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PADDINGTON ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

2026-27

Date of last review	October 2026	Review period	1 year
Date of next review	October 2027	Owner	DRI
Type of policy	Statutory	Approval	LGB
SLT member in charge	DRI		

Summary: Attendance At a Glance

Attendance Matters

At Paddington Academy we have the highest expectations across all areas of our school including attendance. We want all pupils to feel they belong here and are valued and we do this by creating a culture where attendance matters and absence is noticed. We work with our pupils and their parents to ensure that they have the highest possible attendance at school. We believe that this is the best way for them to achieve success as this allows pupils to make the most of everything that we have to offer as a school.

There is a clear link between academic outcomes and school attendance and it is important that parents understand that every day their child misses school affects their grades and their future earnings.

There are 175 non-school days per year for things such as holidays, appointments and for pupils to spend time at home and with their families. This means that there is no reason, except in extreme circumstances, for a pupil to miss a day's education. This is time in school that they will never get back and when this happens they fall behind their peers who were in school, learning with their peers and their teachers.

If a pupil misses one session in a week (this accounts to half a day) their attendance will fall to 90% and they will be classified as being "persistently absent". This means that they will miss 19 days of education in a year and risk dropping at least one grade in their GCSEs. Please remember that GCSE outcomes can be impacted if this absence takes place in any year of their education leading to Year 11.

It is important that we remember that the school and parents want the same thing; for our pupils to achieve success, have the opportunity to attend university and to lead happy and fulfilled lives. We need the help of parents in teaching our pupils the value of attending school each and every day and with this in mind, we expect that:

- Students always come into school, even if they are not feeling 100**%.** We have trained first-aid staff and the pastoral team will check in on students, work hard to help pupils to get through the day and update you where possible
- All appointments, medical or otherwise, are booked outside of school times
- Where an appointment is unavoidable, we expect all pupils to come to school before and/or after their appointment so that they do not miss a full day of school
- Pupils should not be taken out of school for term-time holidays as these are not permitted
- Pupils who are late to school or late to any lesson within the school day will be sanctioned with a detention on the same day

We do appreciate that at times, pupils may not be able to attend school. We ask our parents and carers to follow the processes outlined below. They support our safeguarding procedures and they aim to support parents to ensure that children regularly attend school.

Absence

If your child is unable to attend school, we must speak to parent/carer regarding this absence on every day of absence. This is a non-negotiable and ensures that we appropriately safeguard every pupil but also support our parents so that their children can return to school as quickly s possible.

Contact with the school regarding absence should be directed to your child's Head of Year or Student Support Mentor in the first instance. If you are unable to speak to either of these members of staff directly, you should call the school phone number of 0207 479 3900 and select option 1, with the following details:

1. Full name of the student
2. Student's year group and tutor group
3. Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child
4. Reason for absence and your plans to support your child to return to school

If your child is absent and you have not yet spoken to your child's Head of Year or Student Support Mentor, please expect a call from them from the school to discuss your child's absence and to see if we can support in any way to get the pupil into school. This will happen as early in the school day as possible and typically this will be before the end of Period 1 which ends at 10:10am.

In this conversation we will remind parents of the importance of attendance, look to support that can be offered to get the pupil into school as soon as possible and to discuss the lessons and impact that this absence will have on the child. We aim to reach an agreement in this contact on the time your child will next attend school

If contact cannot be made with a parent, we will be persistent in contacting an emergency contact to discuss the absence of the pupil verbally over the phone. If this is still not successful, we will contact the parent with information regarding the importance of contacting the school immediately to discuss the absence. Where there are concerns regarding no contact, these concerns will be reviewed by the Child Protection and Safeguarding team and these concerns will be forwarded on to the local authority/police regarding welfare checks where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the parent to be in contact with the school daily regarding absence.

