



## Attendance Policy

Author	O Benzie, W Yeo, A Gowell	Source	Previous Policy
Date	June 2021	Review	June 2023
Review Body	Trust Board	Status	Statutory

### Ratification

Role	Name	Date
Chair of Trust Board	Richard Penska	
Chief Executive Officer	Kaye Palmer-Greene	

### Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details

## Contents

<b><u>Part 1. Policy Overview</u></b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Introduction -----	4
1.2 Aims -----	4
<b><u>Part 2. What the law says</u></b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Legislation and Guidance -----	6
2.2 Contents of Attendance Register -----	6
<b><u>Part 3. Key Information for Parents and Staff</u></b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Safeguarding and Attendance -----	7
3.2 Effects of Late Arrival at School -----	7
3.3. Effects of non-attendance -----	7
3.4 Authorised Absence -----	8
3.5 Illness -----	8
3.6 Pupils taken ill during the school day -----	8
3.7 Medical/Dental Appointments -----	9
3.8 Religious Observance -----	9
3.9 Traveller Absence -----	9
3.10 Exclusions -----	9
3.11 Mental Health and Wellbeing -----	10
3.12 Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance -----	10
3.13 Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ -----	10
3.14 Unauthorised Absence -----	11
3.15 Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave) -----	11
3.16 Penalty Notices and Prosecutions -----	12
3.17 Parenting Contracts -----	12
3.18 Prosecution -----	13

<b><u>Part 4. School Policy and Procedures:</u></b>	<b>14</b>
4.1 Present at School (and Lateness) -----	14
4.2 Response to Absence – First Day Calling -----	14
4.3 Approved Educational Activity (AEA) -----	15
4.4 Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance) -	15
4.5. Pupils on Part-time Timetables -----	16
4.6 Children Missing Education (CME) -----	16
4.7 Reporting to Parents -----	16
4.8 Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence -----	16
4.9 Roles and Responsibilities -----	17
4.10 Policy Monitoring Arrangements -----	17
4.11 Links with other policies -----	17
<b>Appendix</b>	
Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes -----	19
Appendix 2 -----	21
Appendix 3 Roles and Responsibilities -----	22
Appendix 4 Flowchart for morning registers -----	25
Appendix 5 Contextual information to monitor attendance -----	26
COVID- 19 – Interim Attendance Guidance -----	27
Appendix A -----	31

## **Part 1. Policy Overview**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Values of North Star Academy is to develop confident, ambitious people who are emotionally and intellectually equipped for adulthood and society. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning and progress. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason.

### **1.2. Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by promoting good attendance; ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled; and acting early to address patterns of absence.

This policy sets out the Trust's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents<sup>1</sup> must follow to report their child absent from school.

If a child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school has continuing concerns about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory<sup>2</sup> school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough to. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential.

Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

---

<sup>1</sup> Education law defines parents as: all-natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

<sup>2</sup> A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”, therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil’s attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents [‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015’](#) and [‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013’](#) – or ask the school for printed copies.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community
- Raise our pupils’ awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff
- Work in partnership with parents
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality

## **Part 2. What the Law Says:**

### **2.1 . Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the 2020 school attendance guidance, from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 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:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

### **2.2 . Contents of Attendance Register**

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon. On each occasion, the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Absent;
- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## **Part 3. Key Information for Parents and Staff**

### **3.1 Safeguarding and Attendance**

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard **weekly** procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2021 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding concerns on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

**It is vital we have up to date contact numbers with at least 2 emergency contact numbers.**

### **3.2 Effects of Late Arrival at School**

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the 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.

<b>Minutes late per Day</b>	<b>Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year</b>	<b>Which means this number of lessons missed</b>
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

### **3.3. Effects of non-attendance**

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

<b>Attendance during school year</b>	<b>Days lost in a year</b>	<b>Which is approximately</b>	<b>Approximate number of lessons missed</b>
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

### **3.4 Authorised Absence**

'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.

**The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:**

### **3.5 Illness**

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by 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 2020 DfE School Attendance Guidance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. (See DfE 2020 School Attendance guidance document - link in the Legislation and Guidance section, or at the end of this policy, or ask the school for a printed copy.)

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 authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance. The school can also refer you to the school nurse if sleep hygiene or medical issues are preventing your son or daughter attending school on a regular basis. Persistent, authorised school absence could be a cause for concern and will be assessed contextually at regular safeguarding and attendance meetings, see appendix 5.

The daily reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parents/carers and can only ever be made by the parents/carers not the child.

If a pupil is absent and parents have not informed school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible via telephone or email, then office staff will endeavour to contact parents that day. An "N" (no reason given) will be entered into the register and subsequently changed when it is established why the child is not in school.

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

### **3.6 Pupils taken ill during the school day**

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness or extreme emotional distress this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

### **3.7 Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are 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's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. We do however recognise that transport may be a problem and parents/carers may not be able to physically get them to school.

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 out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

### **3.8 Religious Observance**

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of our school community and recognise 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. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence.

### **3.9 Traveller Absence**

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil 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 him 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 should let the school know of their plans as far 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 which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

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

### **3.10 Exclusions**

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion must be agreed by the Headteacher.

### 3.11 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or in school key adult for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning 111 for advice if they are concerned.

### 3.12 Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

Weekly awards for classes who have achieved 100% attendance

The school will award termly certificates and prizes to all pupils whose attendance is either excellent or much improved.

Parents who have encouraged their child to attend and have significantly improved attendance will have the opportunity to win vouchers.

Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of attendance.

### 3.13 Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.**

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion and only in exceptional circumstances. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account 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 only grant leave of absence if they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances and will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be made aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school office. 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 to know the child is safe, rather than missing.** Additional evidence may be requested to support applications. If there are any safeguarding concerns such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage the school will follow the necessary protocols. (See Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

### 3.14 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school 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 is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school after the registers have closed
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for an appointment e.g. a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- 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

### 3.15 Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

All students' attendance is monitored as part of the school's attendance and safeguarding steering group on a fortnightly basis. This looks at attendance and other contextual issues, see Appendix 5. Information will be shared with other staff as appropriate.

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We strongly encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents/carers in the best way. We encourage contact at the earliest opportunity to discuss any attendance matters.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parents aware and give them the opportunity to talk to us about it. The **Headteacher** will invite parents into school to discuss the situation offering advice and together formulate an action plan to improve the attendance. This could involve:

- Enrolling students on the sleep hygiene course.
- Targeting additional support through a multi-agency approach.
- Make reasonable curriculum adjustments.
- Change the structure and timings of the school day.
- Enhance the pastoral support.
- Assessing if the absence is due to Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

This list is not exhaustive but gives an idea of what support could be available in support of improving

attendance. Where there are multi agency professionals connected to the family they will also be involved in formulating the action plan for improving attendance. If the school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority, we will show how we have worked with the parents and will continue to do so.

We will not usually request support from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement any suggested changes. Then and only then will the school seek advice from the Local Authority.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

### **3.16 Penalty Notices and Prosecutions**

The North Star Academy would always consider the needs to the wider family context before issuing penalty notices or prosecutions. The system of issuing a penalty notice or prosecution can be seen in appendix 2.

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 his/her 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 school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action, unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

### **3.17 Parenting Contracts**

To help support families in getting pupils to school the North Star Academy may consider the use of a Parenting Contract; if this is unsuccessful it would form part of the evidence in applying for a penalty notice or prosecution through Bristol City Council's Educational Welfare Service. Any Parenting Order would be done in conjunction with the local authority and the governing body (as advised in the government document 'School Attendance and Absence' March 2020 and 'School Attendance, Parental Responsibility Measures, Jan 2015):

A parenting contract is a formal written signed agreement between parents and either the local authority or the governing body of a school and should contain:

- A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract; and
- A statement by the local authority or governing body agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Parenting contracts can be used in cases of irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. Parenting contracts are voluntary but any non-compliance should be recorded by the school or local authority as it may be used as evidence in court where an application is made for a behaviour parenting order.

The local authority or governing body should fund any support required to implement a parenting contract (such as referral to parenting classes) and provide information to parents about other types of support available, such as details of national and local agencies and helplines.

### **3.18 Prosecution**

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information and Bristol City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare> or ask the school for printed copies.)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

## **Part 4. School Policy and Procedures:**

### **4.1 Present at School (and Lateness)**

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken.

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.

The **Tutor or Assistant Head** will meet with parents of those children who are late arriving at school more than twice in a term without reasonable reasons to investigate and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 8.45 am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 9.05 am and will be kept open until 10.00 am.

Our afternoon register is taken after lunch at our primary site and at the end of the day in our secondary site.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present, a comment will be logged noting the time of arrival.

A pupil who arrives late **after** the registers close will be marked as absent. If the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised. If the pupil is late for no good reason they will be marked with the **unauthorised** absence code 'Late after registers close' (**U**), a comment will be logged noting the time of arrival. See DfE Attendance Codes – Appendix One.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion. If the pupil is a child in care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the LA 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 in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation. Pupils will be reintegrated back to school following a post referral meeting.

### **4.2 Response to Absence – First Day Calling**

#### **Following up Unexplained Absences**

Where no contact has been made, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone and/or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason. Decisions about authorising an absence can be made on a case by case basis in conjunction between the school tutor team, parent, involved agencies and the Senior Leadership Team within school. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 3 school days, we will mark the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parents and there is no contact made through the pupil's emergency contacts and 3<sup>rd</sup> day home visit this will be escalated to first response as safeguarding concern.

### **Day 1 of absence:**

If there has been no contact from parents, office staff calls home to find out reasons for absence. They will also call the emergency contact if there is no answer on primary contacts.

Office staff will circulate an email to all staff informing them of absences for that day. Social workers for relevant pupils will also be informed via email by **SENCO or DSL**.

### **Day 2 of absence:**

The same process as day 1 but for students on CP/CIN the SENCO or DSL will notify their social worker by telephone.

### **Day 3 of absence:**

**SLT or Key Adult** may visit home / contact other professionals to ensure the well-being of the student.

If the welfare of the child is in question and it is unsafe for staff to visit the home, following a check with the Bristol City Council data base (Loan Working Policy and students risk assessment) we may request a Welfare Check from the police.

## **4.3 Approved Educational Activity (AEA)**

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. (School Attendance, Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities Aug 2020)

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements 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). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, 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.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

## **4.4 Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)**

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' (code Y) 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
- A related risk assessment indicates a child cannot attend school (e.g Covid 19 please see addendum included in this policy).

- 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, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- 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'.)

Key information and support will be recorded on **Personal Provision Map (PPM)**.

#### **4.5. Pupils on Part-time Timetables**

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.

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 part-time timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to a full-time timetable. SEN must be notified if any part-time table is actioned. The North Star guidance on Part Time Timetables must be followed.

#### **4.6 Children Missing Education (CME)**

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow [Bristol City Council's Children Missing Education guidance](#), and make Children Missing Education (CME) and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the CME Officer if unsure about any individual cases: [childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk)

#### **4.7 Reporting to Parents**

Parents will receive a letter in September outlining our expectations around attendance which is part of the home school agreement.

We will send out an attendance certificate bi-termly to parents. This gives the parents the opportunity to look at their child's attendance certificate and come back to us with any queries. Attendance percentages will also be added to end of year reports.

During weekly phone calls tutors will highlight any attendance concerns.

Where a child's attendance becomes irregular or there is a high level of authorised absence school will notify the parents that we are concerned and will be monitoring the situation. See Appendix 2.

#### **4.8 Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence**

Attendance is recorded on Arbor daily; this is the school's information management system. All forms of communication regarding attendance including texts, phone calls, and emails are recorded on Arbor.

## 4.9 Roles and Responsibilities

Key roles and responsibilities can be seen in appendix 3.

Key responsibilities for morning registers can be seen in appendix 4

## 4.10 Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Attendance Manager or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

## 4.11 Links with other policies

This policy is linked to: the Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Lone Working Policy, Mental Health Policy and NSAT guidance on Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

---

### Guidance Documents:

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

School Attendance (DfE August 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School census School census guidance and regulation

<https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Children Missing Education Guidance (Bristol City Council January 2018)

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme>

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Bristol City Council September 2018)

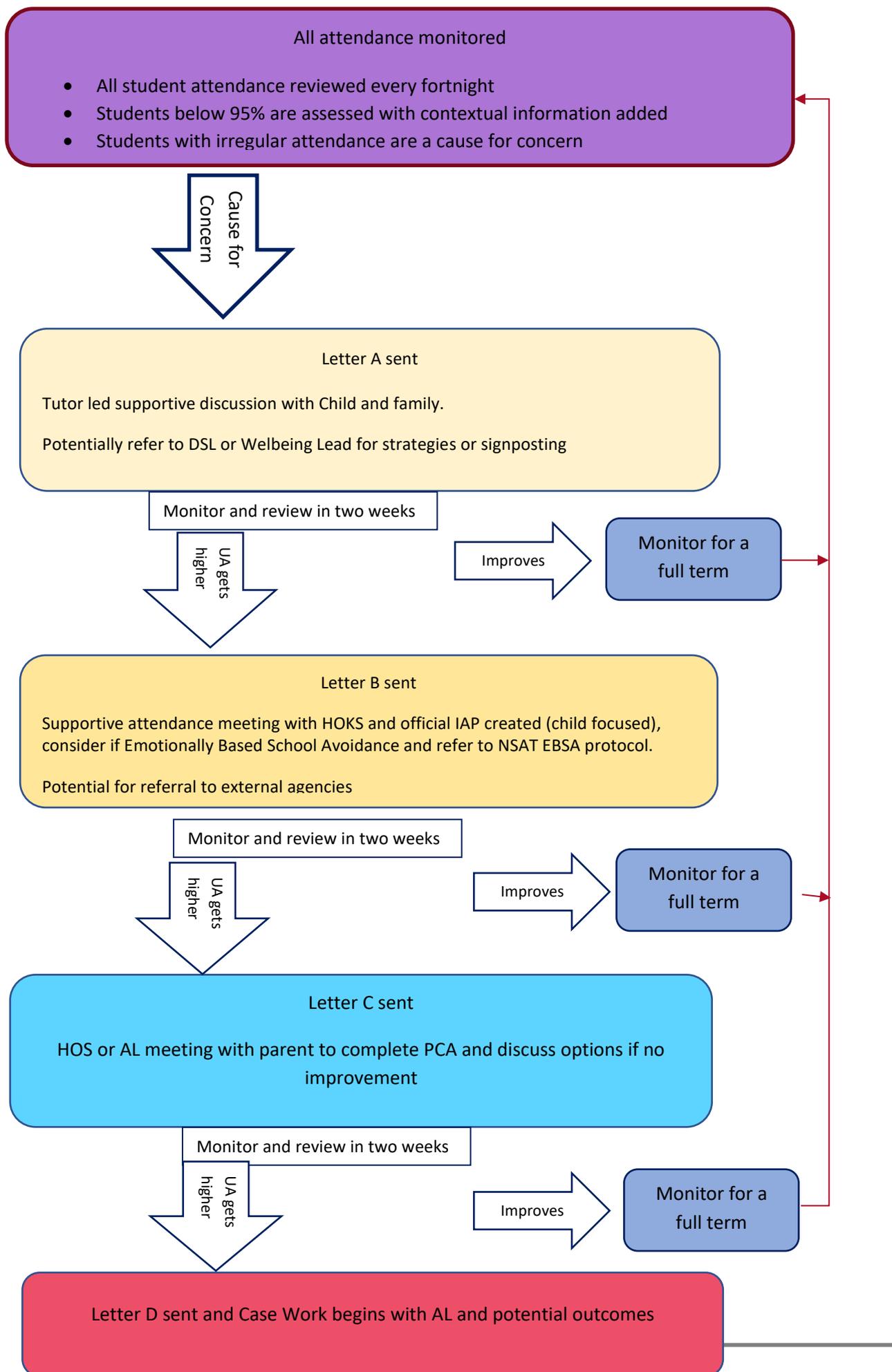
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare>

## Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school; or a pupil is detained in custody for less than four months.	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Appendix 2



## **Appendix 3**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Promoting, celebrating and rewarding good attendance.
- Ensuring that parents/carers and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance at the point of admission.
- Ensuring that attendance is an integral part of long term action planning.
- Receive regular reports analysing attendance patterns and trends.
- Liaising with the LEA at a strategic level on issues relating to Behaviour and Attendance.
- Acting as a signatory for legal proceedings.
- Actioning attendance plans
- Reporting to Governors on attendance matters

#### **The SENCO/DDSL is responsible for:**

- Promoting, celebrating and rewarding good attendance.
- Setting annual school attendance targets with SLT
- Ensuring that the whole school attendance policy is implemented
- Ensuring that the policy is communicated to pupils, staff, parents/carers and Governors
- Ensuring detailed attendance data is regularly collected and used to inform strategic planning on attendance matters in conjunction with the Attendance Lead.
- Liaising and informing SLT on attendance matters
- Implementing appropriate intervention strategies for identified pupils.
- Meeting with the EWO / order to discuss pupils who have not responded to the school's strategies/interventions and when necessary to make referrals
- Support in Managing Reward Scheme for pupils who have consistently high attendance and those who have shown a significant improvement
- Together with Teachers, supporting individual pupil needs re attendance
- Monitoring attendance on a regular basis, setting targets for improvement as appropriate.
- Together with the Deputy Head monitor the performance of individual tutor groups, following up with individual teachers instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed
- Together with the Deputy Head review registers and attendance figures
- Ensuring that contact is made with parents of poor attenders
- Together with the Deputy Head, promoting good attendance and punctuality through assemblies
- Referring students to EWS or other agencies.
- Arranging / supporting with home visits where appropriate.

#### **Deputy Head and Attendance Lead are responsible for:**

- Promoting, celebrating and rewarding good attendance
- Setting annual school attendance targets with SLT.
- Ensuring that the whole school attendance policy is implemented within your key stage.
- Ensuring that the policy is communicated to pupils, staff, parents/carers and Governors within your key stage.

- Ensuring detailed attendance data is regularly collected and used to inform strategic planning on attendance matters in conjunction with the SENCO/DDSL
- Liaising and informing Headteacher on attendance matters
- Implementing appropriate intervention strategies for identified pupils within your keys stage
- Monitoring attendance on a regular basis, setting targets for improvement as appropriate in respective key stages, individual students and tutor groups.
- Together with the SENCO/DDSL actioning letters A,B,C and close monitor cumulative improvement.
- Implementing a range of strategies to improve and monitor attendance and to reward good attendance as directed by the Headteacher
- Liaising with class teams re attendance.
- Liaising with SENCO re attendance information, issues and concerns.
- Raising the importance of good attendance across the school- Through rewards.
- Escalating responses in line with the whole school policy on attendance.
- With the SENCO/DDSL meet with the EWO / order to discuss pupils who have not responded to the school's strategies/interventions and when necessary to make referrals.
- Managing Reward Scheme for pupils who have consistently high attendance and those who have shown a significant improvements/interventions and when necessary to make referrals.

#### **Class Teams/Class Teachers is responsible for**

- Promoting, celebrating and rewarding good attendance.
- Together with the SENCO, support individual pupil's needs regarding attendance
- Completing the morning and afternoon register on a daily basis in a timely manner
- Monitoring patterns of absence for individuals within their tutor group
- Offering praise to individual pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality is good or improves
- Supporting pupils who return after long absences
- Recording contact with parents, other agencies or significant concerns on ARBOR.
- Being aware of home/personal circumstances which affect a pupil's attendance
- Implementing fully the school's Attendance Policy.
- Working closely with families to challenge and support their class pupil's attendance.
- Monitoring progress towards attendance targets target.
- Passing concerns to Attendance Manager / SLT.
- To attend meetings re attendance whenever possible.
- To use data to monitor the attendance of individuals and whole class group and to respond to issues and patterns.
- To display attendance data
- To create Attendance Plans for students not meeting their targets.
- To regularly monitor and discuss attendance plans and targets.

## **The Governing Board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (6 times a year). It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

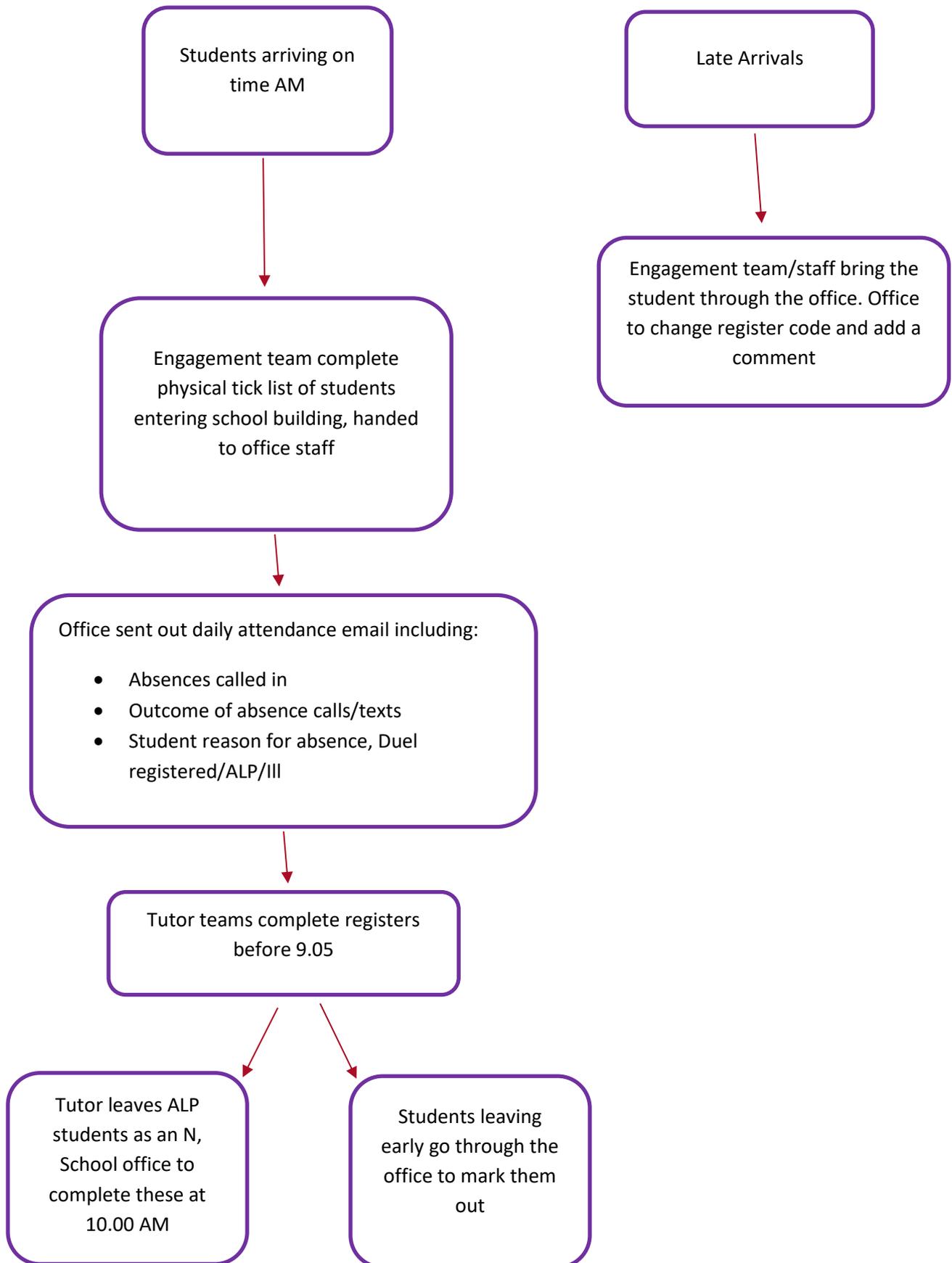
Attendance is intrinsically linked with safeguarding and mental health, therefore the DSL and DDSL will have an overview of daily attendance and follow up on any safeguarding concerns.

## **Office Staff are responsible for**

- Processing registers
- Updating taxi list with any additional information
- Recording of telephone absences
- Producing absence lists on a daily basis and circulating them to staff via email
- First day response calls home
- Updating records and logs
- Sending out letters / certificates as directed by SLT
- Distributing attendance data
- Complete daily registers for students at ALP.

## Appendix 4

### Flowchart for morning registers



## Appendix 5

### Contextual information to monitor attendance

Name	Registration form(s)	LAC	CP	Att 20/21	Unauth. Ab 20/21	Behav	Social Dev	Emotional Developme	Home School	Att	CPOMS	Total	7th to 11th June 21	14th to 18th June 21	21st to 25th June 21	28th to 2nd July 21	Letter A	Letter B	Letter C	Actions	Interventions
XXX	8A		CP	12.5%	72.7%	3	3	3	3	4	4	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29/09/20	17.12.20	22.03.21	07.05.21 - Letter C AG PCA meeting 08/06/21 - OB EWO referral 22.06.21 - await EWO referral	
XXX	10B		CP	13.4%	74.0%	4	2	3	4	4	4	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30/09/20	17.12.2020		08/06/21 - OB EWO referral 22.06.21 - await EWO outcome	
XXX	7B			45.8%	39.7%	1	2	3	2	4	4	16	75.0%	80.0%	40.0%	100.0%	08/06/21 w1t6			22.03.21 IAAP - RD 22.06.21 - tutor to make positive call home	Gardening Intervention 1 (Gardening Intervention)
XXX	10B			62.9%	28.0%	4	2	1	2	2	4	15	100.0%		10.0%	100.0%	22.06.21 T6W3				Social Skills 3 (Social Skills),)
XXX	7A			63.8%	8.2%	1	2	2	1	3	4	13	75.0%	100.0%	80.0%	0.0%				08/06/21 AG call EAR 22.06.21 - AG chase EAR	
XXX	7A	In Care		0.0%	0.0%	2	3	1	4	1	1	12									
XXX	11B			7.5%	49.2%	1	1	1	1	3	2	9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%					TW Emotional resilience JD Physical Safeguarding

## COVID- 19 – Interim Attendance Guidance

### Addendum to the Attendance Policy for Academic Year 2020-21

Setting Name:	North Star Academy Trust
Policy owner:	O Benzie
Date:	September 2021
Date shared with staff:	September 2021

This document has been developed to reflect changes in practice as a result of the COVID -19 (Coronavirus) outbreak.

**It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.**

### **Background**

This addendum has been produced in line with Department of Education (DfE) guidance **Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year August 2020.**

It replaces temporary guidance documents on recording attendance during the COVID-19 outbreak.

This Addendum outlines:

- Attendance Expectations
- Attendance Coding
- Circumstances for non-attendance related to COVID-19 during academic year 2020-21
- Further Key Information

The addendum should also be read in line with DfE guidance School Attendance: main guidance August 2020 and North Star Academy's Attendance Policy. It should also be read in conjunction with the wider guidance document which gives advice on other usual attendance duties and processes that remain in force.

### **Attendance Expectations**

From the beginning of the Academic Year 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

### **Attendance Coding**

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

A new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ has been created and must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)<sup>3</sup>
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

North Star Academy will be using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (See Appendix A) in addition to the new category of ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ as detailed below:

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ should be recorded using code X<sup>4</sup>
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

### **Circumstances for non-attendance related to COVID-19 during academic year 2020-21**

#### **Examples in which ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’**

North Star Academy will follow the procedures detailed below when pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case.
- Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms.
- They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.
- Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

North Star Academy will follow the procedures detailed below when someone in the pupil’s household has symptoms:

- The household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.
- In all cases of self-isolation, THE NAME OF THE SETTING will ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. However evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence will not be requested before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

To support decision making reference should be made to relevant government guidance available [here](#).

**Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

North Star Academy will follow the procedures detailed below when pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19):

- The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious.
- Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

To support decision making reference should be made to the relevant government guidance available [here](#).

**Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

- Parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time.
- Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.
- If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

To support decision making reference should be made to the relevant government guidance available [here](#).

**Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only**

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

- If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high.
- Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with North Star Academy.
- Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.
- North Star Academy will contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school.
- Code X will not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to . North Star Academy

To support decision making reference should be made to the relevant government guidance available [here](#).

## Further Key Information

### Local lockdown

- If rates of the disease rise locally, North Star Academy may need to prevent some pupils from attending.
- North Star Academy will follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown.
- Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X – will be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

### Remote Education

- If a pupil is not attending North Star Academy due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), North Star Academy will offer them access to remote education (this may be online or via other means). North Star Academy will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, however this will not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

## Data Collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

Further information will follow on what, if any, additional attendance data will be required during the 2020 to 2021 academic year to monitor the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) and support the government's planning.

## Appendix A

### Contents of Attendance Register in line with Department for Education Guidance available [here](#)

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or,
- Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)<sup>11</sup>

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

### Boarding Schools

Boarding schools without day-pupils are not required to keep an attendance register. Schools with a mixture of day-pupils and boarders must keep an attendance register for the day-pupils.

### Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

#### Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

#### Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

#### Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

## **Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity**

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

**Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:**

### **Code B: Off-site educational activity**

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

### **Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment**

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

### **Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment**

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

### **Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity**

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

### **Code V: Educational visit or trip**

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

### **Code W: Work experience**

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

### **Authorised Absence from School**

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

### **Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:**

#### **Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

#### **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

#### **Code H: Holiday authorised by the school**

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

#### **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

### **Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

### **Code R: Religious observance**

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

### **Code S: Study leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

### **Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

### **Unauthorised Absence from School**

**Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:**

#### **Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.**

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

#### **Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been

established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

#### **Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

#### **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this addendum for further information, including advice on the application of code X.

#### **Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- Guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care or
- Any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- And their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland if a pupil attending a school in England resides there.

Schools should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory school age is not expected to attend as detailed below.

#### **Administrative Codes**

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

#### **Code X: Not required to be in school**

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

#### **Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or

- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

### **Code Z: Pupil not on admission register**

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

### **Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure**

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.