Attendance

Policy

Document Number:	OAK102
Version Number:	18
Responsibility:	**Office Manager**
Date Reviewed:	
Admin Use	
Approval Date:	06/03/24
Approval Meeting:	**OLGB 24Sp2**
Scheduled Review Date:	
Scheduled Review Meeting:	**OLGB 26Sp2**

Change Log

Date: 31/03/2023 Version: 17
We have updated this policy in line with the latest government guidance on providing remote education.

Date: 27/05/2022 Version: 16
We have updated this policy in line with the DfE's new guidance 'Working together to improve attendance'.

Date: 04/01/2022 Version: 15
We have published a minor update to the Primary Attendance and Absence Policy to clarify that the DSL should be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. We have also updated the Primary Attendance and Absence Procedures During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic appendix in line with the latest guidance on daily testing for close contacts of confirmed cases.

Date: 08/10/2021 Version: 14
We have updated this policy in line with 'Keeping children safe in education 2021' and the latest coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance. We have also made the coronavirus appendix into a separate download.

Date: 04/03/2021 Version: 13
We have updated this policy template in line with the latest government guidance. Appendix A now reflects the return of all pupils from 8 March, along with all relevant attendance expectations and requirements related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Date: 21/09/2020 Version: 12
We have updated this policy in line with 'Keeping children safe in education' 2020 and the latest DfE guidance on school attendance.

Contents

1. Legal framework

1.1. ==[Updated] This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:==

1.1.1. Education Act 1996

1.1.2. Equality Act 2010

1.1.3. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)

1.1.4. The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

1.1.5. Children and Young Persons Act 1963

1.1.6. DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

1.1.7. ==[Updated] DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'==

1.1.8. DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

1.1.9. DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

1.2.1. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1.2.2. Complaints Procedures Policy

1.2.3. Behaviour Policy

1.2.4. SEND Policy

1.2.5. Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

1.2.6. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

1.2.7. Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for:

2.1.1. Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

2.1.2. Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.

2.1.3. Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.

2.1.4. Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.

2.1.5. Regularly reviewing attendance data.

2.1.6. [MATs only] Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

2.1.7. Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

2.1.8. Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

2.1.9. Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

2.2. The headteacher is responsible for:

2.2.1. The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.

2.2.2. The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

2.2.3. Appointing a member of the SMT to the pastoral leader role.

2.2.4. Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.

2.2.5. Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

2.2.6. Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

2.3. Staff are responsible for:

2.3.1. Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.

2.3.2. Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

2.3.3. Modelling good attendance behaviour.

2.3.4. Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

2.3.5. Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

2.4 The pastoral leader is responsible for:

2.3.6. Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.

2.3.7. Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.

2.3.8. Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.

2.3.9. Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.

2.3.10. Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.

2.4. Pupils are responsible for:

2.4.1. Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.

2.4.2. Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

2.5. Parents are responsible for:

2.5.1. Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.

2.5.2. Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.

2.5.3. Updating the school if their details change.

2.5.4. The attendance of their children at school.

2.5.5. Promoting good attendance with their children.

3. [Updated] Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

3.1. Absence:

3.1.1. Arrival at school after the register has closed

3.1.2. [Updated] Not attending the registered school for any reason

3.2. Authorised absence:

3.2.1. An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave

3.2.2. Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave

3.2.3. Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave

3.2.4. An absence due to a family emergency judge on a case by case basis

3.3. Unauthorised absence:

3.3.1. Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason

3.3.2. Truancy before or during the school day

3.3.3. Absences which have never been properly explained

3.3.4. Arrival at school after the register has closed

3.3.5. Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

3.3.6. Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

3.3.7. Leaving school for no reason during the day

3.4. Persistent absence (PA):

3.4.1. Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

3.4.2. [New] Missing education

3.4.3.   Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

4.1.   The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

4.2.   Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

4.3.   The school day starts at 8:45am, and pupils must be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to arrive promptly to permit enough time for pupils to complete morning tasks and organise themselves for the day. Pupils will have a morning break, and a lunch break, detailed timings are available from the school – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

4.4.   Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

4.4.1.   The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

4.4.2.   The morning register will close at 9:15am. Pupils will receive a mark of unauthorised lateness if they do not attend school before this time. This will count towards unauthorised attendance

4.4.3.   [Updated] The afternoon register will be marked by 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

4.4.4.   [Updated] The afternoon register will close at 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

4.5.   Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

5.1.   Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

5.2.   Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by

text through Arbor as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. If the school have not heard from the parent, a telephone call will be made. <mark>If contact cannot be made with a family for three days then members of the Senior Leadership Team will make a home visit.</mark>

5.3.   The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

5.3.1.   Ascertain the reason for the absence.

5.3.2.   Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.

5.3.3.   Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

5.3.4.   Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

5.4.   Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

5.5.   The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. The school will also request supporting evidence where attendance is below 90%.

5.6.   In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the <mark>Pastoral Leader.</mark> The school will inform the LA and MAT of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

5.7.   If a pupil's attendance drops below 85 percent, the pastoral leader will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

5.8.   Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6.   [Updated] Attendance register

6.1.1.   The school uses "Arbor" management information system to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

6.1.2.   Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

6.1.3. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- [New] # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

6.1.4. When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

6.1.5.   Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

6.1.6.   All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

6.1.7.   Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved electronically.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

7.1.   Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal.

7.2.   Leave of absence

7.2.1.   The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete the request for absence form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

7.2.2.   Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school **is not** likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

7.2.3.   Requests for leave **will not** be granted in the following circumstances:
- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

7.2.4.   If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. **The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any**

absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

7.3.   **Illness and healthcare appointments**

7.3.1.   Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

7.4.   **Performances and activities, including paid work**

7.4.1.   ==[Updated] The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which supports the school if it approves the absence(s).==

7.4.2.   Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

7.4.3.   The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

7.4.4.   [Updated] Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's

attendance would <mark>fall below 96 percent.</mark> Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

7.5. Religious observance

7.5.1. Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

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

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

7.6. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

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

8. SEND- and health-related absences

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

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

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

with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

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

8.4.1. Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days across an academic year.

8.4.2. Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.

8.4.3. Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.

8.4.4. Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.

8.4.5. Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

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

8.6. To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

8.6.1. Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.

8.6.2. Incorporating a pastoral support plan.

8.6.3. Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.

8.6.4. Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.

8.6.5. Using an internal or external specialist.

8.6.6. Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.

8.6.7. Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.

8.6.8. Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.

8.6.9. Temporary late starts or early finishes.

8.6.10. Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.

8.6.11. Small group work or on-to-one lessons.

8.6.12. Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Leave during lunch times

9.1. Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

9.2. Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

9.3. Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

9.4. Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in.

9.5. The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

9.6. Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. Truancy

10.1. Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

10.2. All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

10.3.   All pupils are expected to be in their classes for registration 9:00am and 1:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

10.4.   Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

10.5.   The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

    10.5.1.   In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.

    10.5.2.   If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

    10.5.3.   A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

10.6.   The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11.   [Updated] Missing pupils

11.1.   Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

    11.1.1.   [Updated] The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately

    11.1.2.   The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search

    11.1.3.   A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher. Staff will take a radio to report back to the headteacher once they have completed their check or to indicate where the child is.

11.1.4. The following areas will be systematically searched:

- All classrooms
- All toilets
- Changing rooms
- The library
- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds

11.1.5. Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

11.1.6. If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified

11.1.7. The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided

11.1.8. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.

11.1.9. [Updated] The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing

11.1.10. [Updated] If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed

11.1.11. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well

11.1.12. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

11.2. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

11.3. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

12.1. In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the pastoral leader, supported by the SLT, will:

    12.1.1. Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.

    12.1.2. Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.

    12.1.3. Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.

    12.1.4. Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:

- Sending letters to parents.
- Having a weekly review.
- Engaging with LA attendance teams.
- Using fixed penalty notices.

12.2. The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

12.3. The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

    12.3.1. Individual Arbor messages for 100%

    12.3.2. Whole school Dojo messages to celebrate when attendance is above national

12.4. School trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

13.1. The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be

maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

13.2. The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

13.3. The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

13.4. If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the pastoral leader will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

13.5. Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the pastoral leader will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the pastoral leader will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

14.1. There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

14.1.1. Children in need

14.1.2. LAC

14.1.3. Young carers

14.1.4. Pupils who are eligible for FSM

14.1.5. Pupils with EAL

14.1.6. Pupils with SEND

14.1.7. Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

14.2. The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

14.2.1. Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

14.2.2. [UPDATED] Meeting with pupils and families to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.

14.2.3. Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.

14.2.4. Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.

14.2.5. Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.

14.2.6. Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.

14.2.7. Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

14.3. The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

14.4. Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. Legal intervention

15.1. The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the pastoral leader will consider:

15.1.1. Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.

15.1.2.   Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.

15.1.3.   Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

15.2.   Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

15.3.   Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

16.   Monitoring and analysing absence

16.1.   The admin staff will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

16.2.   The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

16.2.1.   The school cohort as a whole.

16.2.2.   Individual year groups.

16.2.3.   Individual pupils.

16.2.4.   Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.

16.2.5.   Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.

16.2.6.   Pupils at risk of PA.

16.3.   The pastoral leader will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

16.3.1.   Patterns in uses of certain codes.

16.3.2.   Particular days of poor attendance.

16.3.3.   Historic trends of attendance and absence.

16.3.4.   Barriers to attendance.

16.4.   The pastoral leader will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The pastoral leader will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

16.5.   The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

16.6.   The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

17.   Training of staff

17.1.   The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

17.2.   The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

17.3.   Training will cover at least the following:

17.3.1.   The importance of good attendance

17.3.2.   That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances

17.3.3.   The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers

17.3.4.   The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance

17.3.5.   The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

17.4.   The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the pastoral leader and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

17.5.   Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Appendix A - Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Oakfield has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers or admin staff are passed immediately to the SLT.
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and pastoral leader weekly.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, administrative staff send Attendance letter 1 to parental guardians. Monitor attendance for two weeks, no further action is taken if there are improvements in attendance..
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent but above 93 percent, administrative staff send Attendance letter 2 to parental guardians and inform pastoral team staff and SLT of concerns. Pastoral staff offer support. Monitor attendance for two weeks, no further action is taken if there are improvements..
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the pastoral leader contacts the parents to discuss this. Medical appointments may not be authorised and evidence may be requested for absences. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and pastoral leader and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
7. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
8. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

Appendix B - Letter at 96%

Attendance Letter 1 - Attendance at 96%

Attendance at or below 96%

Dear   ,

We've noticed that [NAME OF CHILD]'s attendance has dipped recently and we want to ensure everything is ok. You can view your child's attendance record through the Arbor app.

We will continue to check how [NAME OF CHILD] is doing each week and won't be in touch if things improve, though we are here to help if you need us. We have leaflets, advice and support options as well as the possibility of making a referral to other agencies for support if you feel that is appropriate.

As a reminder, please ensure that all medical appointments are taken outside of school hours as much as possible.

Should things get worse, we will send you more information about the next steps, but we hope that doesn't happen.

Your child's teacher,[NAME OF TEACHER], can be contacted if you want to talk things through.

Thank you,

Appendix C - Letter at or below 93%

Attendance at or below 93%

Dear   ,

We are writing to you to let you know that **[NAME OF CHILD]'s** attendance is now below 93% and (depending on the time of year) this may be a concern. We have to regularly inform you of your child's attendance and we do this by using their total 'present' percentage. Their attendance figure is impacted by their total days in school, not the reasons for absence (you are not receiving this because we have not authorised absences necessarily). We let families know when their child has attendance below 96%, below 93% and below 90%.

My child has been ill, why am I receiving this?
We do understand there are times when children will need to be absent from school for several reasons and if your child has been ill recently, this may have impacted on their overall attendance figure. As attendance is calculated as an overall % figure over the academic year the reason for absence can be irrelevant.

My child has only had a few days off school, why am I receiving this?
The closer to the beginning of the academic year we are, the larger the weighting of each session; three days of illness in the beginning of the year may give you 90% attendance in the first half term, but three days of illness over the whole academic year would be 98% attendance. If you have received this email near the start of the academic year and you are aware of illness or other circumstances recently, please disregard this message. If, however, you are receiving this towards the middle or end of the academic year please read on.

Why are you writing to me?
We have a duty to clearly communicate attendance statistics and we therefore want to ensure you are aware of the importance of punctual attendance as well as your requirements as a parent/carer to ensure **[HE/SHE]** attends school regularly.

Why is this important?
At Oakfield, we are committed to promoting and modelling good attendance and behaviour which is essential for pupils to achieve their potential. Lack of attendance is directly correlated to a pupil's deteriorating success and development in their education. Currently, in primary schools where the average absence per pupil is 15 days per year, only 65 percent achieve good grades in maths and English. Whilst 15 days per year seems a vast amount, what may surprise you is how quickly (and easily) unauthorised absences can add up.

What are my responsibilities?
As a parent or carer, you have a legal requirement to ensure your child attends school on a regular basis. Therefore, you hold the responsibility to promote good attendance and punctuality.

My child has not been absent, why am I receiving this?
Should **[CHILD'S NAME]** arrive after the register closes, **[HE/SHE]** will receive a mark to show that [HE/SHE] is on-site, though this will still be recorded as an absence. Continuous lateness will, therefore, result in several unauthorised absences, despite being on-site for the rest of the school day.

What is a penalty notice and will I get one?

It is now possible for parents and carers to be issued penalty notices for unauthorised absences. Penalty notices begin with an initial fine of £60, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Following failure of these payments, the local attendance officer may decide to prosecute a parent. If so, parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

What happens now?
We will continue to monitor **[NAME OF CHILD]**'s attendance on a weekly basis and we may have to act if we do not see an increase over time. Please continue to keep us informed for the reasons for absence, we may request medical evidence in order to authorise any future illness otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

What do I do if my child is anxious or worried?
Should you have any concerns or worries about something at school, your child is starting a new school, you are thinking of removing your child from our school or wish to educate them at home, please contact your child's teacher (**[NAME OF TEACHER]**) in the first instance.

What happens if their attendance figure continues to drop?
If your child's attendance drops below 90%, we will require evidence for all future absences which will be outlined should that become appropriate.

Appendix D - Letter at 90%

Attendance Letter 3 - 90%

Attendance at or below 90%

Dear   ,

I am writing to you as we still continue to have concerns about **[NAME OF CHILD]** 's attendance.
Despite our previous letters outlining our concerns, **[NAME OF CHILD]** is now classed as a 'Persistent Absentee' as **[HIS/HER]** attendance is 90% or less and this can have a dramatic impact on academic and personal development.

We will require medical evidence in order to authorise any further absences from school until **[HIS/HER]** absence is consistently above 90%.

It is now possible for parents and carers to be issued penalty notices for unauthorised absences. Penalty notices begin with an initial fine of £60, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Following failure of these payments, the local attendance officer may decide to prosecute a parent. If so, parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Should you have any concerns or worries about something at school, your child is starting a new school, you are thinking of removing your child from our school or wish to educate them at home, please contact your child's teacher (**[NAME OF TEACHER]**) in the first instance.