PRIMARY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Swale ACADEMIES TRUST

Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

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Roles and contact Details		
Role	**Name**	**Contact details**
Attendance Admin/Officer	Deborah Jensen	01622 752161 sbps_office@swale.at
Attendance Champion / Senior Lead (DSL)	Mathew Currie	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Nicola Higham	
Local Authority (LA) Education Welfare Service	Lauren Ferrara Kent County Council (KCC) education services	03000 421681 Lauren.Ferrara@kent.gov.uk

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1. Aims

1.1 It is the aim of **South Borough Primary School** that pupils should experience a vibrant inclusive community that transforms lives and broadens horizons through excellent teaching and learning. Our mission is to inspire children to flourish and achieve their best. The Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.

1.2 We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos. We value relationship-based practice that achieves good attendance, including:

- Promoting regular attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Recognising and celebrating individual successes.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Taking early action to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Barriers such as poor attendance will hinder,delay or stop their progress.

Studies have shown that frequent absence from school can have a serious negative impact on your child's education. There is a perception from both students and parents that 90% attendance is good, however 90% attendance is the equivalent of one and half days off each week.

1.3 Improving attendance is everyone's business. This policy should be read alongside the annual review of the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This policy is included in the required reading list for all new employees. All team members know the importance of good attendance and support the whole-school approach by communicating consistent high expectations.

2. Legislation and Guidance

2.1 This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibilities responsibility measures Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of Education Act 1996 (legislation.gov.uk)
- Part 3 of Education Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk)
- Part 7 of Education and Inspections Act 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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(legislation.gov.uk)

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

2.2 In addition, this policy incorporates the following guidance from the DfE:

- Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Keeping children safe in education 2025 - GOV.UK

3. School Times

	Start Time	End Time	Late Pick Up Arrangements
Nursery (AM session)	8:40am	11:40am	Children will be kept by Nursery staff. Parents will be charged an additional 1 hour fee for this plus £3 pick up fee.
Nursery (PM session)	12:30pm	3:30pm	
Reception	8:40am	3:15pm	If not collected by 3:30pm, children will be sent to Stay N Play which will be chargeable in line with Teamtheme's terms and conditions.
Years 1 & 2			
Years 3,4,5,6			

All absences should be reported to the school office no later than 9:00am on each day of absence by either telephoning the school on 01622 752161 or emailing sbps_office@swale.at

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Local Authority

Local authorities and other groups that help children play a critical role in assisting students to overcome challenges and ensuring all children can get the full-time education they deserve. Local authorities help families and schools get the extra support they need in the short term to overcome challenges. They also work regionally to address challenges in the long term. Because local authorities differ so much in size, organisation, and demographics, the specifics of how attendance services are delivered should be determined locally to meet the needs of students, parents, and schools.

As a minimum, however, all local authorities are expected to:

Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.

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Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):

- **Communication and advice:** regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
- **Targeting Support Meetings:** hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
- **Multi-disciplinary support for families**: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
- **Legal intervention:** take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- **Monitor and improve** the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School.

Role of Governance

The Board of Trustees, through the Education and Standards Committee, are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across our policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

The Trust Executive Team are responsible for:

- regularly monitoring attendance data, providing challenge and support to the school as necessary

The Local Governing Body are responsible for:

- Receiving attendance data and information via the termly Headteacher's report, providing scrutiny and escalating concerns to the Trust Executive and/or Board of Trustees as necessary.
- Monitoring the application of the Attendance Policy
- Providing parental and community feedback to the school on the impact and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

Role of The School

1. to register the children promptly and accurately;
2. to record absence appropriately, including signing in and out during school hours;
3. to record as late, pupils who arrive after 8:50am. and before the close of registers at 9:20am (please note the close of registers must be thirty minutes from arrival start time);
4. to record as unauthorised absences, pupils who arrive after the registers close;
5. to record as late, pupils who arrive ten minutes after class afternoon registration time;
6. to check registers daily for first day absence;
7. to telephone those parents who have not contacted the school by the required time on the first day of absence, priority being given to:
   - children on the Protection Register or involved with Social Services such as LAC or those with Child Protection Plans;
   - children in families where there is a particular concern;
   - children, whose parents or carers are normally fastidious in making contact.

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8. to send an email home that day to parents who cannot be contacted, to ask why their child is absent.
9. to keep records of all telephone calls on BROMCOM and keep all contact concerning absence;
10. to monitor regularly absence and lateness, to look for patterns and take appropriate action;
11. to involve appropriate external agency if there are any concerns regarding absence or punctuality;
12. to obtain details of telephone contacts for all pupils and to ensure that records are updated regularly by writing to parents to remind them of their responsibilities, whilst requesting current contact information. An emergency telephone number must be recorded for every pupil;
13. to send reminders regarding absence and punctuality on the school's regular communication to parents/carers;
14. to raise concerns regarding absence at parent consultation meetings, or sooner if necessary;
15. to discourage the practice of taking children out of school for odd days and holidays;
16. to report all authorised and unauthorised absence on the child's annual report;
17. to publish attendance data to parents (and individual pupil attendance data on annual school reports);
18. to set attendance targets annually for the whole school as well as individual pupils, and monitor.
19. to adhere to the mandatory requirement to **notify the local authority when a pupil is recorded with code I (illness) and is expected to miss 15 days or more, either consecutively or cumulatively, in a school year.**
20. to inform a pupil's **social worker and/or youth offending team (YOT) worker** of any unexplained absences.

The school will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which cannot be arranged out of school time.

Role of Parents and Carers

- Parents/ carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and work with the staff in resolving any problems together;
- Ensure that the aim is for their children to achieve 100% school attendance;
- Ensure that pupils are on the premises between 8:40 and 8:50am and not before.
- The school front gate opens at 8:40am.
- Take children who are late (8:50am onwards) to the main entrance to sign in;
- Collect children promptly at the end of the school day, which finishes at 3:15pm. After this time, children are the responsibility of their parents or carers;
- Collect children promptly from after school clubs;
- Ensure that the school has current parent/carers and emergency contact telephone numbers and addresses.

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5. Recording Attendance

5.1 Attendance Register

Attendance documents issued to parents / carers are saved directly to the pupil record on the school's Management Information System (BromCom) along with other relevant information to update the current attendance status of our children.

We follow our Trust safeguarding processes for recording information or incidents of a safeguarding nature. This can include information regarding poor attendance.

Expectations on schools:

- Keep registers electronically
- Preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years
- Use the revised attendance and absence codes
- Share the school's daily attendance data directly with the DfE.

Maintained schools and non-maintained special schools **must** (and other schools are expected to):

- Only grant leaves of absence for specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the 2024 attendance regulations
- All schools can also grant absence for education off site.
- Where applicable, schools also expected to report unexplained absences to the pupil's youth offending team worker.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

5.2. Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on each day of an unplanned absence by **9:00am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school attendance office.

Every half-day absence from our school has to be classified by the attendance officer(not by parents/carers) as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If no explanation is received absences will not be authorised.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified.

5.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Please see above for evidence requests if the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the appointment.

If a pupil is present at registration but has a medical appointment during the session in question, no absence needs to be recorded for that session.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed (from 8:50 to 9:20am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)

After the register has closed (from 9:20am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed this will (be) an unauthorised absence unless prior details about the absence have been shared and authorised by the Headteacher.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend the school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on each morning of an unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a welfare visit at the pupil's home address, seek advice from Children's Social Care and/or contact the police.
- To further ensure safeguarding actions are taken where necessary. If the absence

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continues, the school will consider referral to an education welfare officer and/or Children's Social Care, or any other relevant services.

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will share attendance information frequently with parents/carers, for example at each parents evening and on school reports. We will provide parents/carers with a copy of their child's attendance summary for the academic year in Term 6.

If parents/carers 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 pupil's attendance drops below 96% (this equates to 7 missed school days in a year) the school may contact parents/carers to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

Parents/carers to be advised that we do make referrals to the Local Authority for legal action such as Court Judgments or Fixed Penalty notices.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances', a leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, in accordance with local and national guidance, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

- The school will not authorise any leave of absence in term-time unless satisfied the reason for absence is exceptional.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. This includes consultation with other team members as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If Illness occurs either side of unauthorised or authorised leave we will NOT authorise those sick days. We may also require evidence of passports, tickets and original booking of leave along with medical evidence for illness.
- Parents/carers are asked not to make plans to take their child out of school without making a request to the school first.
- Any request should be submitted at least 4 weeks before the absence, via the Withdrawal from Learning request Google Form.
- Parents may be required to provide the school with additional evidence in order to support a leave of absence request.
- The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence cannot be granted.
- The absence should be for the shortest time possible – if an absence is agreed, the Headteacher will decide how many days of absence will be authorised. If the pupil is

absent for more days than were authorised by the school, the remaining days will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

- Any other absence such as trips and visits which have not been agreed in writing by the school, will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents/carers should be aware (that) an unauthorised absence may result in a Penalty Notice or Prosecution. See 5.2 for more information.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail) If your child is leaving the school for an illness they MUST be collected.
- Religious observance. This is '*a day exclusively set apart for religious observance'* when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong, to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. The school may seek further advice from the parent's religious body regarding the absence. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day as authorised on this basis; the rest of the request would be considered as a leave of absence.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school.
- Suspension. When a pupil has been suspended or excluded from the school.
- Taking part in a regulated performance
- A temporary reduced timetable
- Exceptional circumstances that have been agreed by the Headteacher.

6.2 Unauthorised Absence:

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, or where no reason has been provided. Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. See 5.3 for further details.

Unauthorised absence includes, but is not limited to:

- Absences that have not been explained within 5 days of occurrence.
- Parent/carer's keeping children off school unnecessarily (persistent nonspecific illness eg. poorly/unwell/headache/sore throat/period pains).
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason (distance taken into consideration).
- Arriving at the school after the register has closed (unless by prior authorisation).
- Family trips and excursions, including birthdays and weddings.
- Moving house
- Inadequate uniform
- Family Holidays in term time (see details in section 5.1)
- Absences due to an illness of a family member or sibling.

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NB: Schools will only accept a child's medical unfit for school letter from a consultant of which the child is under their care and not a GP statutory sick note which is aimed for adults and their employees. This is an official document for the department of working pensions (DWP). Provision of medical certificates for school children is not part of a GP's responsibility, and declining to provide this certification is in accordance with the government policy to reduce GP bureaucracy and reserve valuable GP time for clinical care.

Parents/carers should seek advice and support from the school when experiencing barriers in securing regular attendance.

If the school has cause for concern regarding the reason for a pupil's absence, we may seek additional information or evidence from parents/carers regarding the absence, and make an outreach visit to the family home in order to verify the reason and offer additional support. If the reason cannot be verified and the school has cause to believe the reason given for absence may not be genuine, parents/carers may be asked to provide satisfactory proof of the reason before the school authorises the absence. If satisfactory proof is not provided, the school may record the absence as unauthorised.

7 Legal interventions

Notice to Improve and Penalty Notices

A notice to improve will be issued if the child's absence has met the DfE thresholds including the 10 in 10 absence threshold.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

Where a Notice to Improve is used, it should be issued in line with processes set out in the Local Code of Conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school. The Notice to Improve is expected to include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.

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• The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

What sufficient improvement looks like can be decided on a case by case basis taking the individual family's circumstances into account. For some families, no further unauthorised absences will be appropriate, for others some absence may be tolerable if considerable improvement is seen. Details of what sufficient improvement looks like for each case should be made clear in the Notice to Improve.

Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended. For example, a Notice to Improve stated there should be no further unauthorised absences in a 6 week period but the pupil is absent for unauthorised reasons in the first week. The parent should be informed before a penalty notice is issued if it is before the end of the improvement period. Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

• The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
• A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
• A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.

In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions. Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

Cross-border Checks

In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years, an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous school was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years. These checks can be made by the school and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case. All local authorities are expected to have an email mailbox to make these enquiries

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as easy as possible, where possible this should be in the form of crossborder.penaltynotice@laname.gov.uk

8. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

One of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, the school strives to provide a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents/carers. The school will regularly reward good and improved attendance with different incentives and initiatives.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality the school aims to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers, pupils, and team members.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the wider family.

9 Attendance improvement

9.1 Improving Attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and must be a whole school approach. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that the school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils feel safe, happy and able to learn.

9.2 Attendance Management

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex and are often specific to individual pupils and families. All school-led interventions are bespoke to the individual needs of pupils and will incorporate a holistic and coordinated package of support to increase the chance of successful outcomes. This approach ensures that pupils and cohorts with additional vulnerabilities are effectively supported to reduce absenteeism. School-led interventions will always incorporate regular opportunities for pupil and parent voice.

10 School Levels of Support and Intervention

10.1 Stages of Support and Intervention

The school operates a tiered level of support measures for families. From a universal and preventive approach for all pupils that can escalate to early help support within the school team and by local partners. If early-help is unsuccessful, or not engaged with, this will lead to targeted and legal intervention. See 5.3.

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Stage 1 **Trigger Points** **(Preventative)**	At this stage parents / carers will be informed by phone call and / or letter that their child's attendance is beginning to decline and will highlight the importance of continued good attendance in school and offer support. When attendance begins to decline, and then ongoing, a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team (YOT) worker will be notified of any unexplained absences.
Stage 2 **Trigger Points** **(Emerging Risk)**	At this stage, Letter 2 is sent home which invites parents/carers to attend an Attendance Clinic at the school or a Telephone Appointment to support the family. After the date of the Clinic, a "Follow Up" letter is sent out which either confirms their attendance at the Clinic, what discussion took place and any support offered or if they did not attend, what will happen if their child's attendance drops to the third stage. At this stage, all future absences, without medical evidence, are marked as 'unauthorised'. Attendance contracts may be put in place and reviewed regularly.
Stage 3 **Trigger Points** **(Vulnerable)**	At this stage, Letter 3 is sent home which encourages parents/carers to attend a meeting with the ***Senior Attendance Champion*** at a given time to discuss their child's attendance and to complete a personalised attendance improvement plan (attendance contract) if not already in place, that addresses the causes and symptoms of declining attendance. A notice to improve commences at this point if appropriate (10 unauthorised absences in 10 weeks). As part of the Attendance Contract, parents will be expected to attend and be part of the graduated assess-plan-do-review process. At this stage the local authority will be notified when a pupil is recorded with code I (Illness) and has missed or on track to miss 15 days or more, either consecutively or cumulatively, in a school year.
Stage 4 **Trigger Points** **(Legal Intervention)**	Letter 4 is sent home which explains that despite the school's intervention and support and attempting to engage with parents/carers several times in order to support with improvements in attendance, that there still does not seem to be any significant improvement with their child's attendance. The letter explains that it has now become necessary for the school to refer their concerns to the Local Authority education service. This could lead to legal intervention. The designated safeguarding lead will work with the attendance team members to assess risk of educational neglect. Case evaluations may lead to a referral into Children's Social Care.

10.2 Trigger Points By Days Each Term

The table below identifies the **number of days of absence** that will trigger each stage of the attendance policy for each term:

Term	Stage 1 Trigger Points	Stage 2 Trigger Points	Stage 3 Trigger Points	Stage 4 Trigger Points
Term 1	4	7	15	23
Term 2	5	8	16	24
Term 3	6	9	17	25
Term 4	7	10	18	26
Term 5	8	11	19	27
Term 6	9	12	20	28

11 Monitoring and Analysing Attendance

The school team will:

- Monitor individual attendance and absence data weekly at a minimum, using our INSIGHT attendance tracker templates to identify pupils at Stage 1,2,3 and 4 trigger points in order to implement early interventions and relevant actions.
- Identify through data analysis, any groups of pupils' whose absences may be a cause for concern. e.g. SEND, EHCP, Pupil Premium, Children in care, Children with a social worker, Young Carers, etc and plan supportive actions.
- Meet weekly to discuss and agree actions for pupils at risk of persistent absenteeism.
- Meet weekly with (the) safeguarding team to review cases and agree action for pupils who are persistently or severely absent.
- Regularly report attendance data, analysis and impact of interventions to the local governing board and executive team.
- Use comparative data at local, trust, similarly schools and national levels to improve attendance rates so they align with at least the Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE).

11.1 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The attendance team will:

- Use data to identify, monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Provide regular updates on attendance improvement data with parents.
- Provide daily attendance data to the DfE.

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12 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously impact 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.

Attendance	**90%**	**85%**	**80%**	**75%**	**50%**
Days Missed	19	29	38	57	95
Lessons Missed	Approx 95	Approx 145	Approx 190	Approx 285	Approx 475

To reduce the impact of persistent and severe absenteeism the school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Prioritise intensive support to overcome barriers in attendance.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Complete an Attendance Improvement Agreement with the family or attendance contract/ Notice to Improve. This will include an action plan, parent and pupil voice, target setting and details of any reasonable adjustments.
- Facilitate access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

12.1 Mental and Physical Health Conditions

The school will work with families to assess and implement any necessary reasonable adjustments for pupils who experience challenges that have a substantial and/or long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out regular daily activities.

Reasonable adjustments may include changes to the physical environment, curriculum or the way information is presented, as well as providing additional equipment, or tailored services.

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable to (for) their age and ability. If the school is unable to provide a pupil with full-time education due to their individual needs, we will work with the pupil, family, and other agencies to create an arrangement that is in the best interests of the pupil.

We will work in partnership with local medical and mental health services to ensure consistency of approach. When a pupil has an identified medical condition, it may be necessary to create an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) to support them at school. IHCPs are developed in partnership between the school, parents, pupils, and any relevant healthcare professionals who can advise on the child's case. The IHCP enables the school to effectively keep pupils safe, well and involved at school by providing clear information on what needs to be done when, and by whom.

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13. Part-time timetables

Temporary part-time timetables must only be used in 'very exceptional circumstances and must not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

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 some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes

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.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

14. Safeguarding and Attendance

14.1 Safeguarding

The school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of its standard procedures. However, it is recognised 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, Local Authority Procedures and the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding and welfare cases to Children's Social Care. The school has a duty to inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when they cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

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The school will regularly liaise with providers of Alternative Provision (AP) to ensure that attendance records are accurately maintained and any absences and/or safeguarding concerns are effectively shared. We will coordinate any required follow up actions in conjunction with the AP. All AP providers agree to implement our school child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures.

We recognise that safeguarding is not a discrete area of work: there is a safeguarding dimension to almost every area of school practice. As part of our whole school approach, and to ensure a holistic view of all children, we have structures and systems in place, such as scheduled meetings and shared databases, to ensure that the DSL and wider safeguarding team has oversight of areas of school organisation which may not fall directly within their remit, but may impact upon effective safeguarding. These areas include behaviour, attendance, medical needs/first aid, SEND and bullying. Information from these areas will be factored into safeguarding decision making for individual children so that their needs are considered holistically.

14.2 Welfare and Outreach Visits

If a pupil does not attend the school regularly, team members may make welfare visits to the pupil's (their) home to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers as part of the school's safeguarding and attendance processes. If team members are unable to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the school with relevant information.

Welfare visits do not need to be agreed or prearranged and can be at any point during school hours by any members of the school team.

The school will offer outreach visits at the family home if an attendance meeting at the school cannot be facilitated. The rationale and purpose for an outreach visit will be clearly communicated in advance with pupils and parents.

Details of welfare and outreach visits are recorded on a pupil's child protection file.

All welfare and outreach visits will be subject to a regularly reviewed Risk Assessment.

14.3 Children Missing Education

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and Local Authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent

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from the school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

We will notify the Local Authority when we are removing a pupils' name from the school admission register. We will also notify Children's Social Care if we have any safeguarding concerns.

14.4 Leaving Our School

We are always sad to say goodbye to our students. If a student is leaving our school because they are relocating or they are changing schools, please inform us.

We need the student's new address and the details of the new school, including school name, address and start date.

This safeguarding procedure means that we know the student is still in education, safe and well. If a parent/carer decides to Electively Home Educate their child, it is essential that they inform the school in writing including the correct terminology from the DFE guidance. This can be via an email to sbps_office@swale.at

15. Policy Review

15.1 This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with that policy review cycle.

15.2 The Senior Attendance Lead/Champion will ensure that team members are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures during the academic year.

15.3 Policies and Procedures

- Trust First Aid and Medical Policy
- Trust Complaints policy and procedure
- Trust Equality Objectives
- Trust Health and Safety Policy and other linked policies and risk assessments
- Trust ICT Acceptable Use Policy (staff and pupils)
- Trust Offsite Activities Policy
- Trust Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- Trust Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Trust Attendance Management Guide
- school Preventing Bullying policy
- school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- school Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing from Education Procedures

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Appendix 1: DfE Attendance and Absence Codes

Summary of Attendance Codes and Meanings

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 a pupil should be recorded as present or absent in the Attendance Register

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non –compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admissions register at the time (exception boarder)

Full information contained in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the Statutory Attendance Guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024

1. **If a pupil is present in school the following codes from table 1 should be used**

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
/	Present at school AM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
****	Present at school PM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrived before the register was closed.	Attending (present)

2. **If a pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place other than school for any of the following reasons the relevant code from table 2 should be used.**

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
K	Attending Education provision arranged the LA	The nature of the provision must also be recorded. Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
V	Attending an Educational visit or trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Code V can only be used if the pupil is present at the visit.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

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P	Participating in a Sporting Activity P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity	P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; ● the activity is of an educational nature; ● the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and ● the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
W	Attending Work Experience	W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA In session for which it is recorded The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; ● the activity is of an educational nature; ● the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and ● the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

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B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA In session for which it is recorded The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; ● the activity is of an educational nature; ● the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and ● The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. As set out in the DfE's guidance on 'Providing remote education'. pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
D	Dual Registered at another school	The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed u	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)

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3. **If a pupil is absent with leave (NB schools not required to follow regulation 11 in granting a leave of absence should still use the relevant code)**

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	Performance licence issued by LA or Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or Justice of peace has given licence for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose	Authorised absence
M	Leave of absence for Medical or dental Appointment	Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with Minimum time necessary Where pupil is absent at registration	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for Interview	Agreement in Advance Application by parent child normally lives with In session absence recorded	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for Studying for public examination		Authorised absence
X	Non – Compulsory School age pupil not required to attend school	For part time attendance Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	Exceptional circumstances If the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time Temporary See Working Together to improve attendance	Authorised Absence

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C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	Exceptional circumstances No blanket approach School discretion Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.	Authorised absence

4. **Pupil Absent other Authorised reasons**

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.	Authorised absence
R	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.	Authorised Absence
E	Suspended or Permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education	Authorised Absence

5. **Pupil Absent – Unavoidable Cause**

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Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if— (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil under section 508B(1) of the 1996 Act(13) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil because of section 508E(2)(c) of the 1996 Act(14) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and— (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home; (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school; and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home.	**Not a possible attendance**
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available	**Not a possible attendance**
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency	**Not a possible attendance**
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those partsf of the premises that remain in use.	**Not a possible attendance**
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.	**Not a possible attendance**

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Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: ● in police detention, ● remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or ● detained under a sentence of detention. A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day	**Not a possible attendance**
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: ● contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or • prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	**Not a possible attendance**
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6))	**Not a possible attendance**

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6. Absent for unauthorised reasons

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
G	Holiday not granted by school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.	**Unauthorised absence**
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O	**Unauthorised absence**
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	**Unauthorised absence**
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes	**Unauthorised absence**

<u>Administrative Codes</u>

Code	Meaning	Statistical Value
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	**NOT COLLECTED**
#	Planned whole school closure	**NOT COLLECTED**

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Letter Exemplars

Please note these letters are exemplars and the exact wording and content is subject to change.

Appendix 2 – Late Letters

Late Letter 1

Dear Parent/Carer of_____

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students, we monitor their attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any students whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are therefore writing to you to inform you that XXXXs current number of late sessions is 3.

Being late to school and registration can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year
10 Minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
15 Minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year

Students are expected to arrive at school by 8:40am each day to ensure they are in class for morning registration at 8.50am. At 8.50am the registers close and your child will receive a late mark 'L. We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. Pupils arriving after 9:20am will be marked as a "U" which is an unauthorised absence.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss attendance with anyone please do not hesitate to contact the school attendance team on 01622 752161. Alternatively, we offer an informal 'Attendance Clinic' on a Monday and Thursday morning from 8:50am - 9:30am.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Champion

Draft

Late Letter 2

Dear X

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students, we monitor their attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any students, whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions.

Further to my previous letter dated _____ , we are writing to you as your child has now been late 6 times. This is concerning.

We are closely monitoring your child's attendance and lateness. Any child arriving after 8:50am is given a late mark (L) in the register. Due to ……consistently arriving late, any arrival after 8:50am will now be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U), from the date of this letter. If a child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absences during the period of 10 school weeks due to lateness, we will be requesting that regular meetings or a parent contact be drawn up.

Being late to school and registration can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:
5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year
10 Minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
15 Minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year

If you have any queries or would like to discuss your child's lateness with anyone please do not hesitate to contact me on 01622 752161. Alternatively, we offer an informal 'Attendance Clinic' on a Monday and Thursday morning from 8:50 - 9:30am.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Late Letter 3

Dear X

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students, we monitor their attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any students, whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions.

Further to my previous letters dated……. & ……, we are writing to you as your child has continued to arrive late. This is very concerning.

As you know, we are now recording any arrival after 8:50am as an unauthorised absence. Your child ……..has accrued …… unauthorised absences in the last …… weeks. A further ……. Unauthorised Absences will result in a ….. (Penalty Notice being issued.)
(Education supervision order being enforced by the LA)

If a child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absences during the period of 10 school weeks due to lateness, we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss your child's lateness with anyone please do not hesitate to contact me on 01622 752161. Alternatively, we offer an informal 'Attendance Clinic' on a Monday and Thursday morning from 8:50 - 9:30am.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 4

Dear X

Further to my previous letters, we are writing to you again about your child's persistent lateness. This is concerning.

As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring your child receives an education. The law says that if you do not make sure your children go to school you are guilty of an offence. You can be fined by being issued with a penalty notice, or prosecuted.

It was explained in the previous letters sent that if a pupil arrives at school after the register has closed (8:50am), it is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Ten unauthorised lates will result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

I regret to inform you that since the last letter sent (dated X), your child has accrued ten further unauthorised absences as a result of being late. A Penalty Notice is therefore being issued.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Appendix 3 – Absence Letters

Stage 1 Letter

Dear X,

Re Absence: Pupil Name, Class

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly as it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress. In addition, it is proven that good attendance is linked with academic success.

The school target for attendance is 96%. As a result of the number of days your child has been absent, they are at risk of not achieving this.

We understand that your child's absence may be for a range of reasons including illness but as their target is below school target, we feel it is important to share it with you.

The school actively encourages regular attendance. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the schools responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Please can you speak to your child about the importance of attendance. If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, please do not hesitate to contact the office and make an appointment to see me.

Your child's attendance will now be closely monitored and should further absences occur, then you will be invited in to discuss this further. We may need to consider putting into place an attendance contract to support the attendance of your child/children.

In the meanwhile, I would like to remind you that you have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and that if you fail to do so you may commit an offence – S 444 Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Stage 2 Letter - Invite

Dear X,

Re Absence: Name of Pupil, Class

As you are aware, all schools are having a real focus on attendance as this has such a huge impact on children's learning. As a school, we are following all the Kent guidelines but we are also trying to be proactive in supporting families with any attendance issues before an Attendance Officer becomes involved.

From the start of the Academic year X has missed X days. This means their attendance percentage is presently only X% which is below our school target of 96%.

Please see the charts below for detailed information about your child's attendance and absences. If any absences are due to medical reasons, please ensure you bring relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

At X%, your child is now at risk of becoming considered a 'persistent absentee' by the Department for Education. We are seriously concerned.

Therefore, I would ask that you attend our weekly 'Attendance Clinic' which takes place on Mondays and Thursdays from 8:50-9:30am with Mrs Higham (Family Liaison Officer) This is a supportive meeting which reviews our Attendance Policy and will enable you to honestly discuss any issues or barriers to your child attending school. We will review the attendance contract and want to avoid any Education Supervision Order and any legal routes the LA can take.

Working in partnership with you, the school seeks to understand the difficulties that may be presented and the Attendance Clinic provides the opportunity to determine if the school can do anything further to support.

If you are unable to attend the Attendance Clinic but wish to discuss your concerns and how the school might be able to help, please call me on 01622 752161. I am sure you are aware that it is important that your child maintains regular attendance, as any absence may interrupt their academic progress and may have an effect on friendships. You should also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement.

We look forward to talking with you and working in partnership to see an improvement.

In the meanwhile, I would like to remind you that you have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and that if you fail to do so you may commit an offence – S 444 Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 2 – Follow Up: Attended

Dear X,

As a result of your child missing X days, you were invited to attend an Attendance Clinic. Thank you for attending and / or telephoning me. This is really important as we value our home / school partnership and want to work with you to improve your child's attendance.

The importance of attendance was explained along with what the law says ('education is not an option – it's compulsory'). The need to avoid taking family holidays during term time was discussed and strategies for how parents can help raise their child' attendance were explored.

Thank you for bringing to my attention….

I have now spoken with the Senior Attendance Champion, X, and we have agreed the school will be able to support in the following ways:

XXXXXXXXX

I am sure that X's attendance will continue to improve and that it will not be long before her attendance figure meets our school target of 96%.

Please remember, that if you have any concerns with regards to X's attendance, you are more than welcome to come and discuss them with me.

It was good to speak with you today, thank you once again for attending / calling.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 2 – Follow Up: Did not attend

Dear X,

As a result of your child missing X days, you were invited to attend an Attendance Clinic. It was a shame you chose not to attend.

You were also given the option to telephone to see if there was anything the school could do to support, however to date we have not heard from you in this regard.

The charts below show detailed information about your child's attendance and absences.

It is important that you are aware of what could possibly happen in the future, should your child's attendance continue to fall:

- should your child's attendance slip further, intervention will be necessary by meeting with the school's Attendance Team. They will determine whether or not targets need to be set and if not met, a notice to prosecute will be issued. These will be set in your absence should you choose not to attend.
- if your child's attendance falls further, your child is considered a 'persistent absentee' by the Department for Education and this will remain on your child's school records. The Local Authority will intervene and if necessary, a court appearance and fine may follow.

I am sure that X's attendance will continue to improve and that it will not be long before her attendance figure meets our school target of 96%.

Please remember, that if you have any concerns with regards to X's attendance, you are more than welcome to come and discuss them with me. We are here to support.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Champion

Draft

Stage 3 Letter - Invite

Dear X,

Re Absence: Name of Pupil, Class

I am writing to inform you that X's attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting X's progress and I would like to meet with you.

Should X's attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996, and a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

We need to bring the following to your attention - Local authorities have the power to prosecute:
• Parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order issued by the local authority to require a parent to get their child registered at a named school (under section 443 of the Education Act 1996). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).
• Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
• Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
• Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing
Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

It is requested with urgency, that you attend a meeting to discuss X's attendance.
I would like to meet with you (place) on: DATE/TIME/LOCATION

Please ring the school to confirm that you will be attending on 01622 752161.

During the meeting we will discuss any concerns you may have, so we can continue to support your child in making good progress. We may also set targets in order to avoid further prosecution. I trust that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Stage 3 Letter – Follow Up: Attended

Dear X,

Thank you for attending a meeting with me today with regards to X's attendance. As I explained at the meeting, your child has now missed X days of schooling and is only at X% which is why you were invited to meet with me today.

I was delighted to hear…

I appreciate you sharing with me…

The following actions were agreed:

XXXXXXXXX

I am sure that X's attendance will continue to improve and that it will not be long before her attendance figure improves and even gets closer to 97%, in line with our school and the Government's targets.

Please remember, that if you have any concerns with regards to your child's attendance, you are more than welcome to come and discuss them with me.

It was good to meet with you today, thank you once again for attending,

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 3 – Follow Up: Did Not Attend

Dear X,

WARNING OF POSSIBLE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICE

You were invited by letter dated [date] to attend a meeting on [date]. This was to give you an opportunity to discuss any difficulties you may be experiencing in fulfilling your legal responsibility with regard to school attendance and to discuss how we could support you in this. You did not attend the meeting and no response was received to our invitation.

If you wish for a meeting to be re-scheduled then please contact me on the above number to rearrange at a mutually convenient date and time.

I confirm that I shall monitor [Student's Name] attendance and review this periodically.

This letter is a warning that should [student's name] accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the next 10 school week period we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

If you have any queries, please contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Stage 4 Letter

Dear X,

Re Absence: Name of Pupil, Class

I note that there has been no significant improvement in your child's attendance since our last meeting.

X's attendance for this academic year has fallen to % which means they have missed X days of school. This is a significant concern despite intervention from a range of staff at X School.

Furthermore I have not received any satisfactory explanation for absences.

Children whose attendance is below 90% are noted by the Department for Education as being "persistent absentees," which means that they are recognised as missing school on a regular basis.

Please find your child's Registration Certificate enclosed.

The school has attempted to engage with you several times in order to support improvements in attendance. It has now become necessary to refer the concerns around your child's attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

An Education Welfare Officer will contact you in due course. Should you have anything you wish to discuss concerning this matter, I will continue to be available.

Please contact me on the above number should you require an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

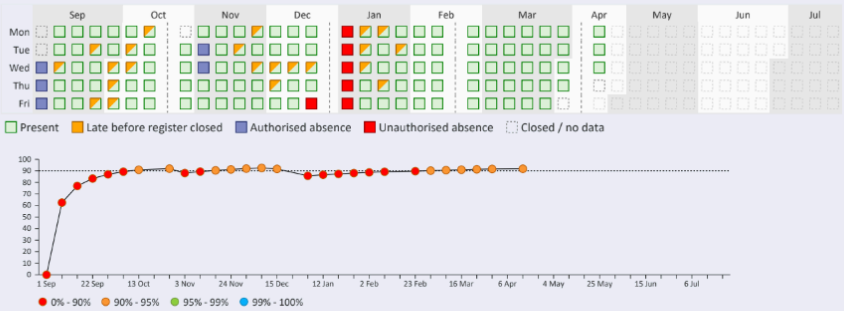
Draft

Appendix 4: Attendance Contract

Attendance Summary

This academic year
(01/09/2025 to 23/04/2026)

57 school days since last absence
10 authorised absences
12 unauthorised absences
11 days missed
22 sessions late before register closed
2 periods of absence due to illness
4 broken weeks



Comparisons

134 days possible (190 last year)
123 days attended (178.5 last year)

11 days missed (11.5 last year)
5 authorised days missed (7 last year)
6 unauthorised days missed (4.5 last year)

91.8% pupil attendance
95.6% school attendance
94.5% local authority attendance
94.8% national attendance

Meeting Lead and Participants

School View - What are our concerns? Why are we putting a plan in place?

Pupil Voice - What is positive about school and what are the challenges?

Parent Voice - What is going well and what are the barriers?

Assessments

Agreed Support and Actions

Support from services outside of school

Additional Comments

Parental consent to information sharing: I/we understand that information about me/us has been and will continue to be collected by schools and local authority services (where relevant) to assess and provide appropriate support. I understand the school and/or local authority may also use this information for monitoring and safeguarding purposes and information could be shared with external agencies and service providers, without parental consent.

A copy of this attendance contract will be circulated to all participants present as well as any relevant professionals unable to attend the meeting. As stated in part (7), section 19 of the ***Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003*** a parenting contract must be signed by parent(s) and signed on behalf of the governing body, therefore this contract may be viewed by the chair of governors. Additional information for schools parents and local authorities about parenting contracts can be found in Department for Education guidance, including Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures.			
Parent Declaration: By signing this contract, I agree to comply with the requirements for parent(s) specified within it for the duration the contract runs. I am aware that refusal to commit to meeting the expectations set out in this contract may result in its termination and other routes being pursued by the school, including a referral to the local authority which could subsequently lead to prosecution in accordance with the Education Act 1996 444(1), 444(1A); or 444(ZA) in the case of an alternative curriculum provision			
Parent/Carer 1 Full name:		Parent/Carer 2 Full name:	
Parent/Carer 1 Relationship to Child:		Parent/Carer 2 Relationship to Child:	
Parent/Carer 1 Signature and Date:		Parent/Carer 2 Signature and Date:	
School Declaration: By signing this contract, I agree to provide support to the parent(s) to help achieve the requirements as outlined above and that a signature by a member of school staff is made on behalf of the governing body as set out in section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.			
Name:	Job Title:	Signature:	Date:

Date of Review

Review - Lead and Participants

Review Summary

Draft

Appendix 5 – Withdrawal from Learning Request Response

Letter 1 - unauthorised (Y1-6)

Dear X,

Withdrawal from Learning Application – Names of Pupils

Thank you for your recent request for an absence in term time for X days from X returning to school on X.

I am not able to authorise this absence – the absence is not deemed as an exceptional circumstance. I realise that you will be disappointed by my decision, but from September additional New Government guidance means that, as Head, I am no longer able to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We will be notifying the Local Authority of the unauthorised absence and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Please note that Penalty notices are issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60.00 which increases to £120.00 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid, this will result in further legal intervention. Unauthorised absence may also result in prosecution under section 444 Education Act 1996. Please note that once a Penalty Notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for a holiday of less than 5 days, and your child is sick immediately before/after the holiday or has extra days off immediately before/after it, we will ask for a copy of your holiday booking or a doctor's certificate to confirm the dates of your holiday or the dates of any sickness. Failure to produce this evidence will result in the School referring you to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice of £60 per child, per parent.

I hope you will understand and support our efforts in sustaining high attendance and attainment at South Borough Primary School.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 2 - authorised (Y1-6)

Dear X,

Withdrawal from Learning Application – Names of Pupils

Thank you for your recent request for an absence in term time for X days from X returning to school on X.

Given the exceptional circumstances surrounding this request, and in line with the school's Attendance Policy, I have decided to authorise a total of ___ school sessions of the requested leave. (The remaining __ school sessions will be recorded as unauthorised.)

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 3 - unauthorised (Year R)

Dear X,

Withdrawal from Learning Application – Names of Pupils

Thank you for your recent request for an absence in term time for X days from X returning to school on X.

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take your child out of school, the absence will be logged as unauthorised.

However, I can confirm that because your child is currently not of statutory school age (as they are in Reception/Year R) at the time of this absence, a Penalty Notice will not be requested by the school.

I hope you will understand and support our efforts in sustaining high attendance and attainment at South Borough Primary School.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 4 - Authorised (Year R)

Dear X,

Withdrawal from Learning Application – Names of Pupils

Thank you for your recent request for an absence in term time for X days from X returning to school on X.

I have considered your request and am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will be authorised.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Attendance Champion

Draft

Letter 5 – Holiday Request Not Submitted

Re: Name of Pupil, Class

Holiday Absence

It has been brought to our attention that either you have not notified the school that you were going on holiday and / or the reason for your child's absence was not truthful.

I am therefore writing about your action in taking [your child/children or name/s] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

Our school works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for each child and believes that regular attendance through the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment. We expect you to consult the school before booking holidays that mean your child will be absent.

I am concerned, as I believe this absence could have a detrimental effect on [your child/children's or name/s] education. Children are required to attend school for 190 out of 365 days of the year.

I strongly urge you always to consult with the school before making plans that involve a pupil's absence from lessons or other commitments.

Please can you complete the 'Withdrawal From Learning' application retrospectively as soon as possible. Please note that if your holiday was 5 days or more, a penalty notice will be issued in line with the school's and county's procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Draft

Appendix 6: Step by Step Guide to First Day Calling

When no reason for absence has been provided by the parent/ carer, schools should as a minimum follow the below steps.

Pupils deemed at risk	**Pupils deemed at high risk should be treated as a priority and a Vulnerable list created:** • **Children subject to a child protection plan or with Early Help Keyworker- EHKW** • **Looked After Children.** • **It is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk of harm.** • **There is information that a pupil is, or may be, a victim of criminal activity.** • **At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** **If these children are absent you must notify the social workers/ key worker via email and paste email to Cpoms/Myconcern.**
Day 1 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Send absent text to parent/carers • Record actions on Brom com

Day 2 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am.
	• If no response - telephone all contacts on Bromcom, if no answer leave message to return call
	• Send absent text to parent/carers
	• If an international dialling tone is heard, leave a message advising of this and ask for a call back.
	  ▪ This may indicate they are on holiday and have not notified the school.
	  ▪ If you believe this to be the case, send a suspected holiday letter.
	  ▪ Letters should be sent separately to both parents first class.
	• Record all actions on bromcom (cpoms/Myconcern if needed).

Day 3 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Telephone all contacts on Bromcom, if no answer leave message asking them to return the call • Send absent text to parents/carers. • Complete a welfare visit - if there is no answer leave a calling card/letter and move to the next step. • Record all actions on Bromcom and Cpoms/Myconcern.
Day 4 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Telephone all contacts on Bromcom, if no answer leave message to return call. • Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Record all actions on Bromcom and Cpoms/Myconcern.
Day 5 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Telephone all contacts on Bromcom, if no answer leave message to return call. • Send absent text to parents/carers. • If you believe this family is **not** on holiday and are concerned about the child's welfare, request a welfare visit from the police 101. • Record all actions on bromcom and Cpoms/myconcern.

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Day 6 – 8 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Telephone all contacts on Bromcom, if no answer leave message to return call • Send absent text to parents/carers. • Either send a further letter or make a further welfare visit. If there is no answer leave calling card/letter and move to next step • Record all actions on Bromcom and Cpoms.
Day 9 - 10 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Telephone all contacts on bromcom, if no answer leave message to return call • If you have not done so already, and you believe the family are **not** on holiday and are concerned about the child's welfare, request a welfare visit from the police 101. • Send a further concern letter separately to both parents / carers by first class post stating: You are making a referral to the Local Authority as their child is now considered Missing from Education • Contact the Children Missing Education Team local authority to discuss whether it is appropriate to submit a Child Missing Referral and checklist.
Missing Pupil Checklist **Day10**	**Must be completed by the 10th day of absence, when one of the following criteria applies:** • A pupil has gone missing, and no contact can be made with parent/carer to establish the reason for absence. • A pupil ceased to attend the school and the forwarding address of the family is not known. • A pupil has not returned from holiday within 10 school days of the expected date of return. • A pupil fails to take up their place at the start of the academic year and the whereabouts of the young person is unknown. **Schools must continue investigations, while the Local Authority undertakes their investigations.**
Day 11 - 19 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Telephone all contacts on bromcom, if no answer leave message to return the call • Send absent text to parents/carers. • Make another welfare visit during this period and leave a calling card/letter. • Inform parents/carers in writing that their child is at risk of being removed from the roll. • Record all actions on Bromcom and Cpoms/myconcern.
Day 20 of absence	• Telephone parents/carers, if it is not answered leave a message if possible. Complete by 10.30am. • Telephone all contacts on Bromcom, if no answer leave message to the return call • Send absent text to parents/carers. **You cannot remove a child from roll until you have received notification from the Local Authority** • Record all actions on Bromcom and Cpoms/Myconcern.
Coding:	• These absences must be coded as O for unauthorised absence due to no reason provided from parents/carers.

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