



**STOPSLEY
HIGH SCHOOL**

Attendance Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

It is due for review in January **2020**

Signature..... Headteacher Date.....

Signature..... Chair of Governors Date.....

Designated Attendance Leads – Mrs P Whiting and Miss S Mitchell

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- 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

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

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

~~This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association — you don't need this you are not an Academy~~

3. Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The attendance team will meet regularly with the link attendance governor.

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

4.3 The Attendance team

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Discuss concerns around attendance with the deputy Headteacher and assistant Headteacher, and reports weekly.
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Completes home visits

4.4 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Form tutors are required to discuss any attendance issues with their form group.

5. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Attendance Leads (SM and PW). At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

6. Registration Times

School starts at 8.40am every morning when the first bell rings. Staff take the class registers at 8.40am and at 2:10pm.

7. Lateness

Any pupil not present when their name is called, who subsequently enters the classroom will be marked late, **using the 'