



Attendance Policy and Procedures

Signatories		
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Chair of Governors	Ms J Arthurs	

Review	
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1. Key contacts

Attendance officer: Mrs Z Wood
Family Liaison Officer: Mrs I Dibua
EYFS and KS1 Lead: Mrs S Banks
Pastoral Welfare Manager and DSL: Mrs S Palmer
Senior Assistant Headteacher: Miss A Beer
Deputy Headteacher: Mr P Adekoya
Governor for Attendance:

All Key contacts may be contacted through the emails below:

School attendance enquiries: school.office@theacademyofwoodlands.co.uk
Tel: 01634336688

Nursery attendance enquiries: woodlands.nursery@aow.uk.com
Tel: 01634336858

Part 1 - Policy

2. Introduction

This policy sets out our school and nursery's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

The Academy of Woodlands believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot strive for *excellence* if they do not regularly attend school.

Our ambition is for all pupils to strive for 100% attendance. We set clear expectations for excellent attendance and expect pupils to be present for every session, every day that school is open. We believe this is fundamental to pupils achieving their full potential and securing positive lifelong outcomes.

Our Attendance Policy reflects this commitment and acknowledges that regular attendance positively influences pupil motivation, attainment and wellbeing. It is a core component of our school ethos.

The Academy of Woodlands expects all pupils to maintain attendance of at least 96% in line with expectations set by Medway Local Authority and National standards. We also

acknowledge that some pupils joining our provision may have experienced extended periods of absence. This will be taken into account when addressing and supporting their attendance. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

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

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect current legislation and guidance. The [Department for Education's guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(2026\)](#), states that school attendance is “essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.”

3. Aims and Commitments

Our school aims to meet its obligations regarding school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time and efficient education to which they are entitled. The Academy of Woodlands acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

At The Academy of Woodlands we follow the [DfE Working together to Improve School Attendance](#) Approach:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

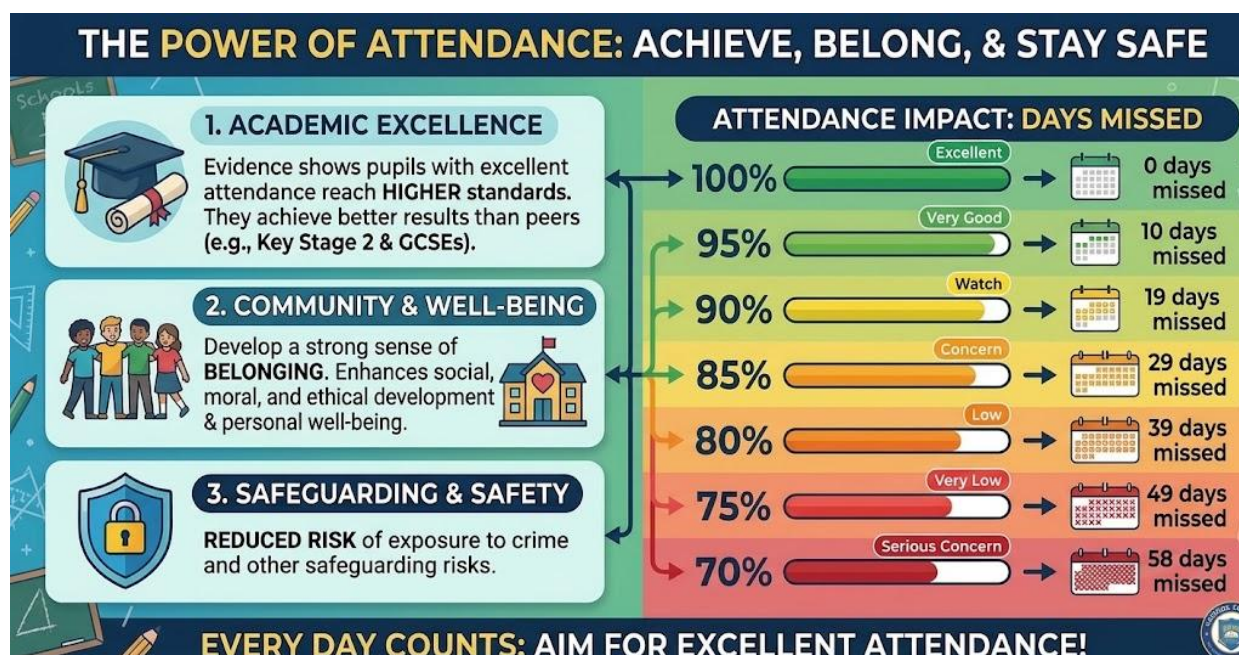
It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school encourages parents of nursery and reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age to send their children to every session that is available to them. Every child enrolled at our school is expected to attend every day they are required to, on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups and expect parents to notify the school of any absence.

We are **committed** to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved and as part of the wider school community.
- Raise pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, pupils and staff.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies such as, other schools health, the LA and local organisations to support our pupils and parents.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

4. Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?



5. Safeguarding and Attendance

At The Academy of Woodlands, we routinely monitor attendance data to identify trends and patterns of absence across all pupils as part of our standard procedures. We recognise that both sudden and gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may be indicative of underlying safeguarding concerns.

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), the school will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding issues to the appropriate authorities. As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, and in accordance with our procedures, we will notify the Local Authority and/or the Police of any pupil who is absent from school and whose whereabouts cannot be established, despite reasonable enquiries such as home visits. This action will be taken where there are concerns for the pupil's welfare or safety.

For further details, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy: [\[insert link here\]](#)

Regular attendance is an important part of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and wellbeing. The Academy of Woodlands recognises that unexplained, persistent, or sudden changes in attendance may indicate that a pupil is experiencing difficulties, barriers to learning, or may require additional support. For this reason, attendance is monitored as part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities and concerns will be responded to promptly and proportionately.

6. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026](#) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- [Children and Young Persons Act 1963](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Children \(Performances and Activities\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)
- [The Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- [DfE \(2023\) 'Providing remote education'](#)
- [DfE \(2024\) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#).
- [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement July 2026](#)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- EYFS attendance procedures

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect current legislation and guidance. The [Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#) states that school attendance is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances."

7. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent' (SA).

Our attendance officer will routinely monitor attendance data to identify emerging attendance concerns and the attendance team (made of the key contacts outlined in this policy) will take proactive action to prevent pupils from becoming persistently or severely absent. The attendance team will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence. This will include identifying the individual needs of pupils, working closely with families and relevant services to remove barriers to attendance, and, where a more formalised approach is required, working in partnership with the local authority in line with the statutory DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

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

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, Looked After, those subject to Child Protection plans or Child in Need and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance strategic team will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

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

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future. Attendance concerns will trigger early intervention and targeted support.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national-level

data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

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

8. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues. This may include the attendance team or the class teacher or phase leader.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Support strategies will be reviewed regularly to assess impact and adapted where necessary to ensure they remain appropriate to the needs of the pupil and family.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such pupils may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. Please see section **6: Authorised absences** for further information.

In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in **exceptional** circumstances, for a limited period, to support pupils to reintegrate back into education and access full time provision.

In accordance with statutory guidance, The Academy of Woodlands must report to Medway Local Authority when a pupil has been absent for **10 consecutive school days without explanation**, and also when a pupil has accrued **15 days of absence due to medical reasons**. These reports should be made promptly to ensure appropriate safeguarding and support measures can be considered.

9. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- The importance of good attendance

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

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils experiencing attendance challenges.

Part 2 – What the Law says and Our School Procedures

1. Contents of the Admissions Register

At The Academy of Woodlands, we maintain our admissions register (also referred to as the school roll) in accordance with the requirements set out in [Regulation 8 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). The register must include specific personal details for every pupil, including:

- Full name and name used at school
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
- Home address
- Full names and addresses of each parent/carer
- Emergency contact details (at least two telephone number per parent/carer the pupil normally lives with)
- Date of admission or re-admission
- Name and address of the last school attended (where applicable)
- Boarding status (where relevant)
- Any additional addresses where the pupil will normally reside and the date from which they will reside there
- Details of any other school the pupil is attending concurrently

Pupils are entered on the admission register (via Arbor) on their starting day, before or at the beginning of the first school session on that day. This is normally the first day agreed between the school and the parent/carer for the pupil to attend, or, where no day has been agreed, the first day the pupil attends the school.



A pupil's name may only be lawfully removed from the admissions register if one of the specific conditions outlined in [Regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations applies](#). Any removal outside of these conditions constitutes unlawful off-rolling.

It is essential that the admissions register is kept accurate and up to date. Therefore, The Academy of Woodlands regularly requests updates from parents/carers regarding changes to:

- Home address
- Emergency contact telephone numbers
- Email addresses

The school will frequently send reminders via school newsletter for families to update their details. Where parents/carers do not respond to these reminders, the school will take further steps to obtain accurate information. This may include direct contact, home visits, or referral to relevant agencies if safeguarding concerns arise.

For further details, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy [[insert hyperlink or reference](#)].

2. Contents of the Attendance Register

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

Staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of Arbor to record attendance information. The national attendance codes used to record attendance are shared in the Appendices (Appendix item 1).

3. Expectations: Being Present at School (and lateness)

We have high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. Families will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

The school day starts at **8:35am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:35am** for warm welcomes with the gates opening at **8:35am**.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark (L code).

- The morning register will close at **9:30am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time (U code).
- The afternoon register will be marked by **13:00pm for KS1 and 14:00 for KS2**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **13:10pm for KS1 and 14:10 for KS2**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

See DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) and [parent/carers guide to Working together to improve school attendance](#)

4. Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss notable events such as assembly, tutor period, teacher instructions and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

Minutes late per day...	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year...	Which means this number of lessons have been missed...
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

5. Absences

5a. Absence procedure

Parents will be required to contact the school office, preferably via telephone or e-mail before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via Arbor or by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. In the event that the school is unable to make contact with any of the emergency contacts provided to confirm a pupil's whereabouts, a home visit will be initiated. If there is no response to the 'calling letter' left at the property, and concerns remain regarding the pupil's welfare and safety, the school may consider making a safeguarding referral to the Local Authority.

This procedure is in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and reflects our commitment to safeguarding as outlined in statutory guidance.

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

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.

- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer and or the attendance team. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

- If a pupil's attendance drops below **92 percent**, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

5b. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, we will attempt to contact parent/carers by text, email, telephone or letter to establish the reason for a child's absence. Once the reason for absence is known, we will record it as authorised or unauthorised in line with statutory guidance.

If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within a school day, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using Code O. Unexplained absence will therefore become unauthorised if a satisfactory reason is not provided within this timeframe.

If we have concerns about a pupil's absence and are unable to make contact with parent/carers, we will contact all emergency contacts provided. In addition, where appropriate and proportionate, we will contact siblings' schools, early years settings, or other professionals or services working with the family where we reasonably believe they may have information to help establish the pupil's whereabouts and ensure their safety.

6. Authorised Absences

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence, only the Headteacher can do this. However, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider

- An absence for illness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave

- An absence due to a family emergency

6a. An absence for illness for which the school has granted leave

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: [Is my child too ill for school?](#) We have also created a decision chart based on the NHS guidance for this here: [Is my child too ill for school AOW.pdf](#)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows the statutory DfE guidance '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)' which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, we **may** ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent for further clarification, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP/Paediatrician directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first day, or subsequent days of absence may not be authorised.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Where a pupil's attendance is affected by a physical or mental health condition, SEND, or other identified need, the school will work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand and remove barriers to attendance. Support may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral or SEND support, and phased reintegration where appropriate.

Where illness-related absence becomes frequent, prolonged or recurring, the school will work with families and relevant agencies to identify underlying barriers and agree appropriate support to improve attendance and access to education.

In accordance with statutory guidance, schools must report to Medway Local Authority when a pupil has accrued 15 days of absence due to medical reasons. These reports should be

made promptly to ensure appropriate safeguarding and support measures can be considered.

6b. SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

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

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

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.

- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

In addition, we have collated a range of services that you can access to get support for children with additional needs in Appendix Item 2.

6c. Medical and Dental appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment. In addition, where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for **the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment**. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter. The school may request evidence of the appointment to support the authorisation of the absence.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed through the front office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

If pupils have been absent for more than 5 days due to illness The Academy of Woodlands will follow up absences with parent/carers, this maybe via telephone call, teams call or home visits following procedures detailed out in section "5a: Absence procedures" to ensure appropriate support is offered to the children and families.

6d. Religious observance

The Academy of Woodlands acknowledges the multi-faith nature of our school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance. The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

6e. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil (mobile child)¹ of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

6f. Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an E code, for a suspension or Permanent Exclusion (PEX). The school will follow the statutory [DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance](#).

Any suspension/permanent exclusion **must** be agreed by the Head of School and Executive Headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (3) "mobile child" means a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

6g. Leaving the premises

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

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the head of school immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the head of school
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 20 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The head of school will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The head of school will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

6h. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

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

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9:00am and 12:30 (KS1) and 13:30 (KS2), where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the head of school is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

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

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6i. Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the head of school to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The head of school will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the head of school will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

6j. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the head – it is at the head of school's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the head of school. The head of school will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The head of school reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the head of school will ensure a photo lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The head of school reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the head of school's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the head of school.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

7. First Day of Absence Response

At our school, we have robust procedures in place to respond promptly to pupil absence on the first day it occurs.

Parents/carers have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, providing a clear reason for the absence. Parents/carers are expected to maintain regular contact with the school throughout any period of absence.

Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided by the parent/carer, we will make same-day contact with the parent/carer to establish the reason for the absence and to ensure the pupil's safety. This will normally include telephone contact and may also involve text message, email, or other agreed methods of communication.

Parents/carers are required to provide the school with up-to-date contact details. Parents will be asked to supply details of **at least two people** (other than parent/carers) who can be contacted in an emergency. These details will be reviewed regularly (e.g. termly) through data collection exercises, parents' evenings, and school communications.

If we are unable to make contact with a parent/carer, we will make all reasonable efforts to do so using all available contact details, including emergency contacts.

In line with our safeguarding responsibilities and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, where we are unable to establish contact and a pupil's whereabouts cannot be confirmed, we will take further action without delay. Regular attendance is an important part of safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing.

This will include making reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and welfare. These enquiries will include:

- contacting all known emergency contacts
- checking with siblings' schools or settings, where appropriate
- liaising with other professionals or agencies involved with the family, including Medway Local Authority, where appropriate

Where contact cannot be established and concerns remain, we will undertake a home visit where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

If no contact is made following a home visit, a letter will be left at the property requesting urgent contact with the school. If there is no response and concerns remain regarding the pupil's safety or welfare, we will take appropriate safeguarding action. This may include referral to Children's Social Care, initiating Children Missing Education (CME) procedures, and/or contacting the Police to request a welfare check.

We prioritise follow-up for vulnerable pupils, including:

- Children in Care (Looked After Children)
- pupils subject to Child Protection Plans
- pupils open to Children's Social Care as a Child in Need
- pupils previously reported missing or at risk of going missing
- younger pupils where absence is unexpected

We will ensure that all actions taken in response to first day absence and subsequent absences are clearly recorded, including attempts to contact parents/carers, outcomes of enquiries, and any safeguarding decisions made.

The school will liaise with Medway Local Authority Attendance Officer where absence is of concern and will notify Medway Local Authority of any pupil who is absent for 10 consecutive school days, in line with statutory requirements.

