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2024/2025

# Attendance Policy

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

Approved by Governing Body on:	17 September 2024
Signed by Chair of Governors:	<i>P. A. Evans</i>
Head Teacher:	O M Flowers
Lead Personnel:	Ben Taylor
Date of Review:	September 2025

# The Westminster School

## Introduction

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## 1. Aims

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 attend 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.

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.

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- Have better career prospects.
- Achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations (and where appropriate achieve qualifications)

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
- Supporting students and their families to attend regularly

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.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance that came into effect on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The link to this guidance can be found below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63049617e90e0729e63d3953/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63049617e90e0729e63d3953/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Sections 19 and 444B (Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6) of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Section 175 (4) (All chapters) of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Section 19 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Paragraph 7 of the Education Regulations 2014
- Paragraph 3 of the Non Maintained Special Schools Regulations 2015 (Chapters 1&2)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792fff71a83e8/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792fff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)
- Mental Health Issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_where\\_a\\_mental\\_health\\_issue\\_is\\_affecting\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf)
- [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. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.*

*Working Together to Improve School Attendance, Department for Education, September 2024.*



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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 attainment.
- 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.
- Provide frequent and regular support in order to address any challenges students may be having with their attendance.

### Key Staff

Below are the key staff that are here to support parents/carers and students with their attendance and processes for attendance.

Mr Ben Taylor – Strategic Lead for Attendance

Ms Denise Taylor (Family Support Worker and Attendance Officer / Abbie Gilbert – Attendance Officer

Leeanne Hocknull/Jade Allen– Members of the Pastoral Team (Team WEST) linked to attendance

If parents or carers have any concerns regarding attendance or require additional support they can email [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk)

We do also appreciate that parents and carers may want to liaise with a member of staff not outlined above and this is perfectly acceptable, parents and carers can contact their child's form tutor or familiar adult for support or guidance regarding attendance.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### The Governing Board

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

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- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- 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 – Pat Evans.

### **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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- 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, and/or authorising the designated senior leader to be able to do so, in this case Mr B Taylor.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

### **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.

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- 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.
- Co-chairing or Chairing the weekly Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG) meetings.
- To report to the Governing Board on Attendance Matters.
- Liaising with the Sandwell Local Authority Attendance team to report students who are a cause for concern and work collaboratively with them to support identified students to (and their families) improve their attendance.

**The nominated Senior Leader for attendance is Mr B Taylor and can be contacted at the school on 01215616884 or via e mail [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk)**

### The Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG)

- Meet 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 non-attendance/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.
- Members of the AMG (predominantly from Team WEST) to take calls from parents/carers regarding absences and record them accordingly in line with school recording processes.
- 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/co-ordinate 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.

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- 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% or below) and acted on 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/designated senior leader for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The School Attendance Officers are Denise Taylor and Abbie Gilbert can be contacted via 0121 561 6884 or via e mail at [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk)

### 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 9.20am for morning registration and by 1.55pm 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.
- Create a safe learning environment where belonging is promoted through good relationships and compassion
- Explore with pupils, using language or their preferred communication method what it is that makes it hard for them to attend school

### School Attendance Administrator –

**To take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school systems accordingly**

**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 alerting SLT/Attendance Officers to any missing children
- To monitor register codings and alert staff to inconsistencies.
- 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 when required.
- 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.

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- 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

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides us most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day to day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected 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 9.20am 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.
  - Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
  - Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
  - Keep to any attendance contracts/arrangements that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Ben Taylor, Denise Taylor or Abbie Gilbert, who can be contacted via 01215616884 or [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk)
- 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!

### The School Day

The school day starts at 8.50am where students will go to their form groups and register. We feel this is a very important part of the day as this supports students to maintain a routine but also to check in with their key staff who can support with any pastoral needs. At 9.15am students will go to their phonics and reading groups, this again is a very important part of the day where students can develop their ability to read and communicate with others. For the academic year 2024-25 registers will close at 9.20am. The afternoon registers will close at 1.55pm as period 7 (first lesson in the afternoon starts at 1.45pm). The school day will finish at 3.05pm. In summary the key times of the day are outlined below:

8.50am – start of the school day and form time

9.15am – phonics and reading groups start

9.20am – registers close



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1.45pm – Lunchtime ends

1.55pm – Afternoon registers close

3.05pm – The end of the school day

### 4. 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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 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 9.20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.35 and will be kept open until 1.55pm.

#### Reporting absences

##### Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of an unplanned absence by 9.20am on each day of absence or as soon as practically possible.

Parents/carers should ring the school on 0121 561 6884 and select **option 1**. 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.

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Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or 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.

### Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

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 9.20am 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 child 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 unexplained 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 9.20am
- Call the parent each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure the proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues the school will consider involving an education welfare officer (Sandwell Local Authority)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no longer than 5 working days after the session for which the pupil was absent
- 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.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with then an issue of a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention.

### 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.

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### 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.

### 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.

- 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.

### Leave Already Taken

Where there are instances where a child returns at a later date than outlined on an initial leave of absence request then parents and carers will be required to complete an additional document called Leave Already Taken (LAT). This will need to be completed as soon as possible. This document can be found in the appendices (appendix in 2b)

### 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 the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 School Attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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. A form can be requested from the school office or from a member

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of the AMG. These must be completed with as much detailed information as possible. If the school do not deem to have the sufficient amount of information then parents and carers maybe requested to complete an additional form.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

**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



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- Waiting for a delivery
- Parent/carer's illness.

### 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.

## 5. 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 to governing board.
- Weekly meetings of the Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG)
- Regular focused meetings 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.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted DfE access to its management system (SIMS) so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 similar local educational settings, 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:

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- 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

### Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents and carers of their child's attendance and absence levels through termly letters.

### 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
- Conduct thorough half termly, full termly and annual data to identify patterns and trends in attendance
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### ADAM (Attendance Data and Metrics)

The school has created an internal system called ADAM. This is a visual representation of attendance data that can be updated regularly and accessed by staff at any point. This data is overseen by the AMG and used to help develop strategies and interventions where required. The example of ADAM can be found in appendix 1b.

### 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
- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and Area of Learning leads to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

### Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

#### Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

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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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the schools strategy for improving attendance.

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 at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- 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.

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 or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this as soon as possible. Persistent Absence 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 (see appendix 5a and 5b) and the plan may include School-based activities around raising attendance.

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### 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.

### Sanctions

#### National Framework for Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

#### Penalty notices

The headteacher, designated senior leader for attendance (B Taylor) local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or



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exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 6. Supporting Students who have medical or Social and Emotional Challenges to Attendance

### 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.

## The Westminster School

- School to put additional support in place with reasonable adjustments for Health Care Plans and Educational Health and Care Plan's (EHCP)
- 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. These case by case scenarios will be regularly discussed in the weekly AMG meetings which are chaired by either the headteacher and/or the designated senior lead for attendance.

### 7. 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.

### 8. Monitoring arrangements

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

### 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

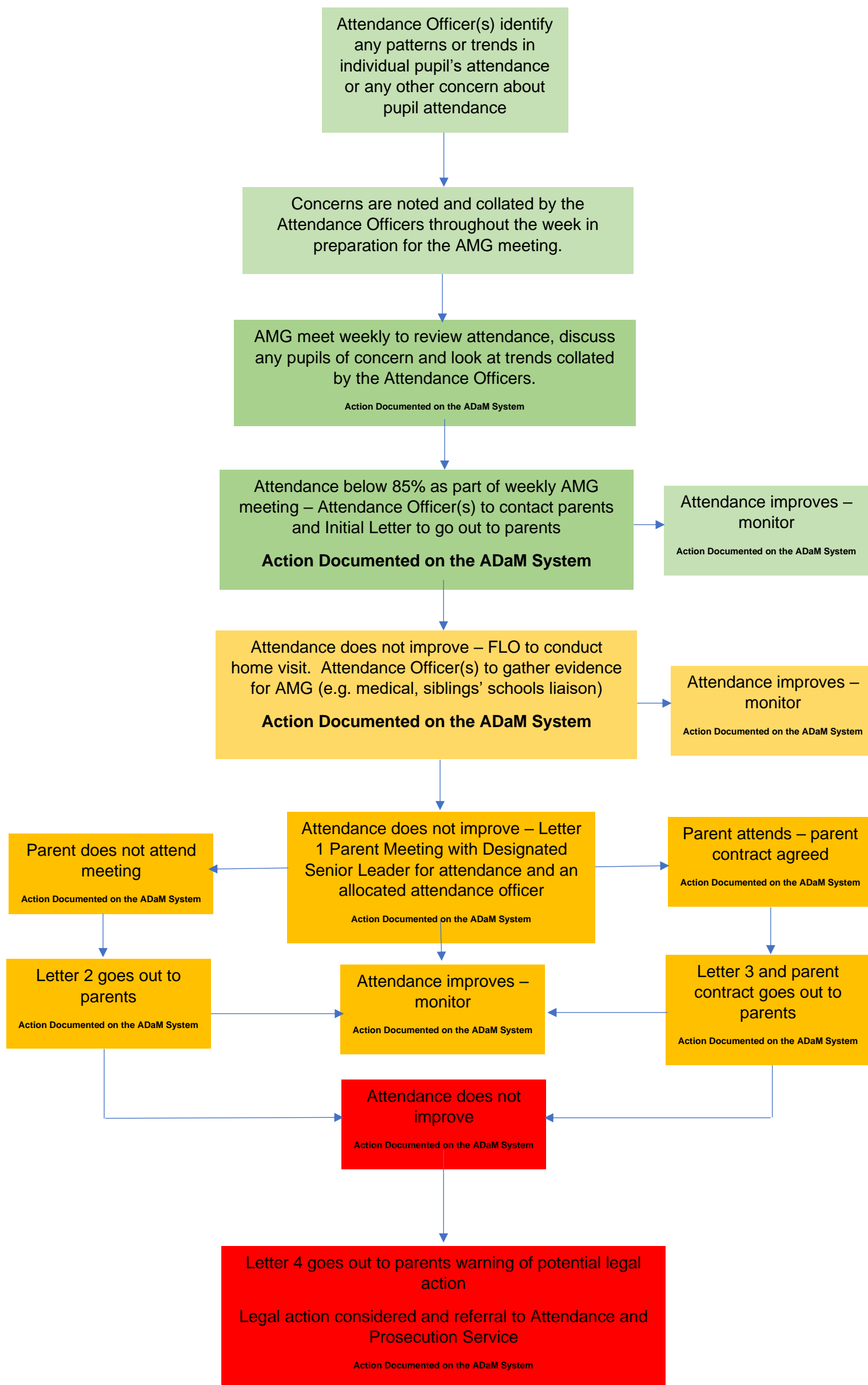
- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour (Wellbeing and Engagement) Policy

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### **List of Appendices**

1. Attendance Management Flow Chart
  - 1a – Example of ADAM (Attendance Monitoring)
  - 2a Attendance recording codes
  - 2b – attendance thresholds
  - 2b – Requesting Leave of absence support, guidance and documentation
3. Parent Contract (LA Documentation)
4. Information letters for Parents and Carers (including meeting arrangements)
  - 5a – Action Plan template for a student who is severely absent (50% or below)
  - 5b – Action Plan template for a students who is persistently absent (50-70%)
6. Multi Agency Safeguarding Duties for Educational Neglect

Appendix 1a – Attendance Management Flow Chart



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



## Appendix 1b

### 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

The Westminster School										Attendance Data and Metrics										Attendance Data	
Pupil Profile:					Pupil Details:					Attendance Metrics:					Term Average Attendance:						
Pupil Name: [Name]					Form: [Form]					Absence Type: [Type]					92.32%						
Pupil Number: [Number]					Enrich or additional Languages: [List]					Sective Type: [Type]					80.00%						
Class: [Class]					Gender: [Gender]					Sective: [Sective]					80.00%						
Event: [Event]					Ethnicity: [Ethnicity]					Sective: [Sective]					92.32%						
Key Dates: [Dates]					LAC Case: [Case]					Sective: [Sective]											
School Pathway: [Pathway]					Primary SEN Req: [Req]					Mentor/Liaison/Officer: [Officer]											
Term 1 - Autumn										Term 2 - Spring										Term 3 - Summer	
Event	Term Date	AM	PM	Mark	Mark	Daily Rate	Event	Term Date	AM	PM	Mark	Mark	Metric of Applicability	Event	Term Date	AM	PM	Mark	Metric of Applicability		
INSET Day	Monday 25 September						INSET Day	Monday 25 September						INSET Day	Monday 25 September						
INSET Day	Tuesday 26 September						INSET Day	Tuesday 26 September						INSET Day	Tuesday 26 September						
Start of Term	Thursday 28 September						Start of Term	Thursday 28 September						Start of Term	Thursday 28 September						
	Friday 29 September							Friday 29 September							Friday 29 September						
	Monday 1 October							Monday 1 October							Monday 1 October						
	Tuesday 2 October							Tuesday 2 October							Tuesday 2 October						
	Wednesday 3 October							Wednesday 3 October							Wednesday 3 October						
	Thursday 4 October							Thursday 4 October							Thursday 4 October						
	Friday 5 October							Friday 5 October							Friday 5 October						
	Monday 8 October							Monday 8 October							Monday 8 October						
	Tuesday 9 October							Tuesday 9 October							Tuesday 9 October						
	Wednesday 10 October							Wednesday 10 October							Wednesday 10 October						
	Thursday 11 October							Thursday 11 October							Thursday 11 October						
	Friday 12 October							Friday 12 October							Friday 12 October						
	Monday 15 October							Monday 15 October							Monday 15 October						
	Tuesday 16 October							Tuesday 16 October							Tuesday 16 October						
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	Friday 30 November							Friday 30 November							Friday 30 November						

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### Appendix 2: attendance codes

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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

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<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and

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		the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence



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<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2b

**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: Leave of Absence – Guidance Notes

Section 1: Further information for Parents/Carers

Section 2: Further information for Schools

### Section 1

#### Further information 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

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and schools in relation to what is and is not an “exceptional circumstance” cannot be considered or determined by the Schools Attendance Support Service).

**There is no statutory right of appeal to the Local Authority against the issue of a Penalty Notice. The Schools Attendance Support Service issue Penalty Notices based on the decision of the Headteacher/Principal.**

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### Schools Attendance Support Service Leave of Absence Request

Before completing this form, please read the  
Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes for Parents and Carers

**PLEASE ENSURE BOTH SIDES OF THIS FORM ARE COMPLETED**

Please send your completed form via [MOVEit](#)  
T3335595\_AS\_SCHOOLNAMELOA-CHILDINITIALS

Section A: Student's Details			
<b>ALL SECTION B MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED – ONE APPLICATION PER STUDENT</b>			
School:			
Student's Name:		Date of Birth	/ /
Address where student usually resides:			
Post Code:			
Section B: Reason for Leave of Absence			
I would like to request a Leave of Absence for the above-named student:			
From	/ /	To	/ /
Head teachers can only authorise a Leave of Absence if they consider that the detail and information <b>you provide</b> constitutes an <b>exceptional circumstance</b> . You <b>MUST</b> provide <b>all the details and information</b> 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:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 £160 in respect of each child and each Parent/Carer) and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court).</li> <li>2. That I am a Parent/Carer with whom the student 'normally resides'.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>			
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:			
Telephone Number:			
Mobile Number:			



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Section C: Additional Parent/Carer(s) with Parental Responsibility				
You must enter the names/dates of birth and address details of every <b>ADDITIONAL</b> 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	/ /	Information corresponds with school records & Data collection sheet included	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Number of days authorised			Number of days unauthorised	
How applicant and any other additional adult were advised of outcome:				
Letter(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:			
Email(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:			
Telephone call(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:			
Text Message(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:			
School Comms (e.g. internal messaging system)	Date:			
Face to face meeting(s) with Parent/Carer(s)	Date:			
<b>School staff may need to provide evidence of the above should Court proceedings follow.</b>				
School's Request for Penalty Notice				
<b>I have read the Leave of Absence Request Guidance. I understand that I am requesting a Penalty Notice and that this cannot be withdrawn once issued, other than in the circumstances detailed in the Guidance.</b>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreed by Head teacher	Date	/ /	Signature of Head teacher:	
Referral to Schools Attendance Support Service	Date	/ /	Referrer Name:	
Position in School:			Contact E-mail Address in school (who you wish any correspondence to be sent to)	
Copy of student's Attendance Summary attached	<input type="checkbox"/>		Copy of student's Data Collection Sheet attached	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of decline correspondence sent to parent/carer(s) attached	<input type="checkbox"/>			

A Leave of Absence referral can be accepted when you use **MOVE!** 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 8 Witness Statement) and the student's Attendance Summary/Certificate and Data Collection Sheet.

## Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes for Parents and Carers

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 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.

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. Parents should contact school to resolve any disagreements before the leave commences.

### 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.

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.

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>

With effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent/carer, for each child as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup> Leave of absence within a 3 year period:** £80 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent/carer, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Leave of absence within a 3 year period:** £160 per parent, per child

**3<sup>rd</sup> Leave of absence within a 3 year period:** Prosecution (per parent, per child) for the offence (penalty notice action will no longer apply)

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.

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 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.



Schools Attendance Support Service  
**Leave Already Taken**

Leave Already Taken (LAT) form is designed to allow and enable educational providers to referral cases when a registered student has taken unauthorised absence without completing a Leave of Absence form. LAT referrals may allow further action to be considered against parent/carer(s) IF referral criteria are met.

Referrers are required to provide the necessary detail and evidence, compliant with legal requirements, in a format that allows for them to be used in the Magistrates Court, under Section 4441 and 4441a of the Education Act 1996.

**All sections need to be completed on this form for the referral to be processed.**

Section A: Student's Details			
Student's Full Name:	Student's Full Name	Date of Birth:	DD/MM/YYYY
Student's Home Address:	Student's Full Address	Post Code:	Post Code
School:	Select school from list	Leave of Absence dates taken:	From: DD/MM/YYYY To: DD/MM/YYYY
Section B: Parent / Carer Details			
Parent (1) Name:	Select Title Full name of Parent/Carer	All known Contact No(s).	Contact No(s)
Parent (1) Full Address:	"As above" if the address is the same as student	Post Code:	Post Code
Parent (2) Name: <small>(Any other parent who has parental responsibility)</small>	Select Title Full name of Parent/Carer	All known Contact No(s).	Contact No(s)
Parent (2) Full Address:	Parent's Full Address	Post Code:	Post Code
Any other responsible adult <small>Any other person who has parental responsibility / care of If more than one, please add in additional information</small>	Select Title Full name of Parent/Carer	All known Contact No(s).	Contact No(s)
Any other responsible adult	"As above" if the address is the same as student	Post Code:	Post Code
Section C: Actions completed by School/Provider			
<b><u>Copies of letters, notes of meeting etc. must be included.</u></b>			
<b>Action – Period of Evidence</b>			
Attach an up-to-date Registration Certificate / Attendance Printout	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Attach an up-to-date School Data Collection Sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Date of face-to-face meeting offered	DD/MM/YYYY	Evidence	
Did this meeting take place?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DD/MM/YYYY Evidence
Letters to parent(s)/carer(s) regarding leave <b>(copy/copies must be attached)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DD/MM/YYYY	Evidence

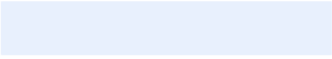
The Westminster School

**Section D: Reason for Referral**

Please note: This should reflect information gained on Leave of Absence Already Taken

Reason for Referral

**Section E: Declarations**

Name of Person completing the referral Please note that this will be the person we communicate with	Name		
Position in School	Position		
Contact No.	Contact No.		
Email Address:	Email Address		
I have attached an Attendance Summary/Certificate attributable to the student.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have attached a Data Collection sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Head teacher I have read ***above <input type="checkbox"/> (In cases where the Head teacher is also the DSL please identify this)	Name	 <i>Please upload digital signature</i>	DD/MM/YYYY



Schools Attendance Support Service

# Parent / Carer Contract

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

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 <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Late attendances:		Minutes lost to lateness:				



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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.

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**Support currently provided:**

Name	Agency	Contact No.	Reason and how this will support improvement	Parent / Carer Aware	
				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

**Further support agreed:**

Name	Agency	Contact No.	Reason and how this will support improvement	Parent / Carer Aware	
				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

**Any other information**

.....

.....

.....

Improvement target:

.....

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

.....

Review date:                      /                      /

The Westminster School

**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 – Concern regarding attendance

**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

### Absences from school

We've noticed that (insert name) has missed a lot of school recently. We're concerned that they are missing out on key experiences because of this, and that they risk falling behind both socially and academically.

(Insert name) currently has an attendance figure of (insert figure) and as a result has missed (insert number of days)

We know that every family's circumstances are different, and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. We are aware of (insert reasons for possible absence). Please let us know if there's anything else going on at home or at school which might be making it difficult for (insert name) to attend regularly.

We want to make sure that we can support (insert name) education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on 01215616884 or you can e mail [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk) as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help (insert name) catch up on any missed provision.

Yours sincerely,

Mr O Flowers

Headteacher

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Letter 2 – Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence

### Unauthorised absence from school

We've noticed that (insert name) has recently taken a number of unauthorised absence from school.

(insert name) has been absent from school for a total of (insert number days) on the following dates:

Insert Dates

Insert Dates

Insert Dates

It's important that (insert name) attends regularly, so that they can get the best out of their education.

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. Please let us know if there is anything going on at home or at school which might be making it difficult for (insert name) to attend regularly.

We want to make sure that we can support (insert name) education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on 01215616884 or email [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk) as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help (insert name) catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Mr O Flowers

Headteacher



## The Westminster School

### Letter 3 : 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 continued 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:

Insert date and time of meeting

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 or e mail [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk)

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** which is outlined in the schools attendance policy which can be found on our website or requested from the school office.

Yours sincerely

Mr O Flowers

Head Teacher

## The Westminster School

### Letter 4 : 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 9.20am, 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 do not hesitate to contact school on 0121 561 6884 or e mail [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk) if you have any additional concerns regarding your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## The Westminster School

### Letter 5 : 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:

(insert key points)

These actions will be reflected in your child's individual attendance action plan.

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 which is outlined in the school attendance policy.

**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 or e mail [attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk) if you have any additional concerns regarding your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## The Westminster School

### Letter 4 – Formal notice of unauthorised absence

**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:

**£80 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days**, rising to **£160 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. 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.

**The Westminster School**

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 Ben Taylor, our school Attendance Champion.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## The Westminster School

### Information Letter outlining changes to Penalty Notices

#### **Important Information for Parents - Changes to the issue of Penalty Notices to address School Attendance from 19th of August 2024: THE EDUCATION (PENALTY NOTICES) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2024 No. 210.**

Dear Parent,

From 19.08.24 new legislation comes into force regarding the criteria for and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance. A national framework for parental fines is being introduced for any pupil who misses 10 or more half-days within any 10-week period. **Please note that if you have requested a Leave of Absence that commences from September 2024 onwards, any Penalty Notice/s issued will be at the new rates and trigger the start of the three year threshold period, as specified below.**

The following changes have been made:

- the number of unauthorised absences that may trigger a potential fine: **10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in a 10 school week period.**
- the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child: **a maximum of 2 penalty notices will be issued (per parent, per child) within a 3 year period**
- for the first penalty notice issued to each parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3-year period: **the amount of the penalty notice has increased from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days**
- **any second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice issue is now set at £160 to be paid within 28 days – NB: No discount for earlier payment is offered.**
- **any further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court** for the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty was issued – 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.

Please speak to us if you have concerns about your child's attendance - we want to support you to address any barriers which prevent your child attending on time every day.

## The Westminster School

Information letter – Changes to Penalty notices including term time holidays

Dear Parent / Carer,

### Changes to Penalty Notices

The Department for Education have made some significant changes to Penalty Notices for absence from school, which we need to make you aware of.

### Leave of Absence (Holiday in term time)

If you request a Leave of Absence (holiday in term time) and this is not authorised by school, then you may be liable for the following Penalty Notice:

First Leave of Absence	£80 <b>per parent, per child</b> if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being issued. This will rise to £160 <b>per parent per child</b> if paid within 21 to 28 days of the penalty notice being issued
Second Leave of Absence	Automatically charged at £160 <b>per parent, per child</b> <b><i>If taken within 3 years of the date of the first Leave of Absence request</i></b>
Third leave of absence	Consider referring to court for prosecution which may lead to a criminal conviction <b><i>If taken within 3 years of the date of the first and second Leave of Absence request</i></b>

### Irregular Attendance

A Penalty Notice may also be issued if your child has irregular attendance at school. This is defined as your child being absent for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks (a session is a morning or afternoon in school). This absence can span different terms.

We see the issue of a Penalty Notice as a last resort and want to work with you to improve your child's attendance. If you have concerns, please contact us as we want to ensure the best for your child.

All of the above will come into effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Therefore, if you have requested a Leave of Absence to be taken at the end of the Summer Term (July 2024), any Penalty Notice issued will be at the old rate of £60 per parent per child, rising to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days. If you have requested a Leave of Absence to be taken in September 2024, a Penalty Notice may be issued but this will be at the new rates as specified above.

## The Westminster School

### Information Letter – 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

## The Westminster School

### 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 August 2024

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

## The Westminster School

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

## The Westminster School

### 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.

## The Westminster School

Information letter 5 – Notification of unauthorised absence

Dear **PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN NAME**

### **PUPIL NAME** – Leave of Absence Request

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request.

The Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, unfortunately I am unable to approve leave of absence between **DATES** and **DATES**. I believe a member of School staff has spoken with you regarding this request. Unfortunately, if your child is away from school during this period it will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.

My first concern has to be the educational development of **PUPIL NAME**. Requests for leave are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have considered **PUPIL NAME** overall level of attendance, attainment and the impact any leave may have on public examinations and tests.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that unauthorised absences are referred to the Local Authority who may, under certain circumstances, consider issuing you with a Penalty Notice or legal action in relation to unauthorised absences. This relates to your responsibilities under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Our key priority is to ensure your child is as successful as possible, are able to reach their full potential and gains maximum benefits from their educational experience.

I hope that you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

If you wish to discuss this decision, please email me on [headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk).

Yours faithfully



## The Westminster School

Information letter 6 – Notification of unauthorised absence without a leave of absence request made

Dear **PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN NAME**

### **PUPIL NAME** – Leave of Absence – Leave already Taken

I have been made aware that a leave of absence has been taken without an initial leave of absence request on the dates INSERT DATES. This is following INSERT EVIDENCE BASE OF HOW WE ARE AWARE OF THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE. I am writing to you to make you aware that after careful consideration this period of absence will be **unauthorised**.

The Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

My first concern has to be the educational development of **PUPIL NAME**. Requests for leave are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have considered **PUPIL NAME** overall level of attendance, attainment and the impact any leave may have on public examinations and tests.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that unauthorised absences are referred to the Local Authority who may, under certain circumstances, consider issuing you with a Penalty Notice or legal action in relation to unauthorised absences. This relates to your responsibilities under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Our key priority is to ensure your child is as successful as possible, are able to reach their full potential and gains maximum benefits from their educational experience.

I hope that you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Please can you ensure that in future, leave of absence requests are made prior to any period of absence and the document for this can be found in the school attendance policy (Appendix 2c) or can be requested from the school reception.

If you wish to discuss this decision, please email me on [headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk).

Yours faithfully

## The Westminster School

Information Letter 7 – Authorised Leave of Absence Letter

Dear **PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN NAME**

**PUPIL NAME – Leave of Absence Request**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request.

I am able to confirm that on this occasion I am prepared to authorise leave of absence for **[pupil name]** from **[dates]** for the purpose of **[reason]**.

Requests for leave are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have considered **[pupil name]**'s overall level of attendance, academic attainment and the impact any leave may have on public examinations and tests.

Please may I remind you that **[pupil name]** must return to School on the date agreed. If this is not possible due to unforeseen circumstances, please ensure that the School is informed of the reason and the expected return date.

Yours faithfully

The Westminster School

Appendix 5a – Action Plan Template – Severely Absent

Severely Absent Students (below 50%)

Attendance Action Plan		
Name	Class Group	Form Tutor
Possible Reasons for Absence (include anxieties, medical etc)		
What can help me attend school more?		
Who can help me?		
Key Actions (including key dates)		
What does success look like?		
Autumn Attendance	Spring Attendance	Summer Attendance

## The Westminster School

### Appendix 5b – Action Plan Template – Persistently Absent

Persistently Absent Students (50-70%)

Attendance Action Plan		
Name	Class Group	Form Tutor
Possible Reasons for Absence (include anxieties, medical etc)		
What can help me attend school more?		
Who can help me?		
Key Actions (including key dates)		
What does success look like?		
Autumn Attendance	Spring Attendance	Summer Attendance

# The Westminster School

## Appendix 6 – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Duties for Educational Neglect

<b>7 Minute Briefing – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Duties for Educational Neglect</b>		For access 7 Minute Briefings and Further information regards attendance please see <a href="https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/">https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/</a>
<p><b>1 – What is Educational Neglect?</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>‘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’</p> <p><a href="https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SCSP-WNR-Guidance-2022-Final.pdf">https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SCSP-WNR-Guidance-2022-Final.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Case study SCR</b>  <a href="https://www.bcsbiminyham.org.uk/images/BSCP/Professionals/Serious_Case_Reviews/BSCR2017-18-03/BSCR_2017-18-03_SCR_Report_-_01.09.22.pdf">https://www.bcsbiminyham.org.uk/images/BSCP/Professionals/Serious_Case_Reviews/BSCR2017-18-03/BSCR_2017-18-03_SCR_Report_-_01.09.22.pdf</a></p>	<p><b>2- Why is it important to highlight Educational Neglect?</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>In accepting that “school attendance is everyone’s business” (Education <a href="#">white paper</a>) 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”.</p> <p>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”.</p>	
<p><b>7 – Support/Action:</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Percentage</b></p> <p><b>90-100%</b> 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.</p> <p><b>70-90%</b> Schools should consider all early help (single agency) options including children’s centres, school nursing, inclusion support and police etc.</p> <p><b>50-70%</b> 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).</p> <p><b>50% or less</b> school attendance should trigger all schools and partners to consider “educational neglect” including the possibility of an Education Supervision Order via the Family Court.</p> <p>Any breach of an Education Supervision Order places a duty on Social Care to complete an assessment, following a MARF referral.</p> <p>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.</p>		<p><b>3 – Chronic/Severe Absence including ‘not in education’</b> combined with safeguarding / child protection concerns was included in Sandwell’s windscreen of need.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This may be exacerbated by poor routines and boundaries or a lack of parental engagement.</p>
<p><b>6 – All Practitioners should:</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Please refer to <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance</a></p>	<p><b>5 – Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent(s) consistently failing in maintaining schooling or identifying provision for their child.</li> <li>• Parent(s) failing to engage in school meetings to address attendance concerns.</li> <li>• Parent(s) unable to provide substantiated reasons for absences from school.</li> <li>• Parent(s) failure to engage in statutory or non-statutory interventions to improve attendance.</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• Parents “can’t” rather than won’t enforce boundaries and routines.</li> <li>• Child refusal to attend school / adhere to parental boundaries.</li> <li>• Impact of adverse childhood experiences or multiple moves (school / addresses).</li> </ul>	<p><b>4 – What the Data tells us -</b></p> <p>There is a demonstrable 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.</p> <p>-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</p> <p>-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.</p> <p>- 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.</p>