ATTENDANCE POLICY

Supporting attendance. Removing barriers.
Protecting access to education.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework
and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to attendance and punctuality. It explains the principles, expectations, responsibilities and arrangements through which the school promotes regular attendance, identifies and removes barriers, supports pupils and families, fulfils statutory duties and ensures that every pupil is able to access education as consistently as possible. It establishes a support-first, safeguarding-led approach in which early identification, personalised intervention and partnership working are prioritised before formal or legal action is considered.

At Riverside Bridge School, we believe that regular attendance is fundamental to pupils' safety, belonging, learning, communication, relationships, independence and preparation for adulthood. Attendance is not viewed simply as a percentage or administrative measure; it reflects a pupil's access to education, trusted relationships, therapeutic provision, routines and opportunities to participate fully in school life.

As a specialist school for pupils with complex SEND, we recognise that barriers to attendance may arise from medical needs, emotional wellbeing, communication differences, sensory processing, transport arrangements, family circumstances, safeguarding concerns or difficulties associated with accessing school environments and routines. High expectations for attendance therefore remain for every pupil, but the support, monitoring and intervention required to achieve those expectations must be proportionate, personalised and responsive to individual circumstances.

Our approach is grounded in early identification and strong partnership with families. Where attendance begins to decline or patterns emerge, staff seek to understand the reasons, identify barriers and put appropriate support in place before difficulties become entrenched. This may include reasonable adjustments, family support, therapeutic or medical advice, transport liaison, attendance planning, multi-agency involvement or a structured reintegration approach where necessary.

Attendance is also a safeguarding responsibility. Unexplained, persistent or severe absence may indicate wider vulnerability, unmet need or risk. Attendance information is therefore considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, medical, wellbeing and progress information so that concerns are understood within the context of the whole pupil and acted upon at the earliest appropriate point. The policy already reflects this linkage strongly.

Where voluntary and formal support has not been successful or engaged with, the school may consider legal intervention in accordance with statutory guidance and local authority procedures. Enforcement is never the starting point and decisions are made case by case, taking account of SEND, medical needs, equality duties, safeguarding considerations and the support already provided.

Our attendance arrangements are continually reviewed through pupil-level monitoring, cohort analysis, family engagement, local authority partnership and governance oversight. Through this approach, Riverside Bridge School aims to maximise every pupil's access to education while ensuring that attendance practice remains lawful, supportive, proportionate and centred on the best interests of the individual pupil.

Our responsibility to pupils, families and the school community

Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to promote regular attendance, identify and respond to barriers early and ensure that every pupil receives appropriate support to access education consistently.

In delivering our attendance responsibilities, we will:

- maintain high expectations for attendance and punctuality for every pupil;
- recognise that attendance difficulties may reflect wider SEND, medical, emotional, family or safeguarding needs;
- identify emerging patterns of absence or lateness at the earliest opportunity;
- listen to pupils and families to understand barriers and agree proportionate support;
- make reasonable adjustments where required and work with relevant professionals and agencies;
- maintain accurate statutory attendance records and follow up unexplained absence promptly;
- ensure attendance concerns are considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, wellbeing and pupil progress;
- use a graduated, support-first approach before formal or legal intervention is considered;
- work collaboratively with the Local Authority, health, social care and other partners where wider support is required;
- monitor persistent and severe absence and escalate support where concerns increase;
- communicate clearly with parents and carers about attendance expectations, concerns and available support; and
- regularly evaluate attendance information to strengthen provision and improve outcomes.

Through these commitments, we aim to ensure that every pupil is safe, supported and able to access the education, relationships and opportunities they need to communicate, participate, learn and prepare for adulthood.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	AIMS	02	LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE
03	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	04	PUNCTUALITY
05	OUR SUPPORT-FIRST APPROACH TO ATTENDANCE	06	PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCES
07	HOLIDAYS AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE	08	CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION
09	RECORDING ABSENCE	10	AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ATTENDANCE
11	STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE	12	SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO ARE ABSENT OR RETURNING TO SCHOOL
13	ATTENDANCE MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND USE OF DATA	14	RELATED POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS
	APPENDICES		

APPROVED BY: Governing Board

APPROVED ON: September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON: September 2027

Section 01

AIMS

Setting expectations. Promoting attendance. Supporting access.

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 (2026), 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:

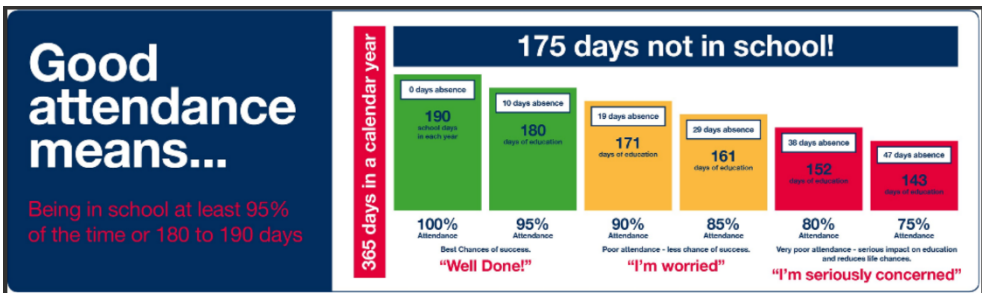
- motivation, engagement, and behaviour for learning;
- the continuity required to identify and meet SEND at the earliest opportunity;
- the development of early reading, communication, and functional skills;

- 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.



Section 02

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Understanding duties. Applying statutory guidance.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance (2026) 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 March 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026);
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (February 2023).

Section 03

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sharing responsibility. Maintaining oversight. Supporting attendance.

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;
- working with 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 Board has responsibility for the school attendance strategy and for approving the Attendance and Punctuality Policy every year. The Governing Board will receive updates on attendance at least termly.

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.

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 (2026), 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 regularly 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, agree targeted actions and signpost to support services 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.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- monitoring daily attendance and punctuality across the school;
- checking and validating attendance registers, ensuring registers are completed accurately and within statutory timescales;
- undertaking first-day response procedures and making attendance contact calls to parents/carers where pupils are absent;
- corresponding with parents/carers by telephone, email and letter regarding attendance and punctuality concerns;
- recording reasons for absence, gathering supporting evidence where appropriate and ensuring attendance records are accurate and up to date;
- monitoring attendance trigger points and implementing the school's graduated response to attendance concerns;
- producing and maintaining weekly attendance and punctuality reports, trackers and attendance analysis;
- identifying pupils at risk of persistent absence, persistent absence and severe absence;
- undertaking attendance and welfare home visits where appropriate;
- arranging and leading Attendance Review Meetings and Attendance Support Meetings;
- liaising with the Deputy Headteacher regarding attendance concerns requiring escalation;
- liaising with the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer, Local Authority Attendance Team and other external professionals where appropriate;
- contributing to safeguarding discussions where attendance concerns indicate possible risk or vulnerability;
- ensuring attendance concerns are escalated appropriately where safeguarding concerns are identified;
- supporting the school in fulfilling its statutory duties relating to attendance, children missing education and safeguarding;
- reporting regularly to the Deputy Headteacher regarding attendance trends, concerns and actions taken.

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 attendance officer;

- raising any safeguarding concerns relating to attendance or punctuality with the school's Attendance Officer 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.

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 attendance officer via attendance@riversidebridge.com or on 0203 946 5809.

Section 04

PUNCTUALITY

Promoting readiness. Identifying barriers. Responding early.

4.1 Registration times and lateness

Morning registers must be completed by class staff by 9:30am. The morning registration period remains open until 9:45am to allow the Attendance Team to account for pupils arriving after the register has been taken.

Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9:45am will be recorded as late before the register closes, using the appropriate attendance code.

Pupils arriving after 9:45am will be recorded as late after the register has closed, unless another authorised absence code applies.

Where lateness becomes frequent or persistent, the school will work with the pupil and their family to understand the reasons, identify any barriers and agree appropriate support. This may include consideration of transport arrangements, medical or SEND-related needs, family circumstances or other factors affecting punctuality.

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 wellbeing, will be discussed with parents/carers and reviewed through the school's attendance and child protection and safeguarding procedures.

Operational punctuality intervention triggers

To ensure consistency and early intervention, Riverside Bridge School applies the following punctuality trigger points. These triggers support the school's graduated response and provide opportunities to identify and address barriers before lateness becomes entrenched.

Number of late arrivals within a calendar month	School response
3 late arrivals	Telephone call from the Attendance Officer to discuss punctuality and offer support where required
5 late arrivals	Punctuality concern letter and email issued to parents/carers
10 late arrivals	Formal meeting with parents/carers to discuss concerns, identify barriers and agree supportive actions

The school recognises that lateness may be linked to SEND, transport difficulties, family circumstances, medical needs or emotional wellbeing. Therefore, responses remain supportive, proportionate and tailored to individual circumstances.

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.

Section 05

OUR SUPPORT-FIRST APPROACH TO ATTENDANCE

Listening first. Removing barriers. Escalating proportionately.

Riverside Bridge School recognises that absence from school is most often a symptom of wider barriers, rather than a standalone issue. 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.

Attendance concerns should never be considered in isolation. They are always viewed alongside the pupil's safeguarding needs, SEND profile, medical needs, emotional wellbeing, engagement and wider family circumstances. Leaders and staff are expected to exercise professional curiosity where attendance patterns change unexpectedly or where the explanation provided does not fully account for the pattern of absence.

The school follows the national attendance framework of:

listening and understanding → facilitating support → formalising support → enforcing (as a last resort).

In practice, this means:

- listening carefully to pupils and families to understand barriers to attendance, using appropriate communication approaches and professional interpretation where required for pupils with SEND and communication needs;
- 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, child protection and safeguarding procedures are followed in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Section 06

PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

Identifying risk. Intensifying support. Preventing disengagement.

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, SEND, medical needs, and safeguarding concerns.

The school's response to attendance concerns is underpinned by its Support-First Approach to Attendance (Section 5), which prioritises early identification, partnership working, and proportionate escalation. Attendance concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity to prevent absence from becoming entrenched.

Stage 1 - Early Concern (attendance below 95%)

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 established.

Where a pupil's attendance falls below the school's attendance expectation of 95%, the Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers to:

- inform them of the pupil's current attendance percentage;
- discuss the importance of regular attendance;
- identify any emerging barriers to attendance;
- offer advice, guidance and support where appropriate.

The school also monitors frequency of absence and patterns of attendance. To support early intervention, the following operational attendance triggers apply:

Number of absences within a calendar month	School response
2 absences	Telephone discussion with parents/carers
3 absences	Attendance concern letter and email
5 absences	Attendance meeting with parents/carers

Attendance monitoring at this stage will also consider:

- repeated absence on particular days;

- frequent Monday and/or Friday absences;
- recurring absences linked to specific lessons, activities or routines;
- emerging punctuality concerns;
- attendance patterns involving siblings attending the school.

The purpose of Stage 1 is to identify concerns early, understand barriers and prevent attendance difficulties from becoming established.

Stage 2 - At risk of Persistent Absence (attendance below 92%)

Where attendance falls below 92%, the pupil will be considered at risk of persistent absence.

At this stage:

- attendance will be monitored more closely;
- attendance patterns and attendance history will be reviewed;
- parents/carers will be contacted by the Attendance Officer;
- barriers to attendance will be explored in greater detail;
- support strategies will be discussed and implemented where appropriate;
- attendance may be discussed with the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer where necessary.

Additional support may include:

- pastoral support;
- wellbeing support;
- family support;
- transport liaison;
- reasonable adjustments linked to SEND or medical needs;
- multi-agency involvement where appropriate.

Where attendance remains below 92% for a sustained period, or continues to decline despite support, an Attendance Review Meeting may be arranged with parents/carer.

The purpose of this stage is to prevent attendance from declining to persistent absence levels through timely intervention and collaborative support.

Stage 3 - Persistent Absence (attendance below 90%)

Where attendance falls below 90%, the pupil is classified as persistently absent in line with Department for Education guidance.

Where attendance concerns persist despite earlier support, the school formalises intervention whilst maintaining high expectations and a supportive, proportionate approach.

At this stage:

- a formal attendance meeting will be arranged with parents/carers;

- attendance concerns will be discussed in detail;
- barriers to attendance will be reviewed;
- an Attendance Support Plan may be implemented;
- attendance targets and review dates will be agreed;
- attendance will be monitored over an agreed review period;
- the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer may become involved.

Supportive strategies may include:

- pastoral check-ins;
- family support referrals;
- emotional wellbeing support;
- safeguarding support;
- attendance mentoring;
- requests for medical evidence where appropriate and proportionate;
- liaison with external agencies.

Parents/carers will receive written confirmation of agreed actions and review arrangements.

Stage 4 - Severe Absence (attendance below 50%)

Where attendance reaches severe levels, intervention is intensified in line with the school's Support-First Approach to Attendance, with safeguarding and multi-agency working taking priority.

If attendance falls below 50%, a formal attendance meeting will be arranged involving:

- the Attendance Officer;
- the Deputy Headteacher;
- the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer (where appropriate);
- parents/carers.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- review barriers to attendance;
- assess safeguarding concerns;
- evaluate previous support strategies;
- agree a clear action plan;
- determine whether additional services need to be involved.

However, Stage 4 may be triggered before the severe absence threshold is reached where:

- attendance is declining rapidly;
- safeguarding concerns are present;
- attendance concerns are linked to wider family difficulties;
- previous support has not been effective;

- there are significant concerns regarding a pupil's welfare, wellbeing or educational engagement.

This stage may involve some or all of the following:

- referral to external agencies;
- Early Help involvement;
- safeguarding intervention;
- attendance home visits;
- direct work with the pupil and family;
- attendance support planning;
- multi-agency meetings;
- review of EHCP provision where appropriate;
- support to facilitate a return to full-time attendance.

Legal intervention

Legal intervention is always considered a last resort and only where:

- voluntary support has not been engaged with;
- formal support has not led to sustained improvement;
- support is not considered appropriate due to the nature of the absence;
- statutory thresholds have been met.

Where appropriate, a Notice to Improve may be issued in accordance with local authority procedures.

Further action may include:

- involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Service;
- penalty notices in line with national guidance;
- prosecution under relevant attendance legislation.

Any legal intervention will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of SEND, medical needs, safeguarding considerations, equality duties and the support already provided by the school.

Section 07

HOLIDAYS AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Applying expectations. Considering exceptional circumstances.

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. Family holidays will not be authorised during term time. Other requests for leave of absence will only be authorised where the statutory criteria are met and the Headteacher considers the circumstances exceptional.

Section 08

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Identifying absence. Protecting pupils. Acting without delay.

Children missing 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. The school's Children Missing Education procedures operate alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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.

Section 09

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Recording accurately. Following up promptly. Maintaining accountability.

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 Attendance Officer.

The school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil where reasonably possible, to support timely follow-up of absence and child protection 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's Attendance Officer, where a message can be left on the answer machine, with a member of the admin team or emailed to the school email, attendance@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. Requests for medical evidence will always remain proportionate and will take account of the pupil's individual SEND, disability, medical circumstances and any relevant professional advice.

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 Deputy Headteacher 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 for the absence. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's primary contacts, additional emergency contacts provided by the family may also be contacted;
- identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised in accordance with the Department for Education's attendance guidance and the school's Attendance Policy;
- ensure the appropriate attendance code is recorded as soon as the reason for the absence has been established, and no later than five working days after the relevant session(s);

- maintain daily contact with the parents/carers where the absence continues without explanation, to establish the reason for absence and ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary. In the absence of any immediate safeguarding concern, the school will normally undertake a safeguarding home visit on the third consecutive day of unexplained absence. Home visits may be undertaken by the Attendance Officer, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or another authorised member of staff, depending on the purpose of the visit and the level of safeguarding concern. Where safeguarding concerns are identified earlier, action may be taken immediately in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. If contact has still not been made following the home visit, any referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or another authorised safeguarding lead in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- where absence is due to confirmed illness and continues beyond five consecutive school days, the Deputy Headteacher will determine whether a welfare home visit or other supportive intervention is appropriate, taking account of the pupil's individual circumstances;
- where appropriate, notify the Partnership Learning Attendance Officer and the relevant Local Authority/EHCP Team of unexplained or persistent absence, in accordance with statutory requirements and local procedures;
- offer appropriate support to the pupil and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance where barriers have been identified;
- identify, at the earliest opportunity, whether support from wider partners or external agencies is required, including Early Help or other specialist services, and make appropriate referrals where necessary;
- where support has not been appropriate, has not been successful or has not been engaged with, consider the use of a Notice to Improve, Penalty Notice or other legal intervention, in accordance with Section 10.2 of this policy.

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.

Section 10

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Applying codes consistently. Considering circumstances. Acting proportionately.

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 2026 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.

Section 11

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

Encouraging participation. Recognising progress. Strengthening belonging.

Riverside Bridge School promotes regular attendance through a whole-school culture in which pupils feel safe, valued, understood and supported to participate in school life. We recognise that positive attendance is strengthened through trusting relationships, meaningful learning, effective communication and early support when barriers arise.

Our approach focuses on making school accessible and ensuring that pupils and families understand the importance of regular attendance, while recognising that some pupils may experience significant barriers associated with SEND, medical needs, emotional wellbeing, transport or wider family circumstances.

The school promotes attendance by:

- maintaining high expectations for attendance and punctuality while responding proportionately to individual circumstances;
- creating safe, welcoming and communication-rich environments in which pupils experience belonging and positive relationships;
- providing an ambitious, meaningful and personalised curriculum that supports pupils to engage and participate;
- identifying emerging attendance concerns early and working with pupils and families to understand and remove barriers;
- making reasonable adjustments and providing personalised support where SEND, medical needs or other vulnerabilities affect attendance;
- maintaining regular and constructive communication with parents and carers about attendance, progress and any emerging concerns;
- recognising improvements in attendance and punctuality, including successful reintegration following periods of absence;
- celebrating pupils' engagement, participation and achievements across school life;
- working with external professionals and services where additional support is required to enable regular attendance.

Recognising attendance and progress

Positive recognition forms part of the school's wider approach to encouraging participation and belonging. Recognition is intended to acknowledge effort, progress and achievement rather than penalise pupils for absence arising from circumstances beyond their control.

Where appropriate, pupils may be recognised for:

- sustained or improved attendance;
- improved punctuality;
- overcoming individual barriers to attending school;
- successful return or reintegration following a period of absence;
- increased engagement with school routines and learning; and
- individual progress towards agreed attendance goals.

Recognition may include praise, communication with families, House points or other appropriate forms of celebration within the school's wider recognition systems.

Attendance percentages alone will not determine whether a pupil is recognised or celebrated. Individual circumstances, including SEND, disability, medical needs and other unavoidable reasons for absence, will always be taken into account.

This ensures that the school's approach remains equitable, inclusive and supportive, while maintaining high expectations and promoting the importance of regular attendance for learning, wellbeing, relationships, independence and preparation for adulthood.

Section 12

SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO ARE ABSENT OR RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Understanding barriers. Planning reintegration. Restoring access.

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 entitlement to a full-time 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 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 professionals will work together to identify barriers to attendance and agree appropriate support strategies.

The pupil's views, experiences and preferences will be sought wherever possible using communication methods appropriate to their needs. This may include verbal communication, AAC, observations, changes in regulation or presentation, communication passports, information from parents/carers, and professional interpretation from staff, therapists or other professionals where appropriate.

School-based interventions may include Zones of Regulation strategies, Thrive interventions, support from the school's in-house Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist, reasonable

adjustments, transition support, personalised attendance plans and, where appropriate, a reduced timetable in line with statutory guidance.

External support may include referrals to outside agencies, Educational Psychology, CAMHS, Early Help, Family Support Services, health professionals and other specialist services as appropriate.

Parents/carers will be signposted to relevant local authority services, support groups and community resources where appropriate.

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, 2026), 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.

Section 13

ATTENDANCE MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND USE OF DATA

Identifying patterns. Evaluating impact. Informing support.

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 wellbeing, 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.

Attendance information forms part of a pupil's safeguarding record where relevant and will be managed confidentially in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection Policy.

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.

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.

Attendance monitoring also includes:

- pupils whose attendance falls below 95%;
- pupils whose attendance falls below 92% and are therefore at risk of persistent absence;
- pupils with repeated absences within a calendar month;
- pupils with emerging patterns of absence;
- pupils with repeated lateness.

Operational attendance and punctuality trigger points are used to ensure consistent identification, monitoring and intervention across the school.
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.
Attendance information will be shared only with those professionals who have a legitimate safeguarding or educational need to know, in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection Policy.
Where attendance concerns form part of a safeguarding concern, attendance records will also contribute to the pupil's safeguarding record and will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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;
- pupil's voice and feedback, gathered through appropriate communication methods;
- safeguarding concerns or vulnerability factors;

- 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 child protection 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 issue.

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 considered.

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.

Attendance bandings

Attendance	Category
95% and above	Expected Attendance
between 92%-94.9%	At Risk of Persistent Absence
between 89.9%-50%	Persistent Absence
below 50%	Severe Absence

These bandings support early identification and intervention and do not replace professional judgement. Individual circumstances, SEND, medical needs and safeguarding considerations will always be considered.

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.

Section 14

RELATED POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy forms part of Riverside Bridge School's integrated governance framework. It should not be read in isolation but alongside the policies and procedures listed below, which collectively ensure a consistent, safe and effective approach to supporting pupils across the school.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Support Policy
- Bridging Communication Framework
- Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy
- Positive Support and Regulation Framework
- SEND Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Data Protection Policy

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

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Attendance 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 • 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 B

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 should 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:

- talk with you early;
- offer support and guidance;
- agree a plan together;
- 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 attendance@riversidebridge.com;

- providing evidence for appointments where needed;
- working with us if attendance becomes a concern;

We are here to help. Attendance concerns should always be discussed with the school at the earliest opportunity. The sooner we understand any barriers, the sooner we can work together to provide support.