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2022/2023

Attendance Policy

Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational, and independent members of our community.

Approved by Governing Body on:	**12/01/2023**
Signed by Chair of Governors:	P.A. Evans
Head Teacher:	**O M Flowers**
Lead Personnel:	**A Gibson, L Brayshaw, D Taylor**
Date of Review:	**12/01/2024**

Introduction

The Westminster School is committed to providing a safe, happy and learning environment for all pupils. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. It is very important therefore that the whole school community (staff, students, families and other agencies) make sure that students attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at School, on time, every day the School is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility.

These are the main strategies our school has adopted to promote good school attendance:

- Development of policy into effective practice which recognises the importance of good school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos
- Promotion of a safe, happy and learning school environment
- Provision of clear and high attendance expectations
- Establishment of efficient and effective day-to-day management of attendance issues in order to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Targeting additional support for attendance issues on priority areas of need
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

The right to quality education is already firmly rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international legal instruments, the majority of which are the result of the work of UNESCO and the United Nations.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Attending school on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good habits for later life. It will also give your child the opportunity to:

- Make friends and feel included.
- Learn new things and develop skills.
- Increase confidence and self-esteem.
- Improve social skills.
- Have better career prospects.
- Achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Why Regular Attendance is So Important

"Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn." *Working Together to Improve School Attendance, Department for Education, May 2022.*

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same classes.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at School is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from School without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution in line with the Education Act 1996.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Home – School Newsletter
- Report to you on how your child/children is/are performing in School, what their attendance is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Inform you at the beginning of the academic year your child's previous academic year attendance and set an achievable target for attendance for the coming year. Appendix 2 outlines the sample letter for this.
- Attendance may be discussed as part of your child's EHCP review.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

As school attendance is a vital component to student wellbeing and progress the remit of attendance falls under the portfolio of the safeguarding governor who is the Chair of Governors.

The Head Teacher

- Responsible for the strategic approach to attendance and implementation of this Policy within School
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Co-chairing or Chairing the weekly Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG) meetings.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

- Leading attendance across the school
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of the School Self-Review, Evaluation and School Improvement Planning process.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Manage the analysis of attendance data across the school, identifying patterns/trends
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- To intervene when an individual pupil's attendance/absence gives cause for concern.
- Develop, where appropriate, a multi-agency response to the attendance agenda.
- Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to supporting attendance.
- Track attendance of vulnerable pupils and identify pupils that need additional support to improve their attendance.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Identify, and where possible, mitigate potential barriers to attendance in partnership with families.
- Work on initiatives which raise the awareness of the whole school community on the importance of good school attendance.
- Documenting the Intervention Notes in ADaM – The Attendance Data and Monitoring System (see appendix 1a).
- Co-chairing or Chairing the weekly Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG) meetings.
- To report to the Governing Board on Attendance Matters.

The nominated Senior Leader for attendance is Mr B Taylor.

The Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG)

- Meeting weekly to monitor and review school-level absence and punctuality data, discuss and challenge patterns and trends and identify individual pupils with attendance levels causing concern
- Scrutinise absence and punctuality data, identifying patterns and trends
- Identifying and implement appropriate interventions that can be offered to pupils and their families to improve pupil attendance
- Coordinate meetings with parents/carers to address the reasons for nonattendance/poor punctuality and agree a plan with appropriate strategies and timescales to tackle the issues.
- Work on initiatives which raise the awareness of the whole school community on the importance of good school attendance.
- Will follow the processes outlined in Appendix 1, Attendance Management Flow Chart.

The Attendance Officers

- Assessing the daily attendance report to ensure the correct codes have been administered to record attendance.
- Monitors daily attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Check taxi registers in the morning as an early intelligence piece of the daily attendance.

- Provide the narrative through the daily monitoring section of ADaM.
- Follow up on daily absences if a reason has not already been communicated to the school. Document the reasons for daily absences following contact with the family or carer.
- To make first day phone calls or home visits
- Looking at trends/patterns in attendance and analyse, identifying strategies to address these and bringing these to the attention of the AMG.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data as part of the weekly attendance meetings
- Providing detailed notes on the ADaM system details actions and interventions linked to daily/weekly attendance trends.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Being the link personnel to the Safeguarding Team where attendance is of a concern (89.9% - 0%) and actioned appropriately.
    - School Intervention and Support Plan
    - Early Help Intervention
    - Multi-agency Targeted Support
    - Threshold of Educational Neglect.
- Identify pupils that need additional support to improve their attendance.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer(s) are Denise Taylor and Lisa Brayshaw and can be contacted via 0121 561 6884.

Teaching and Learning Support Staff

- Recording attendance in registers on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office, using the correct codes and submitting this information through SIMS by 9.05am for morning registration and by 1.45pm for afternoon registration.
- Set clear expectations that good attendance is expected and the benefits of this (e.g. being with friends, learning new things, going on trips/visits), being mindful to ensure inclusivity
- Celebrate good attendance within the class appropriately to the needs of the class, identifying effective and inclusive strategies tailored to the class
- Identifying patterns and trends in pupil attendance – eg pupil missing on same day several times and reporting concerns to the Attendance Officers as soon as possible following the procedure below.
- Liaise with the Admin Team, Attendance Officers and parents over punctuality, absence, collection of children and relay messages promptly.

School Attendance Administrator

- To take calls from parents about absence and complete ALFs. ALFs will alert SLT and Attendance Officers and be recorded in the ADaM system which is monitored the Attendance Officers and Attendance Management Group
- To forward messages about absence to relevant staff.
- Record Late arrivals to school or early finishes using the ALF System.
- Communicate late Sandwell Passenger Assist vehicles when receiving information from the travel operator.
- To handle administration of “Leave of Absence” requests.
- To cross reference taxi check off lists to ensure that these match with the register, identifying any anomalies and altering SLT to any missing children
- To monitor register codings and alert staff to inconsistences.
- To liaise with the Attendance Officers over attendance and punctuality as appropriate.
- Generating the attendance report each day and sending it to the attendance team.

- To produce individual, group, class, year group and whole school analysis and summary sheets as required.
- To identify any trends or patterns in attendance and report concerns to the Attendance Officers
- To produce attendance figures and summaries for Annual Reports.
- To attend AMG meetings to take minutes and produce letters and arrange meetings with parents/carers as directed.
- Produce termly attendance reports for parents for all pupils.

Pupils

- To attend school regularly and on time and be in school between 8.55am and 3.05pm.
- To attend registration promptly for both morning and afternoon sessions
- To arrive at lessons on time

Parents and Carers

- To ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually every day that School is open to pupils. This can be facilitated by promoting effective morning routines to ensure they are ready for:
  - Sandwell Passenger Assist allocated pick-up time on their nominated route.
  - Parent travel to school.
  - Travelling to school independently.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence to the school office on 0121 561 6884 and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Showing their child that they think school is very important - ask about their day and what they have learned and what they have enjoyed - or not!
- To take family holidays in the School holiday period and not to take holidays during Term time.
- To provide the School with up-to-date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility and or care of their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- If a "Leave of Absence" is required for exceptional circumstances, it must be made in writing on the correct Form to the Head Teacher, at least 10 school days in advance of the proposed start date of the absence. The Form can be obtained from the School Office. Parents should not assume that returning the Form guarantees that the absence request will be approved and should bear this in mind before booking holidays.
- Contact the school as soon as possible if there are issues relating to pupil attendance to seek support.

Attendance Monitoring

The school has robust systems and processes in place to monitor attendance for all students which includes:

- Monitoring pupil absence on a daily basis.
- Attendance reports are presented to the Governing Board on a termly basis. each term go to governing board.
- Weekly meetings of the Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG)
- Fortnightly focus with the Chair of Governors focusing on attendance trends and challenges.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. If a pupil's absence is ongoing, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Our school collects and stores attendance data and uses it to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Ensure attendance records are checked daily between the attendance officers and school administration staff for accuracy.
- Monitor daily whole school attendance figures.
- Check taxi registers in the morning as an early intelligence piece of the daily attendance.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

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

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a ‘Persistent Absentee’ (PA) when they miss 10% (19 days) or more schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents’/carers’ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

There are 190 school days per year					
190 days attended	181 days attended	171 days attended	161 days attended	152 days attended	134 days attended
0 days missed learning	9 days of missed learning	19 days of missed learning	29 days of missed learning	38 days of missed learning	56 days of missed learning
100%	95%	90%	85%	80%	70%
Good attendance Best chance of success.		Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress.		Serious Concern Very limited progress. Damaging effect on future prospects.	

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark <u>or</u> is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include School-based activities around raising attendance.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Place students on a watchlist to closely monitor attendance patterns to ensure intervention methods are effective.
- Write to parents to highlight the identify trend and emphasize the importance of attendance.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents 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
- Add anything else that is part of your strategy
- Instigate Multi-agency (TAF) / targeted support may be considered following the completion of an early help assessment. (If consent/cooperation is withheld, intervention by the Attendance Service may be appropriate).
- Possible application for an Education Supervision Order via the Family Court.

Medical and Social and Emotional Challenges to Attendance

There are instances where health concerns can contribute to the attendance of students. In these cases:

- Parents should work with school to understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Parents should proactively engage with the support provided.
- School to maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with parents and pupils to maximise attendance.
- School to put additional support in place with reasonable adjustments for Health Care Plans and EHCP's.
- Use wider services and external partners where necessary
- Regular monitor data for such groups with Governors and Local Authorities.

Where medical issues are affecting attendance a whole team approach is necessary to remove barriers and ensure that online learning/attendance in school is provided.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Persistent, severe or unexplained lateness can be classed as unauthorised absence and may be referred to the Local Authority.

Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. 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

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

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from School for a valid reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off School unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the School day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at School too late to get their mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holiday in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be off School because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend School. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. We have a support mechanism in School in order to support parents and carers appropriately.

Recording attendance

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 morning of each school day and once during the lesson after lunch. 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 2 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.35 and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of an unplanned absence by 9.30am on each day of absence or as soon as practically possible.

Parents/carers should ring the school on 0121 561 6884. Alternative arrangements can be made for parents who have issues with using a phone (eg hearing loss – please contact the School Office to discuss this).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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.

Parents should send in a copy of appointment cards, letters or screenshots of appointments sent by text into school by email prior to the appointment taking place.

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.

Lateness and punctuality

Lessons start at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your son/daughter to School on time.

LA Transport (IPTU)

Parents **should NOT** contact IPTU to cancel school transport. All requests to cancel transport must be made to the School Office, who will inform the Attendance Officers of all such requests.

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason,
- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.30am;
- Our Family Liaison Officer may telephone you or make a visit to your home to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of SLT, if absences persist; and agree steps forward to improve the situation.
- Refer the matter to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer if attendance does not improve.

Pupils attending Work Experience/Alternative Provision

Pupils attending work experience placements should attend as agreed with the School and parents should report any absence to School in the normal way.

Personalised Timetables

Personalised timetables may be drawn up for a pupil to meet a pupil's individual needs.

Personalised timetables need careful consideration prior to implementation and must have the support and agreement of the parent. Only the Head Teacher can place a pupil on a reduced timetable. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. All leave of absence requests must be made on the form in Appendix 2b.

Exceptional circumstances are one-off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English, Welsh, 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

Unauthorised absences are those which legislation does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children or young people off school
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Waiting for a delivery
- Parent/carer's illness.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is expected across the school and celebrated appropriately within class and by all staff in school. The school will give high levels of support to families and pupils in order to build and sustain improvement in attendance.

We take an inclusive approach in our attendance incentives processes, as we recognise many of our pupils that may have medical conditions that result in regular hospital appointments, medical procedures etc which will impact on their attendance.

The School has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the School and for classes are displayed in the School. We will make parents and carers aware of these targets too. The minimum level of attendance for this School is 94%; we will keep you updated regularly about progress towards this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our aim is to exceed this target because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the Local Authority.

Throughout our School year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our School Newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Moving to a new address/school

If a situation arises where a child is moving address or to a new school then the school will need the following information from parents

- The full name of the parent the child will be living with
- The new address
- The date where the child will commence living from this address

If a child is moving to a new school then parents will need to inform us of the new school and the proposed start date.

School Contacts

Parents should contact the Class Teacher in the first instance for any day-to-day queries on attendance. Absences should be reported to the school as detailed above. Parents needing further support on attendance should contact the Attendance Officer.

Monitoring arrangements

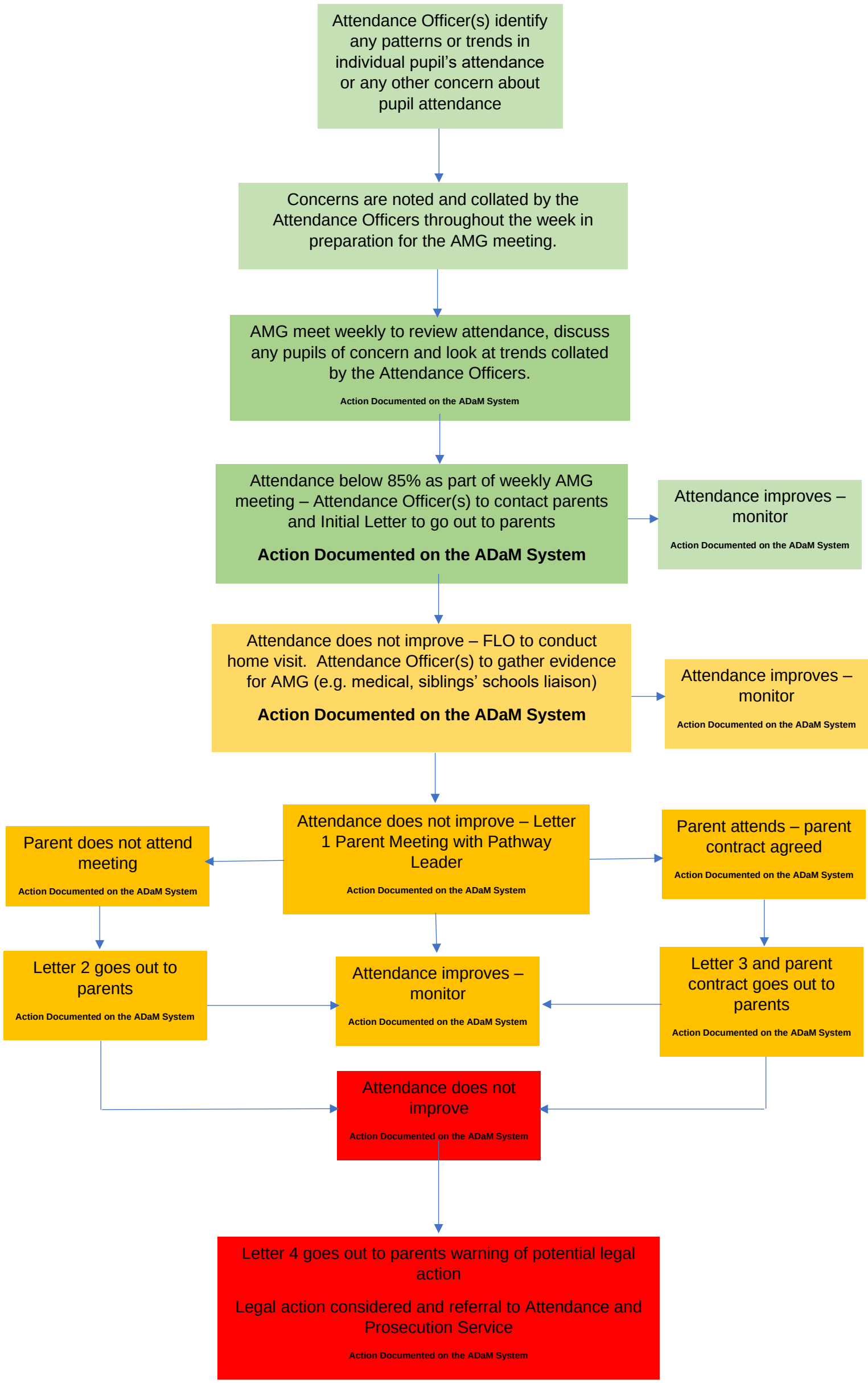
This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the school will seek the views of pupils and parents and the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour (Wellbeing and Engagement) Policy
- Remote Learning Policy

Appendix 1 – Attendance Management Flow Chart



Information Letters 2-4 may be sent to parents/carers as appropriate.

Appendix 1a

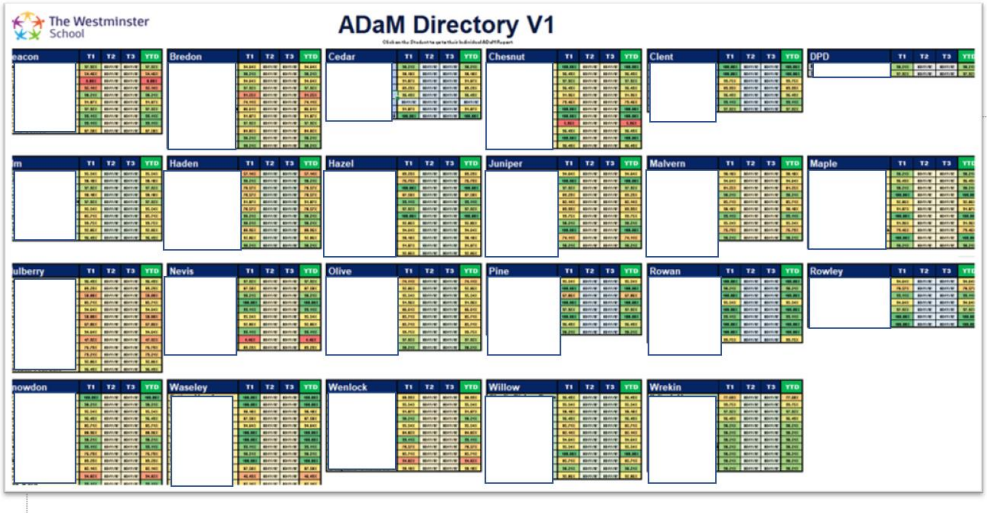
ADaM – Attendance Data and Monitoring System

ADaM is The Westminster Schools bespoke Attendance Data and Monitoring Tool. It is a method of centralising all aspects of attendance for the entire cohort of students.

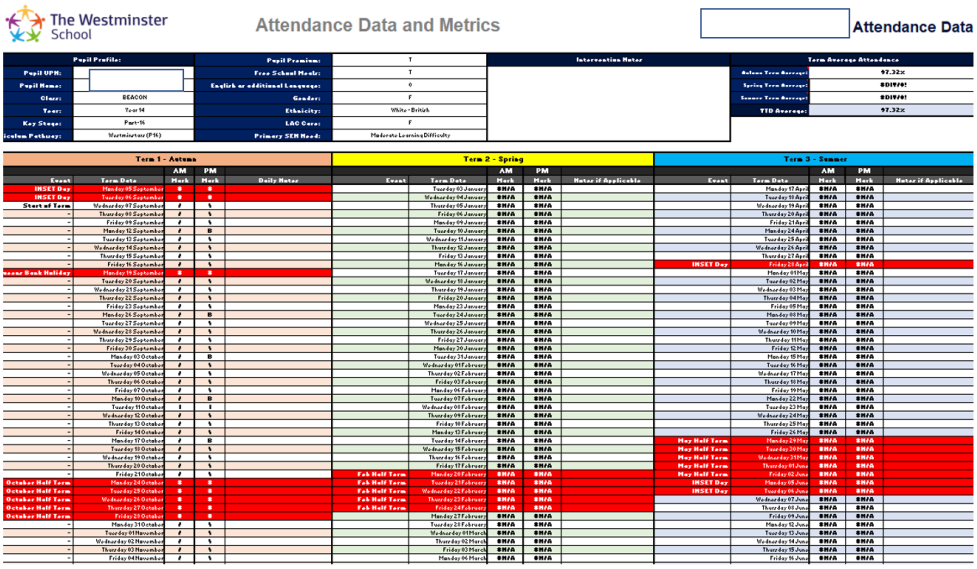
What does ADaM do?

- Provides a whole school heat map of pupil attendance.
- Is a method of recording parent/student reports of absence.
- Is a method of documenting school intervention strategies.

Main Adam Directory



Individual Student Record Example



Appendix 2: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2a

Attendance Thresholds

90-100% TWS embraces a universal whole school approach (school, parent, child, and community) to attendance: Ensuring that internal policies and processes are applied to promote good attendance and/or challenge where concerns arise.

70-90% Schools should consider all early help (single agency) options including children's centres, school nursing, inclusion support and police etc.

50-70% Where attendance concerns remain multi-agency (TAF) / targeted support may be considered following the completion of an early help assessment. (If consent / cooperation is withheld, intervention by the Attendance Service may be appropriate).

50% or less school attendance should trigger all schools and partners to consider "educational neglect" including the possibility of an Education Supervision Order via the Family Court. Any breach of an Education Supervision Order places a duty on Social Care to complete an assessment, following a MARF referral.

Appendix 2b Pupil Leave of Absence Request Form

Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes

Section 1: **For Parents/Carers**

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence **may not** be Authorised unless:

(a) An application has been made in advance to the Head teacher by a Parent/Carer with whom the pupil normally resides (lives with most of the time); and
(b) The Head teacher, or a person Authorised by them, considers that Leave of Absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

It is only a Parent "with whom the child normally resides" (lives with most of the time) that can apply for a Leave of Absence for their child. A Parent/Carer who does not live with the child cannot apply for a Leave of Absence. Any application they might make should be rejected by the school.

Parents/Carers should ensure that any Leave of Absence application is made in advance of any Leave of Absence to be taken. (Schools may have specific timescales for processing Leave of Absence applications. Parents/Carers should make sure they know what these are. Different schools may have different timescales.)

Parents/Carers should ensure that they know if their Leave of Absence application has been Authorised by the Head teacher before planning, booking or paying for anything in relation to that Leave of Absence application.

Parents/Carers should ensure they provide the Head teacher with all the detail and information they would want the Head teacher to know in deciding if a Leave of Absence can be Authorised.

Head teachers can only Authorise a Leave of Absence if they consider that the detail and information provided by a Parent/Carer in the application can be considered as an "exceptional circumstance".

It is at the Head teacher's discretion to decide if the detail and information provided by a Parent/Carer can be considered as an "exceptional circumstance" and agree if any Leave of Absence can be Authorised.

Disagreements between Parents/Carers and schools in relation to what is and is not an "exceptional circumstance" cannot be considered by the Schools Attendance Support Service.

Section 2: **For Schools**

Schools should consider having a clear, detailed and published policy or process that Parents/Carers should follow in applying for any Leave of Absence at their school.

Schools should decide on the format of their Leave of Absence Application Form.
(The Schools Attendance Support Service provide a template document for consideration)

Schools should decide on the timescales for accepting, processing and responding to any Leave of Absence applications received.

Such a timescale would need to consider how the school might inform the Parents/Carer of the outcome of the Head teacher's decision so that it is received by them before any planned Leave of Absence starts.

Schools should decide that if any late or incomplete application is received if they will process this or if the Leave of Absence application cannot be considered and the Absence recorded as Unauthorised.

Schools should decide how they will advise Parents/Carers of the Head teacher's decision and if the Absence is to be Authorised or not.

Schools should mark all Absences in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

Schools can request that a Penalty Notice be issued to Parents/Carers should any Unauthorised Leave of Absence be taken. (Such a request should be made within 5 school days of the child's return to school after the Leave of Absence is taken)

The Schools Attendance Support Service cannot issue a Leave of Absence Penalty Notices unless a Request is made by the Head teacher to do so, that the school can provide the required information and detail that allows for the Penalty Notice to be issued in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/schoolattendancepenalty

Section 3: Penalty Notices

If a Leave of Absence is not Authorised and the child is then absent from school, the Head teacher can request that the Schools Attendance Support Service issue Parents/Carers with Penalty Notices.

The Schools Attendance Support Service can only issue Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence following receipt of a request to do so by the school.

Penalty Notices are issued based on the information and detail provided by the school and in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct
https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/schoolattendancepenalty

Once issued a Penalty Notice cannot be 'withdrawn' unless it meets the criteria detailed in Section 4 of the Code of Conduct (see below):

A penalty notice may be withdrawn if the local authority determines that:

a) *It ought not to have been issued or issued to the person named as the recipient.*
b) *The notice contains material errors, e.g. sent to the wrong address.*
c) *Where the issuer did not comply with this code of conduct*
d) *Where after the expiry of 28 days the penalty notice is unpaid, and the local authority has not started legal proceedings, or wishes to take such action under section 444.*

Unpaid Penalty Notices can result in Parents/Carers being put before the Magistrates Court and fined up to £1,000 per Parent/Carer per child plus Court costs. If a history of offences exists, parents may be prosecuted under Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 and the court can impose fines up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

September 2022

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Schools Attendance Support Service

Leave of Absence Request

Before completing this form, please read the
Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes : Section 1 for Parent/Carers

Section A: Student's Details

All sections must be fully completed – ONE APPLICATION PER STUDENT

School:			
Student's Name:		Date of Birth	/ /
Student's Address:		Telephone No.	
		Mobile Tel No.	
		Post Code	

Section B: Reason for Leave of Absence

I would like to request a Leave of Absence for the above-named student:

First date of Absence from school	/ /	Returning to school on	/ /

Head teachers can only authorise a Leave of Absence if they consider that the detail and information **you provide** constitutes an **exceptional circumstance**. You **MUST** provide **all the details and information** you would want the Head teacher to consider in deciding if your request can be granted.

By signing this application, I understand and agree the following:

1. That I have read the Leave of Absence Request Guidance Notes and that **if I take my child on an Unauthorised Leave of Absence the school can request that I and any other Parents/Carers of my child are issued with a Penalty Notice (a fine of up to £120 in respect of each child and each Parent/Carer) and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court).**
2. That I am a Parent/Carer with whom the student 'normally resides'.
3. That I understand it is the Head teacher's decision as to what is and what is not an "exceptional circumstance" and I should discuss any questions I have regarding the decision made by the Head Teacher prior to the absence starting.

Parent/Carer Applicant PRINT NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	/ /
Parent/Carer Applicant SIGNATURE		Date of Application	/ /
Relationship to student			

Please turn over for Section C

Section C: Additional Parent/Carer(s) with Parental Responsibility

You must enter the names/dates of birth and address details of every **ADDITIONAL** adult who holds Parental Responsibility and/or care of your child.

Parent/Carer FULL NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	/ /
Address (if different from student's home address)			
		Post Code	
Relationship to student			
Parent/Carer FULL NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	/ /
Address (if different from student's home address)			
		Post Code	
Relationship to student			

For School Use ONLY

Request form Received Date	/ /	Checked as complete Name of school staff:	Y/N
Information corresponds with school records & Data collection sheet included	Y/N	Head teacher's review Date	/ /
Outcome: Agreed / Declined	/ /	Applicant advised of outcome Date	/ /
How applicant was advised of outcome (i.e. verbally, by letter, by telephone) School staff may need to provide evidence of the above should Court proceedings follow.			

School's Request for Penalty Notice

I have read the Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes and understand that once requested and issued a Penalty Notice cannot be withdrawn other than in the circumstances detailed.			☐
Agreed by Head teacher Date	/ /		
Referral to Schools Attendance Support Service Date	/ /		
Referrer Name		Position in School	
Have you attached a copy of the student's Attendance Summary/Certificate	Yes	☐	
Have you attached a copy of the decline letter sent to Parent/Carer(s)?	Yes	☐	

You do not need to complete a Legal Intervention Referral if all the above details are provided. A Leave of Absence referral can be accepted when you use MOVEit together with a fully completed Leave of Absence Request form, a copy of the school's decline letter to parents/carers (or confirm agreement to provide a Section 9 Witness Statement) and the student's Attendance Summary/Certificate.

Please send your completed form via MOVEit
T3335595_AS_SCHOOLNAMELOA-CHILDINITIALS

Appendix 3 – Letters and Parent Contract

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

September 2022

Schools Attendance Support Service

Parent / Carer Contract

Name of Student	**Date of Birth:** / /
Name of Parent/Carer(s) (1):	
Name of Parent/Carer(s) (2):	
Address:	
School:	

Parent contact completed due to continued concerns relating to attendance of

_____

with the aim of providing parent / carer(s) the opportunity to improve their attendance.

Parent contract completed at face to face meeting with_____

Has your child been prevented from attending school on medical grounds? No ☐ Yes ☐

Consent obtained from parent for referral to school nursing service: No ☐ Yes ☐

Parent / carer(s) view on parent contract – what type of support they think would be helpful to secure

's regular attendance:

_____

Student's view on parent contract (if appropriate) – what type of support they think would be helpful to secure their regular attendance:

_____

Unauthorised Absences %	Attendance %	Authorised Absence	Temporary Exclusions		Out of School (Permanent Exclusions	
%	%		**No** ☐	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐	**Yes** ☐
Late attendances:		Minutes lost to lateness:				

Reason for Parent / Carer contract and underlying issues raised	
•	
•	
•	
Agreed Actions for Parent / Carer(s)	
1.	*(parent/carer)* to ensure (child) attends school every day it is open and arrive on time (am). Hand over to *(designated person)* if appropriate.
2.	*(parent/carer)* will telephone *(school/designated person)* before am to advise them for the reason for absence and the likely return date if is unable to attend for any reason.
3.	to seek medical advice if is unwell and provide the school with or evidence, for example, a doctor's note, appointment card, hospital letter, medication prescribed by a GP any other evidence that enables the Head Teacher to consider authorising the absence as illness or medical appointment.
4.	*(parent/carer)* to attend any meetings requested by School, or Schools Attendance Support Service.
5.	
6.	

Support currently provided:					
Name	**Agency**	**Contact No.**	**Reason and how this will support improvement**	**Parent / Carer Aware**	
				Yes ☐	**No** ☐
				Yes ☐	**No** ☐
				Yes ☐	**No** ☐

Further support agreed:					
Name	**Agency**	**Contact No.**	**Reason and how this will support improvement**	**Parent / Carer Aware**	
				Yes ☐	**No** ☐
				Yes ☐	**No** ☐
				Yes ☐	**No** ☐

Any other information

Improvement target:

Timescale: (during the next half term): from: to:

Review date: / /

If school attendance does not improve because of the actions agreed not being adhered to then this contract can be used as court evidence.

Consent by parent/carer(s)

I/We have agreed to this Parenting Contract and will

Work with the school (and any other agencies) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and
Carry out what we have agreed to do.

I/We also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

I/We also understand that if my child has any unauthorised absences from school in the next

(e.g. half term) a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

Parent/Carer Signature: Date:

Parent/Carer Signature: Date:

Student present at meeting **No** ☐ **Yes** ☐

Form completed by: who has agreed to provide support to the parents/carers for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Agency: _____

Location:_____

Telephone No. _____

Date: / /

Signature: _____

The Westminster School

Information Letter 1

Parents Full Name (One letter per parent sent separately whether at the same address or not)
Address
Date

Dear Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr – e.g. minimum of initial i.e. Mrs J Bloggs

School Attendance Concern – Pupil Name

Possible Penalties for Non-Attendance

Once you have registered your child at a school it is your responsibility to make sure that she/he attends regularly and punctually. If you fail to do so the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider legal action to enforce school attendance.

There are several legal measures that the Local Authority can pursue:

- a Parenting Order
- your child being issued with an education supervision order. This is an order where the child attends court and certain measures are put in place regarding attendance at school
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice' This is a fine of £60 per parent/carer for periods of unauthorised absence such as truancy, holidays in term time, lateness, or poor patterns of attendance/punctuality

being prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. This means you could receive a community order, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Letter 1 : Invite into school letter

Parents Full Name (One letter per parent sent separately whether at the same address or not)
Address
Date

Dear Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr – e.g. minimum of initial i.e. Mrs J Bloggs

School Attendance Concern – Pupil Name

Our routine monitoring of the school register has identified a decline in your child's attendance which is causing us concern. Poor attendance will significantly impact on your child's education, friendships and potential to achieve.

A meeting has now been arranged to discuss the above matter. The meeting will be held at The Westminster School on: Day/date/year at: time

The aim of this meeting is to establish reasons for absence and offer advice and support if necessary.

It is very important that you attend this meeting. If for any reason you are unable to attend, please contact the (school office on the following telephone number 0121 561 6884.

Failure to hear from you, or your non- attendance at the above meeting, may result in a referral to the Attendance & Prosecution Service. A further appointment can only be arranged on one occasion prior to further action. **Please note that the Education Act 1996 makes it the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that their child regularly attends the school to which they are on roll. Failure to do so may result in legal action against you** – Please see overleaf for important information regarding this.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty Notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days, the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute under Section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:

"If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- "Parent" includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

Letter 2 : Failure to attend meeting

Parents Full Name (One letter per parent sent separately whether at the same address or not)
Address
Date

Dear Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr – e.g. minimum of initial i.e. Mrs J Bloggs

School Attendance - Failure to Attend Meeting – Pupil Name

Further to our letter dated…… I am aware that you did not attend the meeting regarding your child's attendance and failed to contact the school to rearrange the meeting.

At the meeting we would have discussed the following points with you:

- Establishing the reasons for the poor attendance
- We would advise you to ensure that your child attends schools every day it is open and to arrive on time
- We would inform you that your child will receive an unauthorised absence mark if they arrive after registration closes which at The Westminster School is 9.30am, in line with our School Attendance Policy.
- We would offer advice, support and guidance if necessary to enable your child to achieve an improved attendance level for the current academic year
- We would request you provide medical evidence for absences due to illness – failure to do so may result in an unauthorised mark.

In line with legislation and our School Attendance Policy we may refer unauthorised absence to the Schools Attendance Support Service. Such a referral may lead to a penalty notice being issued or legal action being taken against you.

Please see the Legal Action Information for Parents overleaf, which explains the legislation regarding irregular attendance.

Please do not hesitate to contact school on 0121 561 6884 if you have any additional concerns regarding your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Legal Action Information for Parents

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty Notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days, the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute under Section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:

"If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- "Parent" includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

Letter 3 : Meeting attended

Parents Full Name
(One letter per parent sent separately whether at the same address or not)
Address

Date

Dear Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr – e.g. minimum of initial i.e. Mrs J Bloggs

School Attendance - Meeting Attended – Pupil Name

Thank you for attending the meeting on (date) regarding your child's school attendance.

At the meeting we discussed the following points with you:

(Bullet point list of agreed actions and by whom i.e. parent or school etc)

• •

In line with legislation and our School Attendance Policy we may refer unauthorised absence to the Schools Attendance Support Team. Such a referral may lead to a penalty notice being issued or legal action being taken against you. Please see the Legal Action Information for Parents overleaf which explains the legislation regarding irregular attendance.

Please be aware that, as discussed at the meeting, a review of (pupil's name) attendance will be carried out on……. If further unauthorised absences have occurred, a referral will be made to the Schools Attendance Support Service for consideration of further action against you.

Please do not hesitate to contact School Office on 0121 561 6884 if you have any additional concerns regarding your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Legal Action Information for Parents

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty Notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days, the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute under Section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:

"If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- "Parent" includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

Letter 4 – Warning of Potential Legal Action

Parents Full Name
(One letter per parent sent separately whether at the same address or not)
Address

Date

Parent of: (Child's full name and date of birth)

Warning of Potential Legal Action

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss

We have been in contact with you many times in the past about your child's poor attendance. 's attendance has continued to fall and is now %

In the past we have offered many opportunities for you to work with us (and with other agencies) to improve (Child's name) attendance. None of this work has resulted in a sustained improvement in (Child's name) attendance.
To make it very clear just how much support has been offered we are listing below all of the strategies we have implemented and the outcomes of those strategies:

Strategy 1		Outcome
Strategy 2		Outcome
Strategy 3		Outcome
Strategy 4		Outcome
Strategy 5		Outcome
Other actions by school as per your attendance policy (please specify)		Outcome

It is now necessary for us to consider referring this matter to the School Attendance Support Team at Sandwell Council, which may result in legal action against you in the Magistrates Court. Please be aware that, in line with our attendance policy, I /we will refer the absence to Sandwell Local Authority for the issue of a Penalty Notice (fine) or consideration of immediate prosecution in the Magistrates court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school

A Penalty Notice may be issued **to each parent/carer, for each child** at:

£60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to **£120 per parent/carer, per child if paid between 21-28 days.**

Please note that if the fine is not paid within 28 days or the Local Authority proceed straight to court action you are likely to be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. The maximum fine the court can impose for a first offence is £1,000 per parent, per child.

If, however, you have a history of offences of this nature you may be prosecuted under Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 and the court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution

costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

The Westminster School is committed to supporting parents in helping their children attend school and achieve success in life but we can only do this if you will work with us. Please help us to help you and your child.

If you wish to discuss this matter further or feel you need any additional support with any issue which is affecting your child's school attendance, please do not hesitate to contact (Staff member's name) our school Attendance Champion.

Yours sincerely

Information Letter 2 – Why is high attendance important to my child's education?

As a parent/carer you want the best for your children. Having a good education is an important factor in opening more opportunities in adult life.

Did you know that:

- a child who is absent a day of school per week misses an equivalent of two years of their school life
- 90% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good grades of GCSE and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all
- poor examination results limit young people's options and poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable
- poor school attendance is also closely associated with crime a quarter of school age offenders have truanted repeatedly
- at least 1 million children take at least one-half day off a year without permission
- 7.5 million school days are missed each year through unauthorised absence

GCSEs may seem a long way off for you and your child but all absence at any stage leads to gaps in your child's learning. This in turn can:

- mean that they fall behind in work
- affect their motivation
- affect their enjoyment of learning
- lead to poor behaviour
- affect their desire to attend school regularly affect their confidence in school
- mean they miss out on the social life of school and extracurricular opportunities and experiences
- affect their ability to have or keep friendships

Information Letter 3 – Your responsibilities as a parent

By law, all children of compulsory school age (normally five to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens – either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. This means your child should not have sessions of unauthorised absence.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines parent as:

- all-natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

Recording your child's attendance

Schools must take an attendance register twice a day, which is a legal document that is kept for five years. Any absences will be recorded with a specific code depending on the type of absence. Absences fall into two main categories:

- **authorised** – those which schools can give you permission for
- **unauthorised** – those which they will not

Examples of absences which the school is unlikely to authorise can include:

- sickness of a parent, or other family member
- inadequate clothing for school
- child being used as a carer
- problems with transport
- non-urgent medical treatment
- school refusal or truancy
- days off for birthdays, shopping trips
- family holiday since new regulations came in September 2013

If your child needs a leave of absence you must ask for permission in advance. The headteacher can only approve the absence if he/she views them to be exceptional reasons. The headteacher also decides on the number of days to authorise or unauthorised. You can request a leave of absence form from your school.

What do I do if my child is unwell?

Most schools will have an attendance policy which is aligned to the expectations and guidance of Sandwell local authority, including the specific procedures a parent/carer should follow in the

event of their child needing to be absent from school. Parents/carers are advised to refer to the school's own procedures alongside this guidance.

As a parent/carer you should notify the school on the first day your child is unable to attend due to illness. Generally, this is done by telephone and many schools now have an answerphone facility specifically for this purpose. Schools may contact parents if they need more information. In cases when they have cause for concern about the genuineness of an illness, they may request that medical evidence is provided, such as a prescription or an appointment card; a note from a doctor may not be necessary. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if they are not satisfied that the illness is genuine but should advise parents/carers if they intend to do so.

You should let the school know:

- the nature of the illness (although you may wish to talk confidentially about this)
- whether your child has seen their GP, or whether an appointment has been made for some other specialist service
- how long you expect your child to be absent from school
- the prognosis for the child's recovery

Longer absence through illness, injury or medical condition

If absence is long-term or repeated, schools may request proof that your child is genuinely unwell and unable to attend school as this is a key part of their safeguarding duties. Keep copies of any appointment letters or medical reports.

If your child:

- has a long term or chronic condition, and is expected to be absent from school for a longer period
- has intermittent attendance due to an illness (such as epilepsy or sickle cell anaemia)
- is going to be absent from school for a period of therapy or surgery

The school may want to draw up a support plan with you, and consider whether to refer your child to our specialist services.

Education for pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs can be provided for in the following ways:

- children who are in-patients of most hospitals will be taught through the in hospital teaching service
- children who are not in-patients, may receive home tutoring

Information Letter 4 – Penalty Notices Frequently Asked Questions

Can I appeal the penalty notice?

Within the current regulations there is no statutory right of appeal against issuing of a penalty notice. Once a penalty notice has been issued it can only be withdrawn if it can be found that it was incorrectly issued.

Why are the dates given different to the days my children were absent?

The dates on the penalty notice are between dates and therefore may cover a wider period than the unauthorised absence.

Why have I been issued a notice when my children only missed a short period of school?

On the 6th April 2017 the Supreme Court ruled in the Isle of Wight Council v Platt case, that regular attendance at school meant that a parent must ensure their child attends school every day on which it is open.

My children's attendance is normally good

Previous regular attendance is not a factor in considering whether to issue a penalty notice or not in this instance. (see above)

Why have both parents received a penalty notice?

The Education Act 1996, makes it clear that each parent is responsible for their child's attendance, therefore, each parent individually receives a penalty notice.

Who do you class as a parent?

The natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not. Any person who has parental responsibility for a child. Anyone who has the care of a child i.e. lives with and looks after the child. (section 576 of the Education Act 1996)

Can I have a payment plan?

Penalty notices must be paid in full within the time specified in the notice, we are unable to accept part payments or agree a payment plan.

Who should I make cheques payable to?

Please ensure that your cheque is made payable to SMBC. We cannot accept payment if the payee is incorrect and your fine will remain unpaid.

Appendix 4 – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Duties for Educational Neglect

7 Minute Briefing – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Duties for Educational Neglect

For access 7 Minute Briefings and Further information regards attendance please see https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/

1 – What is Educational Neglect?

The Department for Education (DfE) has stated, 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect'. The NSPCC has cited, 'failure to ensure regular school attendance which prevents the child reaching their full potential academically' as one of their six forms of neglect.

'Working together to safeguard children' provides a neglect description, 'The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development'

https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SCSP-WNB-Guidance-2022-Final.pdf

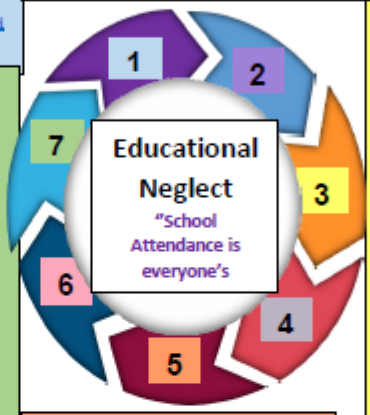
Case study SCR
https://www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk/images/BSCP/Professionals/Serious_Case_Reviews/BSCB2017-18-03/BSCB_2017-18-03_SCR_Report_-_01.09.22.pdf

2- Why is it important to highlight Educational Neglect?

Educational neglect, persistent and severe absence are recurring themes in Safeguarding Practice Reviews. In contrast, regular school attendance is a protective factor for the most vulnerable children and young people, providing opportunities for support whilst giving them the best possible start in life – Sandwell Vision 2030.

In accepting that "school attendance is everyone's business" (Education white paper) the SCSP intention is, not to increase social care referrals, but to agree a pathway that creates a shared responsibility for responding to "educational neglect".

Professor Jan Horwarth, describes *"educational neglect as involving a carer failing to provide a stimulating environment, show an interest in the child's education (**at school or otherwise**), support their learning, or respond to any special needs, as well as failing to comply with state requirements regarding education and attendance".*



3 – Chronic/Severe Absence including 'not in education'

combined with safeguarding / child protection concerns was included in Sandwell's windscreen of need.

The White Paper requires us to review our shared thresholds and definitions of persistent (90% or less) and severe (50% or less) absence from school.
In Sandwell the SCSP has agreed that the Educational Neglect of a child which significantly impacts their welfare and/or educational outcomes is likely to result in the **serious impairment** of the child's health; well-being, development and/or life chances.

This may be exacerbated by poor routines and boundaries or a lack of parental engagement.

4 – What the Data tells us -

There is a demonstratable link between absence and attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4. Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared with those with lower attainment.

-Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard

-Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

- Research shows associations between regular absence from school and extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent)3 and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study.

5 – Indicators:

- Parent(s) consistently failing in maintaining schooling or identifying provision for their child.
- Parent(s) failing to engage in school meetings to address attendance concerns.
- Parent(s) unable to provide substantiated reasons for absences from school.
- Parent(s) failure to engage in statutory or non-statutory interventions to improve attendance.
- Parents fail to prevent children from becoming PA- (below 90% attendance) and/or severely absent over a period equal to an academic year (9 months / 6 half-terms).
- Parents "can't" rather than won't enforce boundaries and routines.
- Child refusal to attend school / adhere to parental boundaries.
- Impact of adverse childhood experiences or multiple moves (school / addresses).

6 – All Practitioners should:

Consider the significance of educational neglect if they become aware of persistent and/or severe absence from school.
Demonstrate Professional curiosity in relation to children not in school including those who are Electively home educated / not on roll.
Challenge parents and carers as to why children are not in / attending school.
Consider how they and others might resolve the absence from school. E.g. Screen for Emotionally based school avoidance
Seek advice from the child's school, the School Attendance Support Service or the SCSP if they are concerned about a child's attendance.

Please refer to
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

7 – Support/Action:

Attendance Percentage

90-100% All schools should adopt a universal whole school approach (school, parent, child, and community) to attendance: Ensuring that internal policies and processes are applied to promote good attendance and/or challenge where concerns arise.

70-90% Schools should consider all early help (single agency) options including children's centres, school nursing, inclusion support and police etc.

50-70% Where attendance concerns remain multi-agency (TAF) / targeted support may be considered following the completion of an early help assessment. (If consent / cooperation is withheld, intervention by the Attendance Service may be appropriate).

50% or less school attendance should trigger all schools and partners to consider "educational neglect" including the possibility of an Education Supervision Order via the Family Court.

Any breach of an Education Supervision Order places a duty on Social Care to complete an assessment, following a MARF referral.

The Graded Care Profile (GCP2) is a practical tool which supports practitioners in measuring the quality of care delivered to an individual child from an individual carer or carers over a short period.