



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Member of Trust Strategic Team with responsibility for oversight and update of policy	Jo Howell
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1. Introduction

For any pupil to meet their full potential academically, a consistently high level of attendance is crucial. At this school, we aim to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance for all, thereby enabling every pupil to take full advantage of the educational opportunities, both academic and social, which are available to them.

In line with our ethos, this school is committed to providing the best possible education for our pupils, ensuring equal opportunities for all. Our intention is that each individual feels valued and supported. Our emphasis is on building excellent working relationships with pupils and ensuring a calm, orderly, safe and stimulating learning environment where all pupils want to be and where they are keen and ready to learn.

This policy outlines the various strategies we employ to promote excellent attendance which include creating a pleasant working environment, engaging and motivating pupils, ensuring early intervention when attendance begins to raise concerns and instigating further intervention when attendance is a concern, including working in partnership with parents¹, the Local Authority and other external agencies, where necessary.

We see improving attendance as everyone's responsibility; effective communication and a joint approach to working are vital. We understand that barriers to accessing education are often complex, both within and beyond the school, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. We will ensure that parents are kept well-informed about the link between attendance and attainment and that when academic progress is at risk, this message is clearly reiterated and support is put in place to help remove potential barriers from emerging.

This policy runs alongside, and should be read in conjunction with, the *Department for Education* guidance document entitled *Working together to improve school attendance* and the school's *Behaviour Policy*², which sets out school systems for managing behaviour, including that relating to attendance and punctuality.

2. Key school information - Birchwood Primary School

DAILY ROUTINES

Pupils are welcome on to school site from 8.20 am and our school gates open at 8:28 am. The school day starts at 8.45 am. Pupils are encouraged to be on site no later than 8.40 am. On arrival, children head straight to their classroom doors where they will be greeted by their teaching staff and welcomed into their classroom so that learning can start promptly.

The school gates are locked at 8.45 am. Any pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late (L). The official register opens at 8.45 am and closes at 9.20 am. Any pupils arriving after that time will be coded as U, an unauthorised late mark which counts as an absence. The afternoon registration session is staggered for each year group due to staggered lunchtimes. By 1.25 pm, all registers will have been taken.

¹ For the purpose of this policy, the term 'parent' is used to indicate all who have parental responsibility for, and/or day-to-day care of, a child. It also includes any parent who does not live with the child.

² Sometimes called *Behaviour and Relationships Policy* or similar. For the purpose of this document, the term *Behaviour Policy* is used.

Where pupils are late because of major traffic congestion, registers will be amended so that the child is not penalised for something beyond the control of themselves or their family.

PUNCTUALITY

The school wants all pupils and parents to appreciate the importance of punctuality. Where children are persistently late, the school will work with the family to support pupils to be in school on time.

KEY ATTENDANCE STAFF

The Strategic Leader with responsibility for the strategic approach to attendance is Mrs Ella Webb, SENCO and pastoral lead, who can be contacted via admin2619@welearn365.com

Parents should report absences as soon as possible when known and ideally before 8:30 am on the morning of absence by calling the school office on 01827 892913 or by emailing birchwoodparents@welearn365.com

Where parents require further support to enable their child to attend school, they should contact Mrs Ella Webb - Strategic Attendance Lead or Mrs Charlie Bell - Attendance Administrator.

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS

Birchwood Primary School will always prioritise providing support over legal action. However, we recognise that it is our duty to ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. As such, it is our policy to make a referral to the local authority where we feel parents have not engaged with the advice and support offered and their child has continued to acquire unauthorised absence marks, despite interventions having been put into place by the school.

3. Legal requirements

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. There is a legal requirement placed on all parents to ensure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where a parent has decided to register their child at school, there are additional legal duties placed upon them to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means that their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy conforms to the aforementioned legal requirements, as detailed in section 7 of *The Education Act 1996*, and to the requirements outlined in the latest guidance document entitled *Working together to improve school attendance*, (September 2022). This policy also has due regard to all relevant legislation and other statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- *Equality Act 2010*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)*
- *Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence*
- *Children Missing Education*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory guidance and legislation. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the School Standards Committees and to the headteachers of each Trust school.

The **School Standards Committee** and **Strategic Leadership Team** in each school have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting these colleagues in ensuring success.

The trustees of Community Academies Trust ensure that attendance remains a constant focus across all Trust schools by:

- recognising the importance of attendance and actively promoting it through Trust ethos and policies;
- ensuring the Trust and each school meet their statutory responsibilities in relation to attendance and continue to have high aspirations for each pupil;
- reviewing attendance data at Trust and individual school level, providing support and challenge as required;
- ensuring staff receive adequate attendance training and that best practice is shared between Trust schools.

The Trust will:

- devise and regularly review the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*;
- agree and review attendance and punctuality targets with schools at least annually;
- provide advice and support to schools on attendance matters, as required.

The School Standards Committee will:

- ensure appropriate strategies are in place to promote and implement the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* throughout the school;
- ensure the policy is well-publicised and that attendance expectations and procedures are understood by parents and pupils;
- review the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy in response to the data and corresponding analysis in the half-termly School Self-Evaluation Statement (SES).

The headteacher will:

- ensure the school's vision, values and ethos promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality;
- ensure a member of the Strategic Leadership Team is appointed with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school, as per DfE guidance;
- ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* throughout the school;
- ensure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable, through effective use of Pupil Premium funding;
- monitor the school's curriculum offer to ensure delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to the needs of the pupils, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- regularly monitor attendance and punctuality data;
- make decisions regarding the authorisation of absences in exceptional circumstances;
- set attendance targets with the strategic attendance lead and/or other relevant members of staff directly responsible for attendance.

The strategic attendance lead³ will:

- ensure that section 2 of the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is fully personalised to the school to meet statutory requirements;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*, are well trained to address attendance issues and are aware of the school's current attendance headline data;
- ensure the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is consistently applied across the school, starting with the accurate completion and maintenance of the Admissions Register (often called the school roll) and the Attendance Register;
- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and parents;
- take an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives to promote the profile of attendance throughout the school, including ensuring regular use of praise and the issuing of rewards that are valued by pupils;
- with the support of key staff members, analyse attendance and punctuality data on a weekly, half-termly and termly basis, identifying patterns and trends and preparing reports as necessary for other school leaders and governors;
- provide the School Standards Committee with half-termly reviews on attendance and punctuality via the SES, including data about pupils who are persistently absent (90% attendance or below) and those who are severely absent (50% attendance or below);
- oversee intervention, including quality assuring action plans and the arrangements for attendance review meetings;
- ensure appropriate school liaison with the Local Authority including, when in place, full engagement with the School Attendance Support Team, to ensure multi-agency working is effective;
- comply with the DfE's statutory guidance on *Children Missing Education (CME)* by informing the Local Authority of the details of children who are regularly absent or missing from school following a leave of absence, and prior to removing a child from the school roll;
- comply with the requirements set out in the local authority's *Code of Conduct* when requesting legal intervention;
- ensure the school's electronic information management system remains fit for purpose and that staff accessing it are appropriately trained to meet all legal and statutory recording requirements and so they can make best use of the system to support effective data analysis and intervention.

Others responsible for attendance, as directed by the Headteacher⁴ will:

- monitor attendance on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis, contacting parents of pupils who have been identified as 'at-risk of persistent absenteeism' to challenge absences and to encourage an early return to school;
- ensure data on attendance and punctuality is displayed in school in prominent places, visible to pupils;
- implement the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance including, where appropriate, carrying out home visits and/or making a referral to the local authority's education welfare service or equivalent contracted service where concern is ongoing and/or where initial interventions are not proving effective;

³ Since September 2022, the DfE has required all schools to have a named senior leader who is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance. This may well be the Headteacher. Where an Executive Headteacher is in post across multiple schools, each school must have a named strategic attendance lead.

⁴ Individual schools will have different members of staff in various roles carrying out these responsibilities; it will not necessarily be the same person taking responsibility for each action; the Headteacher will ensure individual staff members know which parts are their responsibility and this will be monitored by the Strategic Attendance Lead.

- where necessary, and in line with school policy, issue appropriate sanctions to pupils for whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern;
- in line with school policy, issue appropriate rewards to pupils for whom attendance and/or punctuality has improved;
- with oversight from the strategic leader responsible for attendance, maintain an up-to-date Attendance Risk Register for 'high-risk' pupils, which tracks interventions and their impact;
- where punctuality is a concern, maintain a Punctuality Risk Register as outlined in section 8 of this policy;
- lead attendance interventions, including initiating Attendance Review Meetings and developing Attendance Action Plans involving the child, parent and, where appropriate, other agencies for pupils whose attendance and/or, if applicable, punctuality, falls below the expected level;
- coordinate the support plans for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence;
- if appropriate, co-ordinate other staff members in agreed intervention activities, including mentoring and/or target setting of individuals or groups;
- where necessary, make referrals to appropriate external agencies;
- authorise appointments, as appropriate;
- co-ordinate the collation of all the documentary evidence required by the local authority for pursuing legal intervention;
- ensure that the procedures for making additions to, and removals from, the admissions register follow statutory guidance and that no pupil is removed without the school having full details of their destination and providing this information to the local authority, using agreed local procedures.

Class teachers responsible for morning and afternoon registration will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;
- ensure that the statutory attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the afternoon session;
- provide regular encouragement and support to the class as a whole and to individual pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality;
- ensure their own register is completed accurately and in a timely manner;
- ensure absence notes or verbal messages relating to attendance and punctuality are provided to the attendance administrator;
- be proactive in noticing and addressing any signs of disaffection or any well-being concern which may result in poor attendance and punctuality, thereby impacting on learning and potentially safety;
- contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, by providing stimulating teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- support pupils to catch up on essential work missed following absence, thereby removing a potential barrier to re-engagement;
- regularly review class registers and report any absence trends or concerns that they identify.

Attendance administrators will:

- monitor whole school attendance on a daily basis, ensuring all registers are completed accurately and on time and that any missing marks are quickly resolved in order to keep pupils safe;
- be the first point of contact for parents and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments;
- be responsible for ensuring that the parents of non-attenders are notified by text message on the first day and any subsequent days of absence;

- ensure that reasons for absences are provided by parents after each period of absence;
- collate and issue all attendance and punctuality data on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis to attendance leaders and strategic leaders, as requested;
- maintain a record of all applications for leave of absence during term time and requests for issuing penalty notices;
- maintain a record of all mid-year arrivals and leavers, including reasons for their moves;
- maintain a log of all pupils whose parents have instructed the school to remove them from roll in order to electively home educate;
- support leaders, where requested, in making attendance referrals to external agencies;
- following approval from the relevant strategic leader, inform the local authority of any pupil who is to be deleted from the admissions and attendance registers.

All staff members will:

- lead by example, modelling excellent attendance and punctuality, thereby conveying a message about the importance we attach to this matter;
- in line with our *Ensuring Excellence* document, aim to create a positive atmosphere, developing excellent working relationships with pupils which are supportive and encouraging.

Parents/carers will:

- ensure their child attends school every day when the school is open;
- ensure their child arrives to school on time, ready and equipped to learn;
- be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason;
- be aware that only the school can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised';
- notify the school as soon as possible and ideally before the start of the school day and on each subsequent day of absence if their child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected date of return;
- ensure that all appointments, wherever possible, are arranged out of school hours;
- ensure that where an appointment during school time is unavoidable, their child attends for as long as possible prior to and/or returns immediately after the appointment;
- ensure that their child returns to school as soon as possible after any period of illness;
- support their child's attendance by avoiding arranging holidays/leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances;
- ensure that all requests for leave during term time are made by completing the *Leave of Absence during Term Time Request Form*, where possible at least one month in advance;
- work with the school and other agencies when barriers to their child's attendance are identified;
- be aware that for unauthorised absences the School Standards Committee reserves the right to apply to the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice (a fine);
- provide the school with a minimum of two emergency contact numbers and ensure they are kept up to date with any changes.

Pupils at the appropriate developmental level will:

- strive to achieve an excellent level of attendance and punctuality;
- understand the correlation between high levels of attendance and academic achievement;
- be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality;
- ensure all absence notes/appointment cards are passed to the relevant member of staff;
- speak with the appropriate member of staff if there are any problems which may affect attendance, punctuality and/or learning;
- take responsibility for catching up on all work missed due to absence.

5. Day to Day Process for Registration and Responding to Absences

- The attendance register will be completed at the start of the first session of the day and once during the afternoon session.
- The member of staff with responsibility for taking the session register must record whether each pupil is:
 - present,
 - attending an approved educational activity,
 - absent or
 - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- Registers will be completed using the *Department for Education's* Attendance and Absence Codes, as detailed below.
- Parents should report absences as soon as possible when known and ideally before 8:30 am on the first morning of absence and on each subsequent day of absence until the pupil's return.
- Where a pupil who is expected in school does not arrive, the school will contact parents on the morning of absence by automated text or telephone to try to establish the reason for absence.
- The school will prioritise making contact where a child is considered to be vulnerable e.g. those in care, those with Child Protection Plans or those who have previously gone missing.
- When the reason is established, the absence will be marked as authorised or unauthorised depending upon the reason provided.
- If the school is unable to establish the reason for absence, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (O) after five working days.
- If the school is concerned about a pupil's safety or is unable to contact a parent, the school may use other named contacts⁵ who may reasonably be able to confirm the child's whereabouts.
- In some cases, where concern is significant, the school may choose to contact the emergency services or other professionals for advice and support. Home visits may also be carried out by the school or external agencies, as appropriate.
- The school will record reasons for lateness or absence, whether received in note form or via email or phone call, using the school's electronic information management system. Where phone calls home have been made, details of the call or messages left will also be recorded.
- In line with legislation⁶, any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date of the amendment
 - The name and role of the person who made the amendment.
- Every entry on the attendance register will be retained for three years after the date of entry.
- In line with legislation⁷, an additional back-up copy of the admission register and the attendance register will be made not less than once a month in the form of an electronic, micro-fiche or printed copy.

⁵ Parents are expected to provide at least two named contacts for emergencies.

⁶ *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)*, section 13(2)

⁷ *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)*, section 15 (5)

6. Absence coding

The school decides how attendance and absence should be recorded, using national codes which comply with the regulations as detailed in *Working together to improve school attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*, September 2022.

CODES WHICH COUNT AS PRESENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Present / (am) or \ (pm)
- Late arrival before registration is closed L

CODES FOR WHEN A PUPIL IS ATTENDING AN APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY, WHICH ALSO COUNT AS PRESENT:

- Off-site supervised educational activity B
- Dual registered at another educational establishment D
- The student is on an interview for a job or a place at another educational establishment J
- Participating in a supervised sporting activity P
- Participating in an approved educational trip or visit V
- Attending approved Work Experience in the final two years of compulsory school age W

AUTHORISED ABSENCE CODES:

- Leave of absence granted by the school (exceptional circumstances only) e.g. participating in a performance, pupil is subject to temporary part-time timetable, pupil is pregnant C
- Excluded without alternative provision E
- Holiday authorised by the school (exceptional circumstances only) H
- Illness (not medical or dental appointments) I
- Medical or dental appointments M
- Religious observance (day set apart exclusively for religious observance by the religious body) R
- Study leave (this must be 'used sparingly' for Year 11 pupils during public examinations) S
- Gypsy, Traveller and Roma absence T

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES CODES:

- The reason for absence not yet provided N
- Unauthorised family holiday G
- Absent without authorisation/the school is not satisfied with the reason given O
- Arrived in school after registration closed U

Unauthorised absence includes the following circumstances:

- The pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings
- The pupil is shopping during school hours
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- The pupil is away from the school on a family holiday during term time without authorisation from the school

CODES WHICH COUNT AS NEITHER ABSENT NOR PRESENT

- Code Y - The pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances such as:
 - partial or full closure of the school
 - unavailability of school transport
 - widespread disruption due to a local or national emergency or

- due to a pupil being in custody or detained by a court order

ADMINISTRATIVE CODES - COUNT AS NEITHER ABSENT NOR PRESENT

- Code X - Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend
- Code Z - Prospective pupil not on admission register
- Code # - Planned whole or partial school closure

7. Promoting and incentivising good attendance

School staff work hard to create a positive working environment for our pupils in which they feel safe and supported. The school believes that pupils have the best opportunity to achieve if they feel happy and valued. This approach is at the heart of our school ethos.

We recognise the intrinsic connection between excellent attendance and high attainment. We are also fully aware that children with low attendance can be at increased risk in terms of safeguarding and well-being. Developing good attendance habits and setting high attendance and punctuality expectations is a key part of our school's vision, values and ethos; as such, the school aims to promote and incentivise high levels of attendance through a range of strategies including the following:

- Prioritising effective primary to secondary transition so that pupils who need additional support at this point receive it to help ensure a smooth and successful start to their secondary education;
- Providing a varied and flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, challenging the most able and supporting the pupils who struggle with their learning;
- Ensuring, in partnership with the LA, that, where appropriate, regular review meetings are held to support parents and pupils in raising their attendance levels in order to avoid prosecution;
- Setting personal targets and providing mentoring support for pupils who are struggling to attend regularly;
- Regularly providing parents with information regarding attendance via our newsletters, our website and social media;
- Reporting to parents regularly on their child's attendance;
- Informing parents rapidly where we notice attendance is starting to cause concern;
- Continuing to liaise with parents, agreeing action plans and providing targeted support where a pupil's attendance continues to decline;
- Providing individually tailored re-integration programmes, when appropriate, for pupils who have been absent for an extended period;
- Rewarding good and improving attendance, using the school's reward system;
- Taking every opportunity to celebrate excellent and improved attendance, for example through letters and postcards home, praise phone calls, sustained or improved attendance prizes, celebration assemblies or by displaying/reporting individual and class or year group achievements.

8. Tracking and monitoring attendance

School staff with responsibility for attendance will monitor weekly attendance data so as to rapidly identify pupils and cohorts whose attendance is in decline and respond accordingly. We will routinely monitor the following cohorts and pupil groups:

- Whole school
- Individual year groups
- Boys/ girls
- Those entitled to Pupil Premium
- Those with special educational needs or disabilities
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language
- Children who are looked after or who have been looked after previously
- Those with a social worker
- Those who are persistently or severely absent
- Any other groups of pupils or cohorts about whom there is an emerging concern

All school attendance data is routinely benchmarked against available local, regional and national data. Relevant data is routinely shared with pupils, parents, staff teams, governors, the Trust, including CAT Trustees and the local authority, all with the intention of continuing to improve attendance levels.

Weekly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- analysing data to identify attendance and punctuality concerns and successes within specific cohorts and pupil groups;
- displaying weekly attendance and punctuality data in prominent locations in school to engender a sense of friendly competition amongst staff and pupils;
- issuing sanctions for pupils who are regularly late without a good reason, informing parents, as appropriate;
- contacting parents to raise attendance and/or punctuality concerns with them, particularly where issues are repeated;
- contacting parents where attendance for the year to date falls below the school's minimum target for the first time;
- strategic leaders maintaining an overview of weekly attendance across the school.

Fortnightly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- the strategic attendance lead agreeing appropriate intervention strategies with other colleagues who share an attendance remit
- the provision of up-to-date relevant cohort attendance data to class teachers and the provision of current whole school data to SLT.

Half termly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- Attendance administrative staff producing half-termly attendance and punctuality data for attendance leads which will help leaders to analyse areas of concern and success within specific cohorts and pupil groups;
- The updating of the Attendance Risk Register as follows:
 - Pupils on 99-100% attendance are on level 0 (no risk of persistent absence)
 - Pupils on 97-98.9% attendance are on level 1 (low risk of persistent absence)
 - Pupils on 95-96.9% attendance are on level 2 (moderate risk of persistent absence)
 - Pupils on 92-94.9% attendance are on level 3 (high risk of persistent absence)

- Pupils below 92% attendance are on level 4 (very high risk of persistent absence)
- Arranging attendance review meeting with pupils and parents for those placed on level 4 of the Attendance Risk Register, or the Punctuality Risk Register, if applicable to:
 - discuss levels of authorised and unauthorised absences;
 - discuss punctuality levels;
 - discuss causes for the levels of absence and lateness;
 - provide challenge and support to improve attendance and punctuality;
 - set an action plan with achievable and realistic attendance and punctuality targets;
 - agree a review date.
- The strategic leader responsible for attendance will:
 - keep an overview of the attendance risk register across the school;
 - agree appropriate intervention strategies with the Headteacher, if applicable;
 - identify pupils requiring attendance review meetings;
 - provide the School Standards Committee with half termly data on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistent/severe absentees and about leave of absence requests and their outcomes.

Half termly monitoring and punctuality improvement strategies may include the updating of the Punctuality Risk Register as follows:

- Pupils with no late marks in the previous half term are on level 0
- Pupils with 1-6 late marks in the previous half term are on level 1
- Pupils with 7-10 late marks in the previous half term are on level 2
- Pupils with 11-15 late marks in the previous half term are on level 3
- Pupils with 15+ late marks in the previous half term are on level 4

Termly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- analysing data to identify attendance and punctuality concerns and successes within specific cohorts and pupil groups;
- displaying termly attendance and punctuality data in prominent locations in school visible to staff and pupils;
- sharing attendance data and information regarding the importance of high levels of attendance with parents;
- issuing letters of concern to parents of pupils with attendance below 96%;
- issuing positive letters to parents of pupils who achieve above minimum expectation for attendance and punctuality or who have significantly improved attendance;
- recognising, celebrating and rewarding the above-mentioned pupils in celebration assemblies.

9. Vulnerable pupils including those with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils with a social worker, those in receipt of Pupil Premium and those who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. These students have the same right to an education as any other pupil and as such our attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

Nevertheless, we remain sensitive to and mindful of the barriers these pupils may face and we will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This includes:

- developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions e.g. by making reasonable adjustments or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed;
- considering whether additional support from external partners would be appropriate;
- where a pupil has a social worker, informing them when the pupil is absent without good reason;
- making referrals in a timely manner and working together with external services to deliver any subsequent support;
- working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed;
- establishing strategies for removing in-school barriers pupils may face;
- ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance;
- issuing positive letters to parents and recognising, celebrating and rewarding pupils who work hard to attend whenever possible in the light of adversity or other barriers beyond their control.

In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents, instead working with them to understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance. The aim will be to develop individual approaches that meet pupils' specific needs.

Data for the above groups will be proactively and regularly monitored to ensure they remain a key focus and that attendance is maximised.

10. Leave of absence

Leave of Absence

The regulations regarding Leave of Absence (The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.) advise:

- Head teachers **shall not** grant any Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Expectations

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence in advance parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as ‘unauthorised’. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- **It is important to note**, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 each child if paid within 21 days).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

11. Persistent and Severe Absence

The DfE defines a persistent absentee as a pupil whose attendance is at 90% or lower. This is the equivalent to having one day off every fortnight. As part of the Trust’s Persistent Absence Strategy a pupil is placed on Attendance Risk Register if their attendance falls below 92%, thereby ensuring they receive immediate intervention from this point onwards to help avoid becoming a persistent absentee.

Where a pupil's attendance is at 50% or lower, the DfE define this to be 'severe absence' and in these circumstances, where the pupil is missing over half of all learning opportunities, they should receive a more intensive level of support and where appropriate a more urgent level of challenge, including the possible use of legal intervention through the local authority to help secure improvement.

For both persistent and severe absentees, school-led intervention will have taken place and parental meetings will have been initiated with targets for improvement having been set as part of the process. Where agreed strategies have proved unsuccessful, further consultation will take place with local authority attendance services/School Attendance Support Team to agree a way forward which may include multi-disciplinary support for families via an Early Help Assessment or legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

While the intention will always be to work with pupils and their families to successfully secure improved attendance so that pupils are no longer persistent or severe absentees, where all attempts to engage with parents have proved unsuccessful and all strategies to secure compliance have been exhausted, the school will have no option but to consider legal action. In these circumstances the school will liaise with the Local Authority to decide whether issuing a fixed penalty notice, as an alternative to prosecution, would be effective in changing parental behaviour and securing the regular attendance of their child. In such circumstances the Local Authority's *Code of Conduct* for issuing fixed penalty notices will be followed. Should the relevant agencies agree that a fixed penalty notice is unlikely to change parental behaviour and secure improved attendance, the decision may be made to move directly to prosecution via court action. If there are also safeguarding concerns, support will also be sought through the Local Authority's Children's Social Care.

12. Children Missing Education

The school recognises that children missing education can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. As such, the school will respond rapidly at the first sign of a potential child missing education, making enquiries as to the whereabouts of the pupil as soon as concern is raised.

The school will only remove a pupil from the Admissions Register in line with the *Pupil Registration Regulations*. We will follow the Local Authority's *Children Missing Education (CME)* procedures, making appropriate referrals in all circumstances where:

- a pupil of compulsory school age is absent for ten or more days without the school being able to ascertain the reason for that absence; or
- the whereabouts of the pupil is unknown and the school has been unable to locate them, despite making active enquiries; or
- the family has informed the school that they are leaving the area but there has been no request for the Common Transfer Form from a receiving school.

13. Re-integrations and temporary reduced timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. However, where students have been absent through sickness for any extended period of time, the school will discuss with parents/carers the most appropriate way to re-integrate their child back into school. For some

students it may be appropriate to have work sent home to them to work on, with the understanding that appropriate support will be given by the school upon their return. In these circumstances, upon returning to the school, teachers may choose to focus on work in the core subjects, identifying the priority needs of the student so as not to hinder future learning. Inclusion support will also be available, as appropriate.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a reduced timetable is considered appropriate by the school, as part of a re-integration package.

A reduced timetable will never be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A reduced timetable will only be used for the shortest time necessary and will never be initiated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit at which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. Formal regular reviews will be held with the pupil and their parents.

In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat those absences as authorised.

14. Escalation of procedures and legal intervention

The school will endeavour to work proactively with parents and pupils to remove barriers and improve a pupil's attendance through the range of strategies detailed in this policy. However, if a pupil's attendance continues to decline or if engagement strategies have not had the desired effect, the school will liaise with the Local Authority and other local partners to help support families with ongoing barriers. This could include Pastoral Support Plans, parenting contracts or involvement with early help or social care.

The Local Authority may choose to exercise its legal powers to address ongoing poor attendance. This might include:

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices are served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent.

Fixed penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and will only be used where a fixed penalty notice is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Education Supervision Orders (ESO)

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education.

Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

Prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

The local authority has the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with the school attendance order under section 443 of The Education Act 1996 or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school under section 444 of The Education Act 1996. The fines available to the courts if the parents are found guilty could be between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents to imprisonment for up to three months.

Parenting orders

Parenting orders can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive up to three months of help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance.

15. Removal from Admissions Register and Elective Home Education

Schools are only permitted to remove compulsory school aged children from roll under certain circumstances, detailed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.

In accordance with regulation 12(6) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the reasons set out in regulation 8 as soon as the pupil's name is to be deleted. This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted after they have completed the school's final year.

This school will only delete a pupil's name from the admission register where the specified grounds detailed in the aforementioned regulations are met.

Elective Home Education

In line with best practice and DfE guidance, the school does not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because of poor attendance. However, the school does understand that home education is a parental choice and that there is no

requirement for parents to obtain the school's or the Local Authority's agreement to educate their child at home. As such, on receipt of written notification from a parent of their intention to educate their child other than at school, the school will follow its EHE procedure as detailed in Appendix 1, which includes informing the LA that the pupil is likely to be deleted from the admission register and providing a cooling off period where parents are aware their child may return to school during that period, should they change their mind.

16. Concluding points

All of our attendance procedures are intended to ensure that:

- we have a consistent recording system of student attendance which enables us to meet legal requirements;
- the security and safety of our students is a priority;
- trends of lateness and absenteeism are identified and addressed.

Our *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is part of a wider set of policies and documents all aimed at ensuring that all our students receive a broad, balanced education in a safe, caring environment. This ethos is reflected in the following related documents:

- *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*
- *Behaviour Policy*
- *Child on Child Abuse Policy*
- *Equal Opportunities Policy*
- *Ensuring Excellence* document

This policy will be reviewed biennially or earlier if required.

17. Appendix 1 - Birchwood Primary School's process for addressing Elective Home Education (EHE) requests

The aim of this process is to discourage parents from taking their child out of school to electively home educate. Staff members are expected to inform the SENDCo or Headteacher responsible for attendance if they hear of any student whose family are considering EHE.

Stages	Actions	Further actions if stages are missed
1	<p>Parent or child indicate that EHE is likely to be pursued or is being seen as an option to a member of staff.</p> <p>Refer the information to the SENDCo and Headteacher immediately via email.</p> <p>Headteacher initiates a new EHE record. Even if the EHE does not go through, this will be stored on file and will count in the records.</p>	If a letter is brought in immediately with no warning - straight to Stage 3
2	<p>Parent or child is invited into school for a meeting with the Headteacher and/or SENDCo.</p> <p>In the vast majority of cases, parents will immediately be informed that the school does not support EHE. The disadvantages and issues surrounding EHE are shared verbally.</p> <p>If parent/child do not attend a face-to-face meeting, this message may be shared over the phone.</p> <p>The reasons for EHE is explored at this stage. The school will be proactive in attempting to resolve issues.</p>	If a letter is brought to the meeting - move to Stage 3
3	<p>The Headteacher will notify the LA that we have a potential EHE and that we are trying to address this and keep the child in school.</p> <p>This email is kept on file, along with any response received.</p> <p>Any advice from the LA is actioned by the school.</p> <p>A letter is sent by the Headteacher stating that we do not agree with the child being EHE and offering support to resolve any issues, including the offer of a two-week cooling off period.</p> <p>If cooling off period agreed to, the Headteacher will phone parents following that period to clarify their decision.</p>	If no further correspondence or contact from parent - move to Stage 4.
4	<p>If parent remains adamant that they wish to remove their child and have put it in writing, a letter will be sent from the Headteacher, confirming removal from roll. The letter will include details of how to re-apply for admission should they change their mind.</p> <p>The Headteacher will complete the EHE form and send the documents, along with the formal written request received from the parents, to the LA and confirm removal from school roll.</p>	
5	<p>All paperwork and evidence is retained in the student's school file.</p> <p>NB - If a parent has sent in an EHE letter and will not engage in any of the school's meetings this will be evidenced via communication logs, emails and both letters will still be sent out.</p>	

18. Appendix 2 - Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 state:

1. Head teachers shall not grant any leave of absence during term time unless:

A) An application has been made in advance, by the parent with whom the child normally resides AND

B) They consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

2. The Head teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.

3. The Head teacher can determine how long an absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.

➤ Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (ie home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

➤ If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996).

➤ Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.

➤ Any Fixed Penalty Notices issued and/or prosecution will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend school. 1. The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.

2. Any leave of absences taken which have not been requested in advance will recorded as unauthorised.

3. Parents can be issued with a Fixed [Penalty Notice or prosecuted](#) for unauthorised absence including holidays.

Parents:

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN
EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

Important Information for Parents/Carers

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- When making an application for Leave of Absence the resident parent is advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify of their decision.
- It is advised if you have not received notification regarding the leave of absence, it is the parents' responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of leave.
- If Leave of Absence is granted, please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides. Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance covering the absence dates in full will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- Unauthorised Leave of Absences will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service upon the child's return to school

Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: _____ Form Group: _____

First Date of Proposed Absence: _____ Last date of Proposed Absence: _____

Expected date of return to school: _____

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence (they can only be exceptional circumstances) (see overleaf before completing)

.....
.....
.....

Total Days Requested On This Occasion

(For siblings) I have also applied to _____ School/Academy for leave of absence for _____ (insert child/children's name)

Signature of resident Parent/Carer: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

For school use only: NAME OF CHILD: _____ Date received by school: _____

1st date of absence requested by parents: Last date of absence requested by parents:

Expected date of return to school (as advised by parents):

Absence Authorised: Yes/No

The reasons for this decision are:

- LOA record sheet to be completed by school and submitted where verbal requests made/ for other relevant information

Head teacher/Attendance Lead: Date:

- Copy of this completed section should be sent back to parent with letter

19. Appendix 3 - Absence data chart

Attendance percentage	This might indicate . . .	Associated risk
98% +	Outstanding attendance Fully able to access all learning opportunities	No risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
97 - 97.9%	Excellent attendance Up to six learning days lost over the year Minimal learning opportunities missed	Very low risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
96 - 96.9%	Good attendance Up to eight learning days lost over the year Very few learning opportunities missed	Low risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
95 - 95.9%	Increasing concern if further absences occur Up to 10 learning days lost over the year Missed learning opportunities are likely to have an impact on attainment and progress	Moderate risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
92 - 94.9%	Significant concern. Attendance levels require improvement Up to 16 learning days lost over the year Missed learning opportunities will now have a significant impact on attainment and progress	High risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
Below 92%	Urgent concern. Attendance levels are now critical Over 16 learning days lost over the year Missed learning opportunities will now have a significant impact on attainment and progress	Very high risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
Below 90%	Urgent concern. Attendance levels now critical Pupil is flagged as being a Persistent Absentee Over 19 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement	Persistent Absentee
85%	Urgent concern. Attendance levels now critical Pupil is flagged as being a Persistent Absentee Over 28 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement Potential increased safeguarding risk	Persistent Absentee
80%	Urgent concern. Attendance levels now critical Pupil is flagged as being a Persistent Absentee Over 38 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement Potential increased safeguarding risk	Persistent Absentee
50% or below	Education is at critical risk Pupil is flagged as being a Severe Absentee Over 97/195 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement Potential increased safeguarding risk	Severe Absentee
Impact of absence from school		
85 - 90% attendance	Equivalent of over 27 weeks (⅓ of a year) absent from primary school	
80% attendance	Equivalent of 55 weeks (a full year and a term) absent from primary school	
1 day a week absent	Equivalent of over three years missed over full school career	
10 days holiday a year	Equivalent of two terms of education missed over full school career	
15 minutes late a day	Equivalent of two terms of education missed over full school career	

N.B. The above percentage criteria is in line with pre-Covid expectations and should as such be seen as ambitious post-Covid targets.