



Simul autem et crescere luceat
Together we grow and shine

Fountain Head House School Pupil Attendance Policy

Review due	January 2026
Last review	January 2025
Reviewed by	Dan Turner Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approved by	Julie Smith Chair of the Board

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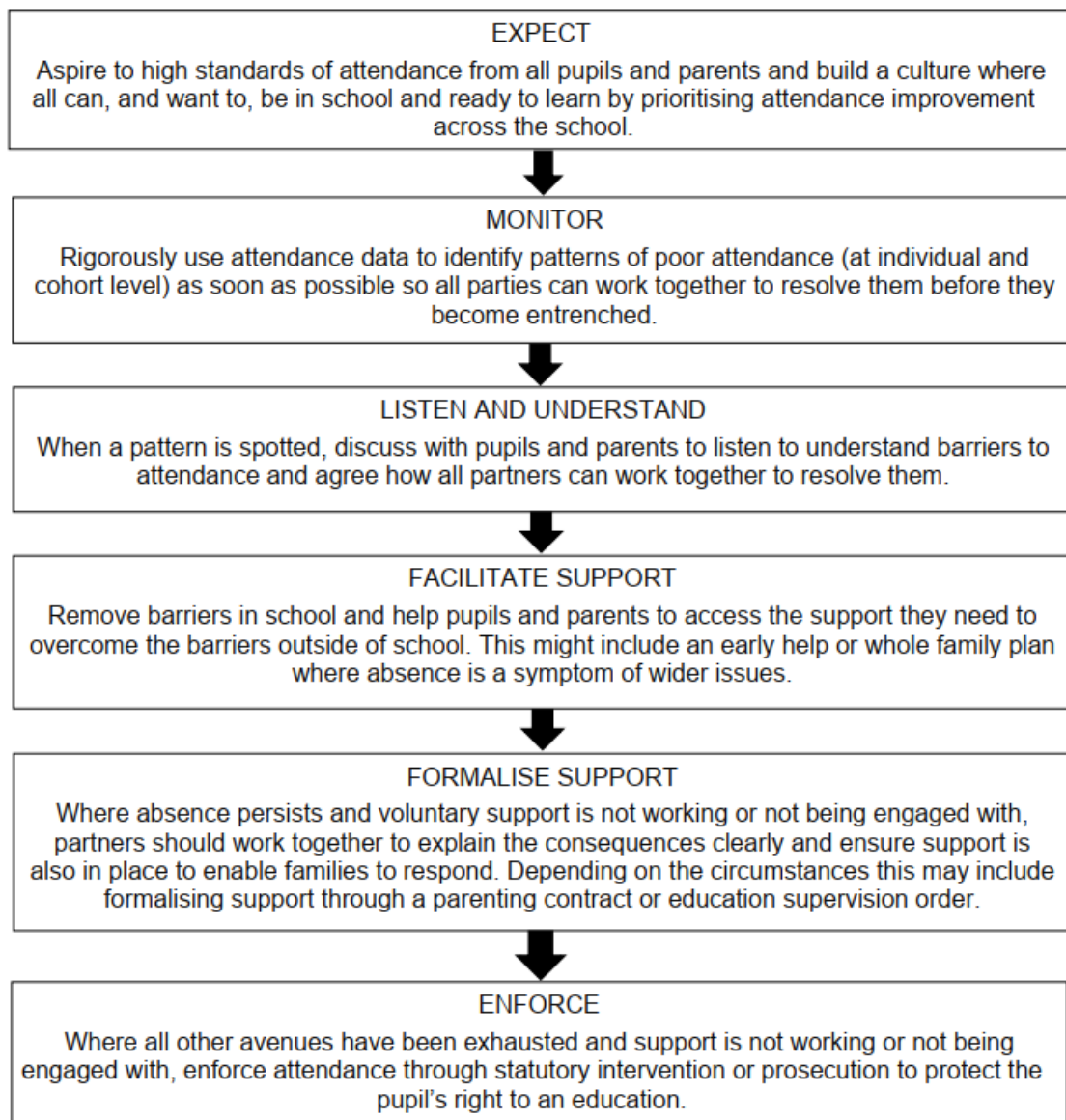
Aims

At Fountain Head House School we are committed to:

- ✓ Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- ✓ Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ✓ Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- ✓ Working collaboratively with all relevant local partners and families, particularly as concerns following best practice for "addressing the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly".
- ✓ Supporting parents to meet their legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly in a non-judgmental way.

Our approach to improving attendance reflects the philosophy and expectations laid out in **Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.**

Published: May 2022 and Updated August 2024 can be summarised as:



Legislation and guidance

This policy is designed to meet the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- ✓ Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- ✓ Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- ✓ Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- ✓ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- ✓ The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- ✓ This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.
- ✓ Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities - Published: May 2022 and Updated in August 2024.
- ✓ Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools – Published February 2023.

The following are links to useful tools and best practice advice for improving attendance:

- ✓ Emotionally Based School Avoidance - Guidance and Return to School Planning Tool <https://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Page/10483>
- ✓ 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle - <https://schools.local-offer.org/send-toolkit/send/assess-plan-do-review/assess-plan-do-review-overview/>

Responsibilities linked to Attendance

- All children aged 5 - 16 years must receive suitable education. (Section 7, *Education Act (1996)*). A pupil of compulsory school age who is registered at a school must, by law, attend regularly.
- By law, parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly. (Section 576, *Education Act (1996)*).
- The Local Authority (LA) must offer educational provision for all children of school age.
- By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed or has been notified that the pupil will attend the school.
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- By law, all schools must keep an admissions' register, the contents of which includes all pupils, their personal details, (including at least two telephone numbers for different safe adults, to ensure that we can always contact someone in the event of an emergency), the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and details of the school last attended.

- Pupils will be removed from roll only when they complete their education stage, transfer to another school, move out of the area or emigrate or following a parental request for elective home education. We follow statutory guidance for removing pupils from roll and notifying the local authority. Further information can be found in Appendix 6.
- There is a clear link between attainment and attendance. Under **section 444 (1)** of the **Education Act 1996** (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance, this is done to ensure that all pupils can benefit from their legal right to receive an education.
- School will communicate attendance concerns to the pupil's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual School Head, if the pupil is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual School Head, where relevant.
- We have a roles and responsibilities framework outlined in the section Roles and Responsibilities to complement this policy. This defines agreed roles and responsibilities for parents, pupils and staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, therefore, The Link Academy Trust expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting attendance at school.

To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Fountain Head House School (FHHS) Board

FHHS Board oversees the monitoring attendance figures for the whole school as part of regular Headteacher's reports. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ✓ Implementation of this policy at the school.
- ✓ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to FHHS Board.
- ✓ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- ✓ Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Senior Leadership Team

- ✓ Take a lead in promoting pupil attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- ✓ Ensure attendance has a high profile across the school.
- ✓ Work on proactively on building strong relationships with families.

- ✓ Build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents.
- ✓ Attend welfare home visits where required.
- ✓ Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- ✓ Liaise with Attendance Lead, DSL, Behaviour Lead and SENCo as appropriate to discuss attendance concerns for individual pupils.
- ✓ Participate in appropriate training in relation to attendance.
- ✓ Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and ensure that adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities.
- ✓ Take overall responsibility for ensuring our school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance e.g., deletion from school roll is adhered to for example.

Attendance Officer – Dan Turner

- ✓ The above staff have the responsibility to ensure all registers are completed twice a day by 09:30 and 13:30. This includes where staff are absent.
- ✓ Report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- ✓ The Welfare lead will carry out first day calls by 10:30.
- ✓ To check for any missing marks and to account for any 'N' marks
- ✓ Attendance monitoring - Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- ✓ If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.
- ✓ Offer support and guidance on attendance where needed
- ✓ Monitor and analyse attendance data and ensure these are shared frequently
- ✓ Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- ✓ Provide regular attendance reports and report concerns about attendance to the headteacher and where required, the Local Board.
- ✓ Monitor pupils with attendance below 95% with regular communication with both the pupil and their parents, holding attendance meetings where required and agreeing individual action plans
- ✓ Attend welfare home visits where required
- ✓ Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Pupil Protection Policy
- ✓ Work with Educational Welfare Team to tackle persistent absence
- ✓ Advise the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- ✓ Monitor daily attendance for vulnerable pupils and track weekly attendance patterns and trends for all pupils, delivering intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This needs to include patterns of attendance for individual pupils, cohorts, and groups but particularly for pupils with attendance below 90%
- ✓ Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends including analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.

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Class Teachers

- ✓ Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via the electronic registration system.
- ✓ Following up on any absence and making notes.
- ✓ Ensure attendance has a high profile within the class
- ✓ Consider whether a pupils known, or not yet identified, SEN could be impacting on attendance and whether provision and/or further reasonable adjustments should be made
- ✓ Take registers twice daily – Am registration and PM registration and record this on Behaviour Watch, using the appropriate code.
- ✓ Build a culture of challenge when addressing absences with parents. Treat all pupils and parents with dignity and model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school
- ✓ Challenge parents when they do not provide a reason for absence
- ✓ Communicate with parents positively. Teachers should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing. Teachers should challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like
- ✓ Escalate concerns as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- ✓ Analyse and report attendance figures for each pupil to parents regularly.
- ✓ Discuss attendance with parents at every opportunity (celebrate good attendance as well as concerning attendance).
- ✓ Participate in training relating to attendance as appropriate

Where a pupil or family need support with attendance, the best placed person in the school will support the family, this may or may not be the child's class teacher. This person should remain consistent, and the school will draw on positive relationships to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing.

Support Staff

- ✓ Understand that promoting pupil attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- ✓ Assist in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- ✓ Build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents
- ✓ Challenge parents when no reason has been provided for an absence
- ✓ Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ✓ Participate in training in relation to attendance

School Office staff

- ✓ Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- ✓ Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- ✓ Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Pupil Protection Policy

Parents/Carers

- ✓ A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school as soon as possible in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.
- ✓ Ensure pupils attend regularly and punctually.
- ✓ Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- ✓ Do everything you can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- ✓ Work with the school and your child to address any in-school barriers to attendance and support their learning by taking an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- ✓ Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of morning routine, bedtime, etc. so that you child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that your child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.
- ✓ Provide the school with more than one emergency contact for your child.
- ✓ Provide proof of medical appointments that can only be attended during the school day.
- ✓ Make early contact with us when you become aware of problems with your child attending school.
- ✓ Attend meetings if concerns are identified.
- ✓ Participate in Early Help Meetings if required.
- ✓ Support attendance contracts where appropriate.
- ✓ Support us in actioning agreed interventions/action plans.

Local Governing Board

- ✓ Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- ✓ Review the implementation of the School Attendance Policy
- ✓ Ensure the school fulfil their statutory duties
- ✓ Ensure the importance of school attendance is promoted across policies and procedures
- ✓ Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- ✓ Discuss the targets for attendance with the Headteacher and review progress towards these at Board meetings.
- ✓ Regularly monitor attendance figures through data analysis at Board meetings. Ask questions about attendance trends and be curious about what is being done to challenge and prevent persistent poor absence

Pupils

- Attend school every day
- Acknowledge positive behaviours needed both inside and outside of our school
- Adhere to our systems for late registration
- Adhere to attendance contracts if they are in place
- Aim for the highest possible attendance
- Discuss concerns about your attendance or punctuality with a trusted adult in our school, especially if you are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on your attendance and/or learning
- Attend all lessons ready to learn and on time for your class.

Recording attendance

Maintaining an Attendance Register

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the pm session. It will mark whether each pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

The school gates are open ready to receive pupils from transport from: 8:50am until 9.15am.

The school day starts at 9.00am.

The first (morning) registration session starts at 9.10am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their designated classroom by 9.15am. The register closes at 9.30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that the pupil is on site, (U) but will count as an absent mark.

Pupils arriving late should report to the main school office and sign in.

The second (afternoon) registration session start at 13:15 and should be completed by 13.45.

If a pupil needs to leave school during the day, they must sign out at the main reception with a parent or carer once authorisation has been given.

Pupils educated off-site are monitored daily for their attendance at the off-site. Staff work closely with the staff at the off-site provision, the pupil, and their parents to support the pupil to maintain good attendance.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We use Behaviour Watch, our Data Management System, to record and collect attendance data.

Recording Attendance

The national absence and attendance codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the Census. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence. See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

There should be no pre-population of codes and individual school tracking systems which monitor the whereabouts of pupils educated off-site, must be robust and quality assured regularly.

Where pupils are dual registered, are on voluntary service or are taking part in other approved educational activities, the register will be updated following regular discussion and information sharing with the other establishment.

The Attendance Officer will check the missing register report throughout the day and report any registers that have not been completed.

Absence and Lateness

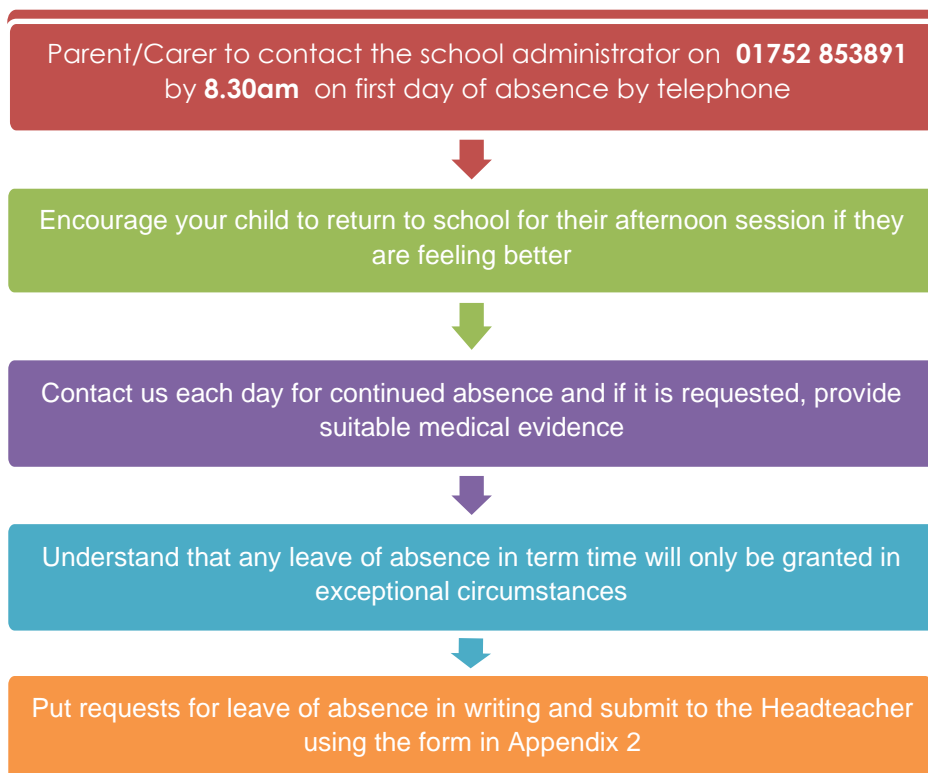
Reporting Absence

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform us of a pupil absence and to inform us of any changes to contact details.

Parents are expected to inform us of their pupil's absence by 8.30 a.m. on each day of absence providing the reason for absence and when their child will be returning to school. We will contact parents and/or other listed emergency contacts where no contact has been made. Where required, we may conduct reasonable enquiries with friends or neighbours and will carry out welfare home visits as necessary. If no contact is made, we may request a welfare check from the police.

Pupils who are known to walk to school on their own and are late to arrive – regardless of when the pupil arrived, a call must be made to the parents for an explanation. A call must be made to the parents within 15 minutes of the start of the school day if the pupil has not arrived.

Protocol for reporting absence



Unplanned absence - illness

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by telephone on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible.

In order to make informed decisions about their pupil's fitness for attending parents/carers are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance ['Is My Child Too Ill for School?'](#). Any authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the Headteacher or member of staff delegated to carry out this task.

In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of an INSET day or Bank Holiday), parents/carers may be asked to provide additional evidence before authorising the absence, however this will only be requested if there is any genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In this instance, if evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis. Parents/carers will be notified of this by letter. Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as evidence when attendance is a serious concern. For the purpose of this policy, 'serious concern' may be defined as: repeated unexplained/unauthorised absences or 3 x separate illnesses within a half term where no medical condition or underlying health issues have been identified.

Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:

- Medical card with one appointment entered with the pupil's name and surgery stamp included, signed by the receptionist

- Letter from a professional such as a hospital consultant
- Evidence of consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes / call log

Planned Absence – Medical

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school by e-mail or telephone in advance of the appointment. Evidence may be asked for in some circumstances.

