ATTENDANCE POLICY
2024-2025

Every Student Thriving

Contents

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

At John Colet We will strive to provide a range of activities, sports teams, house competitions, community activities, charity fundraising, performing arts productions and more all help children, and, crucially, sometimes those who struggle in other aspects of school life, to feel like they are an important person in school who makes a valuable contribution.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)

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- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)](#)
- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- CPD 9/5/24 *'How to successfully Implement and lead on attendance management across your setting'* Victoria Franklin

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  o Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  o Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  o The importance of good attendance
  o That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  o The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  o The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The governing body appoint a governor to meet with the SLT attendance champion to monitor and support with attendance matters. They regularly feedback to the governing body

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3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where appropriate and necessary, and/or authorising the attendance officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with the pastoral team, pupils and their parents/carer
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Gould and can be contacted via the school office or by email sgould@johncolet.co.uk

3.4 SLT

The SLT Link will;

Champion good attendance across the school

- Having a strong grasp of absence data for oversight of absence data analysis
- Meet with line managed links using data to decide which students need intervention and/or closer monitoring
- Support staff in their areas to liaise with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Build close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Support to create intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with their tutors, the pastoral team, pupils and their parents/carer
- Regularly monitor and evaluating progress in attendance on an individual and group level

3.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

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- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with Heads of Year and Pastoral Staff to tackle persistent absence
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with the pastoral team, pupils and their parents/carer
- Working with external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Celebrate and promote good attendance throughout the school

The attendance officer is Mrs Bull and can be contacted via the school office or email dbull@johncolet.co.uk].

3.6 Head of Year

The Head of Year will:
- Champion good and improving attendance across their year group
- Having a strong grasp of absence data for their year group and oversight of absence data analysis
- Using data to decide which students need intervention and/or closer monitoring
- Liaise with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Build close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Create intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with their tutors, the pastoral team, pupils and their parents/carer
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Regularly monitor and evaluating progress in attendance on an individual and group level

3.7 Staff as class teachers and form tutors

Form tutors take **day to day** responsibility for the attendance and punctuality of their tutor group.(see instructions in Appendix 2.

Form tutors will work to develop a form identity as a valued group. They will strive to get to know each student in their group and to make them feel like an important person who makes a valuable contribution.

They will encourage their tutees to take part in the wider aspects of school life; sports teams, house competitions, community activities, charity fundraising, performing arts productions and more all help children, and, crucially, sometimes those who struggle in other aspects of school life, encourage students to attend regularly.

Flag up any absences or concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil immediately, to parents/carers, if this continues to inform the head of year

Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), this needs to be done within the first 10 minutes of a lesson. Am registration and period 4 form the registers for am and pm registration. Staff must take care to complete registers promptly, consistently accurately.

Form tutors/ Classroom staff should make a conscious effort to welcome students who have been absent back to class

3.8 School admin staff

The attendance admin staff will:

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- Take information from parents/carer and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system. This information is provided by google form which can be accessed via the school website ,absence reporting'
- Contact the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Contact parents of targeted groups or individuals to discuss attendance
- Transfer enquiries from parents/carers and pupils to the Form tutor/ Head of year where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Support the Attendance officer

3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Parents are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Reports their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and if possible advises when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by liaising with the school in a timely and reasonable fashion.
- Work with the school to maintain good attendance for their child. The school may contact parents where attendance falls below certain thresholds, for example attendance less than 93% is deemed as at risk of persistent absence; below 90% is persistent absence and below 50% is severely absent.
- We would ask parents to support us in maintaining good punctuality by:-
  - Ensuring that their children get up in plenty of time to be ready and prepared for school
  - Ensuring their child has organised their bag and equipment the night before so that this does not delay departure in the morning
  - Discussing any issues of lateness to ensure this does not become a habit.
  - Engaging with the school when there are concerns over punctuality

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time and to attend every timetabled session, on time
- Sixth former report their absence via the school website before 8.30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

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4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day; 8.30am at the start of am registration and once during the second session; at the start of Period 5 1.55pm. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school day starts at 8.30 am   and ends at 2.55pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by filling in the absence notification form on the school website.

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

On occasion, where the absence is prolonged, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

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

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and submits proof of appointment, this is done via the home page of the school website

However, we encourage parents 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.

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The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Good punctuality at school is essential for students to achieve their full educational potential. It is also vital for students to form good habits for later life. Punctuality records form part of references passed onto employers or higher educational institutes.

- All students are expected to arrive punctually for school in the morning and to arrive punctually for each lesson. A register is taken at the start of the day and during each lesson.

    A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

- According to DfE guidelines, registers must be closed after a certain time in the morning. Therefore, if a student arrives after 9.00am, they cannot receive a late mark but have to be marked as absent for the whole morning session. If the lateness is due to a legitimate reason e.g. a medical appointment, the absence can be authorised. Otherwise, the session is marked as an unauthorised absence.

We place a strong emphasis on good punctuality; we support this by:-

- Giving sanctions to students who arrive late to school or lessons or are persistently late, in line with the school behaviour policy.

- Informing parents, by automated message, if their child arrives late for school

- Awarding R points for improved punctually over a period of time and 100% attendance

- Staff greeting students on the school gates

- Addressing issues of poor time keeping with individual students and their parents

- Attendance Team meeting, greeting and supporting late students in the morning

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact police or external agencies working with a child as necessary.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a County Attendance Officer and following Buckinghamshire county council attendance procedures
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to external agencies working with the pupil's
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school may work with the LA or issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

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4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly progress reports sent at the end of the first half term and the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance. Generally, absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised by the head teacher in exceptional circumstances.

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the funeral of an immediate relative, respite care of a looked after child.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the contact us page of the John Colet Website The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If a pupil is over compulsory school age (e.g. sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day (1 a year) is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. This should be requested through the leave of absence procedure and will be considered on a case- by- case basis.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

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Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will 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.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far

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- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- The minimum expected attendance for every pupil is 98%.
- Regularly set out/communicate attendance expectations including at the start of the school year.
- Each term, we will celebrate students with outstanding attendance.
- RAG system of attendance monitoring.
- Below 93% - send a reminder letter home.
- Below 90% - Follow Local Authority procedures
- Introduce penalty notices for families who breach the holiday expectations.
- These actions to be reviewed for each student depending on circumstances.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers, mental or physical ill health or SEND

Staff will meet with pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence and their parents to seek to understand barriers to being in school and agree actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. Support from the pastoral team in school might include, mentoring, breakfast club, student engagement officers, curriculum adjustment/ adjusted school day (these are usually temporary, timed and to promote the outcome of improved attendance at school), school counsellor, school nurse, matron intervention, trusted adult etc.

The school where appropriate may seek the support of the Buckinghamshire Attendance Team holding meetings with parents where actions are agreed and monitored to promote and secure full attendance.

The Sendco Ms L Bendel is the EBSNA (Emotionally based school non attendance) coordinator. She coordinates alternative provision where necessary. Alternative provision may be considered as an adjustment to improve school attendance

Set out your approach towards pupils with complex barriers to attendance, including how you work with families and strategies for removing in-school barriers.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.2 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Meet with the student and a family member before they start back to discuss their concerns and agree a plan for their first day, to help alleviate anxiety. The school may arrange peer support and inform teachers of any special requirements. Use the meeting to update or complete an Individual Healthcare Plan if appropriate

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Request support from medical or hospital school staff Ask a member of the medical or hospital school/tuition unit to come in and talk to staff especially where a student's medical or mental health condition requires considerable planning or arrangements for a smooth transition back to school.

Liaise with matron/ school nurse liaise with Matron/ the school nurse to ensure all relevant medical information is updated. Medication may have changed or additional or different medical staff may be involved. Make sure you have the most up to date information.

Inform staff : Inform staff who need to know of the effects of the medical condition on the student, and who should be contacted if the student falls ill while at school or on a school outing.

Discuss a plan for catching up: Discuss a realistic plan for catching up on missed work, this should be monitored and evaluated after a set period. This is particularly important for students working towards exams.

Monitor for changes: Look out for any changes in quality of work and overall behaviour. Consult with parent / carer and student early on if there are any concerns.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) at least half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. See appendix 3

The school may contact parents when attendance falls below a certain threshold. (see above)

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

The school uses FFT Aspire attendance tracker to monitor attendance and absence at school level right down to individual pupils. It helps to identify and analyse attendance issues for specific year groups, pupils groups and individual pupils.it allows comparison of John Colet pupils' attendance to similar pupils across the country on a week-by-week basis.

Regularly communicate with parents over attendance (see appendix 5)

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, (see appendix 3)

- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

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- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

  ο Discuss attendance and engagement at school

  ο Listen, and seek to understand barriers to attendance

  ο Explain the help that is available

  ο Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

  ο Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will consider some of the reasons for absence

- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

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John Colet follows Buckinghamshire County Council guidance for targeting unauthorised absence and works with the local authority to support families (See Appendix 6)

"Working together to improve attendance"

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

EXPECT: Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school. Monitor Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND : When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT: Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT: Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE: Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education."

Support Plan Checklist

Hold a meeting with parents/carers and the child if appropriate, to understand the barriers to their attendance. Consider the best approach and ways to communicate with the family. Use interpreters where needed.

Based on the information received in the meeting, work on a structured and agreed support plan. Include timescales and review dates where necessary. The outcomes should be individual to the case, realistic and achievable.

Consider what support can we provide?

Out of School Barriers

Consider making referrals to relevant outside agencies and/or charities.

School Barriers

Understand any barriers within school and action as appropriate.

Examples

- Build on relationships with the child and assign an agreed, trusted adult. Highlight key members of staff for support.
- Make use of support groups, areas, and/or mentors.
- Agree a 'safe' space where they can go in school if needed.
- Set up a 'buddy' or friendship building meet ups.
- Suggest the use of breakfast clubs.
- Make adjustments to the school day/Implement a short term reduced timetable.

Monitor and review the support plan regularly and adapt where necessary. Perseverance is key, try other things if support is not taken up.

Notice to Improve if we find a family is not engaging with the support offered then a Notice to Improve letter might be an option. We will discuss this with the County Attendance Officer.

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9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by SLT Attendance Champion . At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND Policy

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Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

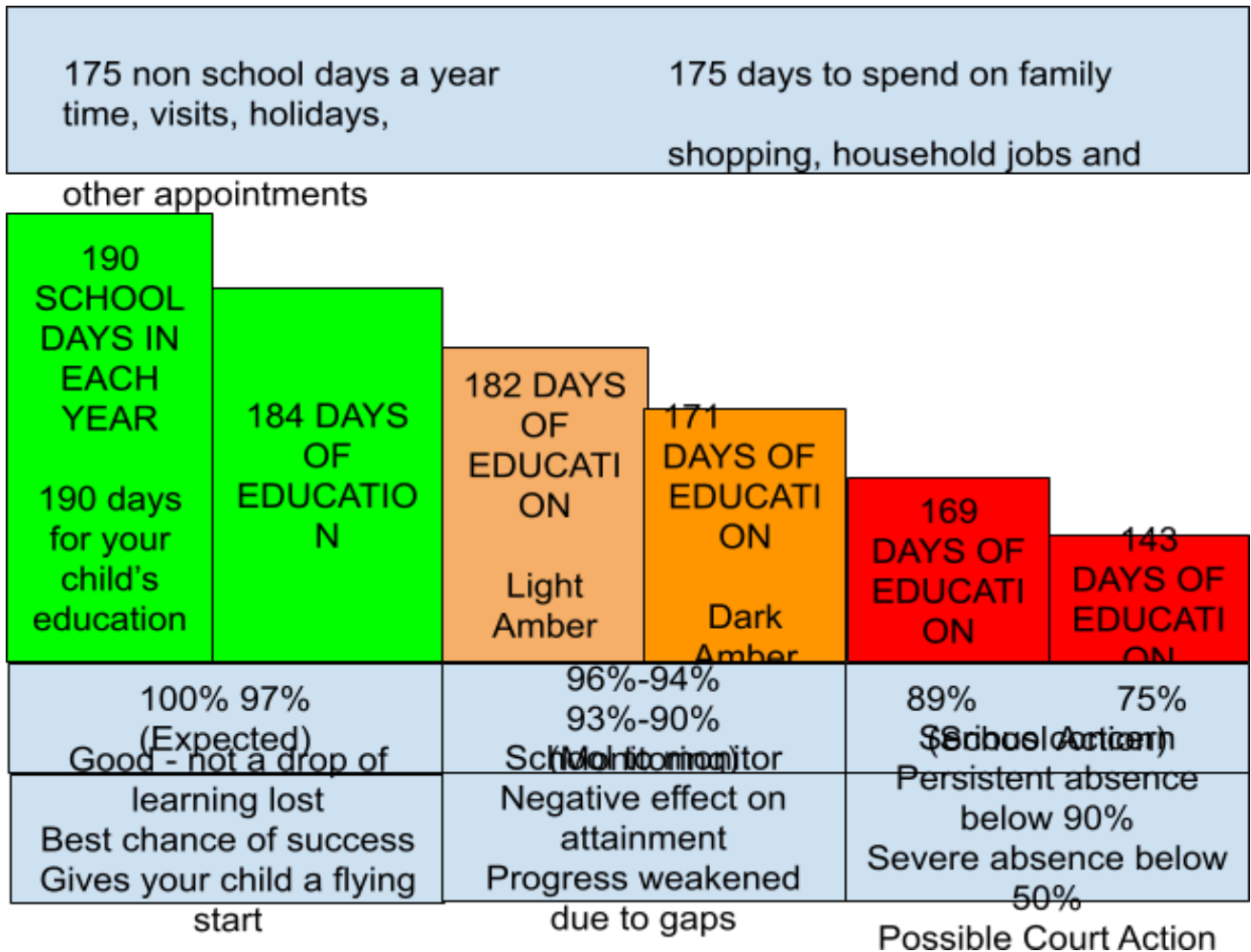| Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

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S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

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Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: ● In police detention ● Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or ● Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Form Tutor

- Take the register, Log on sims a C1 (Late to lesson up to 5m registration, assembly) if a student is late to tutor time or assembly.
- Have a conversation with a student to find out why they are late. Remember if this pattern continues you can escalate to a C3. If there is a pattern talk to the HOY about interventions and contact home. NB The attendance officer logs lateness to school and C3 is issued by her for persistent lateness. However a student can be in school and be late to registration!

- Over time, communicate attendance and punctuality concerns to students, parents and carers working with them to ensure improvement. The form tutor is the first point of contact. Good attendance at John Colet is 97% speak to a student and contact parents (a phone call is better than an email) if you notice a pattern of poor attendance. Log the intervention on Sims so the HOY and Attendance officer can track. You need to raise the concern with parents and communicate why attendance is important. Enquire if there are any barriers to coming to school that you can work with the family to improve. You may wish to arrange a follow up meeting.

- To communicate attendance, punctuality concerns to the HOY. Please remember to also use the attendance officer, student engagement officers, Send Manager, DSL to help you support a student.

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Appendix 3:Internal Monitoring

| 175 non school days a year time, visits, holidays, other appointments | 175 days to spend on family shopping, household jobs and |

| 190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR 190 days for your child's education | 184 DAYS OF EDUCATION | 182 DAYS OF EDUCATION Light Amber | 171 DAYS OF EDUCATION Dark Amber | 169 DAYS OF EDUCATION | 143 DAYS OF EDUCATION |

| 100% 97% (Expected) Good - not a drop of learning lost Best chance of success Gives your child a flying start | 96%-94% 93%-90% School monitor (Monitoring) Negative effect on attainment Progress weakened due to gaps | 89% 75% School Action (School concern) Persistent absence below 90% Severe absence below 50% Possible Court Action |

- SLT Attendance Champion Weekly attendance monitoring using DFE and FFT attendance date. SLT Attendance champion will consider cohort and pupil group patterns as well as severely absent students.

- Fortnightly HOY monitor year group attendance in discussion with SLT link. It is important to look at patterns of attendance for individuals, not just raw %. Use FFT individual attendance data that shows the frequency of student absence, triangulate with % and punctuality. Identify students who need intervention. Consider internal intervention before referral to county (1a)

Amber intervene 96% FSM 93% others	Tutor intervention/Key worker conversation with student and or parent HOY intervention Engagement in school activities
Red	Consider referral for 1A.(if not be clear for the reason) Pastoral Team HOY intervention, SENCO, Attendance officer, Student engagement,

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	school nurse, FSS, DSL, Matron,
High level	SLT monitoring, PCM County EBSNA

- Attendance officer meets fortnightly with SLT Champion to discuss students and cohorts of concern and to plan and review intervention
- Attendance officer meets fortnightly with HOY to discuss students and cohorts of concern and to plan and review intervention
- Attendance Champion meets fortnightly with Pastoral team inc Deputy Head Safeguarding and mental health, DSL, SENCO, Attendance officer, Matron, Student engagement officers and Inclusion Unit Manager.
- Fortnightly pastoral meeting
- Termly attendance report to governors and SLT
- SENCO leads on EBSNA

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Appendix 4: Communication with parents over attendance

- John Colet will regularly inform parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. [Working together to improve school attendance](#) includes more information on schools' responsibilities. The school may communicate with parents on attendance. This will include setting expectations early (at the start of each school year), and regularly (during each term). Communication may be sent home when certain attendance thresholds are met for example below 93% attendance.

Example messages

"Your child has missed X number of lessons this year. Lessons build on what children already know and missing one may make tomorrow's lesson more difficult."

"Your child has missed X number of days of school this year."

"One day could be as many as seven missed lessons, as well as time spent with friends and doing extracurricular activities."

"You can support your child's physical, social and mental wellbeing by ensuring they are in school every day."

"We know that parents and carers worry about their children's mental health. Rather than keeping your child off school, let us know about your concerns. We can then work together on supporting your child."

"It can be difficult to know whether your child is too ill to attend school. NHS guidance is clear that it's fine to send them in with a minor cough or common cold, provided they don't have a temperature."

"School is an enriching environment that can help your child with their social and mental wellbeing."

"School isn't just about learning. It's a warm, supportive environment where your child can get a healthy meal and see their friends."

"School attendance is important for equipping your child with skills for life."

"Attending school every day can help your child to achieve their aspirations, and the aspirations you have for them."

"We are delighted to celebrate that [NAME] achieved 100% attendance last week. We thank you for your continued support to ensure [NAME] attends school every day."

"We have the same expectations as [neighbouring primary or secondary school]. This means you will hear the same messages for the other children in your family as we work closely on attendance as a local partnership of schools."

"We know your child has special educational needs and this can lead to them sometimes not finding school straightforward or as easy as they would like. We understand this and want to work with your child, and with you, on helping your child feel confident to explain any concerns. We can then work together to help provide reassurance and support."

Face-to-face meetings

Many schools already use this format to communicate messages to parents or carers. This includes when there are sensitive or serious issues to discuss and understand.

You may also want to consider a face-to-face meeting when you see a pattern in your school's attendance data.

Consider using video calls where parents or carers may be unable to attend in person at short notice. This may help to:

- develop your relationship with parents and carers
- tackle attendance concerns early

Phone calls, video calls and face-to-face meetings all offer the opportunity for direct and personalised conversations with families. This is vital when establishing and removing barriers to attendance.

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Sometimes it is also beneficial to include the child or young person in these conversations. This may help them to:

- understand the importance of school attendance
- build their confidence to engage with teachers when they are experiencing difficulties with attendancePhone calls

Thinks' research showed that parents prefer phone calls for personal conversations about their child. In-depth conversations to discuss and support parents and carers in their individual circumstances can help to safeguard pupils and families. They provide the opportunity to signpost parents and carers to local authority support services.

Selecting the most appropriate member of staff to make calls to parents and carers is important. If calls are of a personal nature, the member of staff should know the child or young person well and ideally have a relationship with the family.

Phone calls can give parents and carers the opportunity to share more personal details about their circumstances. They can help them feel more supported by the school. This can help to ensure honest communication between a parent or carer and the school for the benefit of the child involved.

You can also use phone calls to highlight actions you can take. For example, fixed penalty notices for absence and enforcement action. Having these conversations over the phone can help parents and carers to understand the severity of potential next steps. They also provide the opportunity to offer more support from the school.

You may want to consider training or support for staff making these calls. It is possible some calls will be challenging. As staff will need to use consistent and sensitive messaging during these calls, training could help to achieve a positive outcome.

Appendix 5: Frequently asked questions

Why has my child been marked as absent for the whole morning when they arrived at 9.30am?

As stated above, DfE guidelines state that the register must be closed 30 minutes after the registers have opened at 8.30am. If arriving after 9.00am, a child will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Could I receive a fine if my child is persistently late?

If your child receives 10 or more unauthorised absences, you could be issued with a fixed penalty notice. 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.

My child was only a couple of minutes late. It seems harsh that he/she should get a late mark.

The school has to abide by the rules and expectations laid down for all schools. Lateness for school (or work) is a failure to arrive on time and will be marked as such. We would encourage students to set off in good time so that any small delay does not cause them to be late.

Our whole family overslept and it is not my child's fault that he/she is late. Will they receive a late mark?

This can not be taken as an acceptable reason for lateness so a late mark or unauthorised absence would be recorded, depending on the time of arrival.

My child has to catch the bus to school which is sometimes late. Will they receive a late mark?

Any lateness is recorded as thus on the register. We would advise that the child leaves earlier so that even if the bus is late, they will still arrive on time. If the bus is sometimes late, then it is not a reliable way to ensure arrival in good time.

Would you make any allowances for lateness if, for example, there were major traffic problems in the area perhaps because of an accident, so my car/the bus was unavoidably stuck in traffic?

The school cannot make allowances for the individual problem (however genuine it may be). However, it does make allowances when there are known reported major problems that affect a large number of people.

What if I phone up/email to say my child is going to be late? Would he/she still get a late mark?

Yes, they would still be marked late, but it is very helpful to know that you are aware and for us to know the expected time of arrival and reason for lateness.

If I know my child is going to be late, do I need to ring/send in a note?

It is very helpful if you do this. If your child is very late, they will be marked as unauthorised absence and your note may give an alternative acceptable reason to allow us to authorise the absence.

What do I do if I don't agree with your policy on punctuality?

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Much of our attendance policy is designed to satisfy DfE regulation but as always, if you feel an approach is unfair or unreasonable, then you can write to the Headteacher and/or Governing Body asking for a review. However, whilst any such policy is in place, the school will operate as stated.

- providing clear reminders of your school's policy relating to absence and guidance such as:
    - Is my child too ill for school?
    - everything you need to know about school attendance
    - school attendance and absence
- engaging with other schools in your area or trust to ensure consistent messaging and approaches, particularly where children from the same family attend different schools

Appendix 6 Bucks CC Irregular School Attendance Flow Chart

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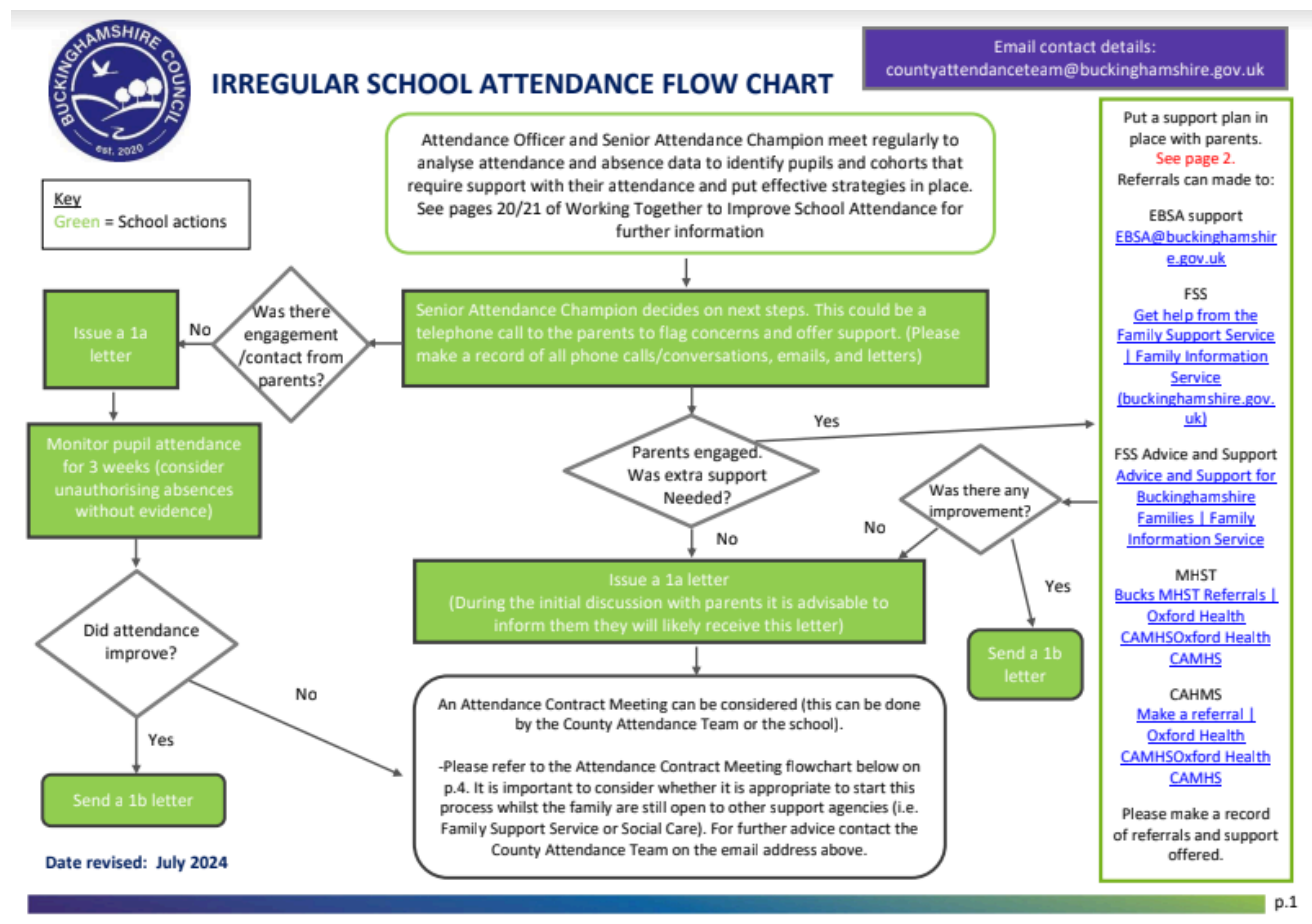
PROCESS FOR ATTENDANCE CONTRACT MEETINGS

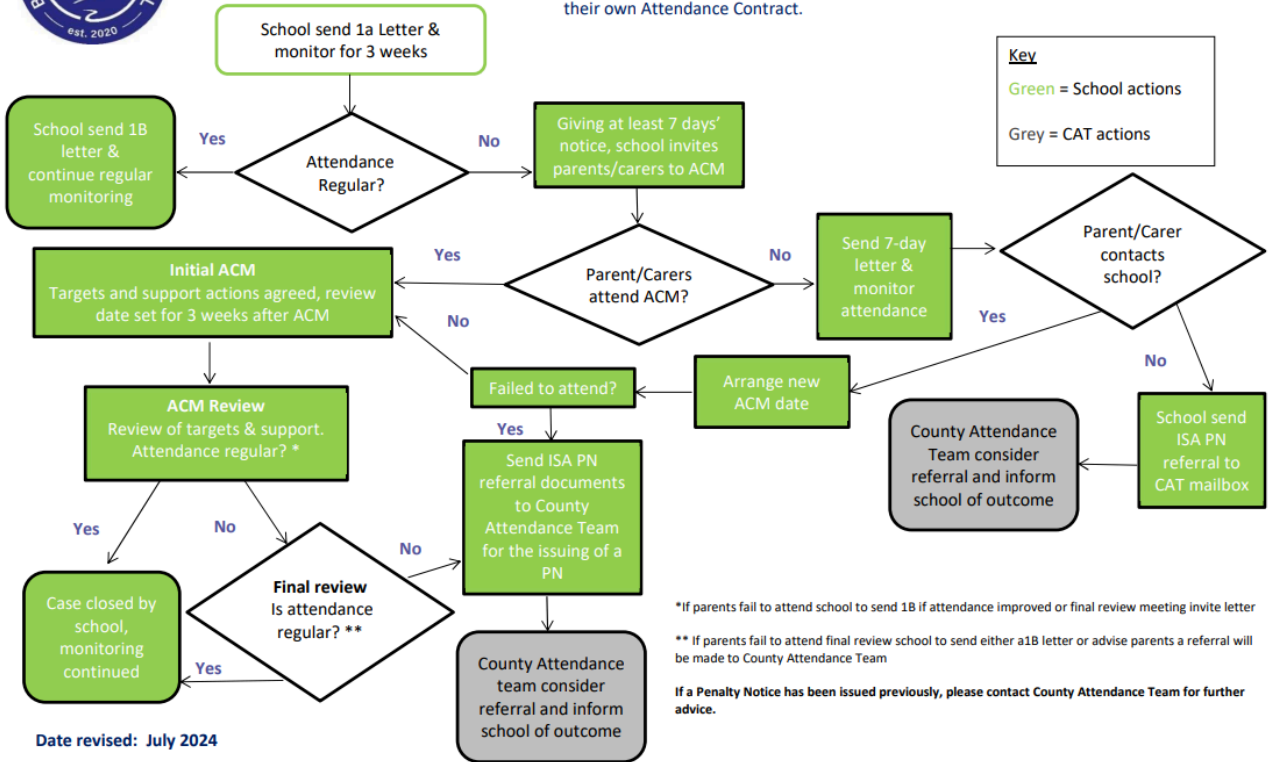Please make sure school have followed the irregular attendance flowchart first. This process is for schools who choose to conduct their own Attendance Contract.

Email contact details: countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Key
Green = School actions
Grey = CAT actions

School send 1a Letter & monitor for 3 weeks

Attendance Regular?
- Yes → School send 1B letter & continue regular monitoring
- No → Giving at least 7 days' notice, school invites parents/carers to ACM

Parent/Carers attend ACM?
- Yes → Initial ACM: Targets and support actions agreed, review date set for 3 weeks after ACM
- No → Send 7-day letter & monitor attendance

Parent/Carer contacts school?
- Yes → Arrange new ACM date
- No → School send ISA PN referral to CAT mailbox → County Attendance Team consider referral and inform school of outcome

Initial ACM → ACM Review: Review of targets & support. Attendance regular? *
- Yes → Case closed by school, monitoring continued
- No → Final review: Is attendance regular? **
  - Yes → Case closed by school, monitoring continued
  - No → Send ISA PN referral documents to County Attendance Team for the issuing of a PN → County Attendance team consider referral and inform school of outcome

Failed to attend?
- Yes → Send ISA PN referral documents to County Attendance Team for the issuing of a PN

*If parents fail to attend school to send 1B if attendance improved or final review meeting invite letter

** If parents fail to attend final review school to send either a1B letter or advise parents a referral will be made to County Attendance Team

If a Penalty Notice has been issued previously, please contact County Attendance Team for further advice.

Date revised: July 2024

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Appendix 7

Behaviour and attendance meeting fortnightly SLT link HOY Link

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