Home visits and/or online teams calls with the child visible form part of the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures and may be undertaken where contact cannot be established, attendance concerns escalate or the school needs to verify a pupil's welfare.

These procedures are in place to safeguard pupils and promote their wellbeing, ensuring that no child is missing education without timely and appropriate action being taken.

8. Rewarding Good and Improved attendance to add

At the Academy of Woodlands, we look to celebrate good and improved attendance. We will continue to encourage all pupils to achieve and maintain good attendance. Our rewards include weekly 100% stickers for children who have achieved 100% attendance all week. Furthermore, classes who have the highest attendance get to cash in a termly reward to the park or to a local trip/school activity of their choice.

As part of our inclusive Woodlands Way, we recognise that some children are improving their attendance to reach 96% which can be difficult if they are recovering from persistent absences. To help, we use sticker charts and class draws where children may win small rewards. We also send certificates for children and our end of year celebration events as rewards for good attendance.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- End of Year celebration event
- Studybugs Certificate sent home electronically

9. Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

In line with statutory DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Attendance team. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. **A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.**

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, we understand that during difficult family times, school can often offer children a valuable sense of consistency, familiarity and emotional security, and therefore continued attendance may be beneficial wherever possible.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

Leave of absence requests for pupils to participate in protest activity, demonstrations, campaigns, marches or similar events during school hours will not normally be authorised. Such requests would not generally be considered exceptional circumstances under the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026 guidance and will ordinarily be recorded as unauthorised absence. The Headteacher retains discretion to consider the individual circumstances of each request.

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in an Education Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

First offence

Parent/carers are required to pay this penalty notice (£80) within 21 days, or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days.

Second offence

If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within any three-year period, the charge will be a flat rate of £160; there will be no reduction if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices for absence before the 2024-25 school year do not count.

Third offence

A parent cannot receive more than two penalty notices for the same child within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached,

10. Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised.

10a. Notices to improve

A Notice to Improve is a formal letter that the school may issue to parents when there are serious concerns about a child's attendance.

This will usually happen when a child has had **10 or more unauthorised absences** (sessions) within a **10-school week period**, and where the school has **already** worked with the family to try to improve attendance but there has not been sufficient progress.

The purpose of a Notice to Improve is to give parents a final opportunity to engage with support and improve their child's attendance, before further action is considered.

We recognise that there are often genuine reasons why a child may find it difficult to attend school. Before issuing a Notice to Improve, the school will **always** take a support-first approach.

We will work in partnership with you to understand any barriers affecting your child's attendance and provide support that is tailored to your child and family's individual needs, rather than relying only on general school procedures.

Before issuing a Notice to Improve, the school must be able to demonstrate that support has been:

- Individualised, targeted, and responsive, and
- Not limited to universal or whole-school approaches

This means that the school will not rely solely on standard letters, general attendance messages, or routine procedures, but will provide bespoke support based on your child's circumstances. Support will be reviewed regularly and adapted over time, depending on your child's needs and level of absence.

Support will include a balance of both pastoral and academic support:

Pastoral support (removing barriers)

This may include:

- Individual mentoring or regular check-ins
- Support for emotional wellbeing or mental health

- Adjustments to the school day or transition into school
- Working closely with parents to understand family circumstances
- Involvement of Early Help or other external services, where appropriate

Academic support (supporting progress)

This may include:

- Support to help your child catch up on missed learning
- Adjustments to teaching or curriculum where appropriate
- Reassurance for pupils who may feel anxious about returning to learning
- Recognition that pupils may be working below, at, or beyond expected levels, and ensuring support reflects their individual starting point

Before issuing a Notice to Improve, we will ensure that:

- We have communicated clearly with you about attendance concerns
- We have offered appropriate and personalised support
- You understand how absence is affecting your child's progress, wellbeing, and future opportunities
- You have been given opportunities to engage with support and work with the school

If attendance does not improve despite support, the school may issue a Notice to Improve.

The notice will:

- Explain your child's attendance record
- Outline the support already provided
- Set clear expectations for improvement
- Provide a timeframe for improvement (usually between 3 and 6 weeks)
- Explain next steps if attendance does not improve
- During this period, the school will continue to support your child and maintain regular contact with you, while monitoring attendance closely.

If attendance improves, we will continue to support your child to maintain this progress.

If there is not enough improvement, any further unauthorised absence recorded may result in a referral by the school to Medway Local Authority seeking enforcement action, including legal sanctions such as an Education Penalty Notice or prosecution.

A Notice to Improve will not usually be issued unless the school can clearly evidence that:

- Appropriate support has been offered and reviewed
- Support has been individual to your child's needs, not just general school approaches

The school must be able to show that support has been targeted, personalised, and responsive before moving to any formal or legal action.

All support and actions taken will be carefully recorded.

11. Persistently and Severely Absent Pupils

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

A pupil is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

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

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

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

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Family Liaison officer support
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Regular check- ins to review progress and the impact of support
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12. Approved Educational Activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, Alternative Provision or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, with the alternative setting.

Attendance data will be reviewed at least weekly by attendance staff and regularly by senior leaders to ensure emerging attendance concerns are identified promptly.

The school retains overall responsibility for the attendance, safeguarding and educational outcomes of pupils attending alternative provision. Attendance, safeguarding, engagement and progress information will be reviewed regularly throughout the placement and recorded as part of the school's quality assurance processes.

13. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause.
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document.
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

14. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than authorised term time leave)

The school and nursery are committed to building strong, positive relationships with pupils and their families to promote excellent attendance. We recognise that regular attendance is essential for pupils' educational achievement, wellbeing and social development.

We will maintain open and honest communication with parents about attendance expectations and will regularly share information regarding their child's attendance, punctuality and absence

levels. Parents will be reminded of their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and receives a full-time education.

Where attendance concerns begin to emerge, we will work with parents and pupils to identify and address any barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity. Support may include meetings with the Attendance Officer, Family Liaison Officer (FLO), SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or other relevant staff as appropriate.

The school will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will always seek to understand the reasons for absence and will take a supportive, solution-focused approach. Where barriers are linked to a pupil's experience at school, such as friendship difficulties, anxiety or bullying concerns, we will work with the family and relevant staff to address these issues. Where barriers are outside the school's control, we may signpost or refer families to appropriate external support services.

To support pupil welfare and safety, the school will maintain two emergency contacts for each pupil wherever possible and will work collaboratively with partner agencies where additional support is required.

15. Support and Formal Action for Poor School Attendance

Sometimes pupils can become reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to speak openly with the school about any attendance difficulties so that appropriate support can be put in place. It is important that parents do not routinely allow a child to remain at home without a valid reason, as this can reinforce attendance difficulties and make them harder to resolve.

In accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Parents must notify the school on each day of absence, provide the reason for the absence and keep the school informed where absences are ongoing.

Where attendance remains a concern despite early support and intervention, the school will implement a more formal attendance monitoring process. This may include attendance review meetings, attendance action plans, parenting contracts and regular monitoring of attendance data. The effectiveness of support strategies will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Where the school is unable to establish contact with parents/carers, or where there are concerns regarding a pupil's welfare, reasonable enquiries will be undertaken. This may include home visits and liaison with relevant agencies to establish the child's whereabouts and ensure their safety.

If attendance does not improve and there is insufficient evidence to justify the absence, the school may refer the case to Medway Local Authority for further action. Before making a referral, the school will be able to demonstrate that:

- Attendance concerns have been clearly communicated to parents.
- Appropriate support and intervention have been offered.
- Parents have been warned of the potential consequences of continued poor attendance.
- Relevant warning letters, notices and attendance records have been issued and maintained.

Where appropriate, this may lead to the issuing of a Notice to Improve, Penalty Notice, prosecution or other legal sanctions in line with local authority procedures.

The school will not normally pursue legal sanctions where poor attendance is primarily linked to complex family circumstances and families are actively engaging with support. In these situations, we will continue to work with the family and relevant agencies through an early help approach. However, legal action may still be considered where parents repeatedly fail to engage with support or do not take reasonable steps to improve attendance.

Where safeguarding concerns exist in relation to a pupil's absence, the school will share information with appropriate agencies and take any necessary action to safeguard the child.

16. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables (RTT)

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the best interests of the pupil, a temporary reduced timetable may be considered to support the pupil's access to education, **reintegration into school, or to meet an identified need**. Any reduced timetable must be agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, other relevant professionals and agencies.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible (max 6 weeks), and subject to regular review, with a clear reintegration plan in place to support the pupil's return to full-time provision **as soon as possible**.

The school will review the arrangement regularly with the pupil, parent/carers and relevant professionals to ensure it remains appropriate and continues to be in the pupil's best interests and is progressing towards a return to full-time education.

Attendance registers will be completed in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and DfE guidance. Sessions that form part of an agreed reduced timetable will normally be recorded using Code C2 (Leave of Absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable). Where a pupil is receiving

education through another approved arrangement, attendance will be recorded using the appropriate statutory attendance code.

Where a pupil has a social worker, the school will ensure they are informed and involved in the reduced timetable process. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will liaise with Medway Local Authority to ensure that the provision and support specified within the plan are reviewed as appropriate.

Our school will submit all signed reduced timetable agreements to Medway Local Authority (LA) reducedtimetables@medway.gov.uk in line with [Medway LA Reduced Timetable Policy](#).

17. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with families and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the attendance officer will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice, or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance. A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

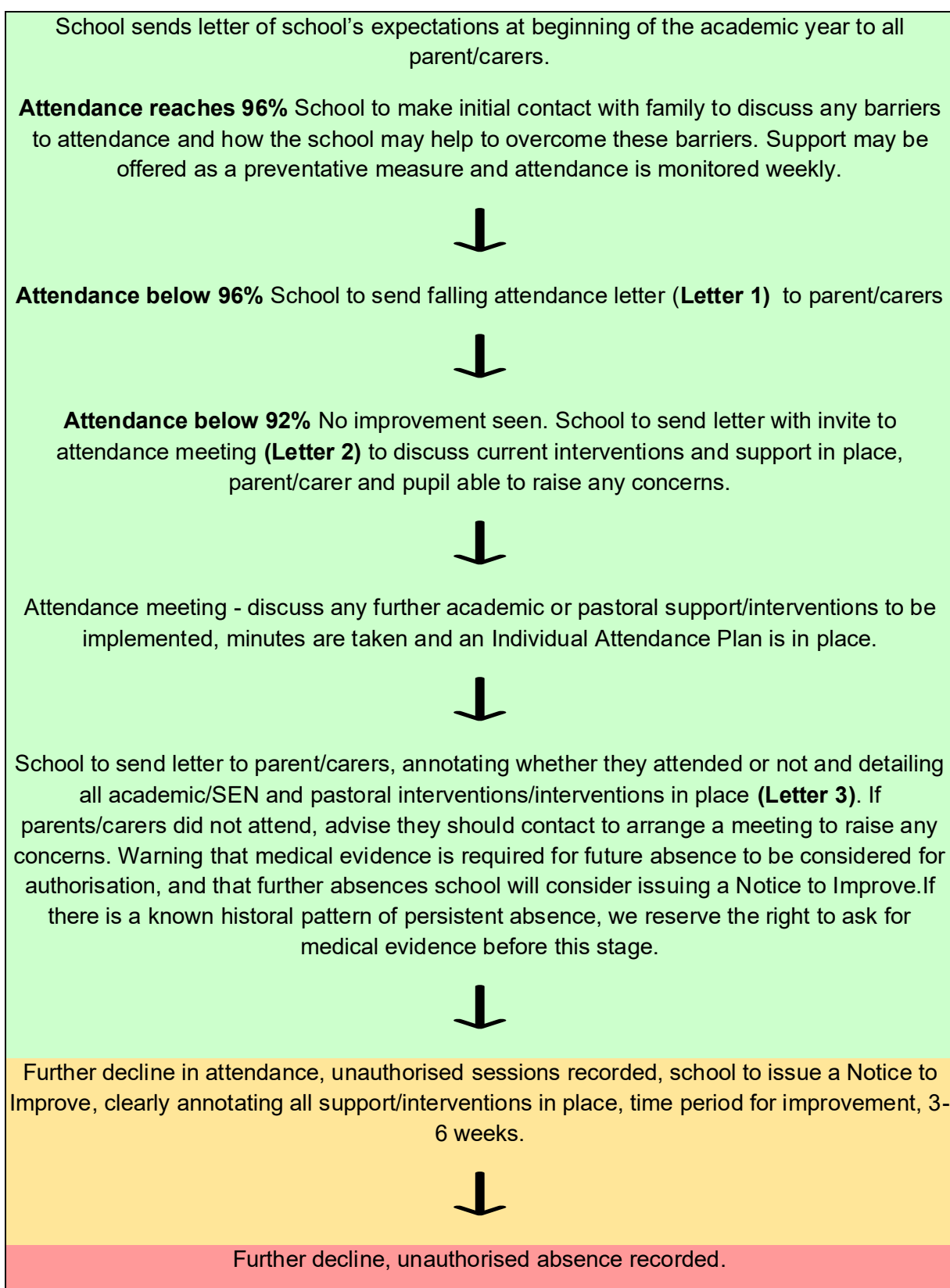
Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#) to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school their parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's

irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter. The following flow chart is also summarised in Appendix item 3.

17a. A graduated approach to ensuring excellent attendance





School to consider requesting enforcement from Medway LA, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to Medway Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to Medway Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2024, as amended](#) and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Medway Local Authority Code of Conduct.

See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information

Please note that Penalty Notices carry fixed amounts and payment deadlines. They cannot be paid in instalments.

The Head of School has the responsibility for authorising any absence. Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence however, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider.

The 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.

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 Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, following receipt of the penalty notice. If the payment has not been made

after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

- **First offence** - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- **Second Offence** (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- **Third Offence** and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

N.B Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in an Education Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

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 exclusion** (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days.

18. Children Missing Education (CME)

The Academy of Woodlands may add and remove pupils from the admissions register in accordance with [Regulation 8 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). A pupil's name may only be lawfully removed from the register if one of the specific conditions outlined in Regulation 9 applies.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil may be missing education or has potentially moved out of Medway Local Authority, we will consult with our Local Authority Attendance Officer within five school days. In line with safeguarding responsibilities, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts. These may include:

- Conducting a home visit
- Contacting schools attended by siblings
- Liaising with the allocated social worker/keyworker, where the family is known to Social Care/Family Solutions/Early Help

If the pupil's location remains unknown, or it is confirmed that they have left Medway, the school will complete and submit a Children Missing Education (CME) referral form to the Local Authority Attendance Officer within ten school days.

This process is aligned with statutory safeguarding duties and reflects the expectations set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Improve School Attendance. It also supports [Medway LA Children Missing Education policy](#), and commitment to identifying, tracking, and supporting children missing education, ensuring that all pupils receive suitable education provision.

19. Direction Off-site

We, as the home school, may use off-site direction as a short-term, time-limited intervention to support a pupil's behaviour. This involves the pupil attending another school, such as alternative provision or another setting, while remaining on our school roll.

During this period, the pupil will usually be **dual registered**. We will notify parents in writing of the placement, including the reason, expected duration and intended outcomes, and will ensure regular review meetings take place.

Attendance will be recorded in line with statutory guidance: typically, **Code D** will be used where the pupil is attending another school under dual registration; **Code B** may be used where the provision is approved educational activity without dual registration; and where a pupil does not attend the agreed provision, this will normally be recorded as **Code O (unauthorised absence)**. **Code E** will only be used where absence is due to a suspension.

20. Managed Moves

A managed move is a voluntary and permanent transfer of a pupil from this (home) school to another mainstream school, used as an early intervention to support improved outcomes and avoid suspension or permanent exclusion. Managed moves will only take place where this is in the pupil's best interests and must be agreed by all parties, including parents, both schools and the admission Local Authority. The home school will ensure parents are fully informed and involved in decision-making and must not place pressure on families to consent.

Where a managed move is agreed, the pupil will be removed from this school's roll and admitted to the new school, meaning the pupil is **single registered**. Managed moves cannot be used on a trial basis; any temporary placement must be arranged through off-site direction.

21. Reporting to Parents

We annually attach a copy of the attendance certificate in the pupil's end of year school report.

In addition, we send weekly attendance year-to-date messages which outline the current attendance figure of the class. We send weekly attendance year-to-date messages to parents to keep them informed of your child's attendance and reinforce the importance of regular school attendance. This promotes early intervention where concerns arise and encourages a strong partnership between home and school in supporting pupils' educational outcomes.

Where a child's attendance falls below expected, for whatever reason, our school will contact parents to highlight this, as per sections 10 and 18 of this policy.

22. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The head of school is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.

- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school/Nursery with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school/Nursery if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school/Nursery as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

23. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent – full details of the school's and class attendance levels can be found on the school newsletters.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the head of school. The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2027.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix item 1: School Attendance codes 2026-2027

Present/Authorised Codes

/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience

Absent Codes**Authorised Absences**

C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes (no fixed abode)
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)

Unauthorised Absence

G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

Appendix item 2: Support for children with additional needs

If your child has a learning disability or autism, these websites can help:

- [Mencap](#) offers expert advice and support for children with learning disabilities, as well as their parents and carers.
- [The National Autistic Society](#) provides valuable resources and support for parents or carers.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following [DfE Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's **Attendance/Designated Safeguarding Lead (or other key professional in the setting)** for further information on the support available.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: [NHS Children's Mental Health – Every Mind Matters.](#)

[Young Minds advice for parents](#)

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Where to find mental health support for children

- North Kent Mind offers [The Medway Therapeutic Alliance](#), led by North Kent Mind and funded by Medway Council, they bring together a range of organisations so families can access support through one clear pathway, without needing to navigate multiple services alone.
- The NHS offers advice on [Mental health support for children and young people.](#)
- [Action for Children](#) helps children and families look after their mental health with simple tools and support to feel better and cope with challenges.
- The [Childhood Bereavement Network](#) offers guidance on supporting a child through grief.
- Visit [NHS - Advice for parents](#) for support if you think your child may have an eating disorder.
- The [Young Minds Parents Helpline](#) offers parents free and confidential advice via phone, email, or webchat.
- Teachers, school nurses, social workers, and GPs can help you find the right support.
- If have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline to talk to dedicated child protection specialists. They will be able to advise and take any necessary action. The Helpline is open 7 days a week, and can be contacted by:
 - visiting [the website](#)
 - emailing help@nspcc.org.uk or
 - calling 0808 800 5000.

Where to get urgent help for mental health

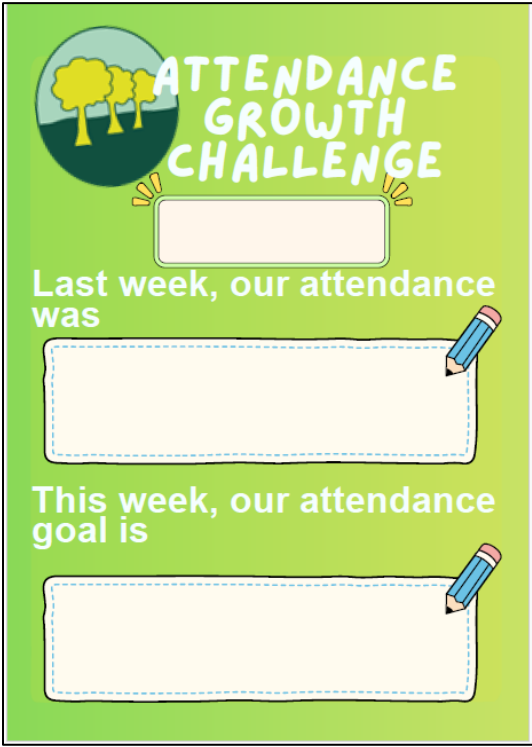
If you or your child are in a mental health crisis, get help straight away.

Visit the [NHS urgent mental health support](#) page to find 24/7 helplines, crisis services, and emergency support.

We recognise that some pupils may experience physical health difficulties, mental health challenges, special educational needs or other circumstances that can affect attendance.

Where this happens, we will work with families and relevant professionals to provide appropriate support.

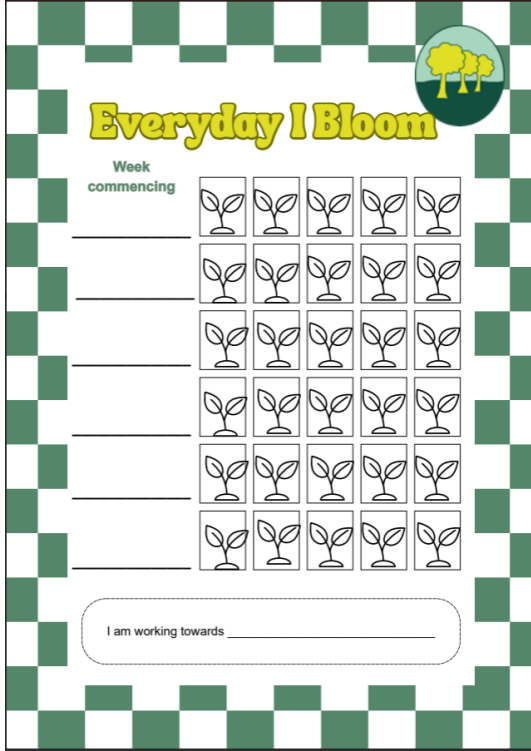
Documents that support attendance



ATTENDANCE GROWTH CHALLENGE

Last week, our attendance was

This week, our attendance goal is



Everyday I Bloom

Week commencing

I am working towards



TOGETHER WE CAN BE THE BEST ATTENDEES!

Let's think, plan and take steps towards great attendance - together we CAN make every day count!

1. WHAT IS GOING WELL?

School	Friendships	Home and family	Leisure and hobbies	Something else...

2. WHAT IS WORRYING ME?

School	Friendships	Home and family	Leisure and hobbies	Something else...

3. MY PLAN Together let's think of ways to move forward

Goals and hopes Where would I like to be?	Who can help me? Who can I talk to if I am worried?	What can help me?	Small steps I can take

TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT - EVERY DAY COUNTS!



My Morning Routine

first	next	last
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My Night Routine

first	next	last
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Appendix item 3: A graduated Approach to Ensuring Excellent Attendance

A Graduated Approach to Ensuring Excellent Attendance

Everyone

Every child is part of our Woodlands Family.

Our aim is to create a warm and welcoming start to the school day, enabling all children to belong, thrive and achieve well academically, through excellent school attendance. We celebrate highest attendance every week and across the academic year to celebrate success. School Leaders welcome children and families at the gate. Termly Attendance Awareness letters highlight attendance and link it to learning.

Attendance below 95%

This indicates a "concern" with attendance.

Letter 1 is sent to parents to highlight attendance concerns.

Support may be offered as a preventative measure and attendance is monitored weekly.

Step 1

Attendance below 90%

Serious attendance level: Government's definition of "Persistent Absenteeism"

Letter 2 is sent to parents requesting evidence for all future absence. Failure to provide appropriate evidence means absence is unauthorised.

Monitoring continues weekly and Outside Agency support may be considered, such as Early Help.

Step 2

No improvement seen

Parent Meeting & ASP

Letter 3 is sent inviting parents to meet with the Attendance Team and an Attendance Support Plan (ASP) is written and targets agreed.

This will be a minuted meeting with or without parental attendance. Improvement targets will be made and minutes will be sent if parents cannot attend the meeting.

The ASP is monitored for 20 school days for improvement or further action.

Step 3

Review Progress

Review to ensure attendance improves

Improvement seen? Continue with support and monitor until attendance reaches 95%

No improvement seen? A Notice to Improve (NTI) is issued to parents - giving a formal, final written warning - before a penalty notice is issued.

Support is not being engaged with - AOW may submit a formal referral to Medway Local Authority.

Step 4

Leave of Absence during Term Time.

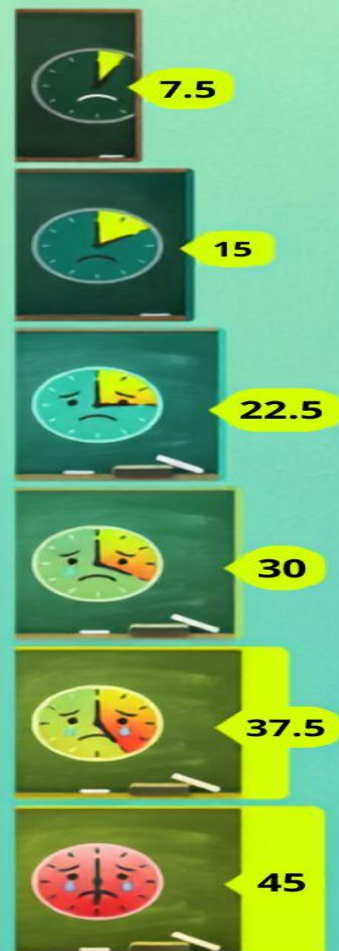
- Family holidays during term time will not be authorised in line with Government guidelines.
- Leave of Absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances - this needs to be arranged with Mrs Brown.
- Penalty Notices can be issued for 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised leave.



When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss notable events such as assembly, tutor period, teacher instructions, and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Lateness per Day (Clock Icon)	Days Lost per Year	Lessons Missed per Year
 5 Minutes Late	 1.5 Days	 7.5 Lessons
 10 Minutes Late	 3 Days	 15 Lessons
 15 Minutes Late	 4.5 Days	 22.5 Lessons
 20 Minutes Late	 6 Days	 30 Lessons
 25 Minutes Late	 7.5 Days	 37.5 Lessons
 30 Minutes Late	 9 Days	 45 Lessons



BE PUNCTUAL. EVERY MINUTE OF LEARNING COUNTS. ENSURE YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE BY ARRIVING ON TIME.

