The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

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

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

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

SEND and health-related absences

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

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

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

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

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence

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

Safeguarding

The school reserves the right to invite parents into the school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns. In addition, if the school suspects that a pupil may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the safeguarding team reserves the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. – social care, police. The school will inform parents/carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent/carer.

Children Missing from Education

The school recognises that when a child goes missing from school, it could result in a 'child being at risk' therefore, under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 we have a legal duty of care to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, the whereabouts of children missing education. We will make 'reasonable' enquiries into the location of the pupil with continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time.

The school reserves the right to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children's Social Care, police, sibling's school, parent's place of employment, and other family members) if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents. Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the child is safe. A referral will be made to the 'Children Missing Education Team' if our attempts are unsuccessful.

For removal from roll for Elective Home Education (EHE), the school must follow the local authority's guidance.

Schools must only remove pupils from the school roll under the circumstances defined in Education Regulations 2006

Leave During Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 prohibits a Headteacher to authorise leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday, therefore, we will not authorise any term time leave of absence for holidays. All requests will be considered on an individual basis without bias on receipt of a leave of absence request form (these can be located on the school website). If the request is to be considered as an exceptional circumstance, this Leave of Absence request form must be accompanied by written documentation evidencing the reason for the request, this must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the leave date. Parents may be asked to attend a panel meeting to discuss the circumstances.

The Government has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' and therefore it is for each Headteacher to decide what they view as an exceptional circumstance. The DfE's advice says schools should consider each request individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. DfE guidance says the fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

It is important that you understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed upon by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional. We strongly urge parents to avoid booking holidays during term time. If unauthorised leave is taken a request will be made for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

A request will be made to the Local Authority for the issue of a Penalty Notice to parent/carer who fail to ensure their child attends school. Fixed Penalty Notices are £60 if paid within 21 days otherwise rising to £120 if paid after the 21 days but within 28 days. Parents can be prosecuted if payment is not received within 28 days.

Fixed Penalty Notice / Legal Interventions

We believe that any absence from school, for whatever reason, is detrimental to a child's long-term life opportunities and should be avoided. Reducing absence from school is a key priority, both nationally and locally. Missing school limits a child's access to learning and long term, will adversely affect their attainment levels. A 'knock-on' effect of this disruption to school routines is that a pupil may be left vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

The school, via the local authority, may exercise its legal powers to address poor attendance in school. These powers include:

Penalty Notices: Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows penalty notices (Fines) to be issued to parents. They are an alternative measure to the prosecution of parents who fail to ensure that their child attends school. A Penalty Notice will be issued by the local authority in line with its code of conduct when a child's absence has not been authorised by the school. The fine is similar to a penalty notice for leave of absence which are £60 if paid within 21 days otherwise rising to £120 if paid after the 21 days but within 28 days. Parents can be prosecuted if payment is not received within 28 days.

Prosecution: If a child fails to attend school regularly at which they are registered then the parents may be guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted by the local authority. They have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with their legal duty of care to ensure their child is receiving an education. The fines available from the courts if the parents are found guilty are between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents for up to 3 months.

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their son/daughter fails to attend school regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised. Such cases may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school. In line with the national attendance figures, we expect all our pupils to achieve a minimum of 98% attendance. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. The use of legal intervention is used across the county to ensure parents adhere to their legal responsibilities to provide their children with full-time education. It is our intention to work closely with our pupils and their families to prevent legal action from being requested.

We operate a very successful and supportive pastoral service with an open-door policy, which means that if a parent requires support with attendance, punctuality or would like to discuss the consequences of a leave of absence during term time, a member of our team would be available.

5. POLICY REVIEW

This policy is reviewed by the Executive Headteacher, the Local Academy Councils and the Governing Body.

Signed by:			
David Clayton	Trust Leader/ CEO	Date:	June 2024
Mrs H Dicker	Chair of Trustees		