	Vanguard Learning Trust *The Vanguard Learning Trust is a group of local primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon. We strive to be a Trust that serves its local community and is pioneering in its approach to broadening our students' lives. We believe in effective teaching which allows our students to shine both in and out of the classroom and that intellectual curiosity is at the core of every learning experience. Whilst schools in the Trust have their own ethos and values, they share the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential and life is a journey of discovery.*

Attendance policy
Part A: Trust-wide

Summer 2026

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Part A: Trust-wide

Section 1: Overview

1.1 Aims

This policy demonstrates Vanguard Learning Trust's commitment to securing excellent attendance across all schools. The Trust's approach is rooted in statutory guidance, evidence-informed practice and shared learning from local and national contexts. The Trust recognises that regular school attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, educational achievement, wellbeing, positive relationships and future life opportunities.
Trust schools will:

- set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils;
- promote the benefits of regular attendance for academic progress, wellbeing, belonging, social development and future opportunities;
- recognise that poor attendance may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns, unmet needs or barriers to learning;
- identify, understand and remove barriers to attendance as early as possible;
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence, through early, proportionate and targeted intervention;
- ensure all pupils can access their full entitlement to education;
- act promptly when patterns of absence or lateness emerge, recognising that regular attendance is essential to ensure pupils can access a coherent, well-sequenced curriculum over time;
- work in partnership with families in a way that is respectful, supportive, empathetic and solution-focused;
- provide timely, targeted and inclusive interventions for pupils most at risk of poor attendance;
- support punctuality across the school day, reinforcing the importance of arriving at school and to lessons on time; and
- promote a culture in which attendance is understood as everyone's responsibility and every child's right.

The Trust is committed to building inclusive school communities where pupils feel safe, valued, connected and supported to attend and thrive.

1.2 Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance in *'Working together to improve school attendance'*, which applies from 19 August 2024 (click here), as well as *'School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures'* (click here). 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 (click here)
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002 (click here)
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (click here)
- The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, along with the 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments (click here)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (click here)

The policy also reflects:

- School census guidance (click here)
- *'Keeping children safe in education'* (click here)
- *'Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools*' (click here)

1.3 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

1.4 Policy monitoring arrangements

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed through the Trust's wider quality assurance and school improvement processes. The policy will be reviewed in response to updated guidance from the Department

for Education or local authority, and at a minimum annually by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school. Following review, Part A of the policy will be approved by the board of trustees and Part B of the policy will be reviewed by the school's local governing body. In addition to Trust-wide quality assurance activity, school leaders will regularly review how attendance systems, processes and culture reflect:

- high expectations for attendance and punctuality;
- positive school culture, belonging and inclusion;
- effective family engagement strategies;
- accurate attendance recording and effective use of management information systems;
- early identification and removal of barriers to attendance;
- effective support for vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); and
- current Ofsted expectations relating to attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and inclusion.

The Trust will quality assure attendance systems, culture and practice across all schools through its wider school improvement and safeguarding processes.

Section 2: Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Attendance is everyone's business

Promoting good attendance is a shared responsibility across the Trust. Creating a culture in which pupils attend regularly, arrive on time and feel a sense of belonging requires a consistent whole-school approach and strong partnership working with families and external agencies. All staff have a role to play in promoting positive attendance. Staff should recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider need or vulnerability and should respond in a way that is supportive, consistent and professionally curious. The Trust seeks to ensure that this culture is consistently understood, modelled and reinforced by all staff.

2.2 Trustees and the local governing bodies

The trustees and local governing body (LGB) of each school are responsible for:

- setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality across the school community;
- promoting a culture in which good attendance is valued, recognised and understood as fundamental to safeguarding and educational success;
- ensuring the school fulfils its statutory duties in relation to attendance, including:
    - recording attendance accurately;
    - maintaining appropriate attendance registers;
    - sharing required attendance information with the Department for Education and local authority; and
    - working effectively with relevant partners to remove barriers to attendance;
- ensuring attendance is appropriately prioritised within safeguarding, SEND, inclusion and pupil premium arrangements;
- ensuring the school has effective systems in place for identifying, monitoring and improving attendance;
- ensuring sufficient resources and staffing are allocated to attendance improvement work;
- making sure school leaders analyse attendance data regularly and use this to identify patterns, trends and groups requiring additional support;
- holding school leaders to account for the effectiveness of attendance systems, interventions and outcomes;
- ensuring attendance support is inclusive, proportionate and responsive to pupils' individual needs;
- monitoring the attendance of vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known to social care;
- ensuring attendance procedures are clearly communicated to parents/carers and are written in accessible, parent-friendly language;
- supporting the sharing of effective attendance practice across the Trust through attendance forums and school improvement activity;
- ensuring staff receive regular attendance training appropriate to their roles; and
- reviewing attendance data, trends and improvement priorities on a regular basis.

Governors and trustees should seek assurance not only regarding attendance outcomes, but also regarding the quality, consistency and impact of attendance practice and culture across the school.

2.3 The headteacher

The headteacher of each school is responsible for:

- ensuring the effective implementation of this policy;
- establishing and maintaining a culture in which good attendance is expected, promoted and celebrated;
- ensuring attendance is prioritised as part of the school's safeguarding, inclusion and pastoral responsibilities;
- ensuring all staff understand their role in promoting attendance;
- monitoring attendance data regularly and reporting this to governors and trustees;
- ensuring attendance concerns are identified and addressed promptly;
- overseeing the effectiveness of attendance interventions and support strategies;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate professional development relating to attendance, safeguarding, family engagement and barriers to attendance;
- working with parents/carers and external agencies to remove barriers preventing regular attendance;
- ensuring pupils with SEND, medical needs or mental health needs receive appropriate support to maximise attendance;
- communicating high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality clearly and consistently to pupils and parents/carers;
- ensuring the school works effectively with the local authority and other relevant agencies where attendance concerns arise;
- authorising fixed penalty notices or other legal interventions, where appropriate and in accordance with local authority procedures; and
- ensuring statutory attendance data and information is shared appropriately with the local authority and Department for Education.

The headteacher will ensure attendance practice is underpinned by a supportive, relational and inclusive approach whilst maintaining clear expectations and accountability.

2.4 The Trust attendance lead

The Trust attendance lead is responsible for:

- developing and maintaining the Trust-wide attendance policy and related guidance;
- ensuring Trust attendance procedures reflect current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice;
- working with relevant school staff to monitor attendance trends, patterns and risks across the Trust;
- supporting schools to improve attendance through advice, challenge, quality assurance and targeted support;
- supporting schools in identifying groups and cohorts at increased risk of poor attendance, including pupils with intersecting vulnerabilities;
- facilitating Trust-wide attendance networks, forums and professional development;
- supporting schools with complex attendance cases and strategic attendance planning;
- promoting evidence-informed and relational attendance practice across the Trust;
- sharing effective practice and resources between schools; and
- working collaboratively with school leaders and external partners to improve attendance outcomes.

The Trust attendance lead is Adam Walthaus and can be contacted via emailing awalthaus@vlt.org.uk

2.5 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school

Each school will identify a designated senior leader responsible for attendance (sometimes referred to as the attendance champion or designated attendance lead). This leader is responsible for:

- leading and championing attendance improvement across the school;
- promoting a consistent culture of high expectations, belonging and inclusion;
- ensuring attendance systems and procedures are implemented consistently;
- monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly;
- identifying pupils and groups requiring additional attendance support;
- ensuring early intervention takes place where attendance concerns emerge;

- overseeing attendance interventions and evaluating their impact;
- working collaboratively with pupils, families and external agencies to improve attendance;
- ensuring attendance communication with families is respectful, clear and solution-focused;
- coordinating reintegration and attendance support plans where required;
- ensuring appropriate referrals are made to safeguarding, SEND or external services where attendance concerns indicate wider need;
- supporting staff to apply attendance processes consistently; and
- providing regular attendance updates to senior leaders, governors and the Trust.

The name and contact details of the designated senior leader responsible for attendance can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

2.6 School attendance team

The attendance team in each school is responsible for:

- monitoring daily attendance and punctuality;
- identifying and following up absence concerns promptly;
- analysing attendance data and identifying emerging patterns;
- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- communicating with families regarding attendance concerns;
- arranging and contributing to attendance meetings and support plans;
- working closely with pastoral, safeguarding and SEND teams to support pupils with barriers to attendance;
- supporting reintegration following periods of absence;
- escalating attendance concerns in line with school procedures; and
- supporting the implementation of attendance improvement strategies.

The names and contact details of relevant attendance staff can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

2.7 Staff responsible for completing registers

Staff responsible for completing attendance registers are responsible for:

- completing attendance registers accurately and on time;
- recording attendance using the correct national attendance codes;
- following school procedures where attendance concerns arise;
- reporting safeguarding concerns linked to absence or punctuality promptly; and
- ensuring any amendments to attendance records are made in accordance with statutory requirements.

Further details regarding registration procedures can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

2.8 Office staff

Designated office staff are responsible for:

- receiving and recording absence notifications from parents/carers;
- ensuring unexplained absence is followed up in line with school procedures;
- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- communicating attendance information to relevant staff; and
- supporting effective communication between home and school regarding attendance matters.

2.9 Parents/carers

For the purpose of this policy, the term ‘parent/carer’ refers to:

- all natural parents, whether married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and/or
- any person who has day-to-day responsibility for the care of a child or young person.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time;
- notify the school on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence, unless otherwise agreed by the school;
- provide clear reasons for absence and an expected date of return;
- work collaboratively with the school to address attendance concerns;
- attend meetings and engage with support offered to improve attendance where appropriate;

- avoid arranging holidays or unnecessary appointments during term time;
- provide the school with up-to-date emergency contact details; and
- seek support at an early stage if barriers to attendance arise.

Parents/carers play a vital role in promoting positive attendance and helping children establish good attendance habits for life.

2.10 Students

Students are expected to:

- attend school regularly and on time;
- attend all timetabled lessons and registration periods;
- engage positively with support offered to improve attendance;
- communicate with staff where they are experiencing difficulties affecting attendance, where appropriate; and
- contribute positively to a culture in which good attendance is valued.

In sixth form settings, pupils may additionally be expected to follow specific absence reporting procedures outlined in Part B of this policy.

Section 3: Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

Each school will maintain an attendance register and record the attendance of all pupils at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session, in accordance with statutory requirements. Attendance registers will record whether pupils are:

- present;
- attending an approved educational activity;
- absent; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Schools will use the national attendance and absence codes in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (click here) and current Department for Education guidance. Attendance registers are legal documents and must be completed accurately, consistently and in a timely manner.

3.1.1 Amendments to the attendance register

Any amendment made 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; and
- the name and role of the person making the amendment.

All amendments will be made in accordance with statutory requirements and school procedures. **Appendix 1** outlines the attendance and absence codes used by the Department for Education.

3.1.2 Other information

The school will also record:

- for students of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not;
- the nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity;
- the nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; and
- relevant attendance information required for safeguarding or statutory reporting purposes.

Schools are required to share attendance data securely with the Department for Education and local authorities in line with statutory expectations. Schools will retain attendance registers and related records for a minimum of 6 years in accordance with statutory requirements and data retention guidance. Timings of the school day and registration arrangements can be found in **Part B**.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school of the reason for their child's absence on the first day of absence as soon as reasonably practicable and in line with the procedures outlined in **Part B** of this policy. Unless otherwise agreed by the school, parents/carers should continue to notify the school on each subsequent day of absence. Where a pupil is absent due to illness, the school will normally authorise the absence unless there is a genuine concern regarding the authenticity of the illness. Where appropriate, the school may request medical evidence to support the absence. This may include:

- an appointment card;
- prescription information;
- prescribed medication;
- a doctor's note; or
- other suitable evidence.

Schools will not routinely request medical evidence unnecessarily and will consider the individual circumstances of each case. Where the school is not satisfied that the reason for absence is genuine, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Parents/carers will normally be informed where this is the case. Where absence due to illness becomes frequent or patterns emerge, the school will consider whether additional support, assessment of need or safeguarding action is required.

3.3 Planned absence

Medical and dental appointments should, wherever possible, be arranged outside the school day. Where this is not possible, parents/carers should notify the school in advance and pupils should only be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary. Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made in advance and in accordance with the procedures outlined in **Part B** of this policy. The headteacher will determine whether a request for leave of absence should be authorised in line with statutory guidance and the circumstances outlined in Section 4 of this policy.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Promoting punctuality is an important part of improving attendance and establishing positive routines for learning. A pupil who arrives late before the register closes will be recorded as late using the appropriate attendance code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be recorded as absent for the session using the appropriate attendance code. Schools will monitor patterns of lateness and work with pupils and families where punctuality concerns emerge. Persistent lateness may result in further intervention or support. Further details regarding punctuality procedures and responses can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where a pupil expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without explanation, the school will follow up the absence promptly and proportionately. This may include:

- contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence to establish the reason for absence;
- making reasonable attempts to contact all emergency contacts provided;
- identifying whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised;
- recording the correct attendance code as soon as the reason for absence is established;
- continuing to follow up unexplained absence where necessary;
- considering safeguarding concerns where a pupil cannot be located or where absence is unusual;
- making referrals to relevant services or agencies where appropriate;
- offering support to remove barriers to attendance; and/or
- considering formal intervention where support has not been successful or engaged with.

Where a pupil is missing from education or there are concerns regarding their safety or welfare, schools will follow their safeguarding and children missing education procedures and may involve the local authority, police or children's social care where appropriate. Attendance concerns will be considered alongside wider safeguarding, wellbeing and contextual information.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Schools will regularly communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality. This may include:

- attendance percentages;
- information regarding patterns of absence or lateness;

- communication regarding attendance concerns;
- invitations to attendance meetings; and
- recognition of positive attendance or improvements in attendance.

Schools will seek to ensure attendance communication is clear, supportive, accessible and solution-focused. Further details regarding attendance reporting arrangements can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

Section 4: Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only authorise absence from school in line with statutory regulations and Department for Education guidance, including the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'. Leave of absence during term time will only be granted where there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are expected to be rare, specific to the individual case, and not a norm. The headteacher may authorise absence for:

- participation in a regulated performance or regulated employment;
- attendance at an interview;
- study leave in relation to public examinations (where appropriate);
- a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable agreed as part of a support plan; and
- exceptional circumstances, as determined by the headteacher.

4.2 Granting a leave of absence

Leave of absence is granted at the discretion of the headteacher, taking into account the individual circumstances of each request, the pupil's attendance history and any wider safeguarding or welfare considerations. Each school will define and apply the meaning of 'exceptional circumstances' in a consistent way, as outlined in **Part B** of this policy. In line with statutory guidance, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday. Where a request is refused and absence is subsequently taken, this will normally be recorded as unauthorised. The school may request evidence to support any application for leave of absence where appropriate. Requests should be made in advance using the school's agreed procedures, details of which are set out in **Part B** of this policy. Where a pupil is over compulsory school age (for example in sixth form), requests for leave of absence may be made by the pupil or by a parent/carer with whom they normally live, in line with school procedures.

4.3 Other valid reasons for authorised absence

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons, in line with statutory guidance:

- illness (including physical and mental health-related illness);
- medical or dental appointments that cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours;
- religious observance where the day is set apart by the relevant religious body;
- travel for occupational purposes, including for families who are recognised as travelling for work (for example, showmen, travellers or other occupational travellers), where agreed with the school;
- unavoidable circumstances that prevent attendance, including but not limited to:
    - disruption to travel caused by emergency or severe weather;
    - school site closure;
    - lack of access arrangements where the local authority is responsible; or
    - other circumstances beyond the control of the pupil or family.

Schools will consider each case individually and will apply authorisation decisions consistently, fairly and in line with statutory expectations.

4.4 Sanctions

The Trust is committed to ensuring that attendance concerns are addressed through a graduated response, which prioritises early help, support and engagement with families. Formal sanctions will only be considered where support has been offered and either not engaged with or not effective. Attendance processes are not intended to be punitive in isolation. Meetings, letters and interventions are part of a wider support pathway designed to improve attendance. Decisions regarding escalation will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual circumstances of the pupil and family.

4.4.1 Notices to improve

Where the national threshold for persistent absence or unauthorised absence has been met and support is deemed appropriate, but engagement with support has not been sustained, the school will normally issue a Notice to Improve where support has not been engaged with and attendance remains a concern. A Notice to Improve will be issued in accordance with the relevant local authority code of conduct and will include:

- details of the pupil's attendance and any relevant absence patterns;
- information on statutory parental responsibility for attendance;
- details of support already offered or provided;
- further support available to address attendance barriers;
- a clear improvement period, typically between 3 and 6 weeks;
- the expected level of improvement required; and
- a warning that failure to improve attendance within the agreed timeframe may result in further legal intervention, including a penalty notice.

4.4.2 Penalty notices

Penalty notices may be issued by the headteacher (or authorised staff), the local authority or the police in line with local authority codes of conduct. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will ensure that:

- the national threshold for consideration has been met (typically 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period);
- appropriate support has been offered or considered;
- a Notice to Improve has been considered where appropriate; and
- issuing a penalty notice is the most appropriate and proportionate response in the individual case.

Penalty notices will be issued in line with local authority procedures and current statutory guidance. Where issued, penalty notices are payable to the local authority. Current national framework levels are:

- First penalty notice: £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days;
- Second penalty notice (same pupil within 3 years): £160 if paid within 28 days;
- Third penalty notice within a 3-year period: no further penalty notice will be issued; alternative legal action will be considered.

Penalty notices may also be issued in relation to unauthorised absence during exclusion periods where a pupil is present in a public place during restricted days, in line with statutory regulations. All decisions regarding penalty notices will be made in line with the principles of fairness, proportionality and equality, including consideration of duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Section 5: Monitoring attendance

5.1 The Trust's approach

The Trust adopts a graduated model of attendance support and intervention, aligned with a three-tier approach of universal, targeted and intensive support. This reflects national best practice and the expectation that attendance improvement should be rooted in early identification, proportionate response and sustained partnership with families.

- **Universal support** focuses on creating a strong culture of belonging, high expectations, positive relationships, clear routines and consistent messaging about attendance. Attendance is promoted as part of the school's wider ethos and personal development offer.
- **Targeted support** is provided for pupils whose attendance begins to fall or who are at risk of persistent absence. This includes early identification, family engagement, mentoring, attendance plans, and personalised support strategies.
- **Intensive support** is implemented for pupils experiencing persistent or severe absence. This may involve multi-agency working, individualised reintegration planning, formal attendance contracts and the use of statutory interventions where appropriate.

This graduated approach ensures that support is responsive, proportionate and focused on removing barriers to attendance as early as possible.

5.2 Strategies for promoting attendance

Each school will implement a range of strategies to promote and improve attendance. These will be tailored to context and set out in **Part B** of this policy. Strategies may include:

- clear and consistent communication of attendance expectations to pupils and families;
- celebration and recognition of good and improved attendance;

- early identification of attendance concerns using daily and weekly data;
- structured family engagement, including attendance meetings and support discussions;
- mentoring, pastoral support or key adult check-ins for pupils at risk of poor attendance;
- targeted interventions for specific cohorts or year groups;
- use of attendance contracts or agreements where appropriate;
- coordinated support with SEND, safeguarding and pastoral teams;
- use of external agencies and local authority support where required; and
- removal of in-school barriers to attendance where identified.

Schools will ensure that attendance communication is consistent, relational in tone and focused on support and partnership.

5.3 Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

Schools will provide appropriate support for pupils who are absent or returning following a period of absence. This includes pupils with medical needs, mental health difficulties, SEND, or other complex barriers to attendance. Support may include:

- phased or supported reintegration back into school;
- temporary adjustments to timetables where appropriate;
- additional pastoral or key adult support;
- coordination with external agencies and health services;
- reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND;
- strategies to rebuild confidence, belonging and routine; and
- targeted academic or emotional support to reduce the impact of missed learning.

Where a pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and attendance becomes a concern, or where barriers to attendance are linked to their needs, the school will consider whether the local authority should be informed and involved in reviewing support arrangements. The focus will always be on enabling sustained attendance in a safe, supportive and inclusive way.

5.4 Using data to monitor attendance

Schools will use attendance data systematically to identify patterns, trends and areas for improvement at whole-school, cohort, year group and individual pupil level. Attendance data will be monitored:

- daily (operational safeguarding and follow-up);
- weekly (pattern identification and early intervention);
- half-termly and termly (strategic analysis and evaluation); and
- annually (trend analysis and strategic planning).

Schools will ensure attendance data is:

- accurate and consistently recorded within the management information system;
- used to identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence;
- used to identify vulnerable groups and cohort trends, as well as students with intersectional risks;
- shared appropriately with senior leaders, safeguarding leads, SENDCos and governors; and
- used to inform intervention planning and resource allocation.

Schools will also benchmark attendance against local, regional and national data to identify relative performance and areas for improvement. Further information about how the school monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality data), and systematically and regularly analyses it can be found in **Part B**.

5.5 Analysing attendance data

Schools will analyse attendance data to:

- identify emerging patterns of absence, including lateness and partial attendance;
- identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence;
- recognise cohort-level trends (for example year groups, disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND);
- understand contextual and historical patterns of attendance; and
- identify barriers to attendance that may require further investigation or support.

Analysis will be used to inform targeted action rather than reporting alone. Where concerns are identified, schools will ensure that attendance data is triangulated with safeguarding, pastoral and academic information where appropriate.

5.6 Using data to improve attendance

Attendance data will be used to drive timely and effective intervention. Schools will:

- implement targeted actions in response to identified attendance concerns;
- ensure pupils and families receive appropriate support based on need;
- provide regular attendance information to staff to support conversations with pupils and families;
- report attendance concerns to relevant leaders, including safeguarding, SEND and pastoral teams where appropriate;
- evaluate the impact of interventions and adjust approaches where necessary; and
- share relevant information with external partners and agencies where appropriate and lawful.

Data will be used to support early intervention rather than solely to monitor compliance. Impact of interventions will be evaluated not only through attendance percentages but also through engagement, reintegration and sustained improvement over time.

5.7 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90%. Severe absence is defined as attendance below 50%. Reducing persistent and severe absence is a key priority for the Trust and will be addressed through early, sustained and coordinated action. Schools will:

- identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence as early as possible;
- investigate underlying barriers to attendance, including safeguarding, SEND, medical, emotional or contextual factors;
- ensure timely and appropriate support is put in place;
- engage parents/carers in structured and supportive discussions;
- provide targeted interventions aimed at improving attendance and re-engagement;
- use a consistent but relational approach to follow-up and monitoring;
- work collaboratively with external agencies where required; and
- consider statutory interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.

All responses will be proportionate, individualised and focused on improving attendance through support wherever possible. Schools will ensure that persistent and severe absence is treated as both an educational and safeguarding concern, with appropriate escalation where necessary. Further details of the school's approach towards targeting unauthorised absence, for example via meetings, letters and closer monitoring can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

Version history

First issue/revision date	Approved by	Summary of changes if not first issue
May 2026	BoT	Strengthened alignment with DfE statutory guidance ('Working together to improve school attendance'), including early intervention and multi-agency working. Strengthened links to Ofsted EIF expectations across behaviour, attitudes, safeguarding, leadership and personal development. Reframed attendance as a safeguarding, inclusion and curriculum access priority throughout. Significant revision of Section 2 (roles and responsibilities) to clarify accountability, relational practice and Trust-wide expectations. Improved consistency of terminology and expectations across all roles, particularly attendance leadership and family engagement. Refined Sections 3.2 and 4.3 to strengthen clarity on illness, authorisation and safeguarding-sensitive escalation. Enhanced focus on early intervention, relational practice and family engagement (Sections 3.5, 5.2, 5.6). Improved proportionality and clarity in Section 4.4

		(Notices to Improve and penalty notices). Strengthened graduated response model in Section 5.1 with clearer practice alignment. Enhanced expectations for attendance data use, monitoring and benchmarking (Sections 5.4–5.6). Updated Appendix 1 codes for clarity, safeguarding context and statutory alignment.
July 2025	BoT	Minor language adjustments to reflect guidance. Section 2.2: Information regarding the headteacher's responsibility to share information from the attendance register with the local authority. Section 4.4.2: Information about penalty notices issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place. Section 5.1: Information regarding a tiered approach to attendance intervention. Section 5.3: Clarity that where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.
July 2024	BoT	N/A - new policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. Attendance codes must be used consistently and in line with statutory guidance. Incorrect coding may affect safeguarding decisions, census returns and school accountability measures.

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student 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	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student 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	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable (temporary)	Student is on a temporary, agreed reduced timetable as part of a support plan and remains formally on roll
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances as defined by the school in line with statutory guidance
Absent - other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Traveller families known to be travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (physical or mental health)	Student is unable to attend due to illness.

E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Student is excluded or suspended and no alternative provision is in place.
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student 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	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student 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	Student'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	Student 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. Code N should only be used temporarily and updated once the reason for absence is known.
O	Unauthorised absence	Student is absent without authorisation and no acceptable reason has been provided or accepted by the school
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student 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

	Vanguard Learning Trust *As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust's mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. The Trust has a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through a curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows students to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust's vision and values, with the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential.*

Attendance policy

Part B: Ryefield Primary School

Summer 2026

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Part B: Ryefield Primary School

1. Expectations
The school's view on attendance is that it is everybody's responsibility. Every student is a valued member of the school and their presence is crucial for the collective success and well-being of the community overall. Aligned with the recommendations from an ImpactEd report entitled *'Understanding Attendance*' from January 2024 (click here), the school is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and that they belong. The school aims to foster strong, positive relationships between students, and between students and school staff, to help build a supportive and connected community. Additionally, the school strives to communicate the importance and benefits of good attendance at every opportunity, helping students understand how their learning experiences contribute to their personal and academic growth.

2. Roles and responsibilities
Although attendance is everybody's responsibility, some members of the school community have a specific role in supporting attendance or providing oversight of the school's endeavours. These roles are outlined below.

2.1 The board of trustees
As outlined in Part A, the board of trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures across Vanguard Learning Trust on at least a termly basis, which includes Ryefield Primary School. The board also holds the headteacher of the school to account for the implementation of this policy.

2.2 The local governing body (LGB)
The LGB of Ryefield Primary School is responsible for regularly reviewing 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. Further information about the LGB's role in reviewing attendance data can be found in Part A.

2.3 The headteacher
The school's headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy at the school and monitoring school-level absence data, which is then reported to the governors. Additionally, the headteacher supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students as well as trends and patterns across groups of students. The headteacher works closely with the local authority to consider a range of legal interventions to improve attendance, including the issuing of penalty notices as a last resort.

2.4 The senior leader for attendance (the 'attendance champion')
Ryefield's attendance champion is Mr Wayne Murray. The attendance champion plays a crucial role in promoting and managing student attendance across the school. Their responsibilities include working with the attendance officer to monitor attendance by regularly tracking and analysing attendance data to identify patterns, trends and areas of concern. Their role also involves maintaining accurate records and ensuring that attendance registers are up to date. They support students and families by addressing barriers to regular attendance, offering support and advice and arranging meetings. The attendance champion is key in fostering a culture where good attendance is valued and recognised, contributing to the overall well-being and academic success of students.

2.5 The attendance officer
The school's attendance officer is Ms Danielle Perry. The attendance officer liaises closely with class teachers to ensure that registers are completed accurately and are available for scrutiny. They are responsible for notifying the local authority's school attendance support team of persistent absences and collaborating with them to support improvement. The officer monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level. They notify parents/carers of student absences when parents/carers have not informed the school through the school's online communication platform by sending a text or email to parents/carers once morning registers are taken to highlight absent students. The attendance officer reports

attendance concerns to the headteacher, assistant headteacher, or designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and advises the headteacher when to issue legal interventions, such as fixed-penalty notices. They also report on students with persistent absences to year leaders and the senior leadership team (SLT); send out student absence letters on behalf of the headteacher; and provide general management information on student attendance as required by SLT or the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH). Additionally, the attendance officer accurately and promptly enters any manual registers onto the school management information system, including attendance information for students offsite, oversees the signing in and out process by students and informs appropriate pastoral staff of any concerns. They ensure that latecomers are correctly recorded in the attendance registers and liaise with the pastoral team to arrange the collection and dispatch of work for students absent due to long-term illness.

2.6 Phase leaders and the SLT

Phase leaders and the SLT of Ryefield Primary School are responsible for monitoring attendance data both across the year group and at an individual student level. They pay particular attention to the attendance of students categorised in vulnerable groups. Additionally, they report any attendance concerns to the attendance officer and SLT. Collaborating with the attendance officer, teachers, family-liaison officers and the school attendance support team, they work to address and reduce persistent absenteeism. To further support these efforts, phase leaders and SLT arrange calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues and record any actions taken.

2.7 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for accurately recording attendance within lessons on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and saving this information on the school's management information system. They are also responsible for monitoring, flagging concerns and being a point of contact between home and school to discuss attendance concerns.

2.8 Parents/Carers

By law, all students of compulsory school age (normally 5 to 16 years old) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure this happens, either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to provide them with a suitable, full-time education. Once a child is registered at a school, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring they attend; this means students should not have sessions of unauthorised absence.

2.8.1 How parents/carers can support good attendance

To support their child's school attendance, parents/carers should take several actions. First, they should establish good attendance habits by acting as role models and showing students that good attendance and punctuality are important. Ensuring their child has a good rate of attendance, ideally 97% or higher, is crucial. Creating a good routine for mornings at home so that students can arrive punctually and be properly equipped will also help mornings start calmly. Establishing a good bedtime routine is essential so that children can sleep well, get enough rest and make mornings less of a struggle. Parents/carers should also know the routines of the school day to avoid issues, such as ensuring students have their PE kits on the right days. Reading all school communications helps parents/carers stay informed about what's going on at school and can encourage conversations with their children. Attending all school open evenings and functions is another important step. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of the school day. Parents/carers should only grant days at home for genuine illness and contact the school via the school's online communication platform as soon as possible to explain why their child is absent and when they are expected to return. If appropriate, arranging for a family member or a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick can also help maintain good attendance. Parents/carers should not take holidays during school time.

2.9 Students

Students at Ryefield Primary School are expected to attend school every day and be punctual. This means arriving at school on time, ready to begin the day's activities. Regular attendance is crucial for ensuring that students do not miss out on important learning opportunities. In addition to being on time for school,

students must also ensure they attend every lesson promptly. This punctuality applies to each class throughout the school day, reinforcing the importance of being present and ready to engage in learning activities from the beginning of each session. Unless absolutely necessary, students should remain in every lesson for its entire duration. This policy is designed to maximise learning time and minimise disruptions, helping students fully benefit from the instructional time provided.

3. Communication

Effective communication is paramount in ensuring high attendance rates at school, as it fosters a collaborative environment between the school and families. Ryefield's attendance officer plays a critical role in monitoring and promoting good attendance, acting as the primary liaison between the school and the parents or carers. They are supported by the attendance champion, a senior lead dedicated to attendance issues, ensuring that robust systems and strategies are in place. The school utilises a variety of communication methods, including regular updates to parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. These updates can be disseminated through emails, letters and parent-teacher meetings, helping to keep families informed and engaged. Ryefield Primary School maintains a 'buzz' of attendance through a well-planned calendar of events and communications that highlight the importance of regular attendance. To support these efforts, the school's designated attendance champion and attendance officer will work closely with pastoral staff, including phase leaders, class teachers and welfare staff, all of whom are instrumental in supporting various attendance initiatives. The pastoral team can be contacted for further assistance in addressing attendance concerns and providing additional support to students and their families. By employing a comprehensive approach that includes clear communication and dedicated support roles, Ryefield aims to minimise student absences and promote a culture of regular attendance. Appendix A has examples of communication with parents/carers.

4. Procedures

Procedures are crucial for the monitoring of attendance because they ensure consistency, accuracy and accountability. They provide a standardised approach for recording and tracking student presence, enabling timely identification of absences. This facilitates early intervention for at-risk students, promotes a safe learning environment and supports legal compliance regarding compulsory education. Clear procedures also streamline communication between stakeholders ensuring everyone is informed about attendance-related issues. Additionally, accurate attendance records are vital for funding, resource allocation and analysing patterns to improve overall school performance and student engagement.

4.1 Arriving at school and lateness

Students are expected to arrive promptly for school by the times outlined below.

Table 1: Start times for Ryefield Primary School

	Gates open at	Classroom doors open at	Classroom doors shut at (official start time)	Child marked late if they arrive after
Morning nursery	8:30am	8:30am	8:40am	8:40am
Afternoon nursery	12:15pm	12:20pm	12:30pm	12:30pm
Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 & Year 6	8:05am	8:20am	8:30am	8:30am

4.1.1 Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at Ryefield Primary School on time each day. Sometimes unexpected lateness occurs which cannot be helped. Students will not be permitted through their classroom door after the official start time. Students who arrive after the official start time indicated in Table 1 should be escorted by their parents/carers to the front office, where they should sign them in. Students who are late will receive a red card once they have signed in; this card must then be presented to the class teacher to show the office staff has registered them. Any late child who does not receive a red card will be sent back to

reception to be signed in properly. If a child arrives no later than 30 minutes after the official start time, they will be marked in the register as 'authorised late: late before registration closes.' If a child arrives more than 30 minutes late, they will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence: late after the register closes.' An unauthorised late will affect a child's overall rate of attendance. Arriving late means that students miss the crucial input for their day, which puts them at a disadvantage to their peers. If a child is late on two or more occasions within a week, their parents/carers will receive a message sent via the school's online communication platform. If a child has been late on 5 occasions, they will receive a letter regarding lateness. For every 5 late marks, a new letter will be sent. After 15 late marks, a meeting will be organised and further action determined.

4.2 Absences

Each school day consists of two sessions, a morning (referred to as AM) and an afternoon (referred to as PM). Therefore, if a child is absent from school for one whole day, this will equate to two sessions of absence. There are two types of absence: authorised and unauthorised. The school is responsible for deciding whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised therefore the information give us determines the outcome of the absence. As a school, any authorised absences ultimately will be the decision of the headteacher and the school has the right to request any evidence of any absence. Any absences that have not been reported will be marked as unauthorised.

4.2.1 Notifying the school

Parents/carers must inform the school via the school's online communication platform/app if their child is ill and will be absent from school. A detailed reason for absence must be received before 8:20am on each day of absence. A child simply being 'unwell' is not a reason to be absent from school. Studybugs will automatically notify parents/carers if their child has not been registered before 9.00am. Although medical appointments and illness constitute an authorised absence, they will still affect a child's percentage attendance, therefore we require parents/carers to provide documentation for these absences. Following guidance from Public Health England, the school operates a strict period of 48 hours from the last spell of sickness/diarrhoea before a child is allowed to return to school to which parents/carers must adhere. For advice and information on whether children are well enough for school, parents/carers are advised to visit the related page on the NHS website (click here).

4.2.2 Contact details

Ryefield Primary School must have up-to-date contact numbers for your child so we can contact you when your child is absent or in case of an emergency.

4.3 Working with the local authority

Collaboration between schools and local authorities is crucial for improving attendance. Joint efforts ensure that barriers to attendance are identified and addressed, providing holistic support to students and families. This partnership fosters a community-focused approach, enhancing engagement, resources and interventions, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes and reduced absenteeism.

4.3.1 Issuing of penalty notices

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties continue the school may refer the child to the attendance team at the local authority. The team will also try to resolve the situation but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance fail and unauthorised absences persist, the team can use sanctions such as the issuing of a penalty notice as a last resort. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80. If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will consider appropriate legal interventions. . More information can be found in the Department for Education's statutory guidance on fines for parents (click here). . Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the local authority attendance team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the

school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858. Attendance advice may be sought at any time by the school and it may be necessary to fast track a referral to them.

4.3.2 Child missing from education
If a child has been absent for 10 school days they are classified as a child missing from education (CME). A referral to the local authority's CME team will be made for further advice and support.

4.4 Exceptional leave during term time
The school will not authorise any leave during term time. Parents/carers who feel it necessary to take their child out of school for an extended period of time due to unavoidable and extreme/exceptional circumstances must make a formal request by completing the *'Request for leave of absence during term time'* document (refer to Letter 8, Appendix B). This should be submitted to the headteacher at least two weeks before the intended period of absence. Any supporting documents should be submitted with the request form, such as flight details or exam letters. There is no right of appeal in regards to any decision made concerning requests for exceptional leave during term time. If the child will be late returning from a period of leave, the school requires parents/carers to produce documentation to evidence this. Where holidays are taken which have not been authorised, the school will inform the local authority attendance team, who may issue a penalty notice of £80 per parent per child if it is paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within 21 days, it advances to £160 per parent per child. If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action. More information can be found on the Department of Education's website (click here). Where there is reason to believe that a prolonged absence is the result of a holiday, the school will pursue it as it would if it was informed about the holiday in advance. Suspicion of prolonged absence due to a holiday in term time is enough to pursue a holiday penalty notice through the local authority.

4.5 Extreme/exceptional circumstances
Extreme or exceptional circumstances generally include situations that are rare, significant or unavoidable. The following scenarios illustrate what is meant by this term:

1. Bereavement: the death of a close family member.
2. Serious illness: when a child or close family member has a serious/critical illness that requires the child to be absent.
3. Family crisis: emergency situations involving members of the child's family that require immediate attention.
4. Religious observances: religious festivals or ceremonies.
5. Examinations: external examinations or assessments.
6. Legal requirements: attending a court hearing, being involved in a custody dispute or other legal obligations.
7. Unexpected travel disruptions: unforeseen travel disruptions that make it impossible for the child to attend school (eg. natural disasters).

These exceptional circumstances typically do not include:

- Holidays during term time.
- Family events like birthdays or weddings.
- Minor ailments (colds, headaches).

5. Identifying trends and patterns
It is important to note that consistent attendance is essential for a student's academic and social development. Ryefield Primary School will work with parents/carers and other professionals as needed to support students in attending school regularly and meeting their full potential. The school uses the following procedures for monitoring daily attendance and informing parents/carers:

- Daily attendance reminder messages are sent via email to all parents/carers who have not notified the school of their child's absence.
- Weekly emails are sent to parents/carers to whose children who have more than 2 late arrivals at school during the preceding week.

- Fortnightly attendance summary emails are sent to all parents/carers whose children have missed more than 10 sessions (5 days of school).
- Messages on the school's online communication platform will be sent out half-termly to parents/carers informing them of their child's attendance.
- Parents/carers will be notified if their child's attendance becomes cause for concern and parents/carers will be invited in to meet with staff in line with Ryefield's *'Six steps to monitoring attendance'* (outlined below).
- If there is still no improvement, or parents/carers do not respond to the school's letters, or if parents/carers fail to show up for arranged meetings, then the school will refer the family to the local authority's attendance team.
- School staff may undertake home visits if absences are not reported, to check that the child is safe and well.

5.1 Monitoring attendance

The school closely monitors attendance via its management information system. Once a student has missed the equivalent of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence, their attendance will be subject to ongoing monitoring for the remainder of the academic year. Where a student's attendance continues to decline, the school will implement a series of escalating interventions aimed at promoting regular attendance and engaging families in support. These measures may include:

- issuing formal letters of concern;
- sending invitations to attend attendance review meetings;
- referring the case to the school's attendance panel; and/or
- making a referral to the local authority, where appropriate.

All template correspondence associated with these measures is provided in Appendix B.

6. Celebrating good attendance

Ryefield Primary School recognises the importance of celebrating and incentivising good attendance to encourage students to maintain consistent and punctual attendance. As such, the school utilises a variety of strategies to reward students who demonstrate excellent and/or improved attendance. The school rewards good attendance in the following ways:

- During each weekly whole school assembly, the key stage 1 and key stage 2 class with the best attendance for the previous week win a trophy and certificate. Students are also entered into a weekly attendance raffle for each week they have achieved 100%.
- Class rewards are given using our Marble Jar reward system. Each class can receive two marbles a day, one for everybody being in school and another if everybody is on time. When the class reaches 30 marbles they receive a 'Marble Party'. Marble Parties are not defined and vary throughout the year.
- Certificates are awarded to students who achieve an annual attendance of above 95%.
- Weekly communications to families whose children have demonstrated 100% attendance.

By celebrating both outstanding attendance and meaningful improvements, the school aims to create a positive and motivating atmosphere that highlights the value of regular school attendance and supports students in their journey towards academic success.

6.1 Celebrating improved attendance

Ryefield Primary School recognises that celebrating and rewarding students for improving their attendance can be a great way to motivate them and reinforce positive behaviour. The methods of celebration taken by the school include acknowledging students during school assemblies, displaying their photos on a celebration board, and mentioning them in the school bulletin. The school also rewards improving attendance through providing attendance certificates for achieving specific milestones and half termly awards for significantly improved attendance. Additionally, incentive programmes, such as the school's marble system (where classes earn points for each session of perfect attendance), can be added to by students who have significantly improved their attendance.

7. Students who may need additional support
Ryefield Primary School is committed to providing tailored support to students facing various challenges that affect their attendance. The school recognises that certain groups of students may require additional assistance to overcome these barriers and ensure their regular participation in school.

7.1 Students with complex barriers to attendance
For students with complex barriers to attendance, Ryefield takes a comprehensive approach by closely collaborating with families and external agencies to address the root causes of absenteeism. The school conducts thorough assessments to identify specific challenges these students face, whether they stem from home, social or economic factors, or a combination thereof. Working with families, the school develops individualised support plans that may include flexible scheduling, pastoral support or access to community resources via a referral to the local authority's 'early help' services. The school also strives to remove any barriers by providing a welcoming and inclusive environment, offering personalised learning plans and ensuring that these students have access to necessary support services such as counselling, mentoring and/or play therapy where appropriate.

7.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health, or SEND
Students who are absent due to mental or physical ill health, or their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive targeted support to help them maintain their educational progress. The school's SEND co-ordinator (SENCo) can liaise with a wide variety of specialists including counsellors and healthcare professionals, who work together to create and implement individualised education plans (IEPs) or health care plans. The school will maintain regular communication with these students and their families, providing necessary adjustments. The goal is to ensure that these students receive a continuous and supportive education, tailored to their unique needs and circumstances.

7.3 Students returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence
When students return to Ryefield after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school implements a structured reintegration process to help them transition smoothly back into the school environment. This process includes an initial meeting with the student and their family to discuss any concerns and create a personalised reintegration plan. Key strategies may include a phased return to school, catch-up sessions and/or additional academic support to bridge any learning gaps. The school may also provide emotional and social support to help these students readjust and reconnect with their peers and teachers. By offering comprehensive reintegration support, the school aims to ensure that students feel welcomed, supported and ready to re-engage with their education.

8. Mental health
Ryefield Primary School recognises the critical importance of mental health and its impact on student attendance. In accordance with the Department for Education guidance *'Working together to improve school attendance'* (2024, click here), the school has established clear responsibilities and proactive measures to monitor, promote and support mental health within the community. To effectively support mental health, the school regularly monitors the well-being of students through various means, including surveys, wellbeing check-ins along with observations by teachers and staff. The school evaluates the effectiveness of mental health initiatives by gathering feedback from students, parents/carers and staff and by reviewing attendance data to identify patterns that may indicate underlying mental health issues. This ongoing assessment allows the school to adapt and refine its approach to ensure that the school's support for mental health is meeting the needs of all students.

8.1 Emotional resilience
Building emotional resilience is a key component of the school's long-term strategy and it is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum and provision of pastoral support. The school delivers a personal, health and social education (PSHE) programme that includes social and emotional learning activities, mindfulness exercises and resilience training. These programmes are designed to equip students with the skills they need to manage stress, build positive relationships and navigate challenges effectively. Additionally, the

school's pastoral care team provides personalised support and mentoring to students who may need extra help in developing their emotional resilience.

8.2 A holistic approach

Ryefield Primary School takes a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and well-being, fostering a strong ethos and culture of care. This approach includes creating a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported. The school prioritises open communication, encouraging students to voice their concerns and seek help when needed. The school also collaborates with external mental health professionals and organisations to provide additional resources and support for students and their families. By integrating mental health awareness and support into all aspects of school life, the school aims to create a nurturing and resilient community that prioritises emotional well-being. Appendix C illustrates the support and approaches taken to support students at each stage of its attendance monitoring and intervention strategy.

9. Feedback

Ryefield Primary School values the input of the whole community in helping to shape and refine the attendance policy. The school collects feedback through regular surveys distributed to students, parents/carers and staff, as well as during parent-teacher meetings and school council sessions. This feedback is carefully reviewed and considered in policy evaluations to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of the school community.

10. Further support

To provide comprehensive support for students, Ryefield Primary School actively engages with 'early help' services and other external agencies. These collaborations enable the school to access a wide range of resources and expertise in order to address the various challenges that may affect students and their attendance. Effective partnerships with local health services, social care and mental health organisations (such as CAMHS) ensures that students and families receive the necessary support and interventions promptly and effectively. For additional support, the school recommends the following helplines and websites:

- **Childline**: A free, confidential service for young people seeking help and support (website: https://www.childline.org.uk, phone: 0800 1111)
- **YoungMinds**: A mental health charity offering advice and support to young people and parents (website https://www.youngminds.org.uk, parent helpline: 0808 802 5544).
- **NSPCC**: Provides support and information for children and families (website: https://www.nspcc.org.uk, helpline: 0808 800 5000).
- **Samaritans**: Offers emotional support for anyone in distress (website: https://www.samaritans.org, phone or text: 116 123).

By continuously gathering feedback and leveraging external support, the school strives to create an effective and supportive attendance policy that promotes the well-being and success of all students.

Appendices:
Appendix A: Examples of home/school communication regarding attendance
Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers
Appendix C: Attendance ladder that is used to illustrate levels of good attendance
Appendix D: Materials used to illustrate the school's steps to monitoring and support

Version history

First issue/revision date	Approved by	Summary of changes if not first issue
Summer 2026	LGB	Letters in the appendices have been revised New flow chart for dealing with attendance 4.3.1 updated the fines for parents and link to DfE website
Summer 2025	LGB	Section 4.1.1 : Third party names removed

		Section 5.1 updated, regarding how the school monitors attendance Names of third party software removed Appendix B letters updated to reflect current practice.
July 2024	LBG	New policy

Appendix A: Examples of home/school communication regarding attendance

No reason for absence (daily):

{Pupil First Name} is absent from school today. Please provide a reason for their absence. Absences must be reported each day before 8:20am via Studybugs. {Her/His} current attendance is {attendance this year}.

Absence response message:

Thank you for informing us of {Pupil First Name}'s absence today. Please be advised that {Her/His} current attendance for this academic year is {attendance this year}.

Punctuality email (weekly):

Late Alert: Your child arrived late to school on two or more occasions this week. Please be reminded that classroom doors open at 8:20am and lessons begin at 8:30am once the register has been taken. Students will not be permitted through their classroom door after 8:30am. They will need to be signed in at the main office by an adult and will receive an authorised late register mark. Students arriving more than 30 minutes late will be registered as an unauthorised absence. We look forward to seeing an improvement next week. Thank you for your co-operation.

Examples of the attendance reminder email sent to all families whose children have missed more than 10 sessions (fortnightly):

{Pupil First Name} has missed {days absent this year} days of school this year. Lessons build on what students already know and missing one can make the next day's lesson more difficult. One day could be as many as six different subjects, as well as time spent with friends and doing extracurricular activities.
Let us know about your concerns you may have that are affecting your child attending school. Together we can support your child to ensure they achieve.

{Pupil First Name} has missed {days absent this year} days of school this academic year. School is not just about learning. It is a warm, supportive environment where your child can get a healthy meal and see their friends. Ryefield is an enriching environment that can help your child with their social and mental wellbeing, so ensuring they attend regularly is paramount. If you have any concerns regarding your child's wellbeing or attendance at school please send us a message.

So far this year {Pupil First Name} has missed {days absent this year} days of school. Attending school every day can help your {Daughter/Son} to achieve their aspirations, reach their full potential and equip them with the skills needed for their future.

We thank you for your continued support to ensure {Pupil First Name} attends school everyday. Please speak with the school staff if you have any difficulties with this.

100% attendance email (weekly):

We're pleased to let you know that {Pupil First Name} has achieved 100% attendance this week.
This puts {her/him} in the best possible position to advance {her/his} learning. They will also be in with a chance of winning a prize in this week's attendance raffle!
Congratulations {Pupil First Name}!

Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers

Letter 1 - Recommended letter about the importance of attendance for pupils whose attendance drops below 95%

Dear parent/carer,

Name: **Forename Surname –** Class: **Class –** D.O.B: **DOB**
Current attendance: **Current Attendance% -** Sessions Attended: **Possible Sessions**
Authorised sessions of absence: **Authorised Absent Sessions** Unauthorised Sessions of Absence: **Unauthorised Absent Sessions**

We need your help, please. **Forename** has been absent for **{#}** days of school so far this school year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell, which is the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear, however, that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend, for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance 'Is my child too ill for school?' (https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Ryefield Primary School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on **"{{Forename}}"** absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that **"{{Forename}}"** comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this; therefore, please call or come in and meet **"{{Forename}}"**'s class teacher if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Senior lead for attendance

Letter 2 - Invitation to an Attendance Meeting

Child's name and DOB

RE: Attendance between 92% to 90%

Dear parent/carer

Following my previous letter sent on **(enter date)**, we are disappointed that there has been no significant improvement in **(Child's name)** attendance.

Our records show that your child's current attendance is **%.

It is important that children attend school regularly and on time. Here at Ryefield our best interests are to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly. Once again, we are giving you the opportunity to discuss any issues you may be facing with getting your child(ren)into school. We would like to understand the challenges that are preventing (child's name) attending school full time and would like to support you to affect a sustained improvement.

We are offering a meeting with our Senior Attendance Champion on (enter date and time). Please get in contact with us if you cannot attend to arrange a more mutually convenient time.

Please note, you may be asked for medical evidence for future absences in order that they can be authorised.

Please be aware that if this continues then we will have no other option but to pass this matter on to the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council. You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Senior lead for attendance

Letter 3: Flow Chart Action 1 - Invitation to an Attendance Contract Meeting

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

Re: Invitation to an Attendance Contract Meeting.

Name of Child: <insert> **D.O.B:** <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert> **Current Attendance:** <insert>

****Choose the most appropriate option below and delete accordingly****

1. *Did not attend supportive meeting with Attendance Lead:*

Due to the decline in the regular attendance of your child and the lack of engagement with previous attempts to support with regular attendance, we now require you to attend an attendance contract meeting on <insert> at <insert>.

2. *Attended supportive meeting with Attendance Lead:*

Unfortunately, your child's attendance continues to decline and regular attendance at school has not been maintained. At our supportive meeting held on <insert> we created a plan to help you and your child overcome barriers to attending school, however it has not been successful. To further support, we now require you to attend an attendance contract meeting on <insert>

This meeting will be held at school. If you require the meeting to be held in a different setting such as virtually, via telephone, a home visit, or if this time or day is not convenient, please contact <insert> by <insert> for alternative arrangements to be made.

Your views and those of your child will be sought and taken into consideration during this meeting where we will complete an attendance contract agreement, the terms of which are negotiated.

Please be aware further action from the school will mean we have no alternative but to refer this matter onto the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council. You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider other appropriate legal interventions.

Please bring with you any medical evidence such as a GP/Consultant letter or certificate, any prescribed medication (not bought over the counter) for any considerations that may be given to your child's absences being authorised on health grounds.

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

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Lead

Letter 4: Flow Chart Action 2 - Second Invitation to an Attendance Meeting

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

Re: Invitation to an Attendance Contract Meeting.

Name of Child: <insert> D.O.B: <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert> Current Attendance: <insert>

Your child has failed to regularly attend school and despite invitations to meet and implement a support plan with you for your child, you have failed to attend or reschedule as outlined in previous letters sent.

A final attendance contract meeting has been arranged for <insert> at <insert>.

This meeting will be held at school. If you require the meeting to be held in a different setting such as virtually, via telephone, a home visit, or if this time or day is not convenient, please contact <insert> by <insert> for alternative arrangements to be made. If we do not hear from you by this date, we will assume you will be in attendance for the meeting.

Your views and those of your child will be sought and taken into consideration during this meeting where we will complete an attendance contract agreement, the terms of which are negotiated.

In the event you do not attend, a professionals meeting will be held to discuss support that may be put in place to assist your child, and you will be notified of the outcome.

Following this meeting, if continued unauthorised absence persists, it may result in the school referring the matter to the Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council for legal intervention.

Please be aware further action from the school will mean you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider appropriate legal interventions.

Please bring with you any medical evidence such as a GP/Consultant letter or certificate, any prescribed medication (not bought over the counter) for any considerations that may be given to your child's absences being authorised on health grounds.

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

Yours sincerely

Attendance Lead

Letter 5: Flow Chart Action 4 - Attendance Contract Outcome Letter

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

Re: Formal Support - Attendance Contract Meeting to discuss: <insert>

Name of Child: <insert> **D.O.B:** <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert> **Current Attendance:** <insert>

Thank you for attending the attendance contract meeting on <insert>

Please find attached a copy of the Attendance Contract Agreement signed by you and your child (where appropriate). Your views, opinions and comments and those of your child were taken into consideration at the meeting and have formed part of the agreement.

It was agreed your child's attendance will be monitored over period of *5, 6, 7 or 8* weeks *(delete as appropriate)* Review Date: <insert review date here>.

Please remember to provide the school with medical evidence if your child is absent during the review period as agreed as part of the attendance contract.

If there is no improvement and continued unauthorised absence persists during this time, it may result in the school referring the matter to the Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council for legal intervention. Please be aware further action from the school will mean you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider appropriate legal interventions.

Further information that you wish the school to consider or if you need advice and support, during the period, please do not hesitate to contact me and advise either in writing or by a phone call.

Yours sincerely

Senior lead for attendance

Letter 6: Flow Chart Action 5 - Failed to Attend Attendance Contract Meeting

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

Re: Formal Support - Attendance Contract Meeting

Name of Child: <insert> **D.O.B:** <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert> **Current Attendance:** <insert>

In my letter dated <insert> you were invited for a second opportunity to attend an attendance contract meeting on <insert> to discuss your child's continued poor attendance. You have failed to attend on two occasions and did not notify the school of this, nor did you request an alternative method to conduct the meeting.

The pupil's attendance will be monitored over a period of *5.6, 7 or 8* weeks *(delete as appropriate depending on attendance & circumstances)*
Review Date: <insert review date>

Please remember to provide the school with medical evidence if your child is absent during the review period.

<insert support that will be offered throughout review period>

The school will continue to attempt to engage you in this process. However, if there is no improvement and continued unauthorised absence persists, it may result in the school referring the matter to the Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council for legal intervention.

Please be aware further action from the school will mean you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider appropriate legal interventions

Further information that you wish the school to consider or if you need advice and support, during the period, please do not hesitate to contact me and advise either in writing or by a phone call.

Yours sincerely

Senior lead for attendance

Letter 7: Flow Chart Action 6 - Attendance Improved after Attendance Contract Meeting

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

Name of Child: <insert> **D.O.B:** <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert> **Current Attendance:** <insert>

At the attendance contract meeting held on <insert> an agreement was signed stating that your child should attend school regularly, punctually and every day that the school is open and available. The agreement took into consideration your views and those of your child, where appropriate.

Your child's attendance and punctuality has been reviewed and I am pleased to see that it has improved. The matter will not be progressed from here if improvement is maintained.

I will continue to monitor your child's attendance and should it again become a cause for concern, contact will be made.

Please be aware that should your child's attendance decline and there are unauthorised absences, it may result in the school referring the matter to the Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council for legal intervention. Please be aware further action from the school will mean you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80. If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider appropriate legal interventions.

Should you need further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Senior lead for attendance

Flow Chart Action 3 - Attendance Contract Template

Attendance Contract Agreement
(Formal Support Meeting)

The child named in this agreement has been identified as having low attendance; the aim of the attendance contract is to address this by improving the pupil's outcomes, enhancing communication, providing support and ensure a nurturing environment.

Full name of pupil:					
DOB:		Age:			
Full address:					
School Name:					
School year:					
CIN/CP:	Yes/No	SEND support:	Yes/No	EHCP:	Yes/No
Date of meeting:					

Persons with Parental Responsibility *(this includes the birth parent(s) and persons with parental responsibility or who have day to day care of the child)*

Parental Responsibility	Full name	Address	Telephone Number	Tick to confirm Present
Father				
Mother				
Guardian				

All present at meeting

Professional	Full Name
School senior attendance lead	
School attendance officer	
Other professionals:	
Keyworker/Social worker/Housing officer/SEND Officer/ YOS Officer/ School Nurse/GP or other health professional/ Safer Schools Police Officer	

Reason for Attendance contract

Percentage attendance	Present	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Lates before reg closed	Lates after reg closed	Possible attendances
%						

SCHOOL SUPPORT/ INTERVENTIONS OFFERED

☐Meeting with Head of Year	☐Meeting with Attendance Lead	☐Phone calls / regular check ins
☐Home visits	☐In school counselling / pastoral	☐Educational Interventions
☐Outside school hours sessions	☐Supplemental online learning / learning packs	☐Trusted / safe person assigned
☐Safe / quiet place offered	☐Time out card / emotion cards	☐SENCO involvement
☐Attendance report / rewards	☐Any other support / interventions	☐Part-time timetable

Please expand on the above selection, providing further information including plans, dates, professionals, outcomes and engagement

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REFERRALS / MULTI AGENCY RESPONSE

☐CAMHS referral	☐Stronger Families Key worker referral	☐Information provided on online resources (Kooth, Knus, Young Minds)
☐ SEND Advisory referral	☐ EHCP application / SENDIASS information	☐ Alternative Provision/education
☐ In year application for other schools	☐ Pupil Support referral	☐ Informal managed move / respite arrangements
☐ School Nurse involved/appropriate NHS teams	☐ Referral to other agencies (P3, Young carers, Targeted youth services, HACS, Brilliant Parents)	☐ Other

Please expand on the above selection, providing further information including plans, dates, professionals, outcomes and engagement

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Any comments from other agencies involved / invited to this meeting

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2. **Child's comments:**
(Where appropriate the pupil can attend the attendance contract Meeting, however their views must be sought).

My School and Me booklet completed prior to meeting and attached for primary age pupils who are not attending the meeting Yes ☐ No ☐

What are the barriers to attending school for the child:

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What are the child's aspirations, expectations and goals:

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Tick any of the following that the pupil agrees will be helpful in improving attendance, and that they agree to.

☐ Preparing for school the night before (Bag, uniform, check journey, set alarm)	☐ Access online counselling (Kooth, Knus)	☐ Engage with named/trusted person /mentor (name)_____
☐ Inform trusted person of any issues, problem or barriers	☐ Extracurricular activities or school clubs	
☐ Other		

3. **Parent(s)/carers comments:**
What are the barriers to school attendance for the parent(s)/carer: *(Use this space to capture the comments as to why their child has poor attendance and any barriers they are experiencing)*

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Tick any of the following that the parent(s)/carer agrees will be helpful in improving attendance, and that they agree to.

☐ Phone school when there are issues	☐ Take child to GP to seek appropriate referrals	☐ Attend Brilliant parents
☐ Engage with Key Worker	☐ Book medical appointments outside of school hours where possible	☐ Maintain good communication with school
☐ If unwell send child to school. If necessary, school will send the child home	☐ Use sanctions for poor attendance and rewards for improvements	☐ Attend parent's evenings and any other school meeting
☐ Consider other educational options most suited to your child	☐ Make use of breakfast /after school clubs	☐ Implement time limits on electronic devices –ensure appropriate bedtimes
☐ Other		

4. How is this absence affecting the child's progress at school? What can we as a school do to support the pupil to maximise their potential:
Provide details on academic progress and social development, if possible, attach a recent report or class teacher report.

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5. What is going well for the child in school
Include detail on positive aspects of their school life:

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6. What will the school do to help?
Include any further or ongoing action /intervention by the school

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School will be available for advice and support during the review period. If the child named in the agreement does not attend regularly and punctually, the school may refer to and request the Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council to consider:

- Issuing a penalty notice referral from the school of £160.00 to each parent/carer, per child. If paid within 21 days, the penalty notice is reduced to £80.00 to each parent/carer, per child
- Attendance prosecution at the Magistrate's Court
- An Education Supervision Order
- A Parenting Order.

7. What can the Local Authority do to Help?
Your school Attendance Support Officer at the Hillingdon Council is **Nims Virdy** and they will be responsible for providing impartial advice to both school and parents on ways to overcome attendance issues/ barriers. Upon request they can attend meetings dependent on availability.

8. What should parents/carers do:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open and available and is on time for registration
- Provide medical evidence to the school if the child's absence is due to illness. Please bring with you any medical evidence such as a Consultant letter or certificate, any prescribed medication (not bought over the counter) for any considerations that may be given to your child's absences being authorised on health grounds.

- Where possible send your child into school if they are too unwell to let the school decide whether they are well enough to stay in school. If the school feels that he/she is too unwell, then you will not have to provide medical evidence for that absence.
- Contact the school should there be difficulties with the above points

The pupil's attendance will be monitored over a period of 4 to 6 weeks from _____

I accept the attendance contract agreement is true reflection of what was discussed, decisions made above and agree to comply with the requirements.

_____ Signed Parent/Carer (delete where appropriate)

_____ Signed Parent/Carer (delete where appropriate)

_____ Signed Pupil (where appropriate)

_____ Signed School Attendance Lead/Headteacher (delete where appropriate)

_____ Attendance Officer

_____ Other Professional(s)

_____ Date

Letter 8: Flow Chart Action 7a - Review Attendance Contract Meeting Invite

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

RE: Formal Support - Attendance Contract Review to discuss: <insert>

Name of Child: <insert>	D.O.B: <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert>	Current Attendance: <insert>

Following the attendance contract meeting on the <insert> we are disappointed that there has not been sufficient improvement in your child's attendance, or their attendance has not been maintained.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to come in for a meeting on <insert> at <insert> to discuss how the attendance contract can be adjusted and reviewed to help it work. At this meeting we can review any progress or issues and decide whether the contract is still useful or if it requires amendments. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the school so we can offer an alternative date by <insert>.

Failure to attend this meeting may result in the attendance contract being terminated and an alternative intervention being considered.

It is important for children to attend school regularly and on time every day that the school is open and available for attendance. Here at <insert>, our priority is to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly.

Please be aware further action will mean that the school will have no alternative but to refer this matter onto the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council.

You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider appropriate legal interventions

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Senior lead for attendance

Letter 9: Flow Chart Action 7b - Warning of Termination Letter

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

RE: Formal Support - Attendance Contract failure to comply

Name of Child: <insert>	D.O.B: <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert>	Current Attendance: <insert>

Following the Attendance Contract meeting on the <insert>, we are disappointed that there has been no significant improvement in your child's attendance.

I attempted to contact you on <insert> to discuss reasons your child has been unable to comply with the actions agreed in the contract, without success.

As there has been no improvement and you and your child have failed to fulfil the agreed actions, we will now have to consider terminating the Attendance Contract and consider legal intervention.

It is important for children to attend school regularly and on time every day that the school is open and available for attendance. Here at <insert>, our priority is to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to contact us to discuss any barriers to complying with the attendance contract within five days of the date of this letter. Failure to do so will result in the contract being terminated and further action being necessary.

Please be aware further action will mean the school has no alternative but to refer this matter onto the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council.

You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider appropriate legal interventions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Senior lead for attendance

Letter 10: Flow Chart Action 8 - Notice to Improve

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

NOTICE TO IMPROVE: FINAL WARNING NOTICE

Name of Child: <insert> D.O.B: <insert>

Registered pupil at: <insert> Current Attendance: <insert>

Further to our recent <visit/meeting/letter/agreement>, I am concerned that your child's attendance has not improved and is still a cause for concern. Your child's attendance currently stands at <insert>. <insert> of these absences are unauthorised / <insert> these absences are for illness/medical appointments.

To date, the school has offered you the following support to improve your child's attendance.

SUPPORT OFFERED	DATE AGREED (if applicable)	Outcome (if applicable)
e.g informal meeting with form tutor	*01.10.26*	

Failure to improve attendance will result in a consultation with the Attendance Support Team if there are any further unauthorised absences during the review period of <*day after letter sent – date in three weeks' time*>. The case will be referred on to the Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council for legal intervention to be considered and you may be at risk of prosecution under S444 (1) Education Act 1996. If the unauthorised absence fails to improve during the review period, a penalty notice may be issued before the review period is completed.

Improvement in your child's case would need to consist of ……. (*here detail if it is improved attendance on a specific day that is required, general overall improvement in attendance, unauthorised lates or dentist appointments every Friday, on time for registration, no unauthorised absences, appointments outside of school etc.)*

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise.

Section 444 (1)(A) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. Hillingdon Council may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned.

Poor attendance is taken very seriously at our school and research shows a clear link between absence and poor progress in schools and colleges and future life opportunities.

If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter, please contact me on <insert> and I can arrange a meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Letter 11: Flow Chart Action 8 - Referral to AST for Legal Intervention

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

RE: Referral to The Attendance Support Team

Name of Child: <insert> **D.O.B:** <insert>
Registered pupil at: <insert> **Current Attendance:** <insert>

As stated in our previous letters, your child's attendance has not improved and therefore we have no other option but to take further action which is to refer this matter onto the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council.

The School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council may consider legal intervention against you for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly and punctually.

You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

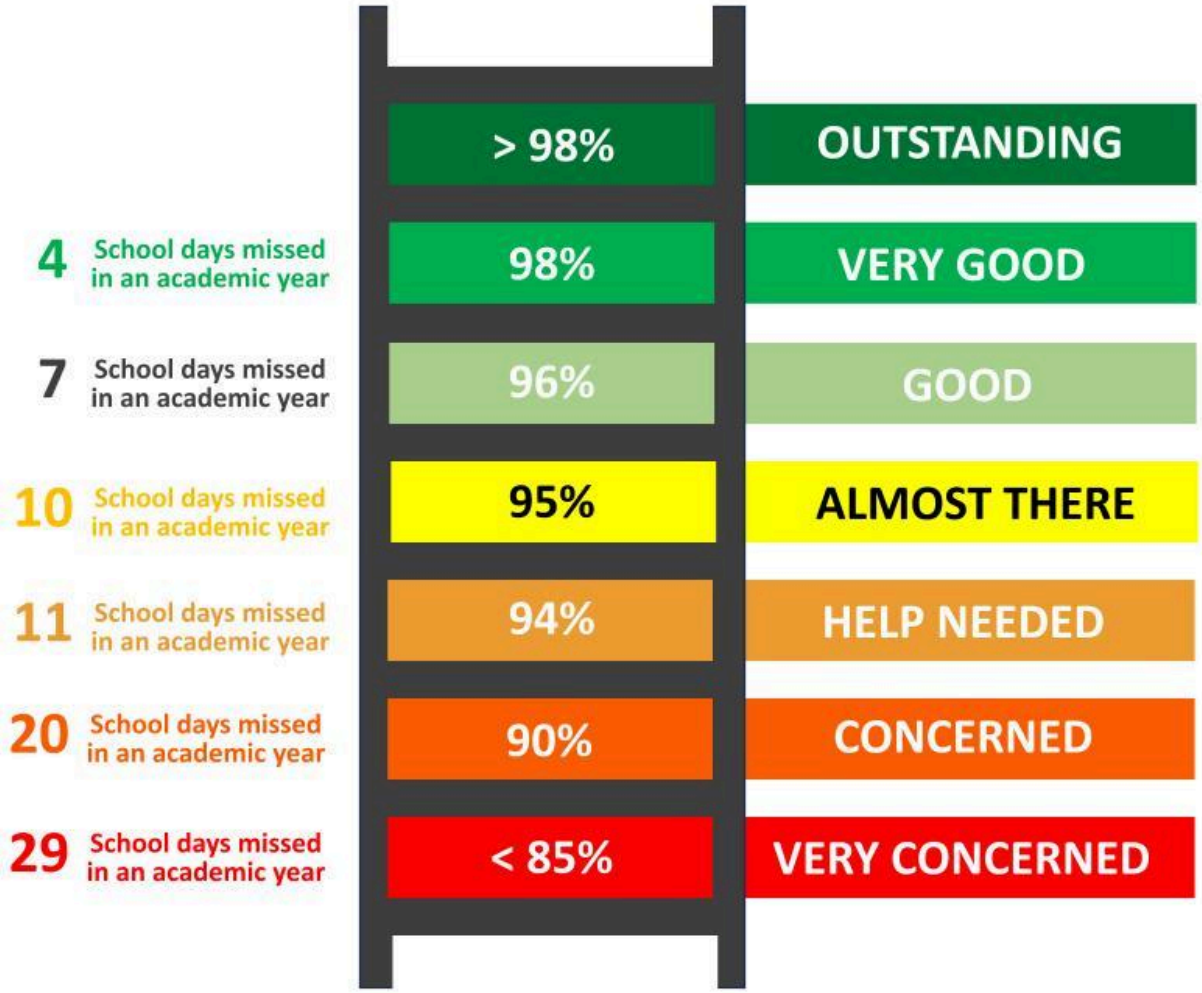
If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will consider appropriate legal interventions

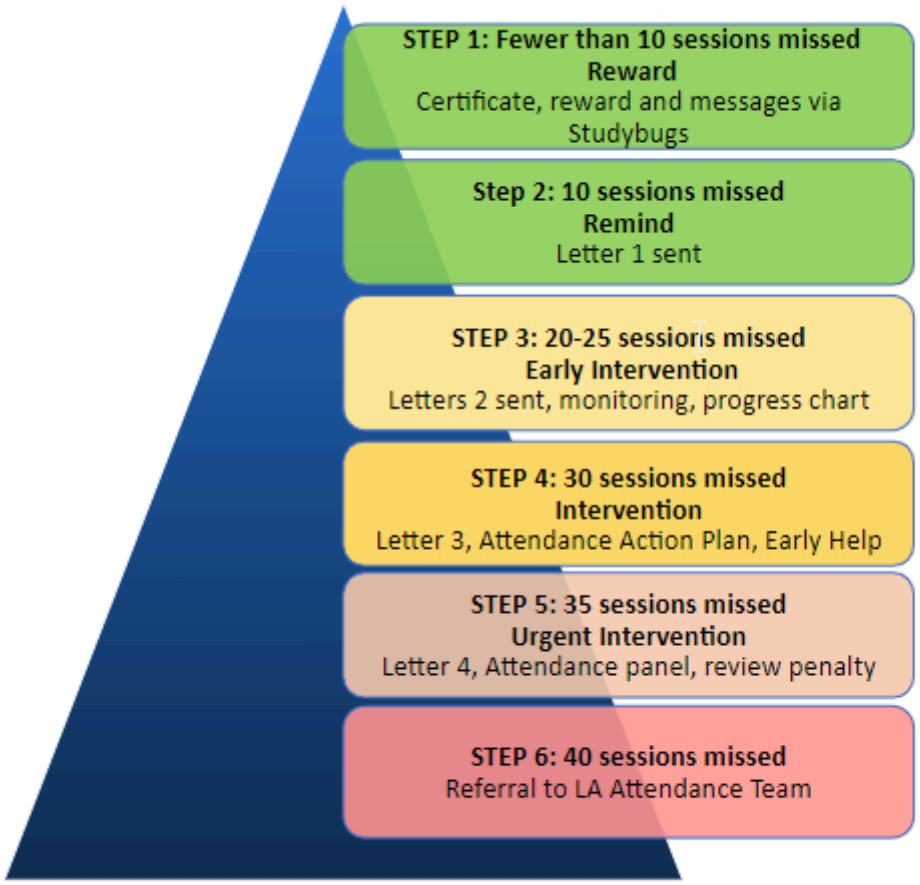
Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

