

Attendance Policy



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

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1. Aims

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

- setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils;
- promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence;
- building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school;
- promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.

At Riverside Bridge School, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive the highest quality of education and are able to achieve their full potential. Excellent attendance and punctuality are a key pre-requisite for achieving this.

Riverside Bridge School has a clear ambition for all pupils to achieve attendance of 95% or above.

Where pupils have complex medical needs, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or other significant barriers to attendance, this ambition remains, but attendance expectations, support, and monitoring are adapted on an individual basis. Decisions are made in partnership with families and relevant professionals, with the aim of maximising attendance while safeguarding pupil wellbeing and access to education.

Impact of Poor Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to ensure pupils experience the curriculum as it is intended. Where attendance is poor, pupils may experience a fragmented curriculum, leading to gaps in knowledge, skills, and understanding over time.

Poor attendance can also impact:

- motivation, engagement, and behaviour for learning;
- the continuity required to identify and meet SEND at the earliest opportunity;
- the development of early reading, communication, and functional skills;
- pupils' access to personal, social, health and relationships education (PSHE/RSE), careers education, and wider enrichment opportunities;
- the development of positive relationships with peers and trusted adults;
- pupils' sense of belonging, routine, and emotional security.

From a safeguarding perspective, prolonged or unexplained absence may increase pupils' vulnerability and reduce protective oversight, particularly for pupils with SEND or complex needs.

Over time, poor attendance can negatively affect educational outcomes, preparation for adulthood, and longer-term life chances. For these reasons, Riverside Bridge School places a strong emphasis on early identification of attendance concerns and proportionate, supportive intervention.

To support shared understanding of the impact of attendance over time, Riverside Bridge School uses clear visual guidance to demonstrate how missed days accumulate across the school year. This supports constructive conversations with pupils and families about attendance expectations and long-term outcomes.



2. Legislation and guidance

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

- part 6 of the Education Act 1996;
- part 3 of the Education Act 2002;
- part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments);
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment.

It also refers to:

- School census guidance (updated October 2024);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2024);
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (February 2023).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board is responsible for:

- setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers;
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority;
- making sure that the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate;
- recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources;
- making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most;
- working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs;
- where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance;
- making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

- the importance of good attendance;
- that absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues;
- the school's legal requirements for keeping registers;
- the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding;
- specific pupils, where appropriate:
 - making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in;
 - sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools;
 - holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The governing body has responsibility for the school attendance strategy and for approving the Attendance and Punctuality Policy every year. The governing body will receive updates on attendance at least termly.

3.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

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

3.3 The Deputy Headteacher is the school's Senior Attendance Champion and has strategic responsibility for attendance and punctuality. They are responsible for:

- ensuring the school meets all statutory requirements for attendance and punctuality as set out in the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance (August 2024), including accurate recording, data sharing, and reporting arrangements;
- ensuring the school has an Attendance Policy that meets statutory and non-statutory expectations, and that the policy is published, publicised and accessible to pupils, parents/carers and staff;
- providing strategic leadership and oversight of attendance across the school, embedding a support-first, safeguarding-led approach;
- overseeing attendance monitoring, analysis and evaluation at pupil, cohort and whole-school level, including the identification of emerging, persistent and severe absence;
- working effectively with local partners to remove barriers to attendance that go beyond the school gates, including building strong links with local statutory services (including social care, health and police) and the voluntary and community sector;
- leading engagement with parents/carers where attendance concerns escalate, ensuring communication is timely, proportionate and supportive;
- authorising or not authorising term-time leave requests in line with statutory guidance and informing parents/carers of decisions;
- managing and overseeing procedures for persistent and severe absence, including graduated support, Attendance Support Meetings and referrals to the Local Authority where appropriate;
- liaising with the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer and the Local Authority Attendance Lead on a termly basis to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance, agreeing targeted actions and signposting to support services;

- ensuring reasonable adjustments and appropriate support are in place for pupils with SEND, medical needs or other vulnerabilities, including oversight of part-time timetables and reintegration planning where required;
- ensuring dedicated attendance training is provided to any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. In addition, this should include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data, and any additional training that would be beneficial to help pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance;
- ensuring training on attendance is included in the school(s)' continued professional development offer for all staff. As a minimum this should include all staff understanding the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances, the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers, the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance, the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;
- ensuring attendance is embedded within the school's continuing professional development programme for all staff, so that all staff understand the importance of good attendance, that absence is often a symptom of wider need, and the school's procedures for tracking, follow-up and support;
- liaising with the Local Authority Attendance Lead on a termly basis to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and signposting to support services where appropriate. managing and overseeing procedures for persistent and severe absence, including graduated support, Attendance Support Meetings and referrals to the Local Authority where appropriate;
- producing and overseeing weekly attendance and punctuality reports;
- reporting regularly to the Headteacher and Governors on attendance data, trends, actions taken and impact.

3.4 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in charge of Attendance is responsible for:

- following the attendance policy which meets the expectations outlined in the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance (August 2024), and which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents/carers and staff;
- ensuring staff monitor attendance of the pupils in their class by completing the registers accurately and in time twice a day;
- corresponding with parents/carers where a child has been absent, and no contact has been made;
- recommending individual pupils' targets for attendance for the senior leadership team and the governing body and monitoring them;
- reporting regularly to the Deputy Headteacher and parents/carers about attendance figures and any issues;
- liaising with Partnership Learning Attendance Officer as required;
- corresponding with parents/carers where a child has been absent and making home visit to parents/carers when no contact has been made after three days or more absences;
- advising the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer, once authorised by the headteacher, when to issue fixed-penalty notice.