Attending an Appointment

Please schedule dental and non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours. We know this might be tough, but it is important for maximising your child's learning time. If rescheduling is not possible, parents must send evidence to the Head of Year or Student Support Mentor, this cannot be a forwarded message and must be a screenshot showing the sender as evidence of their appointment. We need this for our records but also we are unable to allow a student to leave the school site unless this is seen. Pupils must come into school before their appointments where possible and be picked up and returned to school if their appointment ends during the school day – they should not miss a full day of school for a short medical appointment. For more details, check section 6.2 of the full policy.

Known Absence

Your child may need to miss school for exceptional reasons. If so, parents/carers should ask the Principal. They should use the yellow attendance form available in the attendance office. Where possible, this should be made at least four weeks before the required date. The form should be completed and brought back into school and handed to the attendance office. If such a request is made, the school expects it to be short. But even then, they may not be able to approve it.

If the Principal does not authorise it, then any absence is 'unauthorised' and can incur a penalty.

We must follow legal rules. Therefore, we cannot approve holiday requests during term time. Additionally, we may issue penalty notices. For more details, please check the Attendance Policy and Procedures (section 6.1).

Support

We take absence very seriously. We are committed to supporting any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly. We will target support for any pupil whose attendance falls below 96%. Further information on support can be found in the full policy in point 6 "Understanding Barriers to Attendance".

Punctuality

The school day starts at between 8.15 – 8.30 (dependent on the year group of the child) and we expect your child to be in school at that time. Registers close at 9.15am and arrival after that time will mean the child is

late. Lateness means they miss out on important routines which help get their day off to a positive start. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons during the day for others.

How we manage lateness to school and lessons

Lateness to school

Pupils who arrive less than 15-minutes late to a school will receive a 1 hour detention on the same day.

Pupils who arrive more than 15-minutes late to a school will receive a 2 hour detention on the same day.

Lateness to lessons

Pupils who arrive late to a lesson will receive a 1 hour detention on the same day.

Parents may face prosecution if their child is often late after the register has closed. We will monitor this and offer support to address the issues. If the problem persists, we might take action.

The rest of this document outlines our Attendance Policy and Procedures. We encourage all parents to review it. This ensures they understand how we handle attendance. If getting your child to school is hard, please contact your child's Head of Year or Student Support Mentor in the first instance.

Part A – Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

This Attendance Policy outlines the culture and approach to supporting attendance at our academy. The second part of the document outlines the more detailed procedures, roles and responsibilities related to pupil attendance that operate at our academy. Through all that we do to manage attendance, we are committed to creating a positive learning environment, supporting pupil achievement, and complying with legal requirements.

This is an extremely successful academy, and all pupils play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve their best. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that parents[1] make sure that children attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. **Ensuring your child's regular attendance is your legal responsibility**.

The principles of a 'support first approach' are adopted and we seek to:

Support first approach (as set out in DFE Guidance)

[1] *The definition of a parent can be found in the Education Act 1996, and this applies to all the legislation to which this guidance relates. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this guidance include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) who has care of the child. To reflect this, this guidance uses 'parent' to refer to both parents and carers.*

Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
Monitor	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
Listen and understand	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
Facilitate support	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
Formalise support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.
Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

2. Aims

Our aim is to create a school environment where children feel they belong and want to come to school. We believe our school is a great place to learn, and that being in school day in, day out, is in the best interests of all our pupils. However, we recognise that there will be times when there may be barriers that prevent children from attending school. In these instances we will act early to understand the issue, provide support and work with the child and their family to get them back to regular attendance as quickly as possible.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.

- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[2] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[3] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to be at school every day unless in extreme, unavoidable, circumstances. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015', 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013' and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) – or ask the school for printed copies.

2.1. Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed

[2] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

[3] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware sudden or gradual changes or indeed persistent trends in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (published May 2022 and applying from 19 August 2024) and the accompanying Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (August 2024).

