



Attendance Policy

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Contents

1	Aims	3
2	Legislation and guidance.....	3
3	Roles and responsibilities.....	4
3.1	Pupils.....	4
3.2	Parents/carers	4
3.3	The Headteacher	4
3.4	The Senior Attendance Champion.....	4
3.5	Heads of Year.....	4
3.6	Pastoral Support Officers	5
3.7	Class Teachers/Form Tutors	5
3.8	Attendance Officer.....	5
3.9	The Governing Board	5
4	Strategies for promoting attendance	5
4.1	Attendance and Punctuality Rewards:.....	6
4.2	Supportive Attendance Frameworks:.....	6
5	School Procedures	6
5.1	Attendance register	6
5.2	Lateness.....	7
5.2.1	Morning Registration Timeline and Gate Procedures.....	8
5.2.2	Categorisation of Lateness (Arrivals before 9:10 am)	8
5.2.3	Register Closure (Arrivals after 9:10 am)	8
5.3	Unplanned absence.....	8
5.4	Planned absence.....	9
5.5	Following up unexplained absence.....	9
5.6	Reporting to parents/carers	10
5.7	Trips	10
6	Authorised and unauthorised absence	10
6.1	Approval for term-time absence.....	10
6.2	Department for Education Expectations	11
6.3	Legal sanctions - Penalty Notice and Fines.....	11
7	Reduced Timetables	12
7.1	Reintegration Support Framework.....	13
8	Attendance monitoring	13
8.1	Monitoring attendance	13
8.2	Analysing attendance	13
	The school will:	13
8.3	Using data to improve attendance	14

8.4	Reducing persistent and severe absence.....	14
8.4.1	Attendance procedures for persistent absence:	14
9	Monitoring arrangements	15
10	Links with other policies	15
10.1	Appendix 1: attendance codes	15

1 Aims

At Downlands, we believe that regular attendance is key to unlocking a student's full potential. When students are present and engaged, they build strong foundations for academic success, form positive relationships with peers and teachers, and become a valued member of our community where they are safe, supported and successful.

Our Commitment: Supporting 'Every Seat, Every Day'

- **100% Attendance Matters:** Studies show a strong link between attendance and academic achievement – with consistent attendance, students are empowered to reach their full potential. We understand that unforeseen circumstances can arise, but we encourage families to prioritise regular school attendance whenever possible.
- **"Every Seat, Every Day" – Our Motto in Action:** Our primary focus is on creating a welcoming and stimulating environment where students are excited to learn. We actively monitor attendance to ensure all students are on track.
- **Supporting All Learners:** We work collaboratively to ensure each student can participate fully in school life. We recognise that every student learns differently, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- **Building a Strong Partnership:** We work closely with parents/carers to address any concerns that may affect attendance, offering support and resources where needed. We believe open communication is essential in order to achieve this.
- **Promoting Punctuality:** Arriving on time allows students to settle in, maximise learning time, and contribute to a positive classroom environment.

Together, we can create a school community where every student feels valued and empowered to succeed.

2 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#).

- It also refers to:
 - [School census guidance](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
 - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- The Downlands Policies:
 - [Discipline and Student Behaviour Policy](#)
 - [Offsite Activity/Visits Policy](#)

3 Roles and responsibilities

It is our legal duty to ensure pupils attend school regularly.

The Senior Attendance Champion is Mr J Chandler who can be contacted via the school office.

3.1 Pupils

- Pupils attend every timetabled session on time

3.2 Parents/carers

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies and that they arrive punctually to school each morning
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments outside of the school day where possible.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

3.3 The Headteacher

- Ensures the school policy is implemented
- Oversees school-level absence data and reports it to governors
- Monitors the impact of implemented attendance strategies
- Is responsible for the issuing fixed-penalty notices

3.4 The Senior Attendance Champion

- Oversees attendance processes and school attendance interventions
- Implements specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Holds staff involved in school attendance to account
- Evaluates and monitors expectations and processes

3.5 Heads of Year

- On a weekly basis, monitors attendance data that are causing concern
- Ensure that all teachers and tutors fulfil their attendance responsibilities
- Highlights patterns of unauthorised absence and implementing strategies with mentors
- Monitors and develop action plans for all persistent absentees in order to improve attendance
- Meet with parents/carers and pupils to improve attendance
- Update staff when students are expected to be absent for longer than a few days

- Creates intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers after a significant absence

3.6 Pastoral Support Officers

- Assist the Head of Year in monitoring student attendance
- Ensure that up to date and detailed attendance information is available for the Attendance Team meetings and Tutor meetings
- Issue attendance letters
- Liaise with appropriate outside agencies
- Implement attendance interventions under the direction of the Head of Year

3.7 Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

Form Tutors

- Accurately complete the statutory morning registration for students in tutor time
- Directed by the Head of Year to address attendance concerns with pupils
- Are aware of any students who are identified as Persistent Absentees
- Helps to identify and notify any 'patterns' of absence and notifying the appropriate Head of Year of their concern

Class Teachers

- Class Teachers accurately complete the statutory afternoon registration for students in lesson four
- Are aware of students that they teach who are identified as persistent absentees
- Accurately complete a Bromcom register in every lesson
- Helps to identify any 'patterns' of absence and notifying the appropriate Head of Year of their concern

3.8 Attendance Officer

- Checks registers are completed correctly
- Sends school communication home about non attendance
- Oversee Attendance Plans

3.9 The Governing Board

- Promotes the importance of school attendance
- Ensures school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Monitors data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.
- Holds the Senior Leaders to account for the implementation of this policy
- Monitors attendance data and monitors interventions implemented
- Appoints a Lead Attendance Governor

4 Strategies for promoting attendance

At Downlands Community School, our baseline expectation is for every pupil to attend school every single day. We firmly believe that excellent attendance unlocks academic success and personal growth.

To celebrate and encourage positive habits, pupils are regularly rewarded for both exceptional attendance and sustained improvement. These rewards are formally recognised through certificates and Community Achievement Points (AP) that directly reinforce our core ROCKS characteristics.

4.1 Attendance and Punctuality Rewards:

Weekly Rewards

- **Full Attendance:** A full week of school attendance (5 Community AP).
- **Perfect Punctuality:** A perfect week of punctuality with no recorded lates (5 Community AP).

Half-Termly Rewards

- **Perfect/Near-Perfect Attendance:** 10 AP
- **Proven Attendance Progress:** 10 AP (*Clear improvement data*)
- **Zero Unauthorised Absence:** 10 AP (*Clean record*)
- **Zero Lates to School Site:** 5 AP
- **Zero Lates to Lessons:** 5 AP

4.2 Supportive Attendance Frameworks:

When attendance begins to drop, we work collaboratively with families to remove barriers to education. Our formal support strategies include:

- **Individualised Attendance Plans:** Tailored, supportive intervention strategies co-produced with parents, pupils, and pastoral staff to help students get back on track.
- **The EBSA Compass Room Provision:** A dedicated, nurturing space designed to support pupils experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), offering a managed, secure pathway back into full-time classroom learning.

5 School Procedures

The Downlands School Day is as follows:

08:20	School gates open
08.35	First (warning) bell (Entry to school from playground)
08.40	Registration – Start of the school day
09.00	Lesson 1
10.00	Lesson 2
11.00	Break
11.20	Lesson 3
12.20	Lesson 4
13.20	Lunch
13.55	End of lunch
13.55	Lesson 5 (including 10 minutes DEAR Time** for Key Stage 3)
15.05	End of the school day
16.05	Detentions run for 20, 40 or 60 minutes

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

In line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the school will preserve every entry in both the attendance register and the admission register for a strict statutory period of 6 years from the date on which the entry was made.

Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been established by the close of registration, staff will record the absence using Code N. The school will follow up with parents to determine the reason for the absence. In accordance with DfE regulations, the correct attendance or absence code must be entered into the system as soon as the reason is verified, and no later than 5 school days after the initial session. If no valid reason is successfully established within this 5-day window, the marker will automatically and permanently transition to Code O (Unauthorised Absence).

- The school day starts at **8.35am** and pupils are required to go to their Tutor base, via the pupils' year group door, when the bell rings
- Students sign the late book on the playground from **8.39am**

In exceptional circumstances (such as severe weather or public transport disruptions) the closing of registration may be delayed at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Where an unexplained absence occurs for a pupil who has an assigned Social Worker or a **Youth Justice Service (YJS) worker**, the Attendance Team will proactively notify the respective practitioner on the first day of unverified absence to ensure robust safeguarding communication. If a pupil's name is ever considered for deletion from the school roll, the school's Senior Attendance Champion will notify the social worker and/or **YJS worker** prior to the deletion return being processed.

5.2 Lateness

We encourage arriving on time to maximise learning and ensure pupils are able to participate fully in class activities. Being on time also shows respect for your classmates and teachers. If pupils are late to registration, they disrupt the Tutor's routine and can miss important information and news for the day. Similarly arriving late to lessons is disruptive.

5.2.1 Morning Registration Timeline and Gate Procedures

Punctuality is essential for an orderly start to the school day. The morning registration period opens at **8:40 am**.

- **8:40 am – 8:44 am (Present as Normal):** Students arriving at their tutor bases between these times will be recorded as present as normal.
- **From 8:44 am Onwards (Late):** Any student arriving after 8:44 am is classified as late. The school gates will be managed by members of the Leadership Team, who will intercept late arrivals and require them to formally sign in.

5.2.2 Categorisation of Lateness (Arrivals before 9:10 am)

For any student arriving late after 8:44 am but before the official closure of the registers at **9:10 am** (adhering to the statutory 30-minute maximum window), an **L code** (Late before registers close) will be recorded in the electronic register.

To ensure fairness in tracking and behaviour management, the specific reason for lateness will be categorised internally under one of two distinct pastoral classifications:

- **Late Travel:** This internal classification is strictly reserved for verified, unavoidable delays affecting public transport network routes, such as cancelled or delayed trains and public bus services.
- **Standard Late:** Arriving late to school by private car or taxi does **not** constitute 'Late Travel'. The school expects parents and carers to foresee routine traffic disruptions, such as local roadworks or peak-time congestion, and make alternative arrangements to ensure their child arrives on time. While we understand that morning routines can be hectic, routine traffic delays or car issues cannot be classified as 'Late Travel'. We ask families to plan for local congestion to ensure children arrive before 8:44 am. Where a student is frequently late due to morning difficulties, our pastoral teams will look to work with you to find a supportive solution before any formal behaviour sanctions are considered.

5.2.3 Register Closure (Arrivals after 9:10 am)

In strict compliance with statutory regulations, morning registration closes exactly 30 minutes after it opens, at 9:10 am. Any student arriving at school after 9:10 am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session using Code U (Late after registers close), unless an exceptional circumstance or emergency medical appointment explanation is validated by the school. A Code U entry is statistically classified as an unauthorised absence and may contribute towards the national threshold for legal interventions or Penalty Notices.

If your child is persistently late, you will be asked to meet with the Head of Year to resolve the problem. If the situation does not improve, you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Please contact the school or Pupil Entitlement if you, as a parent/carers, are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. Please refer to the Discipline and Student Behaviour Policy.

5.3 Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Contact can be made through:
 - Studybugs
 - By phone

In accordance with DfE guidelines, Downlands will not routinely or rigidly request medical evidence for every standard illness absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's or carer's notification via Studybugs or telephone will be accepted as sufficient verification.

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 92% and establishes a pattern of concern, the school will work collaboratively with the family to understand the underlying health barriers rather than issuing blanket demands for doctor's notes. Medical evidence (such as appointment cards, prescription packaging, or online medical dashboards) will only be requested in a minority of cases where genuine doubt exists regarding authenticity.

If a pupil is recorded with Code I (Illness) and the school has reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 or more school days consecutively or cumulatively within the academic year due to health needs, the school will notify the Local Authority to coordinate continuity of education support.

5.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Our baseline expectation is for all students to strive for 100% attendance. To help families understand how attendance percentages translate into lost learning time, the table below outlines the equivalent school days missed calculated across a **standard 190-day UK academic year**:

Attendance Percentage	Days missed over a school year (approximately)
100%	0
95%	10
90%	20
85%	30

However, if your child is absent, the school will initiate the following progressive support tracking system:

- **Daily Contact:** We will send a communication out via email or SMS on each day of unverified absence.
- **Early Alert (Under 94% / ~11 Days Missed):** After the first half-term, or if a student has had three broken weeks of absence, we will issue a category-directed alert letter (Standard, Medical, SEND, or EBSA) to open a supportive dialogue.
- **Pastoral Review Baseline (Under 92% / ~15 Days Missed):** When a pupil's overall attendance drops below 92% (approximately 15 days of school missed across the year), it establishes a pattern of concern. At this threshold, the school will closely

monitor further non-attendance and question the reasons provided. The school reserves the right to unauthorise these absences (recording them as Code O) if a satisfactory explanation or clear pastoral context is not established.

- **Targeted School Plan (Under 90% / ~19 Days Missed):** If patterns do not improve, we will invite parents/carers in to discuss barriers with a member of staff and co-produce a supportive attendance plan.
- **Multi-Agency Escalation (Under 90% and falling):** The school will collaboratively engage the Local Authority through Pupil Entitlement to ensure wider multi-agency support is safely accessed.