3.5 Class teachers and co-educators are responsible for:

- ensuring that they are available to collect pupils from the buses and parents/carers at 9:10am;
- completing the online registers by 9:30am in the morning and by 1:30pm in the afternoon each day;
- ensuring any messages from parents/carers regarding their child's attendance or absence is handed in to the receptionists and/or the DDSL in charge of attendance;
- raising any safeguarding concerns relating to attendance or punctuality with the school's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Headteacher. This includes any absence for more than 3 days;
- discussing attendance and punctuality issues with parents/carers and sharing attendance figures at parents' evenings.

3.6 The school administration staff are responsible for:

- taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school online system;
- ensuring online registers are completed by class staff by 9:30am and 1.30pm; note the official register closes at 9:45 in the morning in line with statutory guidance;
- transferring calls from parents/carers to the appropriate Assistant Headteacher, DDSL or Deputy Headteacher where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance;
- calling and/or emailing parents/carers to gather information on the reason of a pupil's absence;
- raising any safeguarding concerns relating to attendance or punctuality with the school's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Headteacher. This includes any absence for more than 3 days.

3.7 Parents and Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent/carer, it refers to the adult who has parental responsibility for a child or young person.

The school works in close partnership with parents/carers to achieve excellent school attendance and punctuality. The law states that parents/carers of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996)

It is the parents/carers' responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school on time by 9.15am and are picked up promptly at the end of the day by 3.15pm.

If a child is going to be absent, the parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of absence. They should state the reason for their child's absence as well as the date they are expected to return to school. If there is no contact the school will contact the parents/carers on the first day of absence. On their child's return to school, the parents/carers should provide any evidence to support their child's absence from school i.e. appointment letters, copy of prescription, etc.

All routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school time. When it is essential to have a non-routine appointment during the school day, evidence (such as an appointment card or hospital letter) must be provided in advance. There may be times when parents/carers may be asked to provide further medical evidence, where this is proportionate and necessary.

The parents/carers should ensure that the child is brought to school before the appointment and returned to school afterwards.

If the parents/carers seek support regarding their child maintaining good attendance, they are advised to contact the DDSL in charge of attendance, Mrs K. Kojnozi, via bridge@riversidebridge.com or on 0203 946 5809.

4. Punctuality

4.1 Arriving on time to school

Excellent attendance includes pupils arriving on time and being ready to learn.

The morning routine begins at 9:15am. School doors open at 9:00am. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that pupils arrive on site by 9:15am.

Any pupil arriving after this time is considered late and the reason for lateness will be recorded.

Attendance coding is applied as follows:

- pupils arriving before the register closes at 9:45am are marked with Code L (late before registers close), which counts as a present mark;
- pupils arriving after the register closes at 9:45am are marked with Code U (late after registers close) or another appropriate absence code linked to the reason for non-attendance before register closure.

Where a pupil arrives late:

- the time of arrival and reason for lateness are recorded on the electronic register by school administration staff;
- a member of staff will collect the pupil from reception;
- parents/carers are expected to remain with their child until they are collected.

4.2 Monitoring and responding to lateness (graduated approach)

Punctuality is monitored regularly and is not viewed in isolation. Patterns of lateness are analysed in terms of:

- frequency of late arrivals,
- total minutes of learning time missed,
- underlying barriers, within our school context including SEND, anxiety, sensory regulation, transport or family circumstances.

The school uses a graduated, support-first response to punctuality concerns, aligned with DfE guidance, progressing through Universal, Targeted, Intensive and Formal stages where appropriate.

This may include:

- universal support, such as reminders, check-in calls and practical advice on morning routines;
- targeted support, including agreed punctuality plans, reasonable adjustments, transport liaison or staggered start arrangements where appropriate;
- intensive support, involving senior leaders, safeguarding staff and, where needed, multi-agency involvement.

Persistent lateness, particularly where it impacts learning, regulation, safety or well-being, will be discussed with parents/carers and reviewed through the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Recording and reviewing lateness

Lateness is recorded in minutes, allowing the school to understand the impact on learning time, not just attendance percentages.

Lateness data is reviewed:

- weekly, at pupil level, to identify emerging concerns;
- through Pupil Progress Meetings, where punctuality is triangulated with pupil need, progress, engagement and wellbeing;
- termly, to identify wider patterns linked to transport, provision or routines.

This ensures responses to lateness are proportionate, SEND-aware and evidence-based.

4.4 Collecting late from school

The school day ends at 3:15pm. After school clubs end at 4:15pm.

When parents/carers do not collect their child within ten minutes of the end of the day the child will be recorded as collected late. This is 3:25pm for a normal school day and 4:25pm for after school clubs.

If a child is late being collected from school, the following procedure is followed:

- the staff will record the time that the child was collected;
- staff will make every attempt to contact parents/carers up until 3:45pm (5:00pm if attended an after-school club). If a child remains uncollected and no contact has been made by these times, an immediate referral will be made to the MASH team (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) where advice will be sought from the duty senior social worker. Any previous late collections will be shared with the MASH team;
- If a child remains uncollected by 4:15pm (5:30pm if attended an after-school club) a second call will be made to the MASH team to agree the next steps;
- if parents/carers are late picking up their child on more than one occasion, a meeting will be arranged with a member of the Senior Leadership Team;
- if a child continues to be collected late, a referral will be made to the MASH team;
- children who are escorted to school by borough transport will be taken to their usual pick up/drop off point. If the parents/carer is not at the designated meeting point at the designated time the bus escort/driver will attempt to contact the parents/carers. If no contact is made the child will be transported to a place of safety by the bus escort/driver.

5. Our Support-First Approach to Attendance

Riverside Bridge School recognises that absence from school is most often a symptom of wider barriers, rather than a standalone behaviour. These barriers may relate to a pupil's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), physical or mental health, family circumstances, safeguarding concerns, transport arrangements, or emotional wellbeing.

As a specialist setting, the school places a strong emphasis on early identification and early intervention, recognising that attendance difficulties can become entrenched if not addressed promptly and sensitively. Our approach prioritises building strong, trusting relationships with pupils and families so that concerns can be identified and addressed at the earliest possible stage.

Attendance support is therefore graduated, personalised, and responsive, and is escalated in line with:

- attendance levels and emerging patterns;
- the complexity of a pupil's needs;
- safeguarding considerations;
- engagement with support offered.

The school follows the national attendance framework of:

listen and understand → facilitate support → formalise support → enforce (as a last resort).

In practice, this means:

- listening carefully to pupils and families to understand barriers to attendance;
- removing in-school barriers wherever possible;
- working in partnership with families and external professionals to facilitate support beyond the school gate;
- formalising support through structured meetings, attendance plans, or multi-agency involvement where concerns persist.

Where pupils have SEND, medical needs, or other vulnerabilities, high expectations for attendance remain, but the way attendance is supported, monitored, and reviewed is adapted to individual circumstances. Decisions are made collaboratively, drawing on professional advice where appropriate, and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain proportionate and effective.

Enforcement action is never the starting point.

Legal intervention, including penalty notices or prosecution, is considered only where:

- voluntary and formal support has not been engaged with;
- support has not led to sustained improvement;
- support is not appropriate (for example, unauthorised term-time holidays).

At all stages, the school remains mindful that attendance is closely linked to safeguarding and pupil welfare. Where concerns escalate, safeguarding procedures are followed in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6. Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is defined nationally as attendance below 90%. Severe absence is defined as attendance below 50%. Riverside Bridge School aligns its graduated response to these definitions whilst taking account of individual circumstances, patterns of absence, and safeguarding concerns. The school's response to persistent and severe absence is underpinned by its Support-First Approach to Attendance (Section 5), which prioritises early identification, partnership working, and proportionate escalation.

Stage 1 – Early Concern (at risk of persistent absence)

- In line with the school's Support-First Approach to Attendance (Section 5), early concerns about attendance are addressed through discussion, monitoring, and supportive intervention before absence becomes entrenched.

- If attendance is between 95-90%, an initial phone will be made by the school's Attendance DDSL to inform parents/carers that their child's attendance is a concern. If there are no improvements, a letter will be sent home to the parents/carers notifying them that the school is monitoring the attendance levels of that pupil. The letter will state that there needs to be an improvement in the pupil's attendance or the school will move to stage 2 of the persistent absence policy.

Stage 2 – Persistent Absence

- Where attendance concerns persist despite early support, the school formalises intervention in accordance with its Support-First Approach to Attendance (Section 5), while maintaining high expectations and proportionate support.
- If attendance continues to fall, reaching 90% or below, or if there is a repeated pattern of absence (e.g. frequent absences on particular days), the school will make direct contact with parents/carers by phone. This will provide an opportunity to discuss any underlying issues and to remind parents/carers of their responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.
- During this stage, the pupil's attendance will be monitored closely over a 2-3-week period. Supportive strategies may be put in place, such as pastoral check-ins, referral to family support, or requesting medical evidence for continued illness-related absences.

Stage 3 – Severe or Entrenched Absence

- Where attendance reaches severe or entrenched levels, intervention is intensified in line with the school's Support-First Approach to Attendance (Section 5), with safeguarding and multi-agency working taking priority.
- If attendance falls below 50%, a meeting with the DDSL in charge of attendance, the Deputy Headteacher, the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer, and the parents/carers will be arranged to discuss any issues and agree a way forward.
- However, Stage Three may be triggered before the severe absence threshold is reached where attendance is rapidly declining, barriers are escalating, or there are safeguarding concerns.

This may involve all or some of the following support:

- referral to other agencies;
- direct work with the pupil and family;
- arranging suitable support to help the pupil in making a return to full attendance;
- legal proceedings under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 1989. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers. Parents/Carers can make representations to the local authority in line with the local code of conduct, but there is no formal right of appeal. Queries should be directed to [LA team/contact].

7. Holidays and leave of absence

Parents/carers who request absences in term time must complete the necessary form (available from the school). It is expected that parents/carers plan holidays and any requests for leave during school holiday periods. Holidays and requests for leave will not be authorised in term time and may incur a fixed penalty notice. All fixed penalty notices are discussed with the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer before being issued.

8. Children missing in Education

Children missing in education are:

- those known to have lived in the local or neighbouring authorities, or attended school here, and their whereabouts are unconfirmed, or unknown (this includes those that have been reported to have moved either within the UK but outside of the Local Authority Boundaries or abroad either to live or study);
- those known to be residing in their respective Local Authority boundaries and are believed not to be in education;
- those whose parents/carers claim to be providing elective home education but, because of the Local Authority's informal enquiries, are believed not to be in receipt of suitable and efficient education.

If a child becomes known as a Child Missing in Education, the relevant EHC (Education Health Care) Team, the

MASH team and the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer will be informed immediately. In some cases, the police will be made aware to safeguard the child and discover more details on the child's whereabouts by generating a 'Merlin' report that will be sent to the MASH team.

9. Recording attendance

9.1 Attendance register

The school records every pupil's attendance using an electronic registration system.

Attendance registers are completed accurately and on time by the class teacher or co-educator twice daily: once in the morning and once following lunch.

The school day begins at 9:15am. Pupils are expected to be onsite by this time. The morning register is opened at the start of the school day and officially closes at 9:45am, in line with statutory guidance. Class staff complete initial registration by 9:30am, allowing time for verification, follow-up and administrative checks prior to the official register closing.

As many pupils arrive via arranged school transport, pupils are typically in their classrooms by 9:20am. Pupils arriving with parents/carers are greeted at designated areas and supported to transition to classrooms promptly. The afternoon register is completed following lunch and officially closes within 30 minutes of the start of the afternoon session, in line with statutory guidance, by 1.45pm.

If a pupil is absent, parents/carers are expected to notify the school in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy. Where a reason for absence is provided, this information is shared with the class team for accurate coding or recorded directly on the register by the school administration team.

The school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil where reasonably possible, to support timely follow-up of absence and safeguarding procedures.

Where a pupil is recorded with Code N (no reason yet provided), this will be actively followed up. If no reason is provided within five school days, the absence will be amended to Code O (unauthorised absence) in line with statutory guidance.

Attendance registers are legal documents. All attendance records are retained for a minimum of six years. Any amendments to the attendance register are clearly documented, including the date, time and the identity of the person making the change, in accordance with statutory requirements.

9.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parents/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school administration staff, where a message can be left on the answer machine, with a member of the admin team or emailed to the school email, bridge@riversidebridge.com. Parents/Carers should not use Class Dojo to report any absences.

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

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, 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, parents/carers will be notified of this and a meeting with the DDSL in charge of attendance will be organised to discuss this absence.

9.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parents/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides physical evidence of the appointment. If evidence is not provided, this will become an unauthorised absence.

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

Given the nature of the pupils attending Riverside Bridge School with varying medical needs, the school is aware there are occasions where medical appointments cannot be attended outside of school hours and evidence of such will be required to authorise an absence.

9.4 Following up unexplained absence

When any pupil expecting to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- call the pupil's parents/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's immediate contacts, it may be necessary to call additional contacts provided;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained. This will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent;
- call the parents/carers on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will carry out a home visit. If no contact is made regarding a child's absence after the home visit, this will be escalated to the local MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) team;
- where relevant, report the unexplained absence to Partnership Learning Attendance Officer and the EHCP Team/Local Authority;
- where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance;
- identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals;
- where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 10.2 below), as appropriate.

9.5 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via half termly and/or when appropriate.

10. Authorised and unauthorised absence

10.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad;
- attending an interview;
- study leave;
- a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable (note that any part-time timetable will be used as a short-term, time-limited measure, reviewed regularly, and will not be treated as a permanent arrangement or an alternative to full-time education);
- exceptional circumstance as a one-off event/s which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

The school will consider 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 4 to 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, which can be requested via to the school's email account, bridge@riversidebridge.com

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments;
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- when parents/carers(s) are 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 for a limited period 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;
- if the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made).

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school;
- attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration);
- attending provision arranged by the local authority;
- attending work experience;
- if there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

Examples of unauthorised absences:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- absences that have not been properly explained;
- travel during term-time, including family holidays, that have not been agreed;
- repeated or persistent non-specific illness, for example, 'poorly/unwell';
- absence of other siblings if one child is ill;
- absence because a parent/carer is ill (alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school);
- oversleeping;
- inadequate clothing/uniform;
- confusion over school term and holiday dates;
- medical and/or dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason;
- child's and/or family birthdays;
- any routine family event or trip, for example, shopping.

10.2 Sanctions

The school follows the National Framework for Penalty Notices (2024). Penalty notices or prosecution will be considered only where:

- voluntary and formal support has not been engaged with or has not led to improvement;
- support is not appropriate (for example, unauthorised term-time holidays).

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions, including, but not limited to, those listed below to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. Where appropriate, a Notice to Improve will be issued prior to further legal action.

10.2.1 Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), Local Authority or the police can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school-age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the Local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notices issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks);
- whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil;

- whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution;
- whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

Each parent/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice. This means that if a child is taken on unauthorised leave by one parent/carer with another parent/carer, both parents/carers could receive a penalty notice.

The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parents/carers must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parents/carers in respect of the same pupil, the parents/carers must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parents/carers in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents/carers that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parents/carers must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

10.2.2 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents/carers do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents/carers a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the Local Authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences;
- the benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents/carers under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#);
- details of the support provided so far;
- opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with;
- a clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis;
- a clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period;

the grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

11.Strategies for promoting attendance

Good and excellent attendance is rewarded through allocation of house points to the school's house system.

Each child receives 5 points for a full week of attendance.

Pupils are also praised for consistent attendance across the year with celebratory events in the summer term.

12. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

12.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions and those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided. In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case including;

- understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family;
- working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available);
- regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

12.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Senior leaders, parents/carers, class teachers and relevant external parties will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate and possible, the child's views will also be gathered. School based interventions may be offered: Zones of Regulation strategies, Thrive intervention, school-based support from in-house SALT/OT and/or a reduced timetable if suitable. External interventions may be offered such as referrals to outside agencies, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Early Help, Family Support Services. Parents/Carers will be signposted to local support groups in the relevant Local Authority.

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

As soon as the school is notified of a pupil's return to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, it will arrange to meet with parents/carers and all relevant parties in order to discuss the most suitable transition and steps towards the child returning full time when appropriate. Phased returns, shorter timetables may be in place to suit the needs of the pupil. The school will consider adjustments to practices and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed between the school the child's parents/carers.

12.4 Part-time timetables and phased reintegration

In line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, August 2024), the school recognises that part-time timetables are exceptional, short-term arrangements and are not an alternative to full-time education. Part-time timetables are only used where this is in the best interests of the pupil, for example due to medical needs, significant emotional or mental health needs, or as part of a planned, time-limited reintegration following a period of absence.

Where a part-time timetable is implemented:

- it is time-limited, with a clear start date and defined end point;
- it forms part of a written reintegration plan with agreed review dates;
- progress is reviewed regularly and attendance is increased towards full-time provision;
- the arrangement is agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, relevant professionals;
- attendance is recorded using Code C2 in line with statutory guidance.

The school maintains oversight of all part-time timetables to ensure they remain appropriate, proportionate and temporary, and that pupils are supported to return to full-time education as soon as possible.

13. Attendance Monitoring, Analysis and Use of Data

Riverside Bridge School monitors attendance to ensure pupils are safe, supported, and able to access education consistently. Attendance information is used to identify pupils who may need additional support early, understand barriers to attendance, and ensure that timely, proportionate action is taken.

Attendance monitoring is not undertaken simply to track percentages or generate reports. It is used to inform professional judgement, guide support, and improve outcomes for pupils.

Attendance communication with parents/carers and governors focuses on both attendance data and the cumulative impact of absence. The school explains attendance in terms of learning time missed and the impact on pupils' progress and well-being, to support understanding and engagement from all parties.

Attendance monitoring therefore focuses on three core questions:

- who may be at risk of poor attendance;
- what may be contributing to this pattern; and
- what support or action is required next.

13.1 Weekly Attendance Monitoring – Pupil Level (Operational)

Attendance is monitored weekly using the school's management information system, Bromcom. Attendance is monitored for all pupils, with particular attention given to those with emerging or ongoing attendance concerns. This pupil-level monitoring enables leaders to identify early patterns of concern before absence becomes persistent or entrenched.

Weekly review considers:

- attendance percentage, authorised and unauthorised absence;
- patterns of absence or lateness over time;
- pupils whose attendance is declining or approaching persistent absence;
- pupils with known vulnerabilities, including SEND, medical needs, safeguarding concerns, or involvement with external agencies.

From this monitoring, pupils are identified for support through the school's graduated attendance response. Actions are agreed, recorded, and reviewed weekly to ensure attendance concerns lead directly to timely intervention.

Where attendance concerns indicate increased risk or complexity, appropriate referrals or notifications are made using agreed Local Authority processes, including completion of the Pupil Attendance Meeting (PAM) documentation, where required.

While weekly monitoring focuses on individual pupils and immediate support, longer-term attendance trends are evaluated termly at cohort and strategic level.

13.2 Monitoring of the impact of pupils' attendance and needs on pupils' progress

Attendance at Riverside Bridge School is not reviewed in isolation. Leaders triangulate attendance data with pupil need, safeguarding information and progress data to ensure that responses to absence are informed, proportionate and responsive to individual circumstances.

Attendance is considered alongside:

- pupils' SEND profiles and EHCP outcomes;
- academic, communication, independence and life-skills progress;
- engagement, regulation and wellbeing indicators;
- safeguarding concerns or vulnerability factors; and
- the impact of support and interventions already in place.

This triangulation takes place through regular Pupil Progress Meetings, involving senior leaders, class teachers and relevant professionals. These meetings ensure that:

- attendance concerns are understood in the context of pupils' needs and progress;

- patterns of absence are explored alongside barriers to learning or wellbeing;
- decisions about support, adjustments or escalation are based on a holistic view of the pupil; and
- actions agreed are reviewed for impact over time.

Where attendance concerns coincide with limited progress, regression, or emerging safeguarding risk, support is escalated appropriately in line with the school's Support-First Approach to Attendance and safeguarding procedures.

This approach ensures that attendance strategies remain child-centred, SEND-aware and outcome-focused, supporting pupils to access education consistently and make progress over time.

13.3 Graduated, Support-First Response

Attendance concerns are addressed through a graduated and proportionate response, recognising that absence is often linked to wider barriers rather than being a standalone behaviour.

Responses may include:

- early communication and discussion with parents or carers;
- pastoral support or in-school adjustments;
- attendance meetings and support planning;
- involvement of safeguarding, family support, or external agencies where appropriate.

Where a pupil appears as a concern across consecutive weeks, leaders expect escalation or adjustment of support. This ensures attendance concerns are not repeatedly identified without a change in response. Where appropriate, this includes working collaboratively with the local authority and other partner agencies.

This graduated approach is reflected in practice through the school's punctuality and attendance tracking systems, which record the DfE-aligned stage (Universal, Targeted, Intensive or Formal) each pupil is working within.

13.4 Attendance Bandings and Identification of At-Risk Pupils

Attendance monitoring includes the use of nationally recognised attendance bandings to support prioritisation and consistency in decision-making.

These include:

- pupils approaching persistent absence;
- pupils persistently absent (attendance below 90%);
- pupils severely absent (attendance below 50%).

Bandings are used to guide professional judgement rather than to trigger automatic sanctions. Individual circumstances, SEND, medical needs, and safeguarding considerations are always taken into account.

Persistent or severe absence does not in itself constitute Children Missing Education (CME). Pupils are not removed from roll due to absence linked to illness, mental health needs, or other unavoidable circumstances. Any consideration of removal from roll is undertaken lawfully, in consultation with the Local Authority and the EHC Team, and in line with statutory guidance for pupils registered at special schools.

13.5 Parental Engagement and Access to Attendance Information

Parents and carers have access to their child's attendance information through MyChildAtSchool (Bromcom). This enables families to view up-to-date attendance records and monitor patterns of absence or lateness.

To strengthen shared understanding and partnership, parents and carers are offered annual information sessions which explain:

- why attendance matters for learning, wellbeing, and preparation for adulthood;
- how attendance is monitored and supported by the school; and
- how families and school work together where attendance becomes a concern.

This supports transparency, early communication, and shared responsibility.

Parents and carers may also contact the school directly regarding attendance concerns, absence notifications, or to submit evidence via the dedicated attendance email address - attendance@riversidebridge.com

13.6 Half-termly review - Cohorts and emerging patterns

Attendance data is reviewed half-termly to identify wider patterns across the school. Reviews consider attendance by cohort and group, including:

- year groups or classes;
- pupils with SEND or EHCPs;
- pupils with medical needs or safeguarding vulnerabilities;
- disadvantaged pupils.

This enables leaders to evaluate whether concerns relate to individual need or wider systemic factors, such as transport, transitions, staffing, or curriculum structure, and to adjust provision or support accordingly.

13.7 Termly strategic evaluation using the DfE Pupil Attendance Dashboard

In addition to school-level monitoring, Riverside Bridge School uses the DfE Pupil Attendance Dashboard to support termly strategic evaluation.

The dashboard is used to:

- review attendance trends over time;
- compare current attendance with previous years;
- evaluate levels of persistent and severe absence; and
- assess the impact of attendance strategies.

The dashboard is not used for individual pupil monitoring, as it is aggregated and time-lagged. Its purpose is to support objective, strategic oversight and informed leadership and governance discussions.

The school also engages in termly attendance support meetings with the Local Authority Attendance Lead. These meetings use attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk, review actions already taken, and agree further targeted support where required. This ensures attendance concerns are addressed collaboratively and in line with local authority expectations.

13.8 Integration of operational and strategic monitoring

Attendance monitoring operates at connected levels:

- weekly, through pupil-level identification and support using Bromcom;
- half-termly, through cohort analysis and review of emerging patterns; and
- termly, through strategic evaluation using the DfE attendance dashboard.

This layered approach ensures responsive support for pupils alongside longer-term evaluation of impact.

13.9 Governance oversight

Governors receive regular attendance information focusing on trends, persistent and severe absence, and the impact of actions taken.

This enables governors to:

- review whether attendance is improving over time;
- identify groups requiring additional focus; and
- consider how leaders have adapted strategies in response to attendance information.

This supports effective challenge, accountability, and continuous improvement.

13.10 Use of attendance data to improve outcomes

Attendance data is used to:

- identify pupils who need support early;
- evaluate the effectiveness of interventions;
- strengthen safeguarding oversight; and
- inform leadership decision-making and policy refinement.

Attendance monitoring follows a continuous cycle of **identify → support → review → adapt**, ensuring practice remains focused on improving pupils' access to education, wellbeing, and preparation for adulthood.

14. Policy monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, and sooner if required following updates to DfE or Local Authority guidance.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent - other authorised reasons		
T	Parents/carers travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parents/carer(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within

		walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent - unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2

Attendance - What Do Parents & Carers Need to Know?

We want every child to be in school, safe, supported, and learning.

Our expectations

- We aim for **95% attendance or better** for all pupils.
- Good attendance helps children feel secure, make progress, and build independence.
- School should always be a place of safety and support.
- Parents and carers to contact the attendance team directly via attendance@riversidebridge.com for:
 - absence notifications
 - attendance queries
 - submission of medical or appointment evidence

If your child finds attendance difficult, we understand that some of our pupils have:

- medical needs;
- anxiety or emotional difficulties;
- SEND-related barriers.

We will work with you to:

- understand what is making attendance difficult;
- put support in place;
- review and adapt plans regularly.

If attendance becomes a concern, we will:

1. talk with you early;
2. offer support and guidance;
3. agree a plan together;
4. escalate only if attendance does not improve and support is not engaged with.

Legal action is **always a last resort**.

You can help by

- letting us know as early as possible if your child is absent via a phone call or an email to bridge@riversidebridge.com ;
- providing evidence for appointments where needed;
- working with us if attendance becomes a concern;

We are here to help.

Attendance Support & Escalation Framework Support-first | Safeguarding-led | Graduated response

● Universal Attendance (All Pupils)

Expectation: Daily attendance, punctuality, engagement

What we do

- Clear attendance expectations shared with families
- Daily registers and first-day calling
- Attendance monitored weekly
- Positive relationships and communication

↓ *If patterns or concerns begin to emerge*

● Early Concern – At Risk of Persistent Absence (below 95% / emerging patterns)

What we do

- Early conversation with parents/carers
- Listen and understand barriers
- Short-term monitoring
- Pastoral or classroom-based support

↓ *If attendance does not improve*

● Persistent Absence (below 90% attendance)

What we do

- Formal attendance meeting
- Attendance support plan agreed
- Targeted in-school strategies
- Multi-agency involvement where appropriate
- Regular review and monitoring

↓ *If barriers persist or engagement is limited*

● Severe or Entrenched Absence (below 50% attendance and/or serious safeguarding concern)

What we do

- Intensive, multi-agency support
- Safeguarding review
- Whole-family or LA-led plans
- Consideration of alternative provision / EHCP review

↓

⚖️ Legal Intervention – Last Resort

Only considered when:

- support has not been engaged with
- support has not led to improvement
- support is not appropriate (e.g. unauthorised term-time holidays)

May include:

- Notice to Improve
- Penalty Notice
- Prosecution (in line with national framework)

✧ *At all stages, attendance decisions are individualised, SEND-aware, and safeguarding-led.*

Appendix 4 – Q/A on Attendance

This appendix supports the implementation and monitoring of this Attendance Policy. It provides clarity on how school leaders and governors evaluate the effectiveness, fairness, and impact of attendance arrangements, particularly for our pupils with SEND, medical needs, or complex circumstances.

1. How does the school balance high expectations for attendance with the needs of its pupils with SEND or medical needs?

Riverside Bridge School maintains high aspirations for attendance for all pupils, recognising that regular attendance is fundamental to learning, wellbeing, and preparation for adulthood. However, the school also recognises that some pupils face additional and complex barriers to attendance.

For pupils with SEND, medical needs, or other vulnerabilities, expectations remain high, but the route to achieving good attendance is individualised. Attendance support is adapted based on professional advice, EHCP provision, medical guidance, and safeguarding considerations. Decisions are made collaboratively with families and relevant professionals and are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and proportionate.

Attendance data for these pupils is monitored closely, with a focus on patterns and barriers rather than headline percentages alone.

2. How do leaders know when to intervene, and how early does intervention begin?

Attendance is monitored weekly, not just termly. Leaders analyse emerging patterns such as repeated absences on particular days, frequent lateness, or gradual decline in attendance, even when overall attendance remains above national thresholds.

