



Attendance & Absence Policy 2020-21

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Reviewed by	PPS Committee
Agreed by Full Governing Board	10/11/2020
Shared with staff	Annually
Next Review due date	November 2021

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: Please note, [appendix d](#) has been created in line with the current government guidance. Schools need to ensure that this template reflects any local guidance and the specific needs of their school.

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Statement of intent

Seva School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2020) 'Improving school attendance'

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

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural Policy

2. Definitions

2.1. The school defines "absence" as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

2.2. The school defines an "authorised absence" as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

2.3. The school defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised/agreed by the school.
- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

2.4. The school defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason (attendance below 90%).

3. [Updated] Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school.
- 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.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)’ when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

- 3.2. The Family Welfare and Attendance Officer and Assistant Principal (Safeguarding, Attendance, Primary Behaviour) shall be responsible for:
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to the parents.
- 3.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:
- Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
 - Modelling good attendance behaviour.
 - Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 3.4. Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day (AM for Primary and Period 1 for Secondary) and at the start of each afternoon session (PM column - within first 10 mins of every lesson)
- 3.5. The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 3.6. The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
- Take an unauthorised holiday for a significant time
 - Are being educated from home.
 - No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
 - Have an authorised medical note.
 - Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
 - Have been permanently excluded.
- 3.7. The school will ensure that absence procedures are understood by pupils, parents and carers

- 3.8. Parents are responsible for:
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
 - Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
 - Updating the school if their details change.
- 3.9. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their children during term-time.
- 3.10. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure their children attend school every day.
- 3.11. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- 3.12. All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

4. Training of staff

- 4.1. We recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their inductions and annual refresher training.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support 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.
- 4.4. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day during term time throughout the academic year.
- 5.2. The school expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.
- 5.3. Pupils will be expected to report any absence immediately to the relevant member of staff.
- 5.4. Pupils must complete a Pupil Agreement (back of this booklet)

6. Pupils at risk of persistent absence

- 6.1. The Attendance Officer and Assistant Headteacher will:
- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
 - Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
 - Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
 - Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a weekly tutor review, where Form Tutors discuss attendance with their tutees
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Engaging in meetings with parents, whose children's attendance is flagged as a concern by the Attendance Officer.
- 6.2. The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.
- 6.3. Teaching staff will:
- Provide regular work for pupils who are absent from school, to ensure they can access work and homework on MSTeams
 - Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
 - Meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
 - Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
 - Lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
 - Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
 - Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.
- 6.4. Pupils potentially at greater risk of harm who require a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences. DSL and Family Support Officer will offer further support.
- 6.5. The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups such as:
- Children in need
 - LAC
 - Pupils who are eligible for FSM
 - Pupils who speak English as a second language
 - Pupils with SEND

7. Absence procedures

- 7.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence either by leaving a message on the absence line, email or speaking to the Front Office Staff.
- 7.2. Parents are required to send a note on the first day their child returns to school - with a signed explanation as to why their child was absent.
- 7.3. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to the Attendance Officer.
- 7.4. A telephone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 7.5. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
 - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- 7.6. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Officer.
- 7.7. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 7.8. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the attendance officer will arrange a meeting with parents.
- 7.9. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

8. Parental involvement

- 8.1. The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.
- 8.2. The school will communicate openly and honestly with pupils and their families about their expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

- 8.3. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. if a pupil has a social worker.
- 8.4. Parents will be expected to:
- Complete the Parental Attendance Agreement (back of this booklet)
 - Treat staff with respect.
 - Actively support the work of the school.
 - Call on staff for help when they need it.
 - Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

9. Attendance register

- 9.1. The 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.

Teaching staff will also complete a register for every class lesson, within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson. This will ensure fire drills/other emergencies etc have correct registers taken.

- 9.2. The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:
- / = Present in the morning
 - \ = Present in the afternoon
 - L = Late arrival before the register has closed
 - C = Authorised absence
 - E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
 - H = Authorised holiday
 - I = Illness

- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site educational activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- S = Study leave
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- W = Work experience
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register
- # = Planned whole or partial school closure

9.3. 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, for example, induction days.

9.4. 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.

9.5. Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

- 9.6. The Attendance Officer will complete the 'Educational setting status form' on a daily basis, based on the information on the attendance register.

10. Attendance officer

- 10.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the Attendance Officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a Parent Agreement.^{8U}
- 10.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.
- 10.3. The Attendance Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that early intervention is delivered quickly to address absence.
- 10.4. The Attendance Officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

11. Lateness

- 11.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 11.2. The school day starts at **8:40am**; pupils should convene in the classroom at this time, having attended morning line-up – **8.30am** in the playground.
- 11.3. Registers are marked by **8:50am**; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 11.4. The register closes at **9:40am**; pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 11.5. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

12. Truancy

- 12.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 12.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 12.3. All pupils are expected to be in their **classes at the start of P1 (AM) and P5 (PM)**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.

- 12.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.
- 12.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting.
- 12.6. If truancy is suspected, the Assistant Heateacher/Attendance Officer will be notified and they will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 12.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
- 12.8.
 - 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.
 - If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
 - 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.
 - The local authority will be notified.

13. Missing children

- 13.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Principal.
- 13.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:
 - The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Principal immediately.
 - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
 - 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 Principal.
 - The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms

- All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- 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.
 - If the pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
 - The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
 - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 13.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 13.4. When the pupil has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 13.5. The Principal will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 13.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 13.7. The Principal will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 13.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behavioural Policy.
- 13.9. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses 7.6-7.9 of this policy.
- 13.10. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

14. Term-time leave

- 14.1. Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 14.2. Leave during term time will only be authorised in extreme or exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness. Local Authority stance is that trips abroad in term-time shall not be authorised by the school.
- 14.3. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
 - During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school, unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
 - Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
 - Where a pupil's attendance record is below 95 percent.
- 14.4. 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.

15. Religious observances

- 15.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 15.2. Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- 15.3. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

16. Appointments

- 16.1. Parents should book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 16.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school office.
- 16.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out at the school office by a parent who has permission to collect the pupil.

16.4. Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

17. Young carers

17.1. The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

17.2. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

18. Exceptional circumstances

18.1. When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.

18.2. Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

18.3. The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes

19. COVID-19

19.1. Where a pupil is self-isolating due to COVID-19, an 'X' mark will be allocated.

19.2. Details must be supplied to the Attendance Officer/School on who has tested positive – giving specific date when test was taken or when isolation started.

19.3. Proof of COVID – 19 test result should be supplied when asked.

20. Rewarding good attendance

20.1. Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Postcards home
- House points

- Celebration assemblies

20.2. School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 95 percent, these privileges may be taken away.

21. Monitoring and review

21.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

21.2. The school's attendance target is 96 percent each year.

21.3. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher and the Attendance Officer.

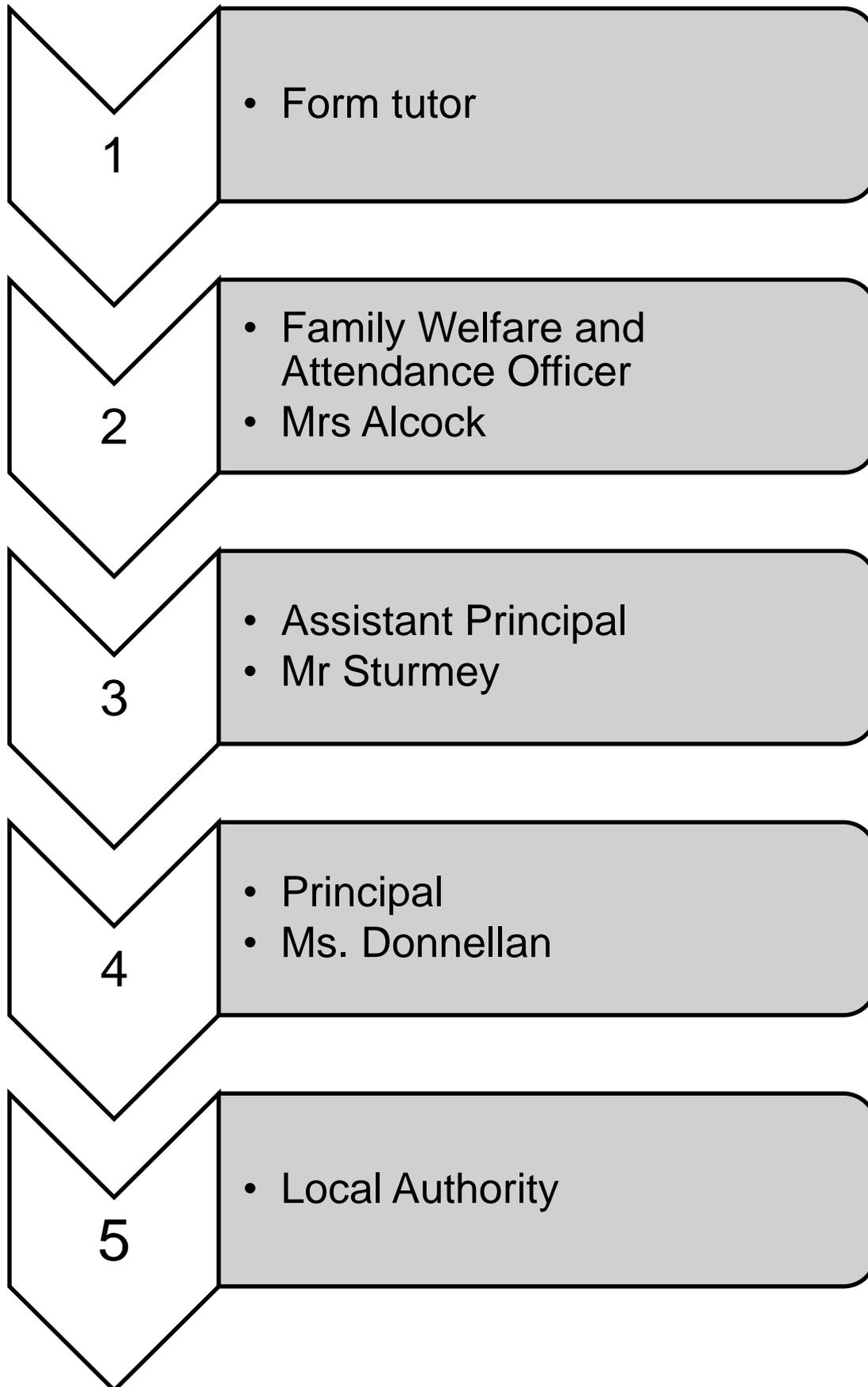
21.4. Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

21.5. The next scheduled review date for this policy is 1st September 2022.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

- 1 • A red, amber, green (RAG) rated spreadsheet will be sent **weekly** to form tutors (FT) detailing **weekly and annual** attendance to date.
- 2 • Attendance will be discussed by FT with pupils. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by FT should be passed immediately to Attendance Officer.
- 3 • Contact will be made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. Second day N codes will be sent to Attendance Officer who should contact home by telephone. Any N codes not established after a week will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- 4 • Pupil attendance drops below 95% – Attendance Officer will speak to pupils to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. AO will make a phone call home, if applicable.
- 5 • Pupil attendance drops below 93% – a letter will be sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the school target of 96%. The letter will also have a leaflet attached outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to help improve attendance.
- 6 • Pupil attendance drops below 90% – AO will contact parents. Attendance monitored for two weeks. If attendance has not improved, then parents will be required to attend a meeting in school with their child's HOY. If parents are unwilling to co-operate, or genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO) who will then carry out a home visit.
- 7 • If attendance has not improved within the two week monitoring period (likely to be close to 85% or below), or if attendance has fallen rapidly, parents will be invited to either: a school attendance meeting with AH, AO and EWO if appropriate, or a medical action planning meeting with the school nurse, AO and SENCO. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance. This will be monitored over a further two week period.
- 8 • After the two week monitoring period, if targets are met, a letter or phone call will be sent home from the AH/AO to congratulate the pupil and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises – if targets are not met, the HOY will make a referral to the EWO.
- 9 • Education Welfare protocol will be followed and a parental contract will be drawn up – there will be a four week monitoring period. No improvements in this time will result in a final written warning. If there is still no further improvement following this, then a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

Attendance Reporting Structure



Attendance Agreement Forms

Student Attendance Agreement

I, name of pupil, agree to attend school and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100 percent. I will ensure that name of school is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the school full details of my absence.

As a pupil of name of school, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to school and lessons.
- Informing the school of the reason for any absence.
- Not missing school for trivial reasons.



Pupil name:	Date:
Form tutor name:	Date:

Parental Attendance Agreement

I, name of parent, understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to school. I agree to send my child to school every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When my child is absent from school due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Parent name:	Date:
Form tutor name:	Date:

Attendance During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

From September 2020, all pupils will be required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government guidance to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

The school will have due regard for the DfE's 'Recording attendance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' guidance when recording attendance during the pandemic.

1. Attendance expectations from September

- 1.1 From the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year (September), attendance is mandatory for all pupils.
- 1.2 From September, the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) will apply, including:
 - Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
 - The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures set out in the main body of this policy.
 - The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

2. Shielding or self-isolating pupils

- 2.1 Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August. This means that pupils who were shielding can return to school, as can pupils who have family members who were shielding.
- 2.2 Pupils who are no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional should discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. Parents should inform the school of any particular measures that need to be in place to ensure their child can return to school safely.
- 2.3 The school understands that there will be occasions where some pupils may not be able to attend school due to coronavirus, including for the following reasons:
 - They are self-isolating and have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test result themselves (10 days self-isolating), or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (14 days self-isolating).
 - Rates of coronavirus in the local area have risen and certain individuals are asked to temporarily shield.
- 2.4 Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised.
- 2.5 Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they will be immediately offered access to remote learning.

3. Reluctance to return to school

- 3.1 Parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.
- 3.2 If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

4. Monitoring attendance

- 4.1 The Attendance Officer will monitor the school's attendance rates once the school is open to all pupils in September.
- 4.2 Any trends in non-attendance will be identified (e.g. due to anxiety) and measures will be put in place to reengage affected pupils with the school.