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers will be informed of their child's attendance record once a year, when academic reports are distributed. Formal letters will be issued for repeated absences and where concerns emerge/persist. Up to date attendance data is available to parents at all times through the Bromcom My Child At School app.

5.7 Trips

The school retains the right to review a student's participation on a school trip if there are concerns about their attendance.

Please refer to the [Offsite Activity/Visits Policy](#) for more information.

6 Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time for which the pupil is authorised to be absent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Applications for leave of absence from Downlands must be made to the Headteacher, using the school's "Request for Authorised Absence in Term Time" form which is available on the school website or from the Attendance manager. Applications must be received at least four working (school) weeks before the requested absence. If emergency circumstances arise the school should be contacted directly by phone.

Guidance on activities that may be approved can be found on the reverse of the "Request for Authorised Absence in Term Time" form.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.3, 4.4)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- A representative sporting activity/event (for National or regional events)
- A performing arts activity/event (for National or regional events)
- Compassionate reasons
- Absence request for armed forces children [service children](#)
- Exams (where it has not been possible to arrange these outside of school hours)

6.2 Department for Education Expectations

As indicated by the [“Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance”](#)

“Schools should set and maintain high expectations for the attendance, engagement and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school. It is important to recognise that, in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten their anxiety about attending in future.”

“Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.”

Downlands will not routinely ask for medical evidence to support recording an absence as authorised for mental health reasons. However, with long term persistent absences for the same reason, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate. It is also important to understand that “If a parent proactively seeks out a note from a GP, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter.”

It is for the Headteacher to be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave and to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted

- Absence without approval of the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised (unlawful absence) on the student’s registration certificate
- Removing a student for a term-time holiday or other unauthorised reasons will contribute directly to the national statutory threshold for legal intervention. In line with the National Framework, any combination of 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence (statistically classified under codes G, N, O, or U) within a rolling period of 10 school weeks will trigger a formal review for a Fixed Penalty Notice or notice to improve.

6.3 Legal sanctions - Penalty Notice and Fines

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to immediate prosecution by the Local Authority. Under the National Framework for Penalty Notices, financial penalties are structured as follows:

- First Offence: The penalty notice is charged at £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Second Offence: A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within a rolling 3-year period is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days, with no option for a reduced rate.
- Third Offence Cap: A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period from the date of the first notice. If the national threshold is met for a third time, alternative statutory interventions—such as attendance prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court or an Education Supervision Order—will be pursued.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- Lack of engagement with in-school pastoral and/or external specialist support

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7 Reduced Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Please note that a part-time timetable cannot be used as a reasonable adjustment for SEND, unless this is on a temporary basis and as advised by an external agency e.g., Educational Psychologist, CAMHS consultant.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent/carer the pupil normally lives with
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents/carers to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

7.1 Reintegration Support Framework

Welcoming a pupil back to school after a prolonged or complex period of absence requires a deliberate, supportive strategy. Downlands is committed to ensuring that pupils returning from long-term medical illness, suspension, or EBSA are not overwhelmed upon their return. The respective Head of Year and Pastoral Support Officer will design an individualised reintegration plan in partnership with the family. This plan may include temporary adjustments to uniform policies, transition spaces during registration periods, a designated pastoral staff point-of-contact, and academic catch-up mentoring to bridge learning gaps and build school confidence safely.

8 Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school carefully monitors attendance on a daily basis and attendance is discussed weekly by the School's Senior Leaders.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 5.3).

We will contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons for repeated absence.

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will:

- Ensure parent/carer meetings are held to challenge and support our parents/carers in raising attendance of their child.
- Ensure a plan is drawn up in consultation with the family and possibly, external agencies.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Report to the governing body at Pupil Outcomes and Wellbeing meetings.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8.4.1 Attendance procedures for persistent absence:

To ensure absolute transparency for families, our tiered intervention pathways anchor all attendance percentages directly to the cumulative days missed across a **standard 190-day UK school year**. Downlands Community School utilises these milestones to trigger supportive, early interventions rather than relying on automated or punitive responses:

- **Attendance Letter 1 Trigger (Tier 1: 94.9% - 90% | Accumulating ~11 Days Missed)**
 - Sent if a student's attendance drops below 94% after October half-term (and involves more than one separate illness instance), or if they accumulate 3 broken weeks of attendance in the first half-term.
 - **Action:** The Attendance Team issues a targeted version of Letter 1 tailored to the known barrier (**Standard, Medical, SEND, or EBSA**).
- **Attendance Letter 2 Trigger (Tier 2: 89.9% - 85% | Accumulating ~19 Days Missed)**
 - Sent within 2–3 weeks of Letter 1 if data shows no measurable improvement and total attendance drops below 90% (Persistent Absence threshold).
 - **Action:** The school issues a category-appropriate Letter 2, which formally triggers **Intervention Cycle 1** with direct monitoring support from the Attendance Officer.
 - **Context:** Because attendance is below our 92% baseline, further unverified absences risk being recorded as unauthorised unless a clear, validated context is established. If attendance initially improves but declines later in the year, a subsequent Letter 2 can be issued to reset support.
- **Attendance Letter 3 Trigger (Tier 3: 84.9% and below | Accumulating ~29 Days Missed)**

- Sent 2–3 weeks after Letter 2 if non-attendance persists and data drops below 85%.
- **Action:** A formal review meeting is arranged between the Head of Year (HOY) and parents/carers. Caseload management transitions fully to the Attendance Officer to review Cycle 1 or initiate Cycle 2.
- **Support Frameworks:** Note that specific support mechanisms, such as the EBSA framework or SEND classroom adjustments, will be activated as early as possible in the tracking process as soon as a barrier is identified, rather than waiting for a student to reach Tier 3. If the family systematically disengages from these voluntary offers, the school will contact the Pupil Entitlement Investigation (PEI) team for casework advice.
- **Pupil Entitlement Referral (Critical Milestone | Accumulating ~38 Days Missed)**
 - If a pupil's overall attendance drops below 80%, a formal external referral **MUST** be made to the West Sussex PEI team via their secure portal.
 - **Statutory Threshold Enforcement:** Independently of overall percentages, if a student accumulates **10 sessions of unauthorised absence** (Codes G, N, O, or U) within any rolling 10-week school period, the case will be reviewed for formal Fixed Penalty Notice legal intervention.

The school will monitor attendance data continuously to identify tracking patterns before they become entrenched. In line with the National Framework, the legal trigger threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. These sessions do not need to be consecutive and can span across different terms or school years. Upon hitting this national threshold, the school will formally evaluate if voluntary support is appropriate or if a Notice to Improve/Penalty Notice is required to positively change parental behaviour.

9 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and at a minimum once per year by Jamie Chandler at the Pupil Outcomes and Wellbeing Governors meeting. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Student Discipline and Behaviour Policy

10.1 Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Under the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance*, national attendance codes are standardised across all schools.

The codes are broken down into four distinct categories based on their statistical and physical meaning:

School Attendance Codes: Definitions and Impact

Category	Code	Meaning	Impact on Attendance Record	Legal/Policy Consequence
Present & Approved Activity	/ or \	Present in school (Morning/Afternoon)	Counts as Present	None
	L	Late (before register closes)	Counts as Present	Monitored for punctuality
	B, K, V, P, W	Approved off-site education, trip, or provision	Counts as Present	None
Authorised Absence	I	Illness (physical or mental)	Counts as Absence	None
	M	Medical or dental appointment	Counts as Absence	None
	C, C1, C2	Authorised leave or part-time timetable	Counts as Absence	None
	E, R, S, T	Excluded, religious observance, study leave, traveller	Counts as Absence	None
Unauthorised Absence	N	No reason yet provided	Counts as Unauthorised Absence	Triggers initial school enquiry
	O	Unauthorised absence (no valid reason accepted)	Counts as Unauthorised Absence	Tailored Attendance Support/ Potential FPN
	G	Unauthorised holiday	Counts as Unauthorised Absence	Tailored Attendance Support/ Potential FPN
	U	Late (after register closes)	Counts as Unauthorised Absence	Tailored Attendance Support/ Potential FPN
Attendance Not Required	D, Q	Dual registered / Access arrangements	Statistical exclusion	None
	Y1 to Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable causes	Statistical exclusion	None
	#	Planned school closure (INSET, holidays)	Statistical exclusion	None

The Impact of Unauthorised Codes:

While the school aims to support families through the progressive support tracking system, the accumulation of O, G, and U codes indicates a failure to secure regular attendance. Under UK law, if a child accumulates a specific threshold of unauthorised sessions, the

school is legally required to escalate the matter. This escalation may involve formal meetings with the Head of Year, and if the situation does not improve, it could result in the issuance of a **Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)** by the Local Authority.