

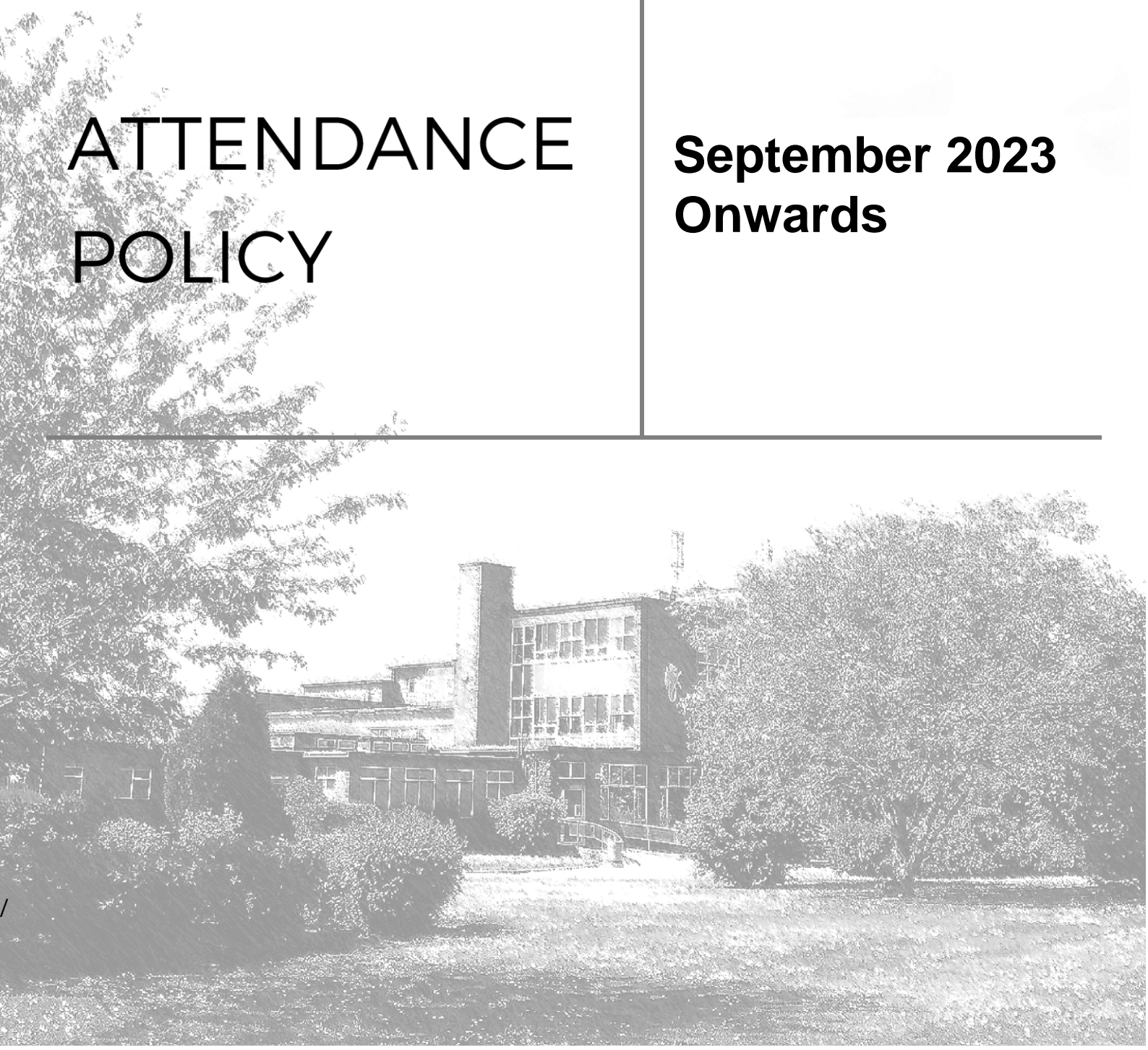
THE

WHITBY
HIGH SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

**September 2023
Onwards**



VALUES

At The Whitby High School, every individual is valued for who they are and what they contribute to our school. Values are intended to support the personal, social and spiritual development of every person throughout our school.

Our values are:

COMMITMENT We commit to doing our best and always striving to improve.

INCLUSIVITY We value diversity and the unique contributions each individual brings to this school.

KINDNESS We treat everyone the best that we can, no matter who they are or how we feel about them.

RESPECT We respect one another's right to safety and dignity at school. We will speak to each other with calmness, politeness, and civility.

AIMS

We seek to fulfil the needs of learners in a caring, happy environment, enabling them to realise their true potential as young people and citizens.

We aim to enable our learners to:

PREPARE for adult life in a happy, caring and purposeful environment

ACHIEVE their full potential regardless of individual need

CARE for everyone and encourage respect and tolerance

ENJOY education and rejoice in success



Attendance monitoring procedures at the Whitby High School

Rationale

Reducing absence and persistent absence is a vital and integral part of schools' work to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure **every** student, regardless of race, social class or disability has access to the fulltime education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that students succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

Poor attendance at school vastly diminishes students' chances of fulfilling their potential and, in turn, their life chances.

Aims

- To highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality and keep the issues at the forefront of day-to-day practice.
- Establish a consistent set of protocols which all year groups to use across the School.
- Work in partnership with all agencies and parents/carers to promote good attendance.
- Establish a staged system which supports parents/carers and challenges those whose attendance causes concern.
- Use data effectively to identify groups of students with attendance issues and put strategies into place to support them (vulnerable groups such as those on free school meals).

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at The Whitby High School is the responsibility of everyone in the School community – students, parents and all staff.

Students - All students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Students who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support. Students whose attendance is either very good or improved will be recognised through the School's rewards system.

Parents/carers – Under 'The Education Act 1996', parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and in a punctual manner. Parents/carers are expected to use Class Charts to keep up to date with their child's current attendance. In addition, the School expects that students are properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns, which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents/carers should

avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during School hours. Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be placed on the School's 'Attendance Management' (see Appendix 1 at the rear of this policy). Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence".

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a 'parent' and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

School – Staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Class Charts. Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of **all** School staff (not just teaching and pastoral staff). The School will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absences, liaising closely with parents/carers. This will also include in school lesson absence which may result in the school putting sanctions in place for persistent lesson avoidance. Staff will respond to all absences firmly and consistently.

We expect our students to have an attendance rate above 97%
We make no apology for raising the issue of attendance with parents/carers

How do the attendance procedures work at The Whitby High School?

This School's policy is driven through the DFE attendance guidance, "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> and Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which states that it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

Authorised (where the school approves a pupil absence)

Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all its pupils. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform the school on the **first day of absence** and each following day of absence, stating the reason. **This should reported to our attendance team via phone call or voicemail on 0151 3558445 or email on attendance@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk**

Please see 'Appendix 1' for a brief summary of the School's procedures.

The system is based on efficiency, whereby concerns are progressed through the procedures in an expedient manner. Support will be offered to those who require it.

Regular Attendance meetings occur and attendance data is discussed weekly to ensure cases are acted upon swiftly. The Attendance team will monitor and track data and actions with regard to attendance. There is regular consultation with the Pastoral Leaders to ensure that support is offered to those who require it the most.

Families may receive the letters outlined in Appendix 1 (Stage 2) or be subject to further action, such as support from designated staff (see 'Appendix 2').

Persistent absence without good reason may result in referral to the Local Authority for legal action. Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence. The school will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. The school will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Attendance runs through whole-school self-review processes. Pastoral Leaders meet with tutors regularly to update cases, it is a major feature of Pastoral year meetings and when Pastoral Leaders meet with their SLT links and the senior leadership team on an individual basis. In addition, it is a standing item on Governing Body agendas.

The School has a dedicated Attendance Lead to address attendance issues.

All absences must be authorised. Medical evidence is required for any unauthorised absences. Medical evidence is required for one-off absences of 5 days or more, 14 sessions or 7 days of absence triggers 'Medical Evidence'. This means that no more absences will be authorised without medical evidence (this can include appointment cards, copies of prescriptions or a dated letter from a medical practitioner). It is strongly advised that medical appointments are made outside of school hours where possible.

Parents/carers with children who have ten or more unauthorised absences may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. Each case will be assessed on its merits.

Parents/carers may be invited into school via a letter for an Attendance Panel meeting to discuss absences.

The issue of attendance will be highlighted around the School and in key messages to students and parents/carers.

It is recognised that some children struggle to attend school because of underlying emotional needs and the School follows the EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) guidance.

Disadvantaged groups of students will be monitored closely.

Early Identification and Intervention: assess, plan, do and review

Every pupil has a right to a full-time education and *The Whitby High school* sets high attendance expectations for all pupils. *The Whitby High school* will consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance and will consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For any child / child person who is absent from school it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place. All staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including Form Tutors, attendance, pastoral and SEND staff work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the child/young person and to overcome barriers to attendance. In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review will be followed utilising an array of school-based resources, evidence-based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, when needed.

Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on the individual child's needs such as an SDQ, SEND assessments and wellbeing assessments or may include the

holistic needs of the family, such as a TAF assessment. Assessments will include the views of the child/young person as well as parents/carers, and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well).

Assessments undertaken may identify that a child/young person is experiencing underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance. School follows the CWAC guidance for schools - Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Good practice guidance for schools (revised November 2021). This is a whole school framework with a graduated approach to support the early identification and intervention of children/young people who may struggle to cope in school/attend school.

Information from assessments will inform a SMART action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services as appropriate. For example, Early Help and Prevention and Social Care may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. SMART plans should be personalised to effectively meet a child / young person's needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.

Regular reviews of support and attendance plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice and support from external services including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services.

Broken Weeks

The School analyses 'broken weeks' data. This measures how many times a student has at least one day off per week. It is possible for some students to have a high attendance percentage, but to have a significant number of broken weeks.

Staff responsibilities

All staff are responsible for keeping accurate registers and alerting the attendance team where a student appears to be missing. Staff will alert the Attendance team if they are supervising a child outside the normal class.

The **Assistant Headteacher** with responsibility for Attendance care will monitor overall School and Form attendance and punctuality. He will ensure systems are updated and rigorous and formulate the School's Attendance and Punctuality Action Plan. Reports will be provided to the Headteacher and Governing Body. In addition, he will liaise with agencies regarding more serious attendance concerns and provide professional challenge to these agencies when appropriate. He will seek to secure the services of independent support consultants to provide additional support and challenge of our systems.

Pastoral Leaders are accountable for overall student attendance rates in their respective Year groups. They will lead their tutors to ensure that systems are being followed and issues are identified and acted upon expediently. Pastoral Leaders are accountable to their Pastoral Directors and the Assistant Headteacher in charge of Attendance and will work closely with the Education Welfare Service and other professionals, in order to address attendance issues. Daily home

contact will take place for priority students. Pastoral Leaders and Assistant Pastoral Leaders will keep attendance as a major priority in their individual teams.

Form tutors will monitor attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. The key focus is for those students on an attendance rate of between 90% and 97%. Form tutors will keep in contact with students who are absent for extended periods for medical or other reasons to ensure a sense of belonging is maintained. Tutors will liaise closely with their Pastoral Leader to ensure attendance and punctuality concerns are addressed.

The **Attendance Team** consists of three staff. The attendance team will contact home to ascertain the reason for absence on the first day of absence and offer advice and support on returning to school. The **Attendance Lead** has overall responsibility for making the 'system' in this policy work on the ground. He/she will manage the Attendance Officer. In addition, he/she will meet regularly with the Pastoral Leaders and identify priority cases and actions. Please see **Appendix 2** for further details.

Student 'Attendance Report'

Students whose attendance is causing concern may be placed on Attendance Report. This will be monitored by the form tutor. This measure is usually, but not always, for students whose attendance is less than 90%. Students whose attendance falls below 90% will be allocated a mentor which is usually their form tutor or their Pastoral Leader for students in receipt of pupil premium funding.

Punctuality

Good punctuality to school is also vital in a child's education. This sets the tone for the day and prepares students for the world of work, where poor punctuality is not tolerated by employers. **Under The Education Act 1996, it is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure their child is punctual to school.** Persistent lateness due to parents'/carers' own circumstances is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with School policy (outlined below). However, we do realise that there are times when students will be late due to no fault of their own. It would be helpful if parents/carers would send a note on such occasions, explaining why their child is late. The School will then take this into consideration. As in all cases of School discipline, the School's decision will be final.

Students are expected to be in school by 8.25 am and in form by 8.30 am. If students arrive in School after 8.30, they are late and will be marked accordingly on the register. Students who are late without explanation will be detained after school for ten minutes. Students late twice in a week will be kept for a longer period. Persistent lateness will lead to conversations with home and possibly further consequences. Text messages will be sent home to inform parents/carers if their child has arrived late to school.

Remember, every minute counts. If a child is ten minutes late every day, this equates to nearly seven days of absence from lessons over a school year.

Students coming to School after registration closes at 9am, without a valid reason, will be given a 'U' mark. This affects a student's attendance, as a 'U' mark is classed as an unauthorised absence for that session (half of the day). Ten 'U' marks within a term will, in all probability, lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Reporting absence

Parents/carers are expected to contact the School daily to report absence detailing their child's name, tutor group and reason for absence. On the child's return to school, a note should be given (electronically or on paper) to their form tutor explaining why they were absent. **It is vital that absences are reported, as unreported absences are classified as unauthorised.** Ten unauthorised absences within a term may trigger a Fixed Penalty Notice. Parents/carers will be notified by letter if there are unexplained absences but good communication with the School can prevent this from happening.

Text alerts for absent students

The School operates a texting service to inform parents/carers if their child has no mark on the register in the morning. Texts are usually sent at 9.30 am.

Medical appointments

Parents/carers should inform the School if their child has a medical appointment. This will prevent a text being sent home on the day of the appointment. It is vital that students sign into School following appointments. If a child arrives before 10.30, having provided proof of a medical appointment, they will be marked late rather than a medical absence on the School attendance register. Please endeavour to make such appointments outside of school hours.

Young carers

We realise that being a young carer can be an immensely challenging situation. This is taken into consideration when dealing with attendance and punctuality issues. Support will be offered by the School whenever possible. Indeed, the School will make every effort to ensure the root cause of any lateness is made apparent and appropriate support is sourced.

Students missing from class/leaving the School site

This is the responsibility of all staff. Teaching staff must alert the Attendance team immediately if a child is absent from class via Class Charts. The same procedure applies if students are witnessed when leaving the School site without permission.

Alternative Provision

A small number of students attend alternative placements as a means of increasing engagement in education. Attendance is monitored daily by the Attendance Officer. Pastoral Directors and

leaders will conduct regular visits to alternative education placements to ensure that students are attending regularly whilst ensuring that attendance issues are resolved quickly.

Leave of absence from school (including holiday requests)

Please complete a 'Leave of Absence' form for requests for known absences. This has been sent to all parents. It can be accessed from the school website, the attendance team or reception. The School does not encourage any leave of absence to be taken during term time. We recognise that holidays can be much cheaper during term time and that work commitments can make taking holidays during School breaks difficult, but doing this can be disruptive both to children's learning and the School.

The Government has issued strict guidelines to schools regarding leave of absence for students. Under these guidelines, Headteachers are not able to grant leave of absence for students during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances and please be advised there are **very few** exceptions.

The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carer's working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member

Please note: there is a common misconception that parents/carers can remove their child from school for up to ten days a year for the purpose of family holidays – this is not the case. Should parents/carers take a holiday in term time without School consent, the absence will be unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

Religious Observance

We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance.

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify *The Whitby High School* in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

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Appendix 1 - FLOWCHART OF ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT AT TWHS

STAGE 1

- Data to be analysed regularly and the data will focus upon:

97% and below
14+ " codes (ongoing throughout the year)
10 'G' codes
10 + 'O' and 'U' codes (termly as above)
Persistent absence threshold (to ensure that all students on this list are being supported appropriately)



STAGE 2

Decisions to be made which letters need to be sent out to parents ****Letter 1** (which is a general concern letter) will, in most cases, need to have been sent prior to sending **Letter 2** (Attendance Panel Meeting Letter) ******

Letter 2 – Attendance Panel Meeting Letter/Invite for parent. The LA views this as an early intervention tool. It is expected that an Action Plan will be drawn up to support a student's attendance.

A time for this **Letter 2** meeting needs to be allocated. The PL will lead this meeting (this meeting can be for unauthorised **and/or** authorised absences). Even if parents do not attend a meeting an **Action Plan** should be drawn up in their absence, as this forms part of the evidence for any future legal processes.

Medical Evidence Letter – this can be considered (once the threshold of 14+ sessions of absence has been reached) at **any** stage of the process when it becomes appropriate to do so.

Should the measures taken above not lead to an improvement in attendance, the Education Welfare Service will become involved and the School will pursue **Fixed Penalty notices** and **court action** in order to improve attendance.

Appendix 2 - The role of specific staff in Attendance Monitoring

<p>Form tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep attendance at the forefront of priorities • Check registers and correct erroneous codes daily • Ensure students are aware of data • Monitor the '90-95%' cohort closely • Make contact home for students who are absent for a period of time to ensure a sense of belonging continues. • Regular conversations with students to promote the importance of attendance • Monitor students who are on Attendance Report 	<p>Pastoral Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the drive to improve attendance within their year groups • Lead the form tutors and ensure cases are acted on • Ensure the issue of attendance is given a high profile at all times, including building a culture of celebration of improvement • Follow the 'Staged System' and ensure appropriate action is taken • Maintain accurate records and report to SLT and the Headteacher as required • Support the Attendance Team with family contact and completion of paperwork when required • Lead multi-agency approaches in school, to support good attendance • Contact home regarding students who are persistently late to school.
<p>Attendance Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the school drive to improve attendance • Foster a culture of praise for good and improved attendance • Lead the 'morning call' process • Regular consultations with Pastoral Leaders to address poor student attendance • Monitor and implement school systems and procedures (regular 'staged' letters and meetings with families) • Ensure records of intervention are maintained and acted upon • Early intervention with identified families, to include work with partner primary schools • Entrenched cases • Liaison with the Local Authority • Strategic oversight of formal processes, such as FPNs and prosecution • Lead the school's response in line with the EBSA framework. 	<p>The School Attendance Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of school systems to monitor attendance • Ensure contact is made home to ascertain reasons for absence and offer advice and support on returning to school. • Production of data to monitor attendance • Attend meetings regarding attendance as required • Production of letters and administration to support whole-school work on attendance • Meet regularly with the School Welfare Officer to review systems

Appendix 3 - What does my attendance rate mean?

There are **190** school days in a year. The following chart shows how percentages equate to actual days of absence:

95%	9.5 days off
92%	15 days
90%	19 days
88%	23 days
85%	28.5 days
80%	38 days

Appendix 4 – The Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Process

The Education Welfare Service are able to send a Fixed Penalty Notice on behalf of the school to the parents of any student who has more than 10 unauthorised sessions absent from school (1 session = ½ day). Students who arrive after the close of registers will be coded as 'U' – unauthorised absence.

The Fixed Penalty Warning letter gives parents a period of 15 school days of monitoring. If, at the end of this period, there has not been an improvement, or an improvement has been made but not sustained, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. Each parent/carer would have to pay £60.00 per child. If this is not paid within 21 days the payment increases to £120.00 per child per parent. Payments will not be accepted after 28 days. If parents do not pay, the Local Authority will prosecute in the Magistrates' Court. If convicted the parent may receive a fine of up to £1000.

As from the 1st September 2017, any requests made for a holiday to be taken during term time which is not considered by the head teacher to be due to exceptional circumstances, will be recorded as unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

Appendix 5- Attendance codes

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day