Early intervention begins before attendance becomes persistent. Initial responses focus on discussion, understanding barriers, and offering support, in line with the school's Support-First Approach. This ensures that concerns are addressed promptly and proportionately, reducing the risk of attendance difficulties becoming entrenched.

3. How does the school ensure that enforcement is proportionate and not punitive?

Enforcement is never the starting point. The school follows a clearly defined graduated response: **listen and understand → facilitate support → formalise support → enforce (as a last resort).**

Legal intervention is considered only where:

- voluntary and formal support has not been engaged with,
- support has not resulted in sustained improvement, or
- support is not appropriate (for example, unauthorised term-time holidays).

All decisions relating to enforcement are reviewed by senior leaders and, where relevant, discussed with the local authority to ensure they are lawful, proportionate, and consistent with national guidance.

4. How does the school ensure attendance work is safeguarding-led?

Attendance is viewed as a key safeguarding indicator. Unexplained absence, prolonged absence, or patterns of poor attendance may signal wider welfare concerns. As such, attendance monitoring is closely linked to safeguarding procedures.

Where concerns escalate, the school follows safeguarding protocols, including home visits, referrals to external agencies, and multi-agency working. Pupils who are severely absent, or who are absent more than they are present, are prioritised for intensive support and safeguarding review.

5. How do governors know whether the Attendance Policy is effective?

Governors receive regular attendance reports that go beyond headline figures.

These include:

- persistent and severe absence rates,
- cohort analysis (including SEND and medically vulnerable pupils),
- early-concern data,
- intervention and support activity,
- use of formal and legal measures.

Governors use this information to challenge leaders on:

- the effectiveness of support strategies,
- whether resources are sufficient,
- whether attendance responses remain proportionate and equitable,
- and whether safeguarding concerns are being appropriately addressed.

6. What would concern governors most when reviewing attendance data?

Key areas of concern include:

- severe absence (below 50% attendance),
- lack of engagement from families despite support,
- repeated unexplained absences,
- patterns suggesting unmet SEND or medical needs,
- any indication that attendance issues may reflect safeguarding risks.

These concerns trigger further scrutiny, requests for additional information, or escalation through safeguarding and multi-agency routes.

7. How does the school ensure consistency whilst still responding flexibly to individual need?

Consistency is achieved through clear systems, defined stages of intervention, and shared leadership oversight. Flexibility is achieved through professional judgement, individualised planning, and regular review.

All pupils are subject to the same graduated framework, but the nature, intensity, and timescale of support within that framework are adapted based on individual circumstances.

8. How does this policy support preparation for adulthood?

Regular attendance supports routine, independence, resilience, and engagement — all key elements of preparation for adulthood. The school explicitly links attendance expectations to these outcomes, particularly for older pupils.

Where attendance is a challenge, support focuses not only on being physically present in school, but also on building confidence, reducing anxiety, and increasing independence over time.

9. How is attendance monitored effectively?

From the data on Bromcom, we track attendance weekly at pupil level using year-to-date data, identify pupils under 90%, review whether attendance is improving or declining week on week, and record actions taken. Where attendance improves, escalation reduces; where it declines, support is increased. The aim is to identify pupils who need support early and respond quickly. We then evaluate attendance trends half-termly using the DfE dashboard to assess impact over time and inform strategic decisions.

10. How is this policy communicated to families?

The Attendance Policy is published on the school website and shared with families. Expectations are reinforced through direct communication, meetings, and regular attendance updates. When attendance becomes a concern, communication is personalised and supportive, ensuring families understand both the support available and the potential consequences if attendance does not improve.

11. How does the school ensure the policy remains current and effective?

The policy is reviewed regularly in line with national guidance and local authority updates. Leaders evaluate the impact of attendance strategies through data analysis, case reviews, and governor scrutiny, making adjustments as barriers and pupil needs evolve.

Appendix 5 – Model Scripts

Reminder to All staff - All attendance calls must be logged accurately, including the reason for absence, evidence requested or received, and agreed next steps.

Staff should use these scripts flexibly, whilst ensuring key messages around safeguarding, evidence, and learning-time impact are clearly communicated.

Where safeguarding thresholds are met, escalation must follow the Attendance and Safeguarding Procedures without delay.

Staff should always explain attendance in terms of learning time missed, not just percentages, to support understanding and engagement.

1. First-Day Absence Call (Day 1 - routine, supportive)

Opening

Hello, this is [Name] calling from Riverside Bridge School. I'm calling to check in about [child's name], who we were expecting in school today.

Purpose

We just wanted to make sure [child's name] is safe and to understand the reason for their absence.

Acknowledge

Thank you for letting me know.

Evidence

Where absences relate to appointments or ongoing illness, medical or appointment evidence will be required so that the absence can be recorded accurately. We only request this where it is necessary and proportionate, and it can be emailed to us if that's easier.

Clarify

When are you expecting [child's name] to return to school?

Learning-time reminder

Just to reassure you why we follow this up quickly, even a small number of days missed can add up over the year, and we want to make sure [child's name] doesn't miss learning they can't easily catch up on.

Close

I will make sure this information is shared with the class team. Please contact us if anything changes or if you need any support.

2. Ongoing Absence Call (Day 2 and 3 - evidence reminder + early safeguarding transparency)

Opening

Hello, this is [Name] from Riverside Bridge School, calling about [child's name].

Purpose

I'm calling to follow up as [child's name] has now been absent for [two/three] days, and we want to understand what's happening and how we can support.

Evidence expectation

As the absence is continuing, medical or appointment evidence will be required so that the absence can be recorded correctly. We only request this where it is necessary and proportionate.

Safeguarding transparency

I also need to let you know that if a pupil is absent for three consecutive days without contact or appropriate evidence, the school will take safeguarding action. This includes arranging a safeguarding home visit.

Learning-time reminder

I also want to remind you that we emphasise good attendance in terms of learning time rather than percentages. For example, attendance around 90% means nearly a month of learning missed across the year, which can really affect progress and confidence.

Supportive close

If anything is making it difficult to provide information or return to school, please let us know so we can support you.

3. Safeguarding Call (3 days absent / no contact / no evidence)

Opening

Hello, this is [Name] calling from Riverside Bridge School regarding [child's name].

Safeguarding explanation

[Child's name] has now been absent for three days without contact or without appropriate evidence. Because attendance is linked to safeguarding, we are required to follow safeguarding procedures to ensure they are safe.

Learning-time reminder

Being out of school for several days in a row means a significant amount of learning and routine is missed, which is why we need to act quickly to make sure [child's name] is safe and supported.

Next steps

This means the school will arrange a safeguarding home visit.

If we are unable to make contact or confirm [child's name]'s safety, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

De-escalation

We would much prefer to resolve this by speaking with you directly. Please contact the school as soon as possible.

4. Answerphone Message - Day 1 Absence

Hello, this is Riverside Bridge School calling regarding [child's name], who has not attended school today.

Please contact the school as soon as possible to let us know the reason for their absence and to confirm that they are safe.

We will always follow up absence promptly because even short periods out of school can add up to lost learning time over the year.

Please call us back as soon as convenient on 0203 946 5809 or email attendance@riversidebridge.com. Thank you.

5. Answerphone Message - Escalated / Safeguarding

These discussions must be conducted in a calm, supportive and professional manner, with the aim of understanding barriers to attendance and agreeing next steps.

This is Riverside Bridge School calling regarding [child's name].

We have been unable to confirm the reason for their absence. As attendance is linked to safeguarding, it is important that we hear from you today.

Just to remind you that we don't look at attendance just as a percentage. At this level of attendance, [child's name] is missing a significant amount of learning time, which can make it much harder to keep up and feel confident in school.

Please contact the school urgently on 0203 946 5809. If we are unable to make contact, we will need to follow safeguarding procedures. Thank you.

5. Attendance Concern Discussion - Repeated absence / Emerging escalation

Key explanation

We understand that illness and complex needs can affect attendance. At the same time, the school has a legal duty to record attendance accurately and to act where absence continues without explanation or evidence.

Learning-time reminder

We don't look at attendance just as a percentage. At this level of attendance, [child's name] is missing a significant amount of learning time, which can make it much harder to keep up and feel confident in school.

Evidence clarity

Where absence continues, medical or appointment evidence will be required. We only request this where it is necessary and proportionate.

Expectation

It is important that we see improvement and that support is engaged with.

Escalation

If attendance does not improve and support is not engaged with, we are required to escalate in line with our attendance and safeguarding procedures. That is not where we want to start, but it is part of our legal duty.

Next step

The next step would be to arrange a meeting with [DDSL / Deputy Headteacher] to agree support and expectations together.

7. Holiday / Term-Time Leave Request Script Initial response

Thank you for letting us know about your request.

Clear expectation

In line with national guidance, holidays and leisure travel cannot be authorised during term time.

Process

You will need to complete a leave of absence request form so the Headteacher can formally consider the request.

Consequences

If the absence goes ahead without authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a penalty notice being issued by the local authority.

Supportive close

If there are exceptional circumstances or something else affecting attendance, we're happy to discuss that with you.

Learning-time reminder

We also want families to understand the impact — for example, 10 days away from school means 10 full days of learning missed, which can be difficult for pupils to recover from, particularly for children with additional needs.

Appendix 6 – Pupil Progress Meeting re. Attendance, Punctuality and Impact

Purpose

To ensure attendance and punctuality are reviewed in context, alongside pupils' need, engagement, wellbeing and progress, and that agreed actions are proportionate, timely and reviewed for impact.

1. Attendance overview (quantitative)

- Current attendance percentage
- Trend over time (improving / stable / declining)
- Authorised vs unauthorised absence
- Persistent or severe absence thresholds (if applicable)

Prompt questions

- Is attendance improving, stable or declining?
- Is absence sporadic or patterned?

2. Punctuality overview (learning time impact)

- Frequency of late arrivals (number of days late)
- Total minutes of learning time missed due to lateness
- Pattern of lateness (specific days, transport-related, routine-based)

Prompt questions

- How much learning time is being missed due to lateness?
- Is lateness occasional or becoming persistent?

3. Barriers and pupil context (qualitative)

- Identified barriers (e.g. SEND, anxiety, sensory needs, sleep, transport, family factors)
- Safeguarding or vulnerability considerations
- Current adjustments or support in place

Prompt questions

- What might be contributing to attendance or punctuality concerns?
- Are current adjustments sufficient and appropriate?

4. Progress and engagement

- Academic, communication, independence and life-skills progress.
- Engagement, regulation and wellbeing indicators.
- Any evidence of regression, stalled progress or reduced engagement.

Prompt questions

- Is progress in line with expectations given attendance and punctuality?
- Are attendance or punctuality impacting progress or wellbeing?

5. Impact of support to date

- Actions previously agreed (attendance or punctuality plans, adjustments, support)

- Evidence of impact or lack of impact

Prompt questions

- What has worked?
- What hasn't worked and why?

6. Graduated response and next steps

- Current stage (DfE aligned): Universal / Targeted / Intensive / Formal
- Adjustments, support or escalation required
- Roles and responsibilities
- Timescales and review date

Prompt questions

- Does the level of response remain appropriate?
- Is escalation required, or can support be stepped down?

7. Safeguarding check

- Any safeguarding thresholds met or emerging
- Need for home visit, Early Help, or external agency involvement

Prompt questions

- Are we confident the pupil is safe?
- Are safeguarding procedures being followed appropriately?

8. Recording and follow-up

- Actions recorded clearly (attendance, punctuality and progress)
- Evidence logged (lateness tracker, attendance records, meeting notes)
- Date for review agreed