It also reflects the current statutory framework for attendance enforcement, including the National Framework for Penalty Notices introduced in 2024, and replaces reliance on earlier standalone guidance on parental responsibility measures.

This policy is informed by the following legislation, which sets out the legal powers and duties governing school attendance:

- Education Act 1996 (particularly sections 7, 19 and 444-447)
- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Sentencing Act 2020
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions across the school year, for whatever reason. Pupils who miss more than 50% of their possible sessions are classified as 'severely absent'

The school will ensure that attendance data is routinely monitored, analysed and acted upon to identify emerging concerns and prevent attendance issues becoming entrenched. Attendance information will be used to:

- identify pupils whose attendance is declining or causing concern;
- identify patterns and trends within groups of pupils, including vulnerable groups;
- understand barriers to attendance and target support effectively;
- evaluate the impact of attendance interventions and support strategies;
- inform discussions with pupils, parents, governors and external agencies where appropriate.

The school will make use of available DfE attendance data tools, including the Monitor Your School Attendance (MYSA) service and the View Your Education Data platform, where available. These tools enable schools to identify attendance trends, analyse attendance among specific pupil groups, compare attendance with local and national benchmarks, and target resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Attendance data will be considered alongside wider information about a pupil's circumstances, recognising that absence is often a symptom of underlying issues. Where concerns are identified, the school will seek to work in partnership with pupils, parents and relevant professionals to understand barriers and provide timely support before attendance deteriorates further. This approach reflects the principles set out in the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance and its guidance on communicating effectively with parents about attendance.

The school will regularly review attendance data for vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, children in care, previously looked-after children, pupils subject to child protection plans, children in need, and any other groups identified through local analysis. Targeted support will be implemented where attendance data indicates a pupil is at risk of becoming persistently or severely absent.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. This does not mean that we will not challenge parents regarding absence from school and parents with children who regularly take unauthorised absences from school should expect that we will have regular and robust discussions about absence from school. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

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. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period and to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

We recognise that strong relationships between home and school are fundamental to improving attendance. Communications with parents will focus on understanding barriers to attendance, providing practical support and highlighting the link between attendance, achievement and wider wellbeing. Attendance concerns will always be considered in the context of the individual child's circumstances.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand

- 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/trust 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.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Part B - What the Law Says and Our Procedures

1. Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (6 times a year). It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher/Principal

The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher/principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Attendance Champion

Daniel Riley-Furse, our Vice-Principal, has strategic responsibility for attendance across the school. Their role is to strategically interrogate attendance by group, such as pupils entitled to Free School Meals, Pupil Premium pupils, pupils with SEND, Children in Care, attendance by Ethnicity and Language and to use this to inform the whole-school attendance routines and systems. They also lead the wider attendance team which includes the attendance officer and the Pastoral Team who lead on daily absence contact, lead student messaging and host parent meetings to intervene when attendance falls below our target of 96% attendance.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Supports with the daily contact made for absent students
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Vice-Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the headteacher as requested.
- Reports directly to the local authority regarding attendance returns

The Pastoral Team

The pastoral team supports the above and are responsible for daily contact as outlined in our daily absence process in this policy. They also lead on attendance meetings with parents and student messaging which is designed to motivate students to attend school every day.

2. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information

regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.**

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date, it is a legal document. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

3. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken, the appropriate attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil. Please refer to **Working Together To Improve School Attendance** for the code descriptors and also **Appendix 2** of this document. The school must record whether each pupil is:

- Attending, or
- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported using our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

4. Attending the School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Our pupils must arrive by between 8.15am and 8.30am (dependent on their year group) each school day.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark.

However, if the pupil arrives late due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

5. Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- Code K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code W: Attending work experience
- Code B: Attending any other approved education activity

- Code D: Dual registered at another setting

Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Our school should ensure that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school or Pupil Referral Unit for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity).

The school expects the alternative provision (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided on a daily or weekly basis, depending on the individual agreement with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provision (AP).

6. Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the pupil's absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable ▪ Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

6.1. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will consider each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion and only following approval by the Principal.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a yellow Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school and hand this back to the attendance office. Please remember that this leave of absence will only be permitted upon explicit approval of the Principal

The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

All term time absence for Children in Care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should make appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site to attend a medical appointment during the school day without parental confirmation and specific evidence of the medical appointment.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments from parents, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised. If this is not provided, we are not in a position to allow pupils to leave the school site or to authorise the absence.

6.3 Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

7. Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

7.1. Mobile pupil - Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

7.2. Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends.

In accordance with the law, the school will authorise absence for days exclusively set apart for religious observance, in line with statutory guidance and individual circumstances. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

7.3. Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)]' 2024[4] which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may therefore consider requesting medical evidence where reasonable and proportionate, taking account of accessibility, SEND and individual circumstances. If this is the case, the school will make parents aware of this expectation in advance.

Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

[4] Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If your child is unable to attend school, we must speak to parent/carer regarding this absence on every day of absence. This is a non-negotiable and ensures that we appropriately safeguard every pupil but also support our parents so that their children can return to school as quickly s possible.

Contact with the school regarding absence should be directed to your child's Head of Year or Student Support Mentor in the first instance. If you are unable to speak to either of these members of staff directly, you should call the school phone number of 0207 479 3900 and selecting option 1, with the following details:

1. Full name of the student
2. Student's year group and tutor group
3. Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child
4. Reason for absence and your plans to support your child to return to school

If you are unable to speak with your child's Head of Year or Student Support Mentor, you should expect to receive a call back from the school to discuss your child's absence and to see if we can support in any way to get the pupil into school. This will happen as early in the school day as possible and typically this will be before the end of Period 1.

In this conversation we will remind parents of the importance of attendance, look to support that can be offered to get the pupil into school as soon as possible and to discuss the lessons and impact that this absence will have on the child. We aim to reach an agreement in this contact

If contact cannot be made with a parent, we will be persistent in contacting an emergency contact to discuss the absence of the pupil and will attempt to do this over the phone. If this is still not successful, we will contact the parent with information regarding the importance of contacting the school immediately to discuss the absence. Where there are concerns regarding no contact, these concerns will be reviewed by the Child Protection and Safeguarding team and these concerns will be forwarded on to the local authority/police regarding welfare checks where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the parent to be in contact with the school daily regarding absence.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or child protection team for further information on the support available. The full details of this team can be found in our safeguarding policy.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, no pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

7.4. Suspensions (Exclusions)

In this policy, the word 'suspension' is used to refer to what legislation calls an exclusion for a fixed period. Suspensions and permanent exclusions are both types of exclusion, and where this policy uses the word 'exclusion' this includes both suspensions (fixed-period exclusions) and permanent exclusions.

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions. The full behaviour and exclusions policy for our school can be found on the school website/ Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the Headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

8. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

- Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

9. Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code G – Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N – Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U – Arrived in school after registration closed

10. Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

11. First Day of Absence Response

Our first day of absence response has been referenced throughout this policy and will include contact with the parent to discuss the reasons for the absence of the pupil as well as an agreement about the support to be put in place to get the child back into school as quickly as possible. We make contact for every absent pupil and will make every effort to consider Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing for follow-up with the safeguarding and child protection team.

The school requires Parents to supply details of **at least two** people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed annually with reminders in parents' evenings/newsletter etc.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may undertake our own 'safe and well' checks and/or request a Welfare Check from the police.

Where the absence continues and continues to be unexplained we may conduct an announced or unannounced home visit to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil.

12. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

We recognise and celebrate both excellent attendance and significant improvements in attendance. Our approach is designed to be inclusive and sensitive to pupils whose attendance may be affected by illness, SEND or circumstances beyond their control. Rewards and recognition systems will therefore acknowledge improvement as well as high attendance.

13. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Parents may be asked to meet with staff at school to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

14. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil of compulsory school age. This applies to resident and non-resident parents, and to any person who has care of the child, each of whom may be subject to legal sanctions if a child does not attend school regularly.

Unauthorised absence from school can lead to a range of outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered on an individual, case-by-case basis, taking account of the reasons for absence, any support provided, and the impact on the child's education and welfare.

Where a child fails to attend school regularly, parents may be subject to legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Where a family has more than one school-aged child, each child's attendance is considered separately and legal action may be taken in respect of each child.

Where unauthorised absence meets the national threshold, the school will normally request that the Local Authority considers the use of a Penalty Notice, unless there are reasonable grounds not to do so following consideration of the individual circumstances and any support provided. The Local Authority is responsible for deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice or to proceed directly to prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended to address lower-level offences and to act as a deterrent to improve future school attendance, for example where unauthorised leave of absence has been taken during term time. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and will only be used where it is considered the most appropriate response in the individual circumstances. In some cases, prosecution may be pursued without issuing a Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised absence may result in one of the following outcomes:

1. Penalty Notice. In line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices (introduced from 19 August 2024), a Penalty Notice may be issued where a pupil has accrued 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period, or in other circumstances where support is not appropriate, such as unauthorised leave of absence in term time.
    - The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent for a child is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid between days 22 and 28.
    - A second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period is £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days, with no option to pay a lower amount.
    - A third offence within a rolling three-year period will not result in a further Penalty Notice and is likely to result in prosecution.
      Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution.
2. Prosecution**.** Prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 may result in a fine of up to £2,500, and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to three months, depending on the offence.

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and in respect of each individual child. For example, where two parents are responsible for two children with irregular attendance, up to four Penalty Notices may be issued. Penalty Notices must be paid in full and cannot be paid by instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices and prosecution, a range of other legal interventions may be used where appropriate. Decisions about which intervention to pursue are made in partnership with the Local Authority and take into account the individual circumstances of the family. These include: Attendance contracts (previously known as parenting contracts), Education Supervision Orders, Parenting Orders, Attendance prosecution.

The school will work closely with the Local Authority to ensure that the most appropriate intervention is used, in line with the statutory support-first approach, rather than relying solely on Penalty Notices or prosecution.

15. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the local authority representative responsible for children missing education if unsure about any individual cases.

16. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within a reasonable period of time, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

17. Reporting to Parents

Attendance communications will be proportionate, personalised and age-appropriate. The school will recognise and celebrate improvements in attendance as well as high attendance, ensuring communications remain supportive and inclusive for pupils whose attendance is affected by illness, SEND or circumstances beyond their control.

We report attendance to parents on their child's attendance record termly via their school report. We also regularly email parents regarding attendance updates so that they are best placed to support their child to be in school as regularly as possible and are informed of any required improvements or congratulations to their child's attendance.

Where a child's attendance drops, for whatever reason below our high expectations, our school will contact to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to. We will also conduct parent meetings here in school.

18. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

We record absence and attendance information in our school management system, Arbor. This will include the agreed attendance code as well as details of our contact with the parent/carer regarding the absence.

19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Vice Principal with strategic responsibility for attendance, or more frequently where legislation or guidance changes. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Local Governing Body.

Guidance Documents (include but are not limited to):

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, updated June 2026; applies from 19 August 2024

National Framework for Penalty Notices introduced in 2024

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023)

Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023)

Keeping children safe in education (2025, and then 2026 from 1 September)

School census guidance and regulation

Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (DfE) (July 2026)

Travel to School for Pupils of Compulsory School Age

Appendix A – 5 Foundations of Effective Practice

- **Foundation 1**: *The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.*
- **Foundation 2:** *The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.*
- **Foundation 3:** *The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.*
- **Foundation 4:** *Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.*
- **Foundation 5:** *Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success*

Appendix B – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

Attending	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure