



TWO RIVERS
HIGH SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Endeavour Multi Academy Trust

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1. Mission, Vision and Values

Endeavour MAT are fully committed to ensuring that all students reach their full potential. To achieve this, a high level of attendance is essential. The MAT believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. We are committed to creating a positive culture where all pupils feel valued and welcome, supporting student learning and success. Underpinning this policy is our commitment to empowerment, respect and care for all students and staff.

Maintaining regular school attendance for many of our pupils is a challenge due to the variety of individual needs they have. This may range from a pupil coping with physical impairments, emotional needs and chronic medical conditions. We hope this policy will provide guidance to pupils, parents/carers striving to achieve the best possible attendance and educational outcomes.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Children's mental health and wellbeing are vitally important to us all. Our children arrive to us with significant learning, health and/or emotional needs that require careful consideration, planning and care. It is important to us that our children achieve the best they can as well as reaching emotional maturity with the capacity to overcome barriers to their learning and develop positive coping strategies. All children have a right to education and children with SEND have the most to gain by attending school regularly and the access to an appropriate school setting provides specialist teaching and support. It is vital that our children attend school every day to maximise these opportunities and get the support they need and deserve.

2. Purpose and intent

This policy is written in accordance with the statutory guidance on attendance in the DfE document, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024', to ensure that every child attends, on time, on every day possible, so that they:

- Establish positive routines and attitudes towards their education from the earliest point.
- Progress well academically and socially.
- Develop excellent habits for their next steps in education and their careers.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Endeavour MAT believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the MAT, school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such, **all staff will:**

- develop and maintain a positive culture where all pupils are effectively supported
- uphold and reinforce expectations for good attendance and punctuality
- complete registers on time and accurately
- monitor, and remain aware of, the attendance of children under social care or other vulnerable pupils
- communicate effectively with parents/carers regarding concerns at the earliest point, working together to eliminate barriers
- raise concerns with the senior leader for attendance, as set out in the local appendices

Headteachers will:

- ensure all children access their full entitlement to high quality education
- develop and maintain a positive culture across the MAT where all staff understand the link between behaviour, attendance, and inclusion
- ensure this policy is implemented at their school
- ensure parents are fully informed of the MAT expectations and requirements
- monitor school-level absence data and report it to governors
- support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- determine, in any cases where there is doubt, whether an absence may be authorised
- monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance will:

- lead attendance across the school, offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluating and monitor expectations and processes
- have an oversight of data analysis
- devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- work proactively in partnership with local authority and/or private Education Welfare teams when necessary, to support good attendance
- oversee communication with parents to discuss attendance issues

- deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- ensure that for those children educated in alternative provision, robust safeguarding and attendance monitoring procedures are followed in accordance with the guidance and MAT policy
- ensure that the school follows the local authority procedures for managing and referring children missing in education (CME)
- support the Headteacher to ensure that suitable provision and support is given to those students with SEND, specific medical and/or mental health conditions which may be barriers to achieving regular attendance
- support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- advise the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The School Attendance Administrator will:

- follow their school's first day absence procedures, ensuring accurate recording of any absence information provided
- ensure all register marks are fully complete and accurate for each school session
- monitor daily attendance, providing regular absence information to the senior leader responsible for attendance
- report specific concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance
- work with education welfare officers and the senior leader responsible for attendance to tackle persistent absence

Parents/carers, we expect to:

- ensure their child attends every day their school is open except when a statutory reason applies
- ensure their child arrives to school on time and prepared for the school day
- support their child in maintaining the MAT expectation for attendance for the duration of the academic year, unless medical or exceptional circumstances affect their attending school
- contact the school as soon as possible to notify of absence
- contact the school to discuss any emerging concerns/barriers that might prevent their child from maintaining good attendance or arriving promptly at school
- proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support when applicable
- provide the school with a minimum of TWO up-to-date home and emergency contact details. Each school administration team will ensure that each child has two contacts recorded on Arbor, unless there are exceptional/individual circumstances that preclude this

- submit, in writing, requests for exceptional leave of absence in good time to the Headteacher, prior to making any arrangements
- provide medical evidence for an absence when requested by the school. We accept appointment cards or letters and prescribed medication with the child's name clearly labelled

Pupils, we expect to:

- attend every day unless there are reasons such as illness, specific family circumstances or other extenuating factors which preclude this
- arrive on time at the start of the school day
- be punctual to lessons within the school day

The Governing Board will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures
- ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- support school leaders to drive improvements in attendance
- seek assurance that the school leaders take appropriate steps to ensure that all students are receiving a high quality of education through positive attendance, enabling them to be the best they can
- ensure there is a clear and sustainable focus on enabling staff and pupils to learn and improve, within the context of attendance management and behaviours
- ensure all school staff receive role-appropriate training on attendance
- regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it

Endeavour Multi Academy Trust will:

- ensure our clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction in the context of attendance management
- approve the mission, vision and values for the MAT in collaboration with the executives
- promote and demonstrate our values and core goals
- ensure that self-evaluation in attendance priorities will effectively achieve these goals and will drive performance
- monitor progress in attendance indicators and our commitment to consistent practice ensuring these are embedded across the organisation
- hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, including attendance indicators as part of behaviour and attitudes as outlined in the EIF

- take steps to ensure the quality of education provision by overseeing standards and outcomes in attendance indicators across all academies within the MAT
- monitor attendance in the context of the intent, implementation, and impact of the quality of education
- seek assurance that the MAT engages with stakeholders; parents/carers, staff and students and wider community
- understand and consider the view of stakeholders within the Trust ensuring that the vision, core goals, values and culture aligns to the needs of the communities the Trust serves

4. Scope and Purpose

Endeavour MAT is committed to working collaboratively.

We achieve this by:

a) EXPECTATIONS

We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents to build a culture where all want to be in our schools. We ensure our pupils are ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement when required.

b) MONITORING

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

c) LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING

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

d) FACILITATING SUPPORT

We are committed to removing barriers, to help pupils and parents access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of our schools.

e) FORMALISING SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we will work with partners to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond.

f) **ENFORCEMENT**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we may enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education, at the discretion of the Headteacher. We adhere to the relevant Local Authority guidance on enforcement triggers.

5. Legal Requirements

- a) Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education (the Education Act 1996). Legal action may be instigated against parents/carers whose child's attendance is at an unacceptably low level and where parents/carers are failing to fulfil their responsibility (section 444(1) and 1(a)).
- b) We must keep an admission register (the school roll) in accordance with Chapter 7 of the guidance. This must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.
- c) In accordance with Chapter 7 of the Working Together guidance; we recognise that a pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.
- d) Each school is required to maintain an accurate register as a legal document on a session-by-session basis.
- e) We must take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each academy day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we must record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- f) Our schools must preserve every entry in their attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.
- g) Our academies code attendance in accordance with 'Attendance and absence codes' as set out in the guidance paragraphs 203 – 276.
- h) From the start of the 2024 to 2025 academic year, it will be mandatory for schools to share their attendance data with the Department for Education (DfE), we will share our data in accordance with this requirement.
- i) Our registers are only amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it was taken and it was subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, our academies must ensure the register shows the original

entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.

j) It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the school on the first and each subsequent day of absence unless a definite date of return is known. The school will reach a decision whether the absence is authorised or not.

k) The school may seek legal action through the local authority for continued poor attendance in accordance with the clear guidance and expectations as laid out in Chapter 6 of the 2024 Working Together to Improve School Attendance, and as part of their wider safeguarding duty outlined in KCSIE. This could result in a penalty notice (PN), or other sanctions being issued.

l) The school may request medical evidence for an absence. We accept appointment cards or letters and prescribed medication with the child's name clearly labelled. These will be requested using discretionary approaches and where the school has reasonable cause to insist on proof. It will not be used as the default. No data will be kept by the school where such proof is provided.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

We follow the guidance on persistent and severe absence as outlined in chapter 5 of Working Together. Authorised absence is where the academy accepts there is good reason for an absence. Consideration for an authorised absence requires a written or telephone communication, from the parent. Parents are asked to notify the academy as soon as possible. Children who return to school following an absence without an explanation will be deemed to have had an 'unauthorised absence' until a suitable explanation has been given. Absence is then coded according to the cause (Appendix 1).

Examples of absence that might be authorised are:

- an absence caused by genuine illness or other unavoidable cause
- an absence for an agreed religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong
- family bereavement
- situations where the academy authorises absence e.g. study leave, work experience, interviews, and special occasions such as theatre/sporting/musical performance
- medical appointments where proof is available
- Suspension

Where explanations are not forthcoming, the explanations are deemed unacceptable, or unreliable; these will be explored by the school and where appropriate, recorded as 'unauthorised'. Examples might include: This list is NOT exhaustive.

- Helping out at home/caring for younger siblings
- shopping
- lateness
- holidays
- day trips
- birthdays

If an absence is deemed as unauthorised this may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice (FPN) or other legal interventions outlined in Chapter 6 of 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', including parenting contracts, education supervision orders and parenting orders. We recognise that attendance below 90% is poor and a child below this figure is treated as a persistent absentee (PA) by all schools and the DfE (Department for Education).

Requests for Planned Absence

A leave of absence may be requested and will be granted if the circumstances are exceptional. Requests must be made to the school in writing, at least two weeks prior to the date required where possible, to give the school sufficient time to consider the request and respond. Evidence of exceptional circumstances may be requested. Where leave is taken which has not been granted, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupil's register.

Family Holidays

Parents/carers are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays during term time. Where parents consider that there may be exceptional circumstances, this should be submitted in writing, as outlined above.

If you take your child on holiday during term time, without authorisation, you may be liable for a fixed penalty notice.

Severe Absence

Focused monitoring and intervention will be given to pupils who are absent from our academies for more time than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These are classed as severely absent pupils. We recognise that these children may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support. Therefore, we may seek interventions from wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

This could include:

- Education Welfare
- Early Help
- Social Care
- Health Services
- SEND team

In all cases, we expect our academies to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible.

7. Addressing Attendance and Punctuality Concerns

Through working closely in partnership with parents/carers, we aim to establish positive routines for attendance and punctuality from the earliest age. Due to the established impact of lost education on progress and achievement, we will always provide comprehensive support to children and families to endeavour to overcome barriers, but we have a robust response where concerns emerge. These are clearly set out in the local appendix for each school.

Children Missing from Education

Endeavour MAT acknowledges its responsibility to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children is promoted in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance. Therefore, where a child has been absent for ten school days (or less where deemed appropriate), and the school has made all reasonable attempts to contact a parent but has been unable to do so, this child will be considered as “missing from education”. We will follow Staffordshire Council’s Children Missing Education Protocol for any child whose whereabouts are unknown.

8. Safeguarding

Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places a child at risk of harm.

For more information on safeguarding and the protection of children please refer to the MAT's Safeguarding policy.

9. Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school, or another setting full-time, and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

10. Absence Codes

Arbor Attendance Code

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
B	Educated off site	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual Registration	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Pupil attending Interview	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
M	Medical / Dental appointment	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Sporting activity (approved)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
V	Educational trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	Not required (non-compulsory school age) Unable to attend due to exceptional	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	circumstances	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils	Attendance not required	Out for whole session

11. Local Appendices

- a) **Cherry Trees School**
- b) **Two Rivers Primary School**
- c) **Two Rivers High School**
- d) **Wightwick Hall School**

a) Cherry Trees Primary School

Procedures

Cherry Trees School applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1) LATE ARRIVAL - If a child is late arriving in school (e.g. medical appointment), the parent or carer bringing the child in must speak to a member of staff upon arrival to ensure that we are aware of their child's presence in school. The pupil **MUST** sign the late arrival register. This ensures we meet health and safety requirements e.g. in the unlikely event of a fire. It is helpful if parents/carers can inform school in advance of scheduled appointments that will result in an absence or late arrival. Lateness can be classed as unauthorised in some situations therefore, it is important that parents/carers keep the school well informed to help maintain accurate records. In order to comply with Department of Education regulations the school closes morning registration at 9.30am. Arrival to the Form Group after this time will result in the pupil receiving a late mark on the registers (L). The registers close at 9.30am. Arriving after this time will result in the pupil receiving a code U or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

2) TERM-TIME HOLIDAY REQUESTS – Parents need to be aware that the school is not able to authorise holidays unless exceptional circumstances have been identified. In order for the Headteacher to consider the request parents are required to fill in the appropriate form with as much notice as possible before planned holidays. The form can be obtained from the school's office.

3) ATTENDANCE - In the event of an unavoidable absence, parents are asked to contact the school on the **FIRST** day of absence by telephone 01902 894484 giving the reason for non-attendance. Additionally, a note can be provided to

school at the time a pupil returns following a short period of absence. This note must be sent to the school office. Regular contact will be required for extended periods of absence as school is required to keep the Local Support Team updated.

At Cherry Trees School we will call daily to check non-attendance of pupils where parents have not informed us of the absence. This will be recorded on SIMS/Arbor.

School has a legal DUTY to inform the Local Support Team (LST) where cases of '**UNAUTHORISED**' absences of 10 days or more occur. Likewise, school has to disclose irregular attendance, persistent lateness or cases where attendance falls below 90%. School is also required to provide an explanation for all such absences (where known) and evidence of action taken to secure information and/or provide support to the family.

Attendance Support Procedures - where appropriate:

Stage 1 – if, where appropriate, a pupil's attendance falls below 90% parents will receive a letter with an invitation to a dialogue with the school in order to improve the attendance.

Stage 2 – if, where appropriate, there is no improvement in the attendance, parents will be invited to a meeting with a Senior Leader to discuss further support. At this stage the school may decide to only authorise the absence when we receive a medical evidence.

Stage 3 – should the absences remain at the level below the target the school will invite parents to a formal meeting with a Pastoral Leader or a Senior Leader to discuss further support and actions if necessary.

In the absence of relevant information regarding poor attendance, school may take advice on further action to be taken. School may also undertake a review of the placement, if it felt that attendance elsewhere would be in the child's best interests and this is done with the full knowledge of parents/carers.

Every 4-6 weeks cases are reviewed and if no resolution is forthcoming other action will be considered e.g. continued input with targets and/or agreements drafted or referral on to another service/agency for input/support or investigation of statutory action. This may also include the Local Support Team (LST) issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice, where earlier interventions have failed to secure regular attendance of the child. Fixed Penalty Notices are decided and

acted upon by the LST and school is required to provide details of absences and interventions. The legal process is managed by the LST and no funds secured by the process are received by the school. Once a case reaches this stage, legal interventions are outside the remit of the school.

Prior to a Penalty Notice being issued, a warning letter will be sent to parents/carers by the LST who will monitor attendance over the following 20 days. No action will be taken if there are no further **UNAUTHORISED** absences during that period. However, parents may be liable to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice (currently £60) if unauthorised absences occur. Failure to pay within 28-days means the penalty value will increase. Cases are then brought before the Court by the LST if payments are not made. In such cases, parents/carers may be liable to pay any further court costs. Again, school is not involved in this process other than by providing information as required by law.

The LST may undertake further legal action in the event of unauthorised absences continuing. This can result in a prosecution which carries a fine of up to £2500 and can attract a custodial sentence. Any fines paid become 'public funds' i.e. payable to the Court and there is no financial advantage to school.

Cherry Trees School will already have attempted to provide support that avoids such action being taken and will continue to engage with families both during and after any legal action has commenced. Such action is the final resort undertaken by the LST and it is a legal requirement.

CHERRY TREES SCHOOL WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SUCCESSFULLY REINTEGRATE PUPILS AT ANY STAGE PRIOR TO, DURING OR FOLLOWING LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AND WE WILL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND ALL INVOLVED PARTIES TO BRING ABOUT A POSITIVE OUTCOME.

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION PROCESS

Cherry Trees School may direct pupils off-site for education, to help improve their behaviour and support the development of their social and emotional skills. As a school we want to avoid suspensions and exclusions wherever possible.



When identified that a pupil is facing challenges. A meeting will be held between parents/carers and the child where appropriate to discuss barriers and identify solutions.



Research will be conducted on the alternative provision identified to ensure that it is bespoke to meet the needs of the individual pupil, to remove any barriers to learning. Emails threads/information gathered will be evidenced and stored in the attendance folder.



Alternative provision educational sessions will be delivered by high quality staff who have suitable training and experience. The Head Teacher will carry out an Alternative Provision audit to support the decision if the alternative provision is suitable for the individual pupils needs.



Alternative_provision_
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The alternative provision will carry out their own safeguarding checks and send Cherry Trees School confirmation that these have been completed. A copy of this will be stored in the attendance folder.



A member of the Senior Leadership Team will carry out a visit to the alternative provision identified to ensure that it is suitable to meet the needs of the individual pupil and to conduct a risk assessment. The risk assessment will be reviewed and signed off by the Head Teacher. A copy of this will be stored on evolve.



All relevant information will be shared with providers and other parties involved. This will be jargon free and include any information on special educational needs, literacy, safeguarding or other issues, as well as any information requested by the provider as appropriate. Information will be provided in accordance with data protection principles.



Parents/carers and the Local Authority will be given clear information about the placement: why, when, where, and how the placement will be reviewed.



A plan of why alternative provision has been agreed, when, and how it will take place will be given to parents/carers. Specific personal, social and academic needs of pupils will be identified and included in the plan. The plan will be evidenced and stored in the attendance folder.



Records will be kept on a pupil's progress in the alternative provision and Cherry Trees staff will evidence this by work completed, photographs taken etc. This will be collated in the pupils work book/folders etc.



Reviews will be undertaken with the Head Teacher, parents/carers, and the child (where appropriate) Regular reviews will provide assurance that the off-site education is achieving its objectives and that the pupil is benefitting from it. Reviews will be evidenced and stored in the attendance folder.



Reviews will consider any barriers to attainment; improved pupil motivation and self-confidence, attendance and engagement with education; and clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement such as reintegration into school, alternative school placement or additional alternative provision required.

b) Two Rivers High School

Overview

The member of SLT responsible for attendance is Mr T Silk. The following 'in-school' procedure is followed for monitoring student's attendance.

- The Attendance Officer Administrator produces a weekly printout of students whose attendance is less than 90% since the start of the academic year. The Attendance Team will closely monitor patterns of absences.
- **Stage 1** – When there are initial concerns regarding attendance, the form tutor will contact parents/carers to open a dialogue about their child's attendance to understand any barriers there may be.
- **Stage 2** - If, where appropriate, a student's attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will receive a letter and be invited in to meet with their child's Strand Lead or a member of the pastoral team in order to discuss barriers to attending school on a regular basis.
- **Stage 3** - Should there be no, or limited improvement in attendance, parents/carers will be invited in for a formal meeting with a member of the Attendance Team or a member of SLT to discuss further support and actions if necessary. At this stage the school may decide to only authorise absences when we receive medical evidence. Medical evidence can be in a form of an appointment card or prescription, for example. Slips are available from the school office for parents/carers to take to the pharmacy, doctors, or other relevant health professionals to sign as proof of appointment. These can be returned to the

school office and may be deemed sufficient for absences to be authorised.

- **Stage 4** – Should absences remain at the level below the target agreed, the school will invite parents/carers to a formal meeting. In the absences of relevant information regarding poor attendance, school may take external advice and may consider statutory action.

Where there is persistent unauthorised absence then a Penalty Notice may be considered.

Should Local Authority involvement be required, the Attendance Lead from Two Rivers High School will provide appropriate records to the Local Authority for them to fulfil their statutory functions should the Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct threshold be met. This could result in a fixed Penalty Notice being issued. In some cases, referral to Children's Social Care may be considered if there are safeguarding concerns.

Further information on legal interventions can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE Sept 2024 [Working together to improve attendance](#)

Two Rivers High School will already have attempted to provide support that avoids such action being taken and will continue to engage with families both during and after any legal action has commenced. Such action is the final resort undertaken by the Local Authority and it is a legal requirement.

Two Rivers High School will make every effort to successfully reintegrate students at any stage prior to, during or following legal proceedings and we will work in partnership with parents/carers and all involved parties to bring about a positive outcome.

General Absences

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

In the event of an unavoidable absence, parents/carers are asked to contact the school before 8:40am on 01827 426124 (option 1) and stating:

- The name of the person calling
- Student's name
- Reason for absence

A telephone call to the number above or a Weduc message to the office clearly stating your child's name, date of absence and reason for absence, is required for each day your child is unable to attend.

Should the absence reach five or more days, we will require medical evidence to authorise such a prolonged period of time.

Office staff will make efforts to contact the parents/carers of any student who is absent if there has been no information received during the morning. Should no reason for absence have been ascertained, a member of staff may complete a home visit to gain the reason for the absence. A home visit may also be completed should the school receive any other information or the staff are concerned about the student's absence from school.

If there is no response to the text message and no explanation is received upon the child's return to school or within two weeks from an absence, the Attendance Lead will attempt to contact parents/carers to seek explanation for the absence. If this is not successful a letter requesting information will be sent to the parent/carer. The student's absence will be marked as UNAUTHORISED until an acceptable reason for the absence has been provided.

Lateness

All students should be on site for 8:50am.

Morning registration closes at 9:00am.

Arrival to the form group after 9:00am will be considered as late and students will receive a late mark on the register (L).

The registers close at 9:30am. Students arriving after this time will be marked as 'Late After Register Closes' (U) and will be considered unauthorised, unless there is an acceptable reason verified by the parent/carer.

Students arriving by contracted transport will be marked present but are required to sign in at reception. This may be done by a member of the office staff.

If persistent lateness is deemed an issue the Attendance Lead will become involved and actions may be taken to overcome any barriers. Ultimately,

continued unauthorised lateness could result in statutory action being taken by the Local Authority.

Absence for Medical Appointments

Where possible, doctors and dental appointments are made outside of the school day. If this is not possible please inform the School Office as soon as possible. Evidence of the appointment may be required in order for the absence to be authorised. Following this your child's attendance record will be marked as 'M'.

Medical evidence can be in the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or letters signed by medical professionals. If this is not possible, medical evidence cards are available from the School Reception. These can be signed by medical professionals and returned to school and may be used as evidence of appointment.

For ongoing medical appointments, we may request a letter from the medical professional stating that the time off is required.

We will not authorise full day absences unless a reasonable explanation is given. Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure their child comes to school before and returns after an appointment.

Please be aware that students will not be allowed to leave the school site without a parent coming to collect them. If a student is going with another adult, the school will require consent from the parent/carer to authorise the student leaving with the adult.

For ongoing illness parents/carers will be expected to complete a Medical Healthcare Plan.

Planned Absence

The Governors' policy is to fully comply with Government regulations. Statutory guidelines state "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances". Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made in advance of the event and on the 'exceptional leave of absence form'. This can be requested from the School Office. Specific details will be required in order to consider the application. If a leave of absence is granted, then it will be for a fixed period of time. Regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school may be deemed as **unauthorised leave of absence**. An application for a Penalty Notice to be issued from Staffordshire County Council will be made for any unauthorised leave of absence of six or more sessions in the current or previous half term. Should a leave of absence be granted, regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school from the granted period, may be recorded as **unauthorised leave of absence**.

Unauthorised leave of absence presents a risk of a Penalty Notice being issued.

Please note that:

- A parent/carer can receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year;
- The school will follow the Staffordshire County Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices.

If a parent/carer does not apply for leave but we believe that the student has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent/carer to

express our concern. The parent/carer will be expected to provide contrary evidence to support the absence and school should receive this by a specified date. Should the supporting documentation not be provided then the absence will be coded as **unauthorised leave of absence** and the relevant procedures will be applied. Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted.

Any request for planned absences for a student to participate in a sporting or other educational activity, should be made on the 'exceptional leave of absence form'. Details of the request should be outlined.

Monitoring Attendance

Monitoring Attendance

Two Rivers High School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Board.

Analysing Attendance

Two Rivers High School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

Two Rivers High School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Two Rivers High School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

- Severe absentees will be referred to the local authority and statutory action may be taken.

Other Circumstances

School will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc however leave may be granted in emergency (e.g bereavement).

School Attendance Targets for Two Rivers High School

The attendance target for Two Rivers High School for the academic year 2023_2024 **92%**

Persons responsible for attendance

Mr T Silk (Assistant Headteacher – Attendance Lead)

Mrs S Howard (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Mrs L Morris (Attendance Office Administrator)

Summary

Two Rivers High School has a duty to publish attendance figures to parents/carers and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. We remain committed to working together for the benefit of our learners.

c) Two Rivers Primary School

Procedures

Two Rivers Primary School applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- 1) LATE ARRIVAL** - If a child is late arriving in school (e.g. medical appointment), the parent or carer bringing the child in must speak to a member of staff upon arrival to ensure that we are aware of their child's presence in school. The pupil **MUST** be signed in at reception by a member of staff. This ensures we meet health and safety requirements e.g. in the unlikely event of a fire. It is helpful if parents/carers can inform school in advance of scheduled appointments that will result in an absence or late arrival. Lateness can be classed as unauthorised in some situations therefore, it is important that parents/carers keep the school well informed to help maintain accurate records. In order to comply with Department of Education regulations the school closes morning registration at 9.30am. Arrival to the class after this time will result in the pupil receiving a late mark on the registers (L). Arriving after this time will result in the pupil receiving a code U or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

- 2) TERM-TIME HOLIDAY REQUESTS** – Parents need to be aware that the school is not able to authorise holidays unless exceptional circumstances have been identified. In order for the Headteacher/Attendance Lead to consider the request parents are required to fill in the appropriate form with as much notice as possible before planned holidays. The form can be obtained from the school's office. This must be handed into school at least 2 weeks (if possible) before the holiday.

- 3) ATTENDANCE** - In the event of an unavoidable absence, parents are asked to contact the school on the **FIRST** day of absence by telephone 01827 426123 giving the reason for non-attendance. Additionally, a note can be provided to school at the time a pupil returns following a short period of absence. This note must be sent to the school office. Regular contact will be required for extended periods of absence as school is required to keep the Local Support Team updated.

At Two Rivers Primary School we will call daily to check non-attendance of pupils where parents have not informed us of the absence. This will be recorded on SIMS/Arbor.

School has a legal DUTY to inform the Local Support Team (LST) where cases of '**UNAUTHORISED**' absences of 10 days or more occur. Likewise, school has to disclose irregular attendance, persistent lateness or cases where attendance falls below 90%. School is also required to provide an explanation for all such absences (where known) and evidence of action taken to secure information and/or provide support to the family.

Attendance Support Procedures - where appropriate:

Stage 1 – if, where appropriate, a pupil's attendance falls below 90% parents will receive a telephone call, home visit or letter with an invitation to a dialogue with the school in order to improve the attendance.

Stage 2 – if, where appropriate, there is no improvement in the attendance, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Lead and VIP Education to discuss further support and actions. At this stage the school may decide to only authorise the absence when we receive a medical evidence.

Stage 3 – should the absences remain at the level - below target - and no improvements have been noted the school will invite parents to a formal meeting with the Attendance Lead and VIP Education to discuss further support and actions if necessary.

In the absence of relevant information regarding poor attendance, school may take advice on further action to be taken. School may also undertake a review of the placement, if it felt that attendance elsewhere would be in the child's best interests and this is done with the full knowledge of parents/carers.

Every 4-6 weeks cases are reviewed and if no resolution is forthcoming other action will be considered e.g. continued input with targets and/or agreements drafted or referral on to another service/agency for input/support or investigation of statutory action. This may also include the

Local Support Team (LST) issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice, where earlier interventions have failed to secure regular attendance of the child. Fixed Penalty Notices are decided and acted upon by the LST and school is required to provide details of absences and interventions. The legal process is managed by the LST and no funds secured by the process are received by the school. Once a case reaches this stage, legal interventions are outside the remit of the school.

Prior to a Penalty Notice being issued, a warning letter will be sent to parents/carers by the LST who will monitor attendance over the following 20 days. No action will be taken if there are no further **UNAUTHORISED** absences during that period. However, parents may be liable to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice (currently £60) if unauthorised absences occur. Failure to pay within 28-days means the penalty value will increase. Cases are then brought before the Court by the LST if payments are not made. In such cases, parents/carers may be liable to pay any further court costs. Again, school is not involved in this process other than by providing information as required by law.

The LST may undertake further legal action in the event of unauthorised absences continuing. This can result in a prosecution which carries a fine of up to £2500 and can attract a custodial sentence. Any fines paid become 'public funds' i.e. payable to the Court and there is no financial advantage to school.

Two Rivers Primary School will already have attempted to provide support that avoids such action being taken and will continue to engage with families both during and after any legal action has commenced. Such action is the final resort undertaken by the LST and it is a legal requirement.

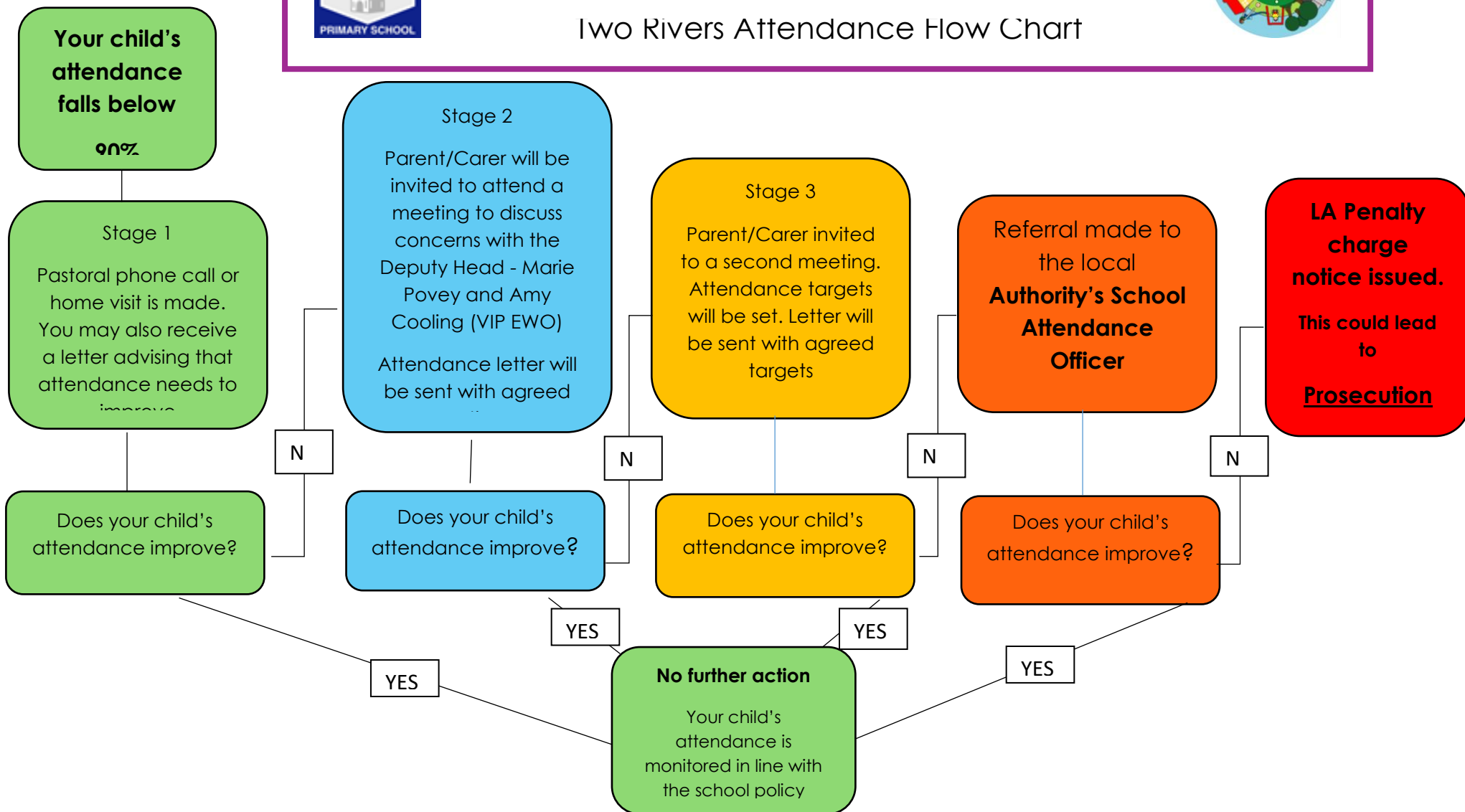
TWO RIVERS PRIMARY SCHOOL WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SUCCESSFULLY REINTEGRATE PUPILS AT ANY STAGE PRIOR TO, DURING OR FOLLOWING LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AND WE WILL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND ALL INVOLVED PARTIES TO BRING ABOUT A POSITIVE OUTCOME.



Two Rivers Attendance target is 95%



Two Rivers Attendance Flow Chart



XXX Term Attendance Report

Attendance Colour Codes

97% - 100%

WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the Green Group you have been absent for less than 6 days in the whole year or you may have attended

90% - 96%

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!

If you are in the Yellow Group you are missing between

Less than 90%

PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 21 days of learning in the school year.

Your child is in the **Red Band**. Remember to continue to keep us informed about absences – if you need some support with attendance, please contact Marie.

This is a terms achievement; let's work together to make it even better next term!

XXX Term Attendance Report

Attendance Colour Codes

97% - 100%

WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the Green Group, you have been absent for less than 6 days in the whole year or you may have attended

90% - 96%

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!

If you are in the Yellow Group, you are missing between

Less than 90%

PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 21 days of learning in the school year.

Well done! Your child is in the **Yellow Band. Remember to continue to keep us informed about absences – if you need some support with attendance, please contact Marie.**

This is a terms achievement; let's try to make it even better next term!

XXX Term Attendance Report

Attendance Colour Codes

97% - 100%

WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the Green Group, you have been absent for less than 6 days in the whole year or you may have attended

90% - 96%

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!

If you are in the Yellow Group, you are missing between

Less than 90%

PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 21 days of learning in the school year.

Your child is in the **Green Band.**

This is a terms achievement; Fantastic well done.

Remember to continue to keep us informed about absences – if you need some support with attendance, please contact Marie.

d) Wightwick Hall School

At Wightwick Hall School, we recognise that regular school attendance is essential if children and young people are to achieve their full potential – at school and in later life. We recognise the clear links between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing, so are therefore committed to supporting our students, and their families, in ensuring that they attend school regularly and consistently, both during their compulsory school career (to Year 11), and beyond (post-16).

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial to ensure safeguarding procedures are in place for children, for data analysis and to support statutory intervention, if necessary.

The register is a legal document and therefore must be kept accurately and in accordance with legislation.

Every half a day of absence from school (known as a session) is marked by the school as either authorised or unauthorised, as detailed in the main policy.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will be likely to have a detrimental impact on your child's education and the school may follow formal attendance processes if a child is classed as persistently absent.

Procedures

If your child is absent from school you must:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:30am
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8:30am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible, and provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

School contact details for absence as follows:

Via telephone: School office on 01902 761889 (lines open at 8.00am, but messages can be left before then.)

Via email: attendance@wightwickhall.staffs.sch.uk

If your child is absent, we will:

- Contact you on the first and every subsequent day of absence if we have not heard from you. Contact will be via telephone in the first instance, but may also be followed up by text or email.
- Record all attempts to make contact on Arbor for evidence.
- Inform the senior leader responsible for attendance and the designated safeguarding lead if we are concerned about a reason for absence.

If we are unable to make contact with a parent/guardian, we will:

- Attempt to call the emergency contacts listed for your child, in line with our Missing Child reasonable enquiries process.
- Consider a home visit being made, either by ourselves, or our Education Welfare service, VIP Education, in the interests of safeguarding
- Make a referral to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be “missing from education.”

Medical or Dental Appointments

We understand that occasional absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment may be unavoidable. For this reason, medical and dental appointments will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments, which can be sent via the attendance email address, or presented at the school office.

We do however politely request that parents/carers make all medical appointments out of school hours where possible.

Requests for leave of absence (Exceptional Circumstances)

The law is very clear that you are not entitled to take your child on holiday during term time, and you are likely to be referred for legal action if you choose to do this.

The law also makes clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are “exceptional circumstances”.

A leave of absence will not be granted in term time unless the reasons are deemed exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or his/her designate (not the Local Authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing to the school.

Procedure for Requesting a Planned Absence:

We will not authorise any leave of absence requests unless the circumstances are granted as exceptional. If you need to request this, please make your request, in writing, with at least two weeks' notice. Requests can be given directly to the school office or sent via email to the attendance email address. A leave of absence form is available upon request from the school office.

There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider requests for leave of absences and either authorise or unauthorise the leave of absence request. A letter or email confirming this will be sent to the parent/carer.

Where a parent/carer removes a child from school when the application for leave was refused, or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested from the Local Authority.

Other Absences

Other absences from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision on whether they are to be authorised or unauthorised will be made by the Headteacher. This decision is final.

Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

We share information and work collaboratively with local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, and other schools where there are safeguarding concerns.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report. During the year, parents will be contacted if there concerns about their child's attendance.

Monitoring

Attendance data will be analysed on a fortnightly basis to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include students with: incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; persistent lateness; periods of extended absence. If concerns are raised by this analysis, parent discussions will occur, through telephone calls to the parents/carers (made by school staff, or our Education Welfare service, VIP Education, or through formal letters. The School reserves the right to issue fixed penalty notices to parents.

Improving Attendance

If we are concerned about your child's attendance, we will:

- Make contact informally (via your child's Form Tutor in the first instance, usually) where there are initial attendance concerns.
- Write to you if your child's attendance is an ongoing concern, falls below 90% (or what is deemed acceptable for your child's specific circumstances) or where punctuality is a concern.
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with a member of school staff, our Education Welfare officer, or our senior leader responsible for attendance, if absences persist and attendance does not improve.
- Work with you to create a personalised Support Plan to identify any barriers to attendance, and look at how we support you to overcome them.
- Set an individual attendance target (based on sessions rather than percentages) that considers the identified barriers to attendance, and that will support the attendance improvement.
- Agree reasonable review dates and conduct regular monitoring reviews, until school are satisfied with the attendance improvement.
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services where appropriate.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance does not improve satisfactorily, despite the above interventions.

Our aim is to work with you to address any reason for the absence and address issues early. We hope this early intervention will ensure that any issues are addressed quickly and successfully, without the need to escalate matters to the Local Authority.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, you as the parent/carer, and your child. If as a parent/carer, you think your child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with you and your family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We have a specialist Outreach Teaching Assistant in school, as well as access to outside agencies who can help, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, Child and Family Support Workers or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting to consider what is working well and what needs to improve.

We understand that some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other specific vulnerabilities.

However, high expectations of attendance remain, and we will work with families and students to support improved attendance, whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments, short-term supportive arrangements and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

Local Authority Attendance Support Services

As a school, we are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority has an Education Welfare team who work with schools, families, and other professionals, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

As a parent/carer, you are expected to work with the school and the Local Authority to address any attendance concerns. You should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance. The school will endeavour, where possible, to solve all attendance issues informally, before going down a formal/legal route.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Students who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

How we manage lateness:

- For all students, the school day starts at 8.50am, but to mitigate for transport often arriving earlier, students are permitted into school from 8.30am.
- Morning registers are taken from 8.55am up to 9.20am. Students arriving between 9.00am and 9.30am will receive a Late (L) mark.

- All students arriving after 9.20am MUST report to the school office before making their way to their classroom, so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Students arriving after 9.30am will be officially absent for the morning session. In accordance with Department for Education Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, which is when the morning register closes, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site (U), but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- Afternoon registers are taken from 1.15pm to 1.30pm. Registration closes at 1.30pm, after which time students will receive a U mark, as explained above.
- All students arriving to school after 1.30pm MUST report to the school office before making their way to their classroom, so that their attendance can be recorded.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding persistent lateness.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child is persistently late, you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff, or the senior leader responsible for attendance, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time.

The Senior Leader responsible for attendance in our school is:

Miss Gina Higgs, Assistant Headteacher

01902 761889

c/o office@wightwickhall.staffs.sch.uk

The first point of contact for parents/carers regarding day-to-day attendance matters is:

Miss Nic Smith, Attendance Administrator

01902 761889

attendance@wightwickhall.staffs.sch.uk; n.smith@wightwickhall.staffs.sch.uk

Excellent attendance is everyone's responsibility and working together means issues are identified and addressed quickly and effectively. Excellent attendance means your child will achieve their best educational outcomes.

If you would like to discuss anything in this policy, please don't hesitate to make contact with us at school.