

Bedford High School

A Specialist Business and Enterprise College
To Care To Learn To Achieve



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting excellent attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. May 2022](#)

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Identified governor for attendance, safeguarding and inclusion: Mrs J Coop

3.2 Senior Leadership Team

The headteacher has responsibility for ensuring there is named member of the senior leadership team overseeing the management of attendance.

The headteacher delegates the responsibility of whole school attendance to the assistant headteacher.

Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding, Attendance and Inclusion: Mrs R Ramsden

The assistant headteacher is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality to all stakeholders
- Implementing the attendance policy, procedures and whole school attendance improvement strategy
- Contributing to the school development plan, with a focus on attendance and punctuality improvement
- Monitoring and analysing school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Ensuring appropriate levels of support are offered and impact of interventions is measured
- Alternative provision – attendance and safeguarding
- CME
- Ensuring safeguarding procedures are followed consistently and there is appropriate communication with external agencies where necessary
- Managing the school Early Help provision, ensuring adequate staff supervision and CPD

3.3 The Attendance Manager

Attendance Manager: Mrs L Ainscough

The attendance manager is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality to all stakeholders
- Monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Supporting the pastoral team in line with the school attendance strategy
- Collating and reporting attendance data to the assistant headteacher
- Managing attendance admin staff to ensure a consistent approach to attendance
- Leading individual Early Helps and communicating with external agencies where appropriate
- Leading parental engagement interventions
- Implementing escalation processes in line with local authority procedures
- Supporting the management of whole school detention (WSD) for punctuality

3.4 The Pastoral Team

The pastoral team are responsible for promoting the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality to all stakeholders and ensuring has a high profile within each year group.

Pastoral Managers are responsible for:

- Monitoring year group attendance, identifying trends / concerns and liaising with the attendance manager regularly
- Management and coordination of form teacher interventions in line with the attendance strategy
- Managing Individual and group intervention

- Implementing, monitoring and reviewing attendance action plans
- Communicating with parents and carers to overcome barriers to school attendance
- Communicating with staff and external agencies in relation to attendance strategies
- Facilitating weekly year group assemblies
- Form time education about the importance of attendance and punctuality
- Rewards and sanctions linked to attendance and punctuality
- Supporting the management of whole school detention (WSD) for punctuality

Pastoral Guidance Officers are responsible for:

- Leading Early Helps for students with emerging needs (Threshold of Need Level 2*)
- Contributing to Early Helps for students with complex needs (Threshold of Need Level 3)
- Communicating with parents and carers to overcome barriers to school attendance
- Communicating with staff and external agencies in relation to attendance strategies
- Implementing appropriate individual plans in order to help address barriers to school attendance
- Supporting the management of whole school detention (WSD) for punctuality

*Appendix 2: Thresholds of Need

Form teachers are responsible for:

- Recording registration attendance accurately and promptly, using the correct codes
- Following the correct procedure when a student is unexpectedly absent
- Promoting excellent punctuality to school and ensuring appropriate follow up to persistent lateness
- Delivering form time attendance education
- Implementing individual intervention
- Liaising with parents and carers to overcome barriers to school attendance and improve punctuality
- Supporting the delivery of whole school detention (WSD) for punctuality as required

*Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

3.5 Teachers and Support Staff

Teachers are responsible for:

- Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality to all lessons
- Modeling expected behaviours around punctuality to lessons
- Recording attendance to lessons, accurately and promptly (within the first 10 minutes of each lesson), using the correct codes
- Following the correct procedure when a student is unexpectedly absent from lesson by emailing the attendance team (missing student group)
- Promoting excellent punctuality to lessons and ensuring appropriate follow up to persistent lateness, including liaising with parents and carers

3.6 Attendance Admin Staff

Attendance admin staff are responsible for:

- Monitoring student attendance on a daily basis
- Communicating with parents/carers of absent students on a daily basis and where appropriate, suggest/advise strategies that could reduce short term absence
- Being the first point of contact for students with attendance/illness issues and parents or carers with attendance queries
- Completing attendance admin tasks
- Recording / monitoring student attendance data to ensure accuracy
- Prepare students' timetables
- Recording all relevant information accurately on the student database (e.g. SIMS)
- Implementing / supporting interventions to improve attendance

3.7 Students

Students are regularly educated on the importance of excellent attendance (see Appendix 3). Students are responsible for:

- The implementation and review of their SPIRIT action plan
- Ensuring they take reasonable steps to lead a healthy lifestyle
- Arriving promptly to school (before 8.25am) and being well prepared for learning
- Arriving promptly to all lessons
- Following their correct timetable at all times (unless directed otherwise by staff)

3.8 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are regularly reminded of the importance of excellent attendance (see Appendix 4 for examples). Parents are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality to their child
- Ensuring their child has the means to travel safely to school and arrive on time, by 8.25am
- Ensuring their child leaves for school wearing their full school uniform correctly and is fully equipped for learning
- Contacting the school before 8.00am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence
- Supplying medical evidence if their child is absent for more than 3 days (NB: If medical evidence is not supplied beyond 3 days, the absence will be deemed unauthorised)
- Working in partnership with the school to overcome barriers to school attendance. This may involve a multiagency approach
- Supplying at least 2 accurate and up to date named contacts (with accurate phone numbers) for school liaison
- Avoiding making medical (or other) appointments during the school day. If this is unavoidable, medical evidence will be required.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register on SIMS, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent (relevant absence code to be issued)
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

*Appendix 1: Attendance Codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Students must arrive in school before 8.25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of period 4.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.00am or as soon as practically possible.

Parents and carers should notify the school of all unplanned absences by calling 01942 909009 (option 1). There is a facility to leave a voicemail 24hrs per day. Parents must state the full name and year group of their child and the reason for absence.

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

At times, the attendance team may need to contact home to clarify the reasons for absence. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, we may ask the student'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.

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

4.3 Planned absence

Parents and carers aim to schedule medical and dental appointments beyond the school day in order to minimise lost learning time.

If this is unavoidable, attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provide medical evidence of the appointment. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents and carers should notify the school of all planned absences by calling 01942 909009 (option 1). There is a facility to leave a voicemail 24hrs per day. Parents must state the full name and year group of their child and the reason for planned absence.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

*Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. The minutes late will also be recorded. This is monitored by subject leads and pastoral managers and appropriate sanctions such as the whole school detention are issued.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. This is monitored by the attendance team and appropriate sanctions will be issued.
- Students who are late for school or late for lessons will be issued a same day, whole school detention. Parents/carers will be notified of this via a text message and will be expected to support this sanction.
- Students who are persistently late will be issued further appropriate sanctions, to which parents are expected to support.

Students who are persistently late will be issued with an appropriate sanction and parents will be notified and expected to support the school.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.

In addition to this, the school will:

- Send an automated text each morning to inform parents of unexpected absences
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary. This may include measures such as home visits and/or liaising with safeguarding partners (e.g. Children's Social Care and/or the Police)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Safeguarding concerns related to attendance

Students are expected to attend all timetabled lessons on time and must be locatable at all times whilst on the school site. Staff are required to complete registers accurately within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson. Students who are expected to attend the lesson but fail to do so, are marked as 'N' and safeguarding alert sent to the attendance team. Reasonable pastoral checks are then made for the 'missing student'. If missing student cannot be located within 15 minutes, parents/carers will be informed and asked to contact their child. Following support from parents to locate their child, if they have still not been located, the attendance /pastoral team may report to the police as a missing person.

If the student fails to arrive at school (and has not been seen by staff), and parents have been unable to locate their child, the parent is expected to report this to the police as a missing person.

Further information regarding internal and external truancy is outlined in the Behaviour and Rewards Policy.

4.6 Reporting to parents and carers

Parents and carers will receive a termly letter regarding their child's attendance. Within this written communication, parents will also receive guidance on how to improve their child's attendance and useful information regarding links between attendance and student outcomes.

In addition to the termly communication, Parents and carers will also be contacted if:

- A pattern of absence is identified
- Student attendance is declining and becoming a concern
- Student punctuality is declining and becoming a concern
- A student has been absent without an appropriate reason
- An attendance issue needs further intervention from the local authority and/or an external agency

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion following a discussion with the attendance team. If a parent or carer intends to request an authorised leave of absence, they should do so in writing, at least 7 days in advance and addressed to the headteacher.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and unavoidable medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 and other outside agencies.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence and severe absence

Persistent absence is defined as:

- Any student who has 3 days absence or 6 sessions in a 30 day period
- Any student who has 19 days absence or 38 sessions in an academic school year
- Any student who has below 90% attendance

Severe absence is defined as a student whose attendance is 50% or less.

Working in partnership with students, parents/carers and external agencies, we aim for all students to have excellent attendance and avoid persistent absence.

To do this, a range of measures and interventions will be considered. These include:

- Universal offer of attendance education, advice guidance and support
- The delivery of clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new and existing students and families through admission/transition events and our regular channels of communication
- Rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness
- Regular whole school data monitoring to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- Robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME)
- Effective support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)

Where attendance concerns have been identified and/or a student is at risk of persistent absence, escalation procedures will be initiated. These may include:

- Written communication with parents and carers
- Attendance review meetings with students and parents
- Attendance action plans and/or contracts
- Attendance panel meetings with senior leaders and the governing board
- Support under the Early Help Framework where appropriate
- Liaison with external agencies, including the local authority attendance teams, alternative provisions and/or safeguarding partners
- Use of fixed penalty notices

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5.4 Children Missing in Education (CME)

Responsibilities for Children Missing from Education (CME):

The school will enter students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the setting has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the education setting should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity

The school will monitor students' attendance through their daily register. We agree to inform local authorities of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. We will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance.

The Local Authority must also arrange full-time education for excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the *Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England* statutory guidance.

As part of our duty, we will investigate any unexplained absences. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The school will make reasonable enquiries for children missing in education. The term 'reasonable enquiries' grants schools and local authorities a degree of flexibility in decision-making, particularly as the steps that need to be taken in a given case will vary. The term 'reasonable' also makes clear that there is a limit to what the school and local authority is expected to do.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. We also record that we have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a young person is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral

will be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

Staff have a responsibility to report immediately to the DSL, if they know of any child who may be:

- Missing – whereabouts unknown and unable to make contact (as a result of making reasonable enquiries)
- Missing education – (compulsory school age (5-16) with no school place and not electively home educated)

The Local Authority requires Education Settings to complete the '**Children Missing Education**' referral form. (Appendix 7) This form should be completed once the setting has completed reasonable enquiries, but failed to locate the child following 10 days of absence. The first part should be completed by school and submitted to the Children in Need Duty Team CINdutyteam@wigan.gov.uk. Further check will be completed to ensure all lines of enquiry have been exhausted, before it is agreed the child is removed from roll.

Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next, for example, to contact the police, children's social care and, in cases where there may be concerns for the safety of a child who has travelled abroad, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days they can only be removed from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the student's whereabouts after **jointly** making reasonable enquiries. Local authorities and education settings should agree roles and responsibilities locally in relation to making joint enquiries. This only applies if the setting does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

A range of strategies are employed to promote excellent attendance. These include:

- High expectations for excellent attendance – shared with students, families and staff
- Regular communication with students and families regarding the importance of excellent attendance, linked to student outcomes and career pathways
- Attendance education through form time activities and the assembly programme
- Personal action plans and regular reviews
- Attendance incentives and rewards
- Communication with external agencies, including the local authority and safeguarding partners
- Cohort / group action plans and interventions
- 'Team around the child' meetings with associated actions.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team office monitor student absence on a daily basis and appropriate action is taken.

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school before 8.00am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The parent/carer is expected to call the school each subsequent day their child is ill. This call should also be completed before 8.00am.

If a student's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this and support the student's return to school.

If a student's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider additional measures to support the student to return to school.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The school monitors and stores attendance data using SIMS. This data is used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual students
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support
- Monitor whole school trends over time

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by **Rebecca Ramsden (AHT)**. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help Policy
- Behaviour and Rewards policy
- Lone Working Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

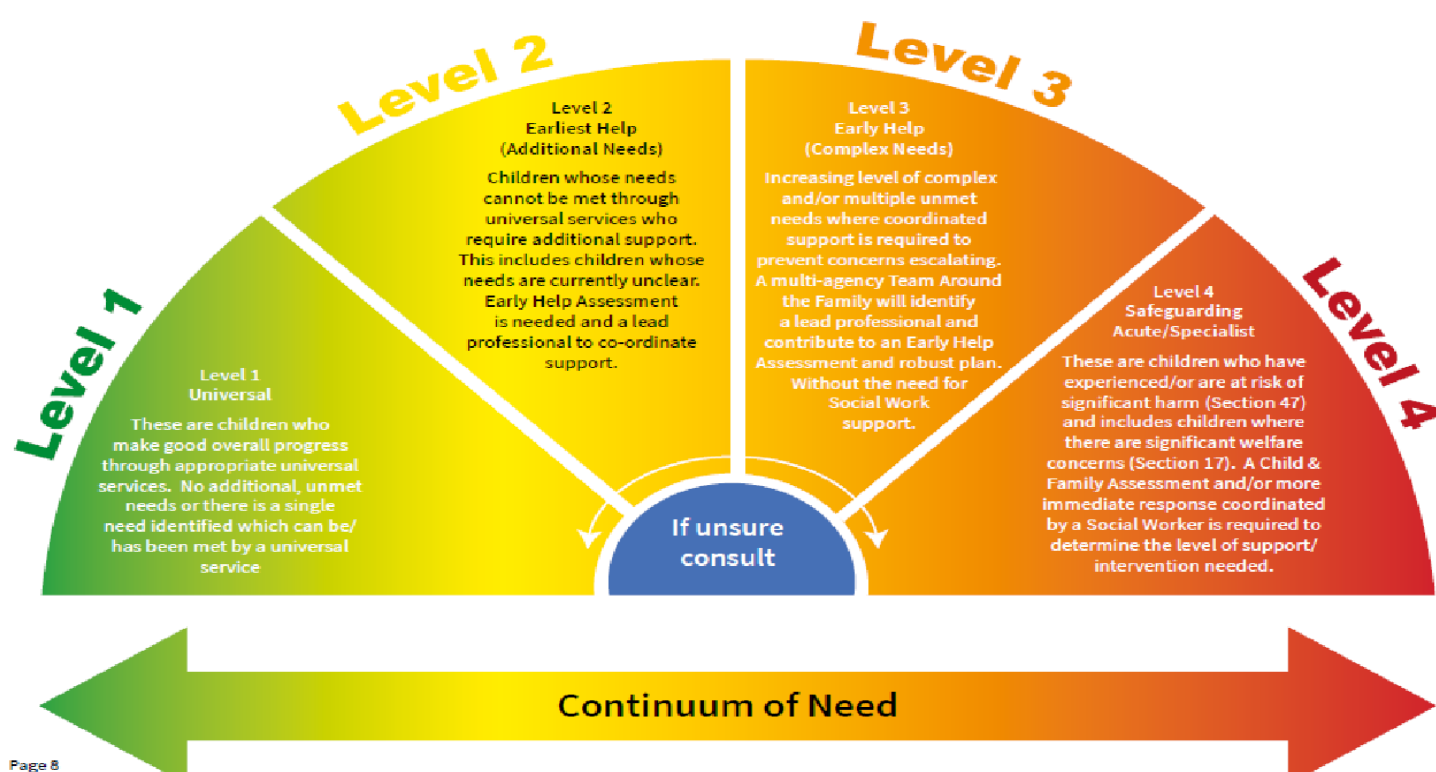
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Threshold of Need

Please note that Universal Services are available to families at any stage on the Continuum of Need Framework and that successful partnership working is facilitated by effective information sharing and transparent communication.

The model on this page is known as the 'windscreen' and provides a visual explanation of the Continuum of Need.



Appendix 3

Percentage	Category	Definition	Band
97% - 100%	Excellent	Attendance is excellent. Recognition given	A
95% - 96.9%	Acceptable	Attendance is acceptable	B
93% - 94.9%	Below Expected	Attendance needs to improve. Form teachers intervene to motivate students to reach their target.	C
90% - 92.9%	At Risk	Attendance is at risk of falling below 90%. This is when a student is classed as persistently absent. The pastoral team will intervene.	D
80% - 89.9%	Support	Pastoral team to intervene to improve attendance as the student is persistently absent from school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will be notified of concerns Meetings will be held to identify issues and support needed Penalty notices may be issued to parents External agencies may be considered to offer additional support 	E
50% - 79.9%	Intervention	Pastoral team and Attendance Enforcement Officers will intervene to improve attendance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent meetings will be held Penalty notices may be issued to parents Enforcement Officers may be deployed to improve attendance External agencies may be considered to offer additional support 	F
Under 50%	Severely Absent	Attendance is a serious concern and requires individualised plans to improve. Attendance Enforcement will work closely with the school and other social care agencies to improve attendance.	G

Example Interventions

Band Group	Attendance %	Breakdown of Interventions	
A	97-100%	Rewarding excellent attendance	<p>Your child's attendance is not a cause for concern Your child should be making good progress Your child's good attendance should be celebrated and rewarded. Pupils with 100% attendance, for a given half term, will be rewarded for their achievement.</p> <p>Your child's attendance is being closely monitored. You should consider contacting us to discuss your child's attendance. You should take steps to reduce any further absence which could put your child into the Red category</p> <p>Your child's attendance is of grave concern. Your child will have missed valuable time in school and may not be reaching their potential. Where medical intervention/reason explains an absence, attendance will be monitored closely post recovery. You will be contacted by your child's Pastoral Manager or the Attendance manager to discuss an action plan to improve attendance. The Local Authority Attendance Officer may be involved and in the case of no engagement this will be escalated to the Attendance Enforcement Team</p>
B	95-96.9%	Acceptable attendance	
C	93-94.9%	Letters home/phone calls/monitoring group	
D	90-92.9%	Escalation and tracking. Discussion with students	
E	80-89.9%	Weekly tracking with PM and liaison LA Attendance Officer Consider EPN fines Meetings with parents Early Help consideration Attendance panels Form time intervention / focus group	
F	50-79.9%	As above Focused work with parents/student Escalation where appropriate Multi-agency approach Early Help / multiagency intervention expectation SEND involvement School Nurse Rigorous tracking Welfare visits	
G	> 50	As above Attendance Officer leading on casework Consider prosecution where appropriate Aspirations Support Package Involve SENCO Work with outside agencies Welfare visits	