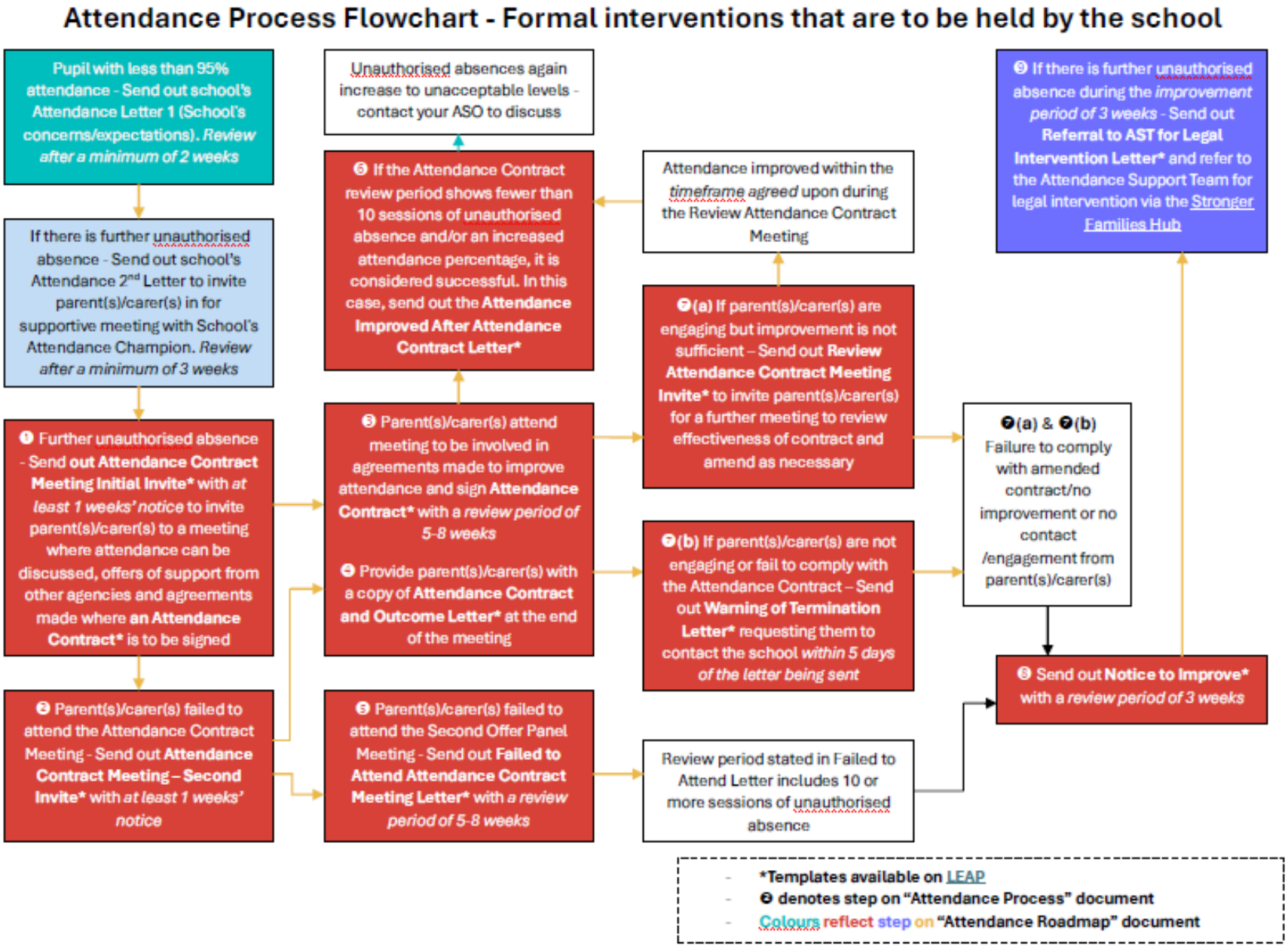
Appendix C: Attendance ladder that is used to illustrate levels of good attendance:




STEP 1: Fewer than 10 sessions missed
Reward
Certificate, reward and messages via Studybugs
Step 2: 10 sessions missed
Remind
Letter 1 sent
STEP 3: 20-25 sessions missed
Early Intervention
Letters 2 sent, monitoring, progress chart
STEP 4: 30 sessions missed
Intervention
Letter 3, Attendance Action Plan, Early Help
STEP 5: 35 sessions missed
Urgent Intervention
Letter 4, Attendance panel, review penalty
STEP 6: 40 sessions missed
Referral to LA Attendance Team

asds

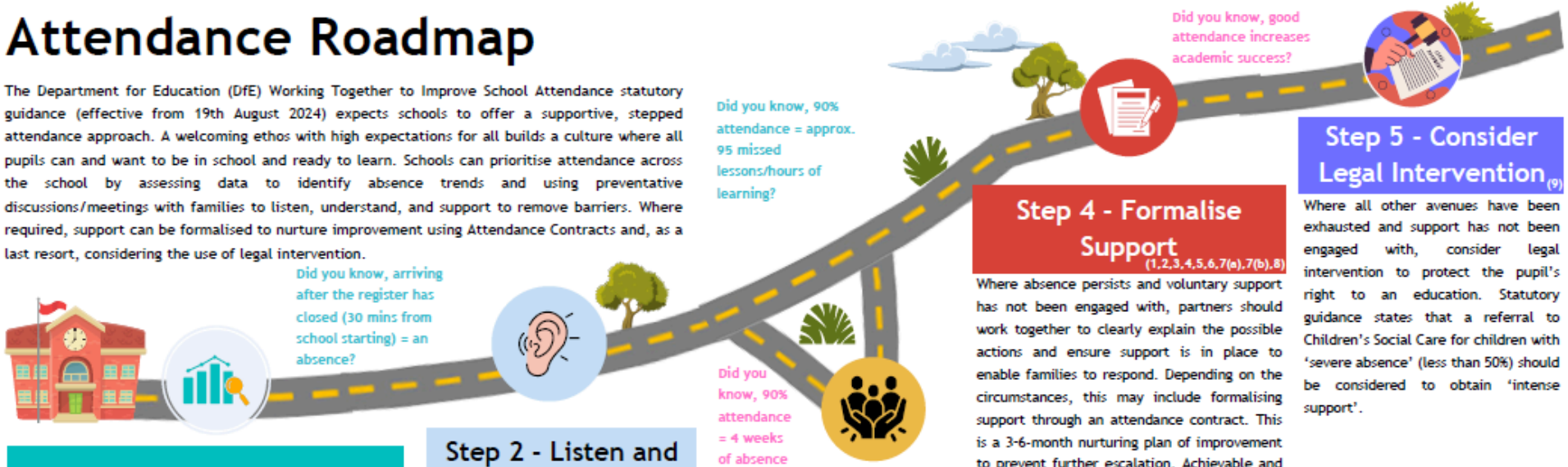
Appendix D: Materials used to illustrate the school's steps to monitoring and support.



	Family engagement	Positive student engagement	Behaviour and mental health	Physical health	Academic support	Extended learning	Basic needs
Steps 1 and 2	Clear communication about attendance expectations Recognition	Connection to a caring adult. Positive, caring daily attendance practices and routines.	Open-door policy for students, families and staff to seek mental health support. Moments of Triumph programme.	Information about physical health prioritised in annual PSHE cycle. School Nurse visibility. Information in PE.	Method of students catching up with any work missed.	Extra-curricular activities available to all students. Breakfast club.	Second-hand uniform. .
Step 3 and 4	Targeted, positively framed family meetings.	Clubs specifically designed to improve attendance. Student mentors.	Check-ins via The Hub Decompressed starts to the school day.	Personalised education plans for students with chronic illnesses (see *'Supporting students with medical needs'* policy)	Tutoring and/or intensive classroom-based support. Attendance strategies added to EHCP or IEPs.	Targeted resources and materials	Signposting of Early Help services and referral.
Steps 5 and 6	In-school key worker identified, who will coordinate support via Attendance Action Plan.	Regular check-ins via The Hub.	Where appropriate, support via external channels, such as Family support worker, art Therapy and CAMHS.	Where appropriate, coordinated care plan with local health provider.	Individualised learning and success plan.	Provision of materials and devices to support learning, including extra-curricular.	TExplore eligibility for support with journey to school., referral to Children's Social Care.

Attendance Roadmap

The Department for Education (DfE) Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance (effective from 19th August 2024) expects schools to offer a supportive, stepped attendance approach. A welcoming ethos with high expectations for all builds a culture where all pupils can and want to be in school and ready to learn. Schools can prioritise attendance across the school by assessing data to identify absence trends and using preventative discussions/meetings with families to listen, understand, and support to remove barriers. Where required, support can be formalised to nurture improvement using Attendance Contracts and, as a last resort, considering the use of legal intervention.



Step 1 - Monitor

Daily actions and processes promote relationship building with children and families to prevent absence. This involves rigorously using attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort levels) as soon as possible, allowing all parties to work together and resolve issues before they become entrenched.

Data trends and absence patterns inform conversations with families (and children where age allows). Other daily actions involve promoting attendance positively through praise, incentives, swift absence follow-up, email and/or letter communication to raise families' awareness of emerging concerns, processing requested leave during term time for exceptional circumstances, and carrying out home visits to meet safeguarding duties as required.

Step 2 - Listen and Understand

Where a pattern exists, encourage pupils and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance, and agree on how all partners can work together to resolve them. Discussions and meetings should be offered to identify if early support or any reasonable adjustments are needed. This can be done using discussions and/or meetings to create a supportive action plan.

Step 3 - Facilitate Support

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

Step 4 - Formalise Support (1,2,3,4,5,6,7(a),7(b),8)

Where absence persists and voluntary support has not been engaged with, partners should work together to clearly explain the possible actions and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract. This is a 3-6-month nurturing plan of improvement to prevent further escalation. Achievable and individualised targets should be set and reviewed regularly. Medical and/or other information should be actively sought at this point if required to work collaboratively with families, professionals, and other agencies.

Step 5 - Consider Legal Intervention (9)

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support has not been engaged with, consider legal intervention to protect the pupil's right to an education. Statutory guidance states that a referral to Children's Social Care for children with 'severe absence' (less than 50%) should be considered to obtain 'intense support'.

PENALTY NOTICES & LEGAL INTERVENTION

1st Offence (effective from 19th August 2024) of Term Time Leave and/or Irregular Attendance (10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence or more) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £80 per parent, per child.

2nd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days, no reduction available.

3rd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = NO PENALTY NOTICE considered. The case will be presented to Magistrates' Court under s444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act. If found guilty, a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be issued. Convictions for s444(1a) offences will show on DBS record.

*(number) denotes step on "Attendance Process" document