



Stoke by Nayland C of E Primary School



St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

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| Date Approved and Minuted | MAT Board | 15 February 2024 |
| Date of Next Review | MAT Board | February 2027 |
| Date approved by Governors: | | |

Stoke By Nayland Cof E Primary School

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy has been written in conjunction with the DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' published in May 2022

2 Aims of the School

As a church school our school vision is deeply rooted in Christian narrative, the story of the Good Shepherd (John 10) and the Parable of The Lost Sheep (Luke 15, Matthew 18). The story encapsulates perfectly what we think is special about our school – just as the Shepherd gives his all to secure the safety of every last sheep and helps them to thrive, so our staff give their all to create a safe and loving environment for every child so that they can be the best that they can be. We prepare our children to go out into the world equipped with everything that is good for the good of all. We are an inclusive school, welcoming all children with respect, understanding and dignity. We have a duty of care to the children and will demonstrate the compassion and understanding that allows all children and adults within our school family and local community to flourish. In the context of this policy, this means that we aim to provide a safe and secure environment, in which children's individual needs are catered for and supported. It also means that we endeavour to provide children with the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe. We recognise the moral and statutory responsibility placed on all staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

'May the God of peace.. that great Shepherd of sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will' Hebrews 13:20-21

- 2.1 The Vision of *Stoke By Nayland C of E Primary School* is to inspire lifelong learners, guided by the example of Jesus. Our mission is to grow in faith, grow in our learning and grow our future world. We do this through our core values to be ambitious, to be kind and to give. This is integral to all of our policies and decision making as a school.
- 2.2 We aim to provide an excellent education in a healthy, safe, supportive learning environment, where people are valued and make positive contributions to the school community, and where pupils enjoy and achieve and go on to attain social and economic well-being as responsible, independent members of society.
- 2.3 This policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance recognizing that strong education can only be achieved and accessed when children are in school. In order to 'be ambitious' and 'grow in our learning', children need to be in school every day to access all of their learning and in turn, to 'grow their future world'.

3 Principles

- 3.1 The principles of this policy are based on a quote from Ofsted in their recent document on securing good attendance (Feb 2022) which says the school's role in attendance is to:

'listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate'

- 3.2 Improving attendance is everyone's business and, as a school, we understand that the barriers to attendance are wide and complex, both within school and outside of school, and can be specific to individual pupils and families. We also understand that to secure good attendance, school needs to be a calm, safe and supportive environment where all

pupils want to be and encourages them to be keen to learn. However, as this policy outlines, whilst we will support families and pupils who are struggling with their attendance, we will not tolerate it and will work with families to remove barriers and improve attendance.

4 The Law on School Attendance

- 4.1 The law entitles every children of compulsory age to an efficient, full time education suitable for their age and any special educational need they may have. **It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. All children have a *legal* right to a full-time education.** Where parents decide to have their children registered at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends the school regularly. Children must attend school every day except in a small number of allowable circumstances.

5 The Impact of Poor Attendance

- 5.1 Research shows that the children who have the **highest end of Year 6 results across the country have higher rates of attendance** compared with those children who have the lowest end of year 6 results. This is also true for pupils at the end of Year 11 in secondary schools. There is a strong link between poor attendance and poor progress or attainment in school. It is essential for pupils to attend school every day to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

6 Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

6.1 The School Day

- Gates open for school at **8.50am**. Children can be dropped off at the gate from this time
- School starts at **8.55am**
- The register closes at **9.15am**
- The afternoon register is taken at **1.10pm** after lunch
- The end of the school day is at **3.30pm**

6.2 Punctuality & Lateness

It is important that all children arrive at school equipped and ready to learn on time. Lessons start at school from 8.55am so when a child is late they miss vital parts of the morning sessions. Therefore, it is vital that all children are punctual to school every day.

- A child is marked as '**late**' (**L**) if they arrive after 8.55am but before 9.15am
- A child is marked as '**unauthorised late**' (**U**) if they arrive after 9.15am

6.3 Absence Reporting

It is the **parent's responsibility** to inform the school when their child is absent. All parents must **call the school between 8am and 9am** on 01206262418 to report their child as absent and to explain the reasons for their absence. This is to allow school staff to speak with families and support them where necessary with advice and to ensure the correct information is recorded.

Any parents who leave voicemails or email the school office will still receive a phone call following up their child's absence. For more information, see the section on the school's day to day processes.

6.4 Requesting Leaves of Absence in Advance

In the exceptional case where families know in advance of a reason why their child may not be able to attend school, they must request a 'Leave of Absence' form from the school office. This must be completed in its entirety, detailing the reasons for the leave request. **Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.**

The Headteacher will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. For example, a background context might be linked to the fact that, as a school, we serve an agricultural community.

Parents will receive a response in writing to say whether the leave is granted. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to decide the length of time a pupil can be away from school.

As Headteachers can only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, **it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.** The impact of missing a week of school is huge on children's learning and can severely impact their understanding of a topic or unit of work when they return to school; in turn affecting their outcomes.

If parents decide to not bring their child to school following a leave of absence being rejected, **this absence will be marked as unauthorised and could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.** Please see the section on Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) that explains the point at which FPNs will be issued.

If families request two or more unauthorised leaves per year, this will lead to an automatic referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

6.5 **Medical Appointments**

All medical appointments should be made outside of school hours. This includes dentist, optician and doctor appointments. On the rare occasion where this is not possible, for example a child needs to attend a specialist centre at a given time, parents must complete a 'leave of absence' request. A form for this can be collected from the school office.

When a pupil has a medical appointment, the child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. They should be brought back to school as soon as possible so that they do not miss out on any more learning than is necessary.

7 **Key Contacts for Attendance**

- 7.1 The information below outlines the key contacts who will be responsible for overseeing attendance and supporting families with improving attendance. All members of staff can be contacted via the school office on 01206262418 or via email at admin@sbn.suffolk.sch.uk Parents must indicate which member of the team they would like to discuss their child's attendance with and they will get back to you as soon as possible.

The named senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is: Kelly McGrath

The named person will lead the attendance team implementing this policy across the school. On the next page is an outlined summary of roles and responsibilities of this team:

| Name | Role | Responsibilities |
|---|--|--|
| Mrs McGrath | Headteacher Attendance Leader Attendance Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategically lead attendance - Work with families whose attendance is not improving - Implement this policy - Review leave of absence requests - Refer Fixed Penalty Notices to the LA |
| Mrs Batterham/Mrs Drew | Office Manager Attendance Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance registers - Receive phone calls from parents regarding absence - monthly and termly tracking of attendance - Send letters to parents where attendance is a concern |
| Mrs Batterham/Mrs Drew | Admin Assistant Attendance Admin Attendance Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily calls and check ins - First day of absence calls and late texts - Daily and weekly logging of attendance and lateness - Receive phone calls from parents regarding absence |
| Miss Thorn Mrs Locke | Teaching Assistant SEND specialist Attendance Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend fortnightly attendance meetings - Support SEND families with attendance - Weekly / Daily calling for some families - Attend fortnightly attendance meetings - Support families with attendance where mental health is a barrier - Weekly / Daily calling for some families |
| Mrs Locke | Higher Level Teaching Assistant Pupil Premium Champion Attendance Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend fortnightly attendance meetings - Support pupil premium families with attendance (free school meals/service/LAC) - Weekly / Daily calling for some families |
| Mrs Conway Miss Durrant Mrs Edwards | Class teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold half termly meeting with families where attendance is a concern - Refer families to headteacher where attendance is not improving. |

8 The School's Day to Day Processes for Managing Attendance

8.1 The approach in this policy is focused on being ambitious for all our pupils' attendance. This means that effective day-to-day processes are set up to ensure that all absences are **tracked and followed up**.

8.2 Managing Lateness

Lateness will be treated in the same way as attendance in this school as we are

ambitious in our learning and in achieving our goals. The school day starts at 8.40am and all children who arrive at school **after this time are late.**

- A child is marked as **'late' (L)** if they arrive after 8.55am but before 9.15am
- A child is marked as **'unauthorised late' (U)** if they arrive after 9.15am

Each time a pupil is late to school, parents will receive a message from the school to inform them that their child was late to school today. If a pattern of lateness is identified, staff will work with families to support them with getting to school on time. If this persists, school staff will follow the processes described in the Attendance Outline in Appendix 1.

8.3 **Parents contacting the school when their child is absent**

It is the **parent's responsibility** to inform the school when their child is absent. All parents must **call the school between 8am and 9am** on 01206 262418 to report their child as absent and to explain the reasons for their absence. This is to allow school staff to speak with families and support them where necessary with advice and to ensure the correct information is recorded.

Any parents who leave voicemails or email the school office will still receive a phone call following up their child's absence. For more information, see the section on the school's day-to-day processes.

On the first day of absence, either the office manager or the admin assistant will contact parents byphone to discuss their child's absence. The reasons given will be recorded on our electronic system and may be used in future meetings with families where attendance is causing concern.

If no reason has been provided by the parent and the parent has not contacted the school or has not answered the phone, this will be followed up on day 2. If there is still no contact from parents by the end of day 2, this will lead to a home visit to ensure safeguarding of the child.

8.4 **Following up unexplained absences**

Office staff will check the registers daily for any unexplained absences and contact parents, even if the child has returned to school. If no suitable reason is given within 3 working days, this will be recorded on the electronic system and marked as an unauthorised absence. See Appendix 3 for the attendance codes and their definitions. School staff will contact other relevant agencies where appropriate, for example family support workers or social workers, and may complete a safeguarding referral if they have concerns.

8.5 **Emergency Contacts**

The school will aim to hold at least 2 emergency contacts for each pupil. On the rare occasion where the school is unable to contact the first emergency contact regarding attendance, they will ring all contacts listed to ascertain the reason for the child's absence as well as to ensure safeguarding of the child.

8.6 Informing parents about their child's attendance

Starting at the end of the Autumn term, each half term, all parents will receive in writing the attendance for their child. This will have a breakdown in days to support parents in better understanding how many days the child has been absent from school as well as the impact on their learning. See Appendix 1 for further information.

For pupils where attendance falls below **95%**, parents should normally receive an additional letter outlining this in the week it happens. This will show that **the child's attendance is at risk**.

For pupils where attendance falls below **93%**, parents should normally receive an additional letter outlining this in the week it happens. This will show that **the child's attendance is at high risk**.

For pupils where attendance falls below **90%**, parents should normally receive an additional letter outlining this in the week it happens. This will show that **the child's attendance is now considered persistently absent** and will contain information about what happens next to support the family in improving attendance.

8.7 Parent Attendance Meetings

Schools are expected to hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school consider to be vulnerable, or who are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement in the school. These are designed to be supportive where staff will listen to the barriers to attendance, both at school and at home, and will work with families to find ways to tackle these. These meetings may be done over the 'phone or included as part of another meeting if appropriate.

When a child's **attendance drops below 93%, an initial parent attendance meeting should normally be set up**. These will be regular and will discuss the child's attendance, share attendance information and patterns identified and support families to improve attendance.

When a child's **attendance drops below 90%, they are considered persistently absent and should normally be allocated an 'attendance key worker'**. This key worker will hold regular parent attendance meetings to share progress on attendance and support families to improve attendance rapidly. For more information, see the section on the school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence.

8.8 Support from wider agencies

Poor attendance is usually an indicator that the family is facing a range of wide and complex situations. Through effective parent contact and meetings, school staff may consider that the pupil or family need additional support from wider agencies beyond the school. This may include, but not limited to:

- Mental Health Support Team
- Emotional Wellbeing Hub
- Early Help Team (through a Common Assessment Framework – CAF)
- SEND services like SES and Communication and Language Team

- Speech and Language Team
- Safeguarding referral (MARF)

Through a robust procedure, school staff will be able to identify pupils who need support from wider agencies as quickly as possible and will make the necessary referrals in a timely manner.

8.9 **Supporting pupils back into school**

On some occasions, where a pupil has had a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, school staff will provide support to build children's confidence and support them with bridging gaps on what they have missed. This will allow them to have the smoothest return to school and limit the possibility of additional absence due to being anxious about returning to school.

9 **Promoting and Incentivising Good Attendance**

9.1 There are many children at Stoke By Nayland Cof E Primary School who have really strong attendance. As a school, we promote and reward good attendance in many ways – a summary of these is below:

- An attendance section on our newsletter each week
- An attendance breakdown by year group shared with parents and children each week where a year group winner is identified
- Attendance assemblies on Monday used to celebrate the year group winner and to identify pupils with improved attendance
- Certificates for pupils who have 100% attendance each half term
- Certificates / stickers for pupils who have improved in their attendance
- Sharing attendance updates with parents regularly for their child
- Attendance information shared with all new starters, including new Reception cohorts
- Attendance cohort sessions for parents where attendance is a concern
- Regular attendance letters sent home
- Attendance discussed at every parents' evening and on end of year reports

9.2 As a school, promoting good attendance is key to ensuring that all stakeholders understand the importance of attendance. It is also vital to celebrate the pupils who have strong attendance and reward these accordingly.

10 **The School's Strategy for using attendance data**

10.1 Through using data to target the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most, the school is well equipped with information to drive continued attendance improvements. Regular, thorough and robust data analysis allows the school to identify trends, patterns and most importantly plan for early intervention. Poor attendance is a habit and it is vital that schools act quickly to reduce the likelihood of this becoming a long-term habit.

10.2 The school’s strategy for using attendance data is outlined in the table below:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Daily | Identify all ‘Lates’ and pupils who are absent and check reasons Check pupils who have given no reasons over 2 days |
| Weekly | Attendance report shared with attendance team and class teachers Individual PA report to be updated to track patterns Generate class attendance and share with parents and staff so staff can discuss these with pupils Key data / trends shared with leaders with responsibility for areas of the school for example the SENDCO, pupil premium champion and DSLs |
| Fortnightly | Hold ‘Attendance Team Meetings’ where daily and weekly data is shared and reviewed to identify key next steps and actions Use this to identify support and plan specific strategies for individuals and pupil groups Send parent letters for all pupils who have fallen below 95%, 93% and 90% Use this information for parent meetings where applicable |
| Half termly | Write to all parents to share attendance information Use data to analyse trends for pupil groups and individuals Generate attendance breakdown for governors and staff alongside national benchmarks to enable comparison and plan for areas of improvement. Measure impact of interventions through monitoring improvements in data. |
| Termly | Share attendance information with parents at parents evening Share more detailed attendance analysis with attendance governor Share statutory data with the MAT |
| Yearly | Analyse attendance summary for the year and review ASP attendance information to identify any further trends or patterns for whole school |

11 The School’s Strategy for Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

11.1 As explained in the principles section of this policy, the strategy that this policy tasks is based on a quote from Ofsted in their recent document on securing good attendance (Feb 2022) which says the school’s role in attendance is to:

‘listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate’

11.2 At Stoke By Nayalnd CofE Primary School we work on building strong relationships with families as we know this is key to improving attendance. We treat all pupils and parents with dignity and respect and all staff model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school.

11.3 We will listen to families and truly understand the barriers to attendance and work with them to remove these. All of our strategies will focus on listening and understanding, building on support for our persistently absent families. We will always work with families and support them in many ways, but we will not tolerate poor attendance. The

support process is detailed in Appendix 2.

11.4 The School's strategy for reducing persistent absence is built on the following:

- All persistently absent pupils and severely absent pupils will be allocated an 'attendance key worker' as soon as they fall below 90% attendance. (For pupils above 90% who are at risk of dropping below 90%, please see section 10 and Appendix 1)
- The attendance key worker will be the named person responsible for ensuring raised attendance.
- Fortnightly, the attendance team will meet and will allocate key workers and parents will be informed who their key worker is. During this meeting, an action plan will be drawn for that child.
- The attendance key worker will book a family meeting with the family to listen, understand and discuss barriers to attendance and will support the family in raising attendance. They will also collate pupil voice about what they feel the barriers to attendance may be.
- Every day, their attendance will be monitored and the key worker will ring home when the child is absent to discuss reasons for this and support the family in bringing them into school as quickly as possible.
- Fortnightly, the persistent absence action plan will be reviewed during attendance meetings and data will be monitored to indicate improvements or any patterns and trends. These will be shared with families to ensure that progress is seen and celebrated.
- On the occasions where illness is being reported as a reason for absence, if attendance is not improving following support, the school will ask to see medical evidence for absence. Any absence where medical evidence is not provided will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Support will be sought from external agencies where appropriate (see section 8.8)

11.5 **When support will be formalised**

Whilst schools will aim to be supportive in raising attendance of persistently absent pupils, if, despite all these actions, attendance is not improving after 15 school days, a formal process will begin. This will involve:

- a formal parenting contract will be put in place and will be shared in writing with families. This will outline the targets and goals and how the school will support as well as the expectations of the family. See paragraph 98 of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance document for further details.
- attendance information will be shared with parents weekly so they are always up to date with their child's attendance
- a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be completed to gain further support in raising attendance
- where attendance is severe (below 50%) a safeguarding referral will be completed as

the school will have concerns around neglect for the child.

- a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued in some cases (see next section).
- if none of the above has not been successful in raising attendance, an Education Supervision Order will provide formal, legal intervention. See paragraph 107-109 of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance document for further details.
- in the very rare circumstance that none of the above improves overall attendance, prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort. This is when all informal and formal support or legal intervention has failed. Only local authorities can prosecute parents but will seek evidence from the school about the support measures put in place.

12 Fixed Penalty Notices

12.1 To promote good attendance at school, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) will be used in line with Suffolk's Code of Conduct. The Working Together to Improve School Attendance document outlines that **FPNs are used by schools where parents have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school that they are registered in.** The Education Attendance Service aim to support schools/ Academies and parents/carers to improve pupil attendance but Suffolk County Council will issue a Penalty Notice once a referral from a school has been received when:

- **Unauthorised absence has occurred from school** and limited improvements have been made despite intervention and support. **This can include being persistently late.**
- One off instances of irregular attendance where a leave has been taken during term time without the permission of the school. This includes family holidays during term time and includes when these have been requested but not authorised by the school. **If an unauthorised absence occurs for more than 3 consecutive days, a fixed penalty notice referral will be completed and a fine issued.**
- Where **parents are stopped during a truancy sweep** and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- Where a parent allows their child to be present in a public space during school hours without reasonable justification **during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion.**

The law says that if children of compulsory school age are absent from school without good reason they are committing an offence and their parents or carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrate's Court.

12.2 Payment of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

A penalty notice will be issued to **each parent** or carer for **each child.**

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid directly to the Local Authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice.

If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 days, the Local Authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

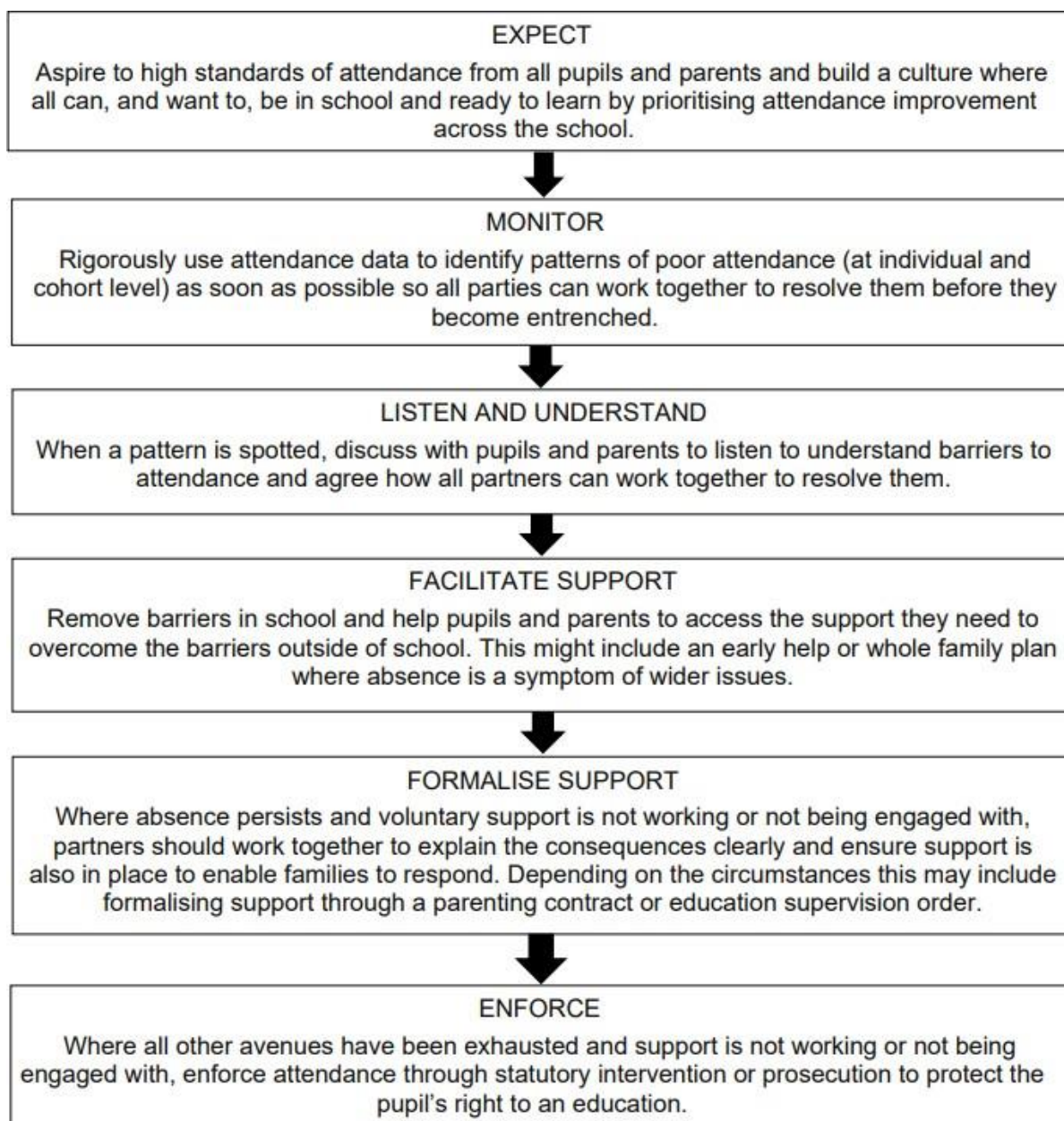
There is no right to appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

Contact should be made with the school if you wish to discuss a fixed penalty notice you have received.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Outline for Parents

| Number of days absent | Attendance Percentage | Impact | School Actions |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|
| 0-2 days absent in a school year | 99% to 100% | <p>Attendance levels are Excellent</p> <p>Your child is accessing all learning opportunities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebrate strong attendance in Monday's Collective Worship - Positive encouragement and awards for pupils and classes - Update parents on their child's attendance termly |
| 2.5-9 days absent in a school year | 96% to 98% | <p>Attendance levels are Good</p> <p>Your child has missed very few learning opportunities</p> | |
| 9.5-17 days absent in a school year | 93% to 95% | <p>Attendance levels are at risk</p> <p>Your child is at risk of underachieving due to missed learning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance letter sent home informing parents attendance is at risk - Weekly check-in by member of staff for pupil and family - Monitor attendance weekly |
| 18-25 days absent in a school year | 90% to 92% | <p>Attendance levels are at high risk</p> <p>Your child is at risk of high underachievement due to missed learning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance letter sent home informing parents attendance is at high risk - Attendance support meeting for parents, pupils and staff - Weekly check-in by member of staff for pupil and family - Identify support for pupil and family needed to improve attendance |
| Over 25 days absent in a school year | Below 90% | <p>Attendance levels are not good</p> <p>Your child is at risk of serious underachievement and is now considered persistently absent</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance letter sent home informing parents attendance is now not good and considered persistently absent - Attendance support meeting for parents - Pupil and family allocated one member of staff to support with improving attendance - Daily check-in by member of staff for pupil and family - Family action plan to be considered if necessary |

Appendix 2 – How The School Will Work With Families



Appendix 3 – Attendance Codes for Absence

Authorised Absence Codes

| Code | What the code stands for | Additional information |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Code I | Illness | Not medical or dental appointment |
| Code C | Authorised Leave (not holiday) | Agreed in advance through the leave of absence process |
| Code H | Authorised Holiday | Agreed in advance through the leave of absence process |
| Code L | Late | Before register closes |
| Code E | Exclusion | |
| Code M | Medical Appointment | |
| Code R | Religious Observance | |
| Code T | Traveller absence | |

Unauthorised Absence Codes

| Code | What the code stands for | Additional information |
|---------------|--|---|
| Code U | Unauthorised Late | After register closes |
| Code G | Unauthorised Holiday | Denied in advance through the leave of absence process (or when not informed) |
| Code N | No reason given at the time of absence | No more than 5 working days and then converted to Code O |
| Code O | No reason established | |

Attending Approved Educational Activities

| Code | What the code stands for | Additional information |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Code D | Dual Registered at Another School | |
| Code B | Offsite educational activity | Y6 taster days at secondary school (as part of transition) School to contact to check pupils have arrived. If not, then usual absence processes follow |
| Code J | Interview with prospective employers | To enable Y5/6 pupils to visit a secondary school To enable other pupils to visit schools for a tour to support transfer to new school |
| Code P | Supervised Sporting Activity | For pupils taking part in national sports activities |
| Code V | Educational visit or trip | School organised trips and visits (including residential) |

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| Code Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed e.g. snow day Transport provided is not available Widespread disruption to travel Pupil in custody |
|---------------|---|---|

Administering Codes

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Code X | Non-compulsory school age not required to be in school | Agreed part time school placement for 4 year olds. |
| Code Z | Prospective pupil not an admission register | To enable schools to set up pupils before they arrive in September |
| Code # | Planned whole or partial school closure | Half terms Bank holidays PD Days |