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

Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with an M code – authorised.

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

Planned Absence – Religious Observance

Parents must inform us, in advance, if absences are required for days of religious observance. We will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Absences for religious observance will be recorded with the R code.

Pupils with medical conditions or Special Educational Needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

Fountain Head House School will:

- Work with parents/carers to improve attendance, be mindful of the barriers pupils face, make reasonable adjustments, and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. It is also expected that parents/carers will engage with the support offered both internally and with external partners to ensure our children have all the support they need to thrive.
- Encourage positive conversations so that a good support plan can be put in place including making reasonable adjustments.
- Consider possible explanations for absence including Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). **See Appendix 4 for more information .**
- Work with parents/carers to consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate,

making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

- Ensure relevant referrals are made for pupils who are too ill to attend school, which may include medical panel (under section 19) and or medical agency support such as CAMHS.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers this may include considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place and consider whether a time-limited, closely monitored and reviewed, phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance through bespoke Step Up Plans.

Adverse Weather or School Closure

On the rare occasion the school has to close due to unforeseen circumstances e.g. adverse weather. The following actions will be taken:

- A decision will be made by the Headteacher based upon local information e.g. Met Office advice.
- The decision to close will be shared with parents/carers through email, social media and school website (phone calls will be made where appropriate)
- Pupils absence will be authorised using code Y due to the exceptional circumstances
- The school will close for least amount of time as possible but each circumstance will be looked at individually

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- ✓ Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code.
- ✓ After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the U code.

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- ✓ Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.
- ✓ Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- ✓ Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- ✓ Identify the correct attendance code to use.
- ✓ Liaise with Child Absent from Education Team as necessary

Defining authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- ✓ Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- ✓ Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- ✓ Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with FHHS but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

*It may occasionally be necessary to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised for a particular pupil unless medical evidence is provided. This decision can only be made by the Safeguarding Team including the Headteacher, DSL and SENDCo.

All requests for Absence during Term-Time need to be made using the form found in Appendix 2 – without this request the absence will be unauthorised.

Monitor and Analyse attendance

The DSL and Deputy Headteacher will check that the registers have been completed twice per day and where they are not will ensure they are completed by the relevant member of staff.

The DSL and Deputy Headteacher will monitor all absence daily and take any necessary steps. Looking for any patterns of absence or concerns.

The monitoring of attendance will in turn inform analysis of attendance, looking at trends for individual pupils and groups of pupils. This will be done through Behaviour Watch, the Data Management System we use to record attendance.

The DSL will carry out First Day Calling by 10:30 each day to ascertain the reason for absences.

Unexplained absences will be followed up on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and the school will identify whether the absence is approved or not. The school will identify the correct code to use and will input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained. **This will take no longer than 5 working days after the session.**

Any pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than one week will be referred to Safeguarding Team.

In the case where the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the school and no reason has been issued for the pupil's absence, the school will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the pupil, following procedures for children absent from education as outlined in the document from the Department of Education and Local Authority guidance.

Each week attendance will be a standing item on the Safeguarding Team Agenda. At this meeting the team will review action taken and discuss next steps.

The team will focus on:

- ✓ Persistent Absence
- ✓ Severe Absence
- ✓ Pupils on bespoke action plans to tackle poor attendance

Persistent and Severe Absence

Pupils with 90% or less attendance are classified as Persistent Absence (PA). PA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

Pupils with 50% or less attendance are classified as Severe Absence (SA). SA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences

All PA pupils will have bespoke action plans to try to improve their attendance to above 97%. This will be monitored the school administrator and Headteacher. Pupils who are PA will be discussed as a potential concern at twice half termly attendance review meetings. Where pupils have an identified special educational need, the schools SENCO will also provide support, so that the impact of needs are clearly understood and appropriate, supportive actions are taken.

The school's strategy for tackling persistent absence, can be found in Appendix 5.

Children Absent from Education

We have due regard to our statutory duty to safeguard pupils who are absent from education. We follow the Local Authority's processes for reporting pupils absent from education.

If a pupil fails to return following a period of absence, investigations will be made by staff to their whereabouts. If our investigations fail to contact the parents/pupil the case will be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Team within 20 days.

Data collection and retention

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

FHHS collects and stores attendance data to:

- ✓ Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- ✓ Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- ✓ Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

- ✓ FHHS reports to parents/carers on their child's attendance record termly unless a pupil's absence is causing concern.

Strategies for promoting attendance and reducing poor attendance and/or persistent absence

The school promotes good attendance for all pupils and works proactively to address attendance that is causing concern. Active monitoring of each pupil's attendance will ensure that we have a good understanding of the levels of each pupil's attendance and be able to identify and act quickly where concerns arise.

Key Triggers

- **Extended absence:** If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Educational Welfare Team.
- **Persistent Absence:** The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee and action taken to try to resolve this situation.

Step 1: Listen and Understand

Where a pupil's absence is causing concern, we will first contact their parents/carer and discuss the issue and attempt to resolve any issues.

Step 2: Facilitate Support

If there is no improvement in attendance following this initial approach, we ask parents/carers to attend a meeting to discuss the issue formally. From this, there may be one of three Early Help outcomes:

- Initiate simple reasonable adjustments.
- Develop a school focused plan with the pupil and their parent as appropriate*
- Initiate a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA).

If the conversation with the pupil indicates a serious safeguarding concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures as set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

* Step Up Plan: School focused plan (or Individual Attendance Improvement Plan) is formulated which outline the actions the school will put in place to support the pupil's return to school, what the parent will do and clear timescales by which the pupil will be expected to engage fully. We will keep this process under close review and may meet again with parents/carers to adjust the process.

Step 3: Formal Support

Again where this process does not bring about a change in attendance the school will seek to work in a multi-disciplinary manner with the relevant Educational Welfare Team, Statutory SEND, Social Services (where appropriate), CAHMS and look at how barriers can be tackled. This meeting and planning may form part of the EHCP review process.

In working to promote attendance and to reduce poor attendance and/or persistent absence the school will follow the guidance and principals as laid out in **Working together to improve school attendance Guidance or maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. (Published: May 2022 Applies updated August 2024).**

Step 4: Enforce: Legal sanctions – Formal Support

Where all voluntary support options above are unsuccessful or are not appropriate, the school will seek advice from the local authority's school Educational Welfare Team and liaise with the relevant Early Help lead practitioner or social worker to take forward attendance legal intervention in line with Section 5 of **Working together to improve school attendance Guidance or maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities**.

Note: It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send children to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of a pupil, where the pupil is of compulsory school age. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher (in discussion with the Governors), in line with the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- Singular incidences of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is seen in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Issuing Penalty Notices

Your local council can give each parent a fine of £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days.

From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.

If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.

If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

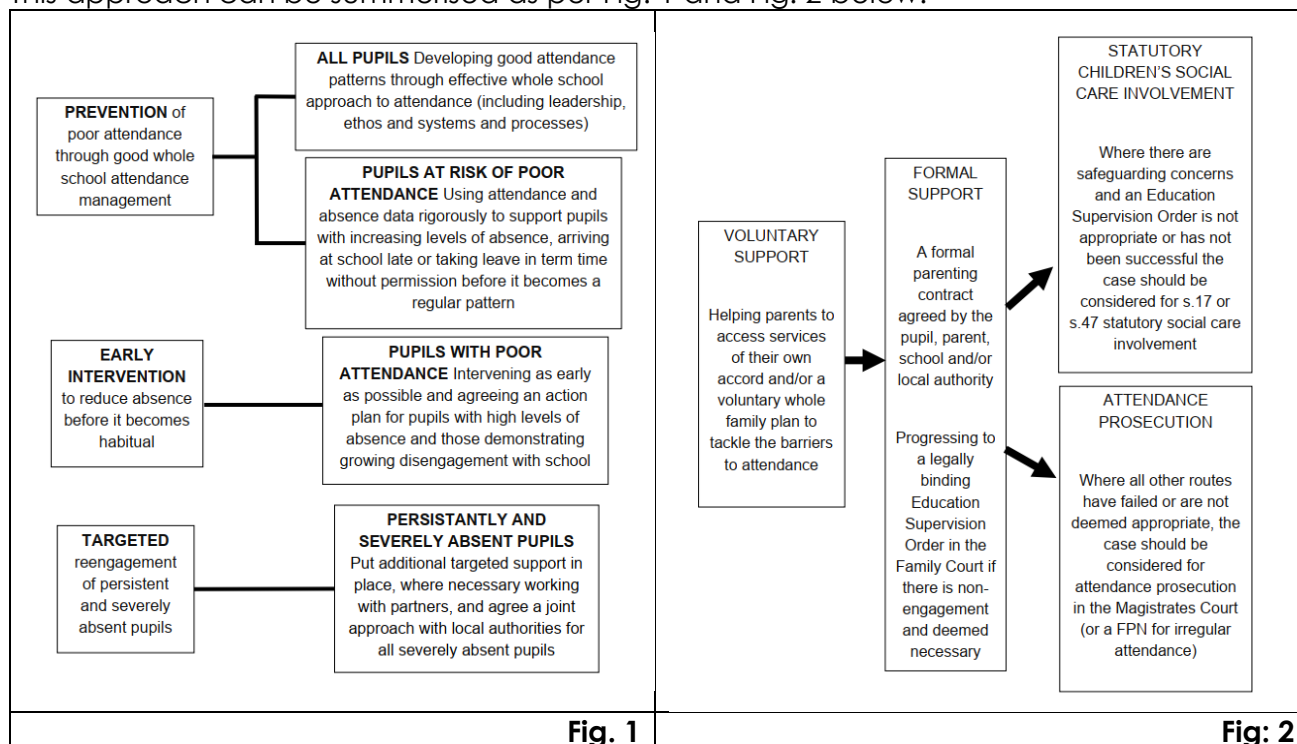
Taking Parents to Court for unauthorised absence

The Education Act (1996) Section 444 (1) states that courts can fine each parent up to £1000 per pupil, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Taking Parents to Court for Persistent Unauthorised Absence

The Education Act (1996) – Section 444 (1A) states that courts can fine each parent up to £2500 per pupil, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to three months.

This approach can be summarised as per Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 below.



Supporting the Attendance of Every Pupil

At Fountain Head House School, we use a variety of strategies to encourage attendance:

- Building strong and enduring relationships with our pupils so they feel a sense of belonging in our school community
- Verbal encouragement and praise
- Create personalized and achievable targets for pupils, based on their SEN needs that is realistic and appropriate for each individual
- Create safe spaces for pupils to thrive
- Make decisions on educational goals in consultation with families, while understanding that a medical condition can worsen suddenly and taking this into account.
- Create opportunities for dialogue with families about attendance, ensuring that we work in partnership with parents
- Use different methods to encourage attendance; for instance, explaining the links between attendance and outcomes
- Raise the profile of attendance with families, particularly when pupils start at the setting
- Teach and model a love of learning, helping families to see the value of the education that is offered to them
- Look at the effect on attendance of decisions made at school level
- Be aware of the complexity of different contexts and the pressures that families might experience, which may in turn contribute to poor attendance; for instance, in areas where many parents perform seasonal work and are unable to take holidays over the summer break.

We recognise that not all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable, are able to achieve 100% attendance through no fault of their own. We celebrate improvements in attendance and contextualised good attendance for individual pupils.

Removing a Pupil from the School Roll

It is vital that you are always professionally curious when following these processes

Elective Home Education (EHE)

The Statutory Notification and the EHE form, together with the Safeguarding form must be submitted on the day of receiving the de-registration letter from the parent with a copy of the letter. The pupil should be taken off roll from the day the school receives the letter or in cases where the parent is giving advance notice of the date requested. Do not backdate it to an earlier date than receipt of the letter even if the parent requests this. The school should confirm that the pupil has been registered with the LA as EHE to ensure that they have assumed responsibility for the pupil. Do not just assume that because the school has submitted the paperwork it has all gone through.

Pupil Moves Out of Area

Unreasonable distance to travel. Submit the Statutory Notification as soon as the school finds this out. Continue to track destination and liaise with LA admissions team. They will advise the school when a pupil may be removed from roll if it has been established that the pupil/family have left the last known address and their new location is known. They may allow the school to backdate the leaving date if they or the school receives confirmation of the pupil starting at another school or within the care of a different LA. The school must have written confirmation from the LA to backdate the leaving date. If the school does not receive this and the school has no other confirmation of where the pupil is the school must keep them on roll for 20 days.

Pupil Emigrates

The school must follow the procedure above for moving out of area but also need to have ascertained from the parent the forwarding address, details of destination school and moving date.

Pupil Transfers to a New School

Confirm the pupil's start date at the new school and that the pupil has started there. Submit the Statutory Notification on the day the school has it confirmed that the pupil started at their new school. The school can take the pupil off roll from the confirmed start date or the last school day if it precedes it e.g., a Friday and they started on a Monday. If the start date is the first day of a school term the school can back date the leaving date for the school's pupil to the last day of the previous term. If the school must investigate in the new term to find out why the pupil is 'absent' keep them on roll until the school gets a confirmed start date at the new school. If there is a gap between the leaving date the school has been given by a parent and the start date for a pupil, the pupil should remain on the school's roll, marked absent, until the transfer school confirms the pupil has started there. If after ten days, the pupil has still not started, the school should submit a CME form. The school cannot remove a CME pupil from the school's roll for a further ten days from the initial notification or safeguarding referral (so 20 days in total from the first day of absence) unless the LA confirms where the pupil has gone.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Chair of FHHS Board and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full FHHS Board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- ✓ Safeguarding and Child protection Policy.
- ✓ Positive Behaviour Policy.

Attendance Codes

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

CODE	MEANING
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon
B	Attending any other approved educational activity: - Alternative provision not arranged through the approved framework
C	Authorised circumstance (see Table 2: The C code for breakdown).
D	Dual registered at another school.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.
G	Holiday not granted by the school or term-time leave not granted by the school.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment).
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority: - Home tutoring - Approved framework for alternative provision - Blended learning.
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed.
M	Attended a medical appointment.
N	Reason for absence not yet established.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.
P	Participating in a sporting activity.
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.
R	Religious observance.
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed.
V	Attending an educational trip or visit.
W	Attending work experience.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see Table 2: The Y code for breakdown).
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register.



Fountain Head House School

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

SECTION A

Child's Name

Class.....

Proposed first day of absence...

.....

Proposed last day of absence.....

Total number of days absent.....

SECTION B

Reason for request of absence.....

SECTION C

I declare the information given on this form is correct.

Signature of Parent/Carer.....

Date.....

SECTION D

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Request approved / not approved

Reasons:

Headteacher's Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix 3

Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance

The following tables summarises the attendance responsibilities for parents, schools, and governing bodies, and local authorities which are outlined in the *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance.

The guidance should be read alongside the statutory guidance documents on parental responsibility measures, children missing education, supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and safeguarding.

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.</p>

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p>	<p>Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p>

Emotional Based School Avoidance

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and links to tools and resources to support attendance improvement where EBSA is an issue.

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Support for pupils where mental health is affecting attendance: effective practice examples:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63dcfbffd3bf7f070ffc1e8d/Support_for_pupils_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance_effective_practice_examples.pdf

The role of school staff is to ensure that the school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, which is the foundation of securing good attendance.

Generally, schools will achieve this by promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing through a whole-school approach to pupil mental health, and by developing a trusted relationship with parents/carers and families that involves them in the conversation about the school's ethos, and emphasises the importance of supporting mental health and regular attendance.

As part of any plan to support the child to attend well, schools should facilitate relevant pastoral support. This should be done with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying mental health issue.

This will involve having sensitive conversations with pupils and with parents/carers as swiftly as possible after having been made aware of the issue, and making reasonable adjustments in order to overcome specific barriers to attendance.

For example, a trusted adult periodically checking how the pupil is feeling or enabling the pupil to access a quiet space at break times can be effective ways of helping a child to feel less anxious about attending school. Or, if a pupil is anxious about returning to school because they are worried about being behind academically, they might be supported by providing access to additional educational support and tutoring. Full guidance on the programmes and activities that the Department is funding to support education recovery and children and young people's wellbeing, including the Recovery Premium and National Tutoring Programme, is available at Education recovery support. More examples of common, effective reasonable adjustments can be found in the effective practice examples.

Any plan to help the child to attend well may also involve making referrals to in-school or external professional support, and schools should be supportive where parents/carers feel the child needs to visit a health professional in relation to a mental health concern. Schools should consider additional pastoral care inputs for pupils, including any support that can be offered by the pupil's most trusted adults in school, and where appropriate making referrals to other service