



**SESAT**  
**Attendance and Absence Policy**

<b>Date Approved: September 2022</b>	<b>Print Name: Matt Rowell</b> <b>Chair of Trustees</b>
<b>Date to be Reviewed: September 2023</b>	<b>Signed: Matt Rowell</b> <b>Chair of Trustees</b>

**1. Statement of Intent**

**SESAT** 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 understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies
- 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 them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support

Statistics show that there is a direct correlation between high attendance and high attainment. Children make better all-round progress, settle into school routines and build better friendships groups.

**2. Legal Framework**

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)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board (delegated from Trust Board) has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals
- Regularly reviewing attendance data
- Ensure Headteachers share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- 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' 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

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- Working with parents where punctuality or attendance is a concern
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance or unexplained absence
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers
- Acknowledge improvements in attendance
- Provide training to staff to support improving attendance

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too
- Ensuring this 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
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school

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
- The attendance of their children at school
- Contacting school of your child's absence before 8.55am
- Arranging all non-urgent appointments (medical/dental) outside of school time or during school holidays
- Promoting good attendance with their children
- Updating school with any issues that may potentially impact attendance
- Encouraging good sleep and healthy living routines
- Booking holidays outside of term time

#### 4. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

**Absence:**

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

**Authorised absence:**

- 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

**Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

**Persistent absence (PA):**

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

## 5. Attendance Expectations

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

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

Gate and register open	8.40am	Gates close at 8.50am	Children who arrive after this time will be late and marked with: L Code
Registers close	9:00am	Your child is unauthorised late if they arrive after registers close	This will be marked with: U code
Afternoon register opens		Following your child's lunch break.	Children who arrive in school 5 minutes after lunch break will be marked with: L Code
Afternoon register closes		10 minutes following your child's lunch break	Children who arrive 10 minutes after lunch break will be marked with: U Code

Punctuality is extremely important and children who arrive late on a daily basis can miss up to 1 hour and 40 minutes of learning a week. This can be disruptive for the class and difficult for the child arriving late.

## 6. Pupil Expectations

Pupils are expected to attend school every day. The target set for all SESAT children is **96% or above**.

## 7. Absence Procedures (Safeguarding and wellbeing)

Parents will contact the school office via telephone or in person by **8.50am** 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.

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 **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. If not available by telephone, they will send a text and remind you to contact school immediately.

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

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure the 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

Please note that if we do not receive a response for an absence this is classed as a safeguarding concern and the safeguarding leads will be informed. This will lead to safeguarding action.

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).

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.

In the case of Persistent Absence (PA), arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Headteacher. 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 authorisation**.

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

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.

## 8. What does good attendance look like?

For a child to reach their full educational achievement – academically, socially and emotionally good attendance is essential to success.

There are <b>190 school days</b> when your child should be attending school					
There are <b>175 non-school days</b> to spend time on appointments, visits, family holidays and other important family commitments					
<b>190</b> Days your child has of Education each year	<b>10 days absence</b> 180 Days of Education	<b>19 days absence</b> 171 Days of Education	<b>29 days absence</b> 161 Days of Education	<b>38 days absence</b> 152 Days of Education	<b>47 days of absence</b> 143 Days of Education
<b>100%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Excellent</b> Gives your child the best chance of success.	<b>Satisfactory</b> Gives your child a good chance of success.	<b>Worrying</b> 95 hours of learning missed.	<b>Serious Concern</b> 145 hours of learning missed.	<b>Serious Concern</b> 190 hours of learning missed.	<b>Serious Concern</b> 235 hours of learning missed.
Attendance at SESAT: The target set for all SESAT children is <b>96% or above</b> .					

The above number of days and hours relate to the attendance percentage across a whole academic year.

## 9. Monitoring, Analysis and Procedures

The Headteacher, along with SLT will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

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

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Individual pupils
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils at risk of PA

The Headteacher and SLT 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:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes
- Particular days of poor attendance
- Historic trends of attendance and absence
- Barriers to attendance

We will raise any absence or late concerns by:

- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Telephoning parents and offering support (93%-95%)
  - Sending letters to parents (92% and below)
  - Creating attendance clinics
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams
  - Using fixed penalty notices
- Establishing a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitoring the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attending or leading attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Acknowledging improvements in attendance

Please note – we will be mindful of the percentage during each term e.g. a child absent in the first couple of weeks into the Autumn Term could flag as a serious concern, however clear and honest communication with parents will be necessary.

**Teaching staff** support by:

- Welcoming pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The administration team will provide regular reports to the Headteacher and this will be cascaded to staff to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Headteacher will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

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.

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.

The Board of Trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

## 10. Training of Staff

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.

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.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The Governing Board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the Headteacher 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.

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.

## 11. Attendance Register

The school uses SIMs to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

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.

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:

- / = 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 = Gypsy, Roma and 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

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.

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.

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

## 12. Authorising Parental Absence Requests

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 and in accordance with DFE guidance, 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.

### Leave of absence

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 a **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.

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 and please note that following guidance the cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for application.



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

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.

#### **Illness and healthcare appointments**

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 and appointments should be kept to a minimum.

#### **Performances and activities, including paid work**

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 authorises the school's absence(s).

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.

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.

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 fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

#### **Religious observance**

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** advance. 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. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

### **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

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.

## **13. SEND and Health Related Absences**

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.

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. 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 with HOPE being provided where necessary and following our Wellbeing Policy.

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

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

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.

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Enabling where necessary a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.

- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

#### 14. Leave During Lunchtimes

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.

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 of their decision within one week of the request.

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.

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 using Entry Sign. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return and must be signed back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

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.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis.

#### 15. Truancy

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

All pupils are expected to be in their classes before the close of registration, 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.

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.

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

- 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 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.

## 16. Missing Children

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

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher 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 Headteacher.
- 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 contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, 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.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

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 are followed in accordance with Barnfields' Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with the 'Absence Procedures' section of this policy. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

## 17. Working with Parents to Improve Attendance

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.

The school will ensure that there are 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.

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.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Headteacher or member of SLT 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.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, 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 Headteacher 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.

## 18. Persistent Absence

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

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

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

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Offering HOPE support (Helping Our Pupils Emotionally)
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.

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

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.

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.

### **19. Legal Intervention**

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 after one term, the Headteacher will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

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

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.