



# Attendance Policy and Procedures

**Date adopted: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

## History of most recent policy reviews

<b>Date (reviewed annually)</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Who is Responsible?</b>
<b>May 2015</b>	<b>Unchanged</b>	<b>Standards Committee</b>
<b>May 2016</b>		<b>Standards Committee</b>
<b>April 2016</b>	<b>Undated wording for term-time absences to clarify school's position in the event of prosecution</b>	<b>Standards Committee</b>
<b>January 2018</b>	<b>Updated wording to reflect the clarification of the law.</b>	<b>Standards Committee</b>
<b>October 2019</b>	<b>Updated to incorporate content from BCC Model Attendance Policy</b>	<b>Standards Committee</b>

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## **Part 1 Policy:**

### **1. Introduction**

It is the aim of Air Balloon Hill Primary School that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. 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. 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.

### **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 our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents<sup>1</sup> must follow to report their child absent from school.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age, therefore the school will encourage parents of Reception children who are not yet compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the 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 is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

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.

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<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

### 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 amount of learning.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Over the 7 years at Primary School this is equal to	
			Weeks	Terms
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	13 weeks	2 terms
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	26 ½ weeks	4 terms
80%	38 Days	7 ½ weeks	53 weeks	1 year and 2 terms

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level does considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects.

### 3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard 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](#) (Sept 2019 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases 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.)

#### **4. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the 2019 [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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

## Part 2 What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:

### 1. 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 second session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

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

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised.

### 2. Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

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.

Parents whose children are frequently late arriving at school may be asked to meet with the class teacher, Pastoral Leader, Family Support Worker or Headteacher to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

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

Our morning register is taken at 8.50 am and will be kept open until 9.20am

Our afternoon register is taken at 1pm (EYFS and KS1) and 1.30pm (KS2).

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

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**). See DfE Attendance Codes – Appendix One.

#### 2.1 Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Arriving late disrupts the lesson for other children and children often also feel

embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late and can cause them unnecessary worry and stress.

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>Over the 7 years at Primary School this is equal to</b>
5 mins	3 Days	4 weeks
10 mins	6 Days	8 weeks
15 mins	9 Days	12 weeks

### **3. 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:**

#### **3.1 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 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. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil’s GP directly.

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 reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

It is school policy that where a child has been sent home from school or absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, they must not return to school until 48 hours after the last episode to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

### **3.1.1 Reporting Absence**

If your child is absent from school due to illness you must use the **Notify Absence** option on the ParentMail App or telephone the school using the absence reporting line:

**0117 903 0077 option 1**

All absences must be notified before 9.30am or it may not be authorised.

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

### **3.1.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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

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

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

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, 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.

## **3.2 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.

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.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

### **3.3 Religious Observance**

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Absences for children whose parents/carers wish them to avoid religious elements of the curriculum (for example visits to the Church at Christmas and Easter or school trips to the Hindu Temple) will not be authorised as the school makes alternative provision for those children to remain in school.

### **3.4 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, Roma 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.

### **3.5 Exclusions**

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

Any exclusion must be agreed by the Headteacher.

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 HOPE Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

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

#### 4. 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. (See DfE 2016 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 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 education provider 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 weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting.

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

#### 5. 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.**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. 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. Our school can only consider requests from the parent with whom the child normally lives and reserves the right to issue Penalty Notices to both parents for the absence, even if the parent with whom the child normally lives is not the parent taking the child out of school.

The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

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

The definition of an **Exceptional Circumstance** would be an absence that is **rare, significant, unavoidable and short**. By unavoidable, we mean an event that could not reasonably be arranged at another time.

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

All requests for a term-time absence must be made in writing using the school's Leave of Absence Request form (Appendix 3). Applications must be made at least 10 school days before the absence is due to start. The law does not allow schools to give retrospective approval for term-time absences and therefore if parents do not apply for a leave of absences in advance, the absence must be recorded in the register as unauthorised.

Only in very exceptional circumstances will an absence of more than 10 days be considered and in reviewing such requests, the Headteacher will take into account cultural needs and family circumstances. Extended leave of absence will only be considered once during the child's primary education.

## 6. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or where a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school – including for a term-time holiday. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not. Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Family holiday or holiday to visit relatives
- A pupil or family member's birthday
- Attending a wedding or other celebration (including weddings taking place abroad)
- Shopping
- Having a hair-cut
- Closure of a sibling's school or class (for example because of strike action)
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Looking after the house
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Looking after siblings or sick relatives
- Unable to get up in the morning
- 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

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

## 7. Term-time Holidays

Absences from school for the purposes of a term-time holiday will not be authorised. Term-times are for education – children and families have 175 days off school every year to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays.

The Headteacher may consider authorising a leave of absence if the reason is considered by the Headteacher to be an Exceptional Circumstance. By exceptional we mean rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By unavoidable, we mean an event that could not reasonably be arranged at another time.

The Headteacher will not normally consider any of the reasons below as an Exceptional Circumstance and any requests for a Leave of Absence for these reasons will not normally be authorised and may result in Penalty Notices being issued to parents/carers:

- Family holiday or holiday to visit relatives
- Cheaper cost of a holiday / flights / accommodation during term-time than during the school holidays
- Availability of the desired holiday accommodation or location
- Weather conditions in the desired holiday location
- A holiday being booked by or paid for by someone else as a gift
- Overlapping a holiday with the beginning or end of a school holiday period
- Attending a wedding (including if that wedding is taking place abroad)
- Parents inability to secure a holiday from work during school holiday periods

Please note that this list is not exhaustive

## 8. 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' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document, 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'.)

## **9. First Day of Absence Response**

A list is kept in the school office of children who walk to school on their own and if they don't arrive, parents/carers are contacted as a priority. Parents who wish to add their child to this list should speak to staff in the school office.

Where a child fails to attend school and no reason has been provided by the parent, the school will make every effort to contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence. However, parents should be aware that the reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent.

Where we are unable to speak to a child's parent or carer on their first day of absence, we will try a child's other emergency contacts and therefore request that parents give us the names of at least 2 other adults who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may request a Welfare Check from the police.

## **10. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance**

To help focus on good attendance the school will:

- Give certificates for 100% attendance at the end of Terms 2, 4 and 6 and for the whole year at the end of Term 6
- Provide parents with a copy of their child's attendance percentage in their tri-annual school reports
- Provide parents with a copy of their child's Attendance Certificate for the year at the end of Term 6
- Include, in the weekly newsletter, the attendance for each class for the week
- Write to parent and carers when there has been an improvement in attendance

## **11. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)**

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We 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 in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to

an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the class teacher, Pastoral Leader or Family Support Worker to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions 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 the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

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

## **12. 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 pupils' return to a full-time timetable.

## **13. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions**

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.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance. They are an alternative to prosecution, and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's irregular attendance (which includes unauthorised absence from school) could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months' imprisonment. (See link to the DfE's statutory guidance on 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' 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.

## 14. 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 CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: [childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk)

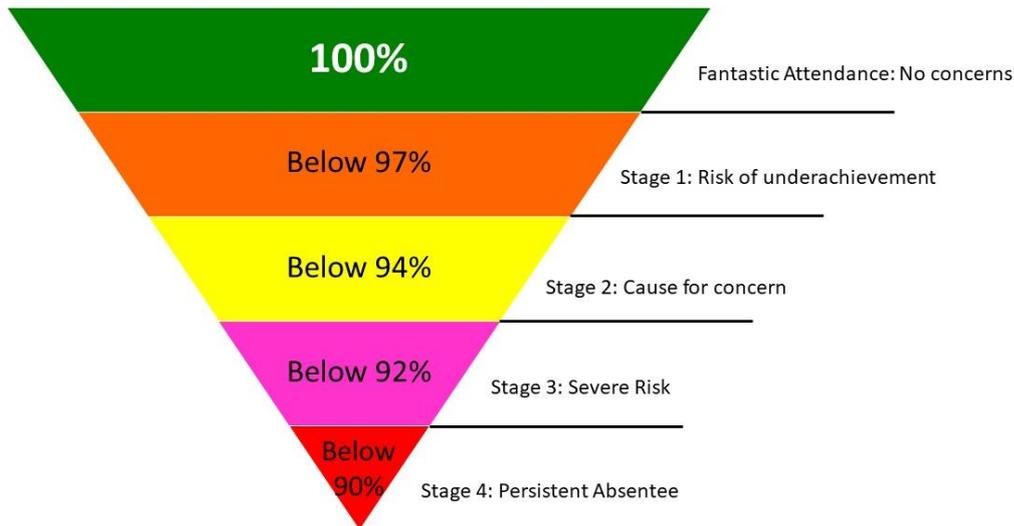
## 15. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by email or telephone 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 for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 2 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

## 16. Reporting to Parents

We will include details of a pupil's attendance in their tri-annual school reports and provide parents with a copy of their attendance summary for the year in Term 6. If parents wish to see a copy of their child's attendance summary at any other time during the year, they can ask for a printed copy at the school office.

Where a child's attendance drops below 97%, we will review the attendance following the stages below and will write to parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.



## 17. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

All absences are recorded in the school attendance register in our Management Information System, RM Integris as required by the law. Information about the reason for the absence, how it was reported, by whom and any additional information pertinent to the absence may also be recorded.

## 18. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

## 19. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions & Administering Medication Policy and our Home-School Agreement.

## **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 2019)

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

School Attendance (DfE September 2018)

<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 2019 (DfE January 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-level-annual-school-census-2019-guide>

School Exclusion (DfE September 2017)

<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
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	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
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## **APPENDIX 2 – Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governing Board**

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

### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **Attendance Team**

The Attendance Team consists of the Family Support Worker, Data Manager and Administration Assistant (Data). They will meet as a team at least once per term to monitor and review attendance across the school – for individual pupils, vulnerable groups and the whole school.

During their meetings, the Attendance Team will identify children whose attendance is a cause for concern and put attendance interventions in place as necessary. Depending on the level of concern, the Attendance Team will involve class teachers and Pastoral Leaders and co-ordinate meetings with parents. In some cases, parents will be asked to meet with the Family Support Worker and formal action plan will be produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

- **Family Support Worker and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)**

Within the Attendance Team, the Family Support Worker will focus on safeguarding and how attendance links to wider safeguarding concerns. As DDSL, the Family Support Worker will take concerns of the Attendance Team to the school's weekly Safeguarding Team meetings. The Family Support Worker will also be the point of contact for parents who have their own concerns about their child's attendance and will meet with parents as and when necessary to share attendance concerns and produce action plans and attendance contracts.

The Family Support Worker will also liaise with external agencies and make referrals to them as required.

- **Data Manager**

The Data Manager monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level, reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate, co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence and advises the Headteacher as required.

- **Administration Assistant (Data)**

The Administration Assistant is responsible for ensuring that the daily registers are completed accurately and on time, recording the reasons for absences and reporting any concerns or patterns of absence to the Attendance Team.

**Class Teachers:**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Where there are attendance concerns, either raised by the class teacher themselves or by the Attendance Team, they will 'check-in' with the pupil to find out about any reasons for absence as part of their responsibilities under our school's Safeguarding Policy.

Class teachers will also be asked to meet with parents whose child has a falling level of attendance and is flagged as a concern by the Attendance Team. This will usually be a stage 1 meeting, where attendance has fallen below 97% without genuine reasons for the absences.

**Pastoral Leaders:**

Where there are wider concerns about a child's attendance or when a parent has already met with a class teacher to discuss attendance concerns but there has been limited or no improvement in that child's attendance, they may be asked to meet with the Pastoral Leader to discuss the concerns further.

Pastoral Leaders will also support class teachers and offer advice.

## APPENDIX 3 – Leave of Absence Request Form



As per current regulations, DfE advice on school attendance (2013) and the school's Attendance Policy, we would like to advise you that the Headteacher may not grant any Leave of Absence in term time unless **exceptional circumstances** exist. By exceptional we mean rare, significant, **unavoidable** and short. By unavoidable, we mean an event that could not reasonably be arranged at another time.

The Headteacher will not normally consider any of the reasons below as an Exceptional Circumstance and any requests for a Leave of Absence for these reasons will not normally be authorised and may result in Penalty Notices being issued to parents/carers:

- Family holiday or holiday to visit relatives
- Cheaper cost of a holiday / flights / accommodation during term-time than during the school holidays
- Availability of the desired holiday accommodation or location
- Weather conditions in the desired holiday location
- A holiday being booked by or paid for by someone else as a gift
- Overlapping a holiday with the beginning or end of a school holiday period
- Attending a wedding (including if that wedding is taking place abroad)
- Parents inability to secure a holiday from work during school holiday periods

Please note that this list is not exhaustive

**It is a legal requirement for parents/carers to obtain the permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school in order to take any leave in term time.** In order to make a request for a term-time absence, you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives.

The School will assess each request on an individual basis, considering the impact that missing school will have on the child's education and any special circumstances of which we are made aware, e.g. the bereavement of a close family member, the needs of the families of service personnel, or the need for time together to recover from trauma or crisis. The School will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the request is granted.

If an absence request is granted, it will be recorded as 'authorised absence'. If a parent/carer takes their child out of school without permission this will count as an 'unauthorised absence'. Penalty Notices can be issued to parents of children with unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child.

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. The Education Welfare Service may take formal action against you, as parent, for failure to comply with the law. Please note that penalty notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution, and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to your child's irregular attendance. Therefore, your child's irregular attendance (which includes unauthorised absences from school) could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 per parent, per child, payable within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay may result in prosecution for the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.
2. Prosecution which could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months' imprisonment.

The application must be made **in advance** using the form found on the reverse this letter. If you require additional space, please continue on a separate piece of paper or attach a letter outlining the reason for the requested absence and any exceptional circumstances you wish the Headteacher to consider. Retrospective requests will not be considered. **Please return this form to the school office no less than 10 school days before the absence is due to start.**

This Leave of Absence Request Form should be read in conjunction with the school's Attendance Policy which is available on request from the school office or can be downloaded from the school website: [www.abhps.com/policies](http://www.abhps.com/policies)

## APPENDIX 3 – Leave of Absence Request Form



By signing this request, I have read and understood the information provided overleaf, noting that if my request is not granted and I take my child on leave anyway, a Penalty Notice may be issued or prosecution instigated.

I request that you authorise a Leave of Absence from School for my child.

Student Name*		Class	
Current Address (inc Postcode):			

\*If you are requesting a Leave of Absence for more than one child, please complete a separate form for each one.

Dates (inclusive)	From		To	
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Reason for the Leave of Absence Request, including full details of any exceptional circumstances (Please explain why the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you require additional space please continue on a separate piece of paper.)

(N.B. application must come from the parent with whom the child normally resides)

Signature of Parent/Carer			
Name of Parent/Carer (please print clearly)		Date of request	

### School Use Only

#### Data Manager / Attendance Administrator

Date Application Received		Current Attendance	
No. of days absence so far this year		Attendance last academic year	
Comments			

#### Headteacher/Designated Deputy or Assistant Headteacher

Absence Authorised	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments (Why request is not authorised or considered to be exceptional circumstances e.g. Learning that will be missed / No Exceptional Circumstances / Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods)		
Penalty Notice to be issued:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Signed		Dated

#### Attendance Administrator

RM Integris Updated		Attendance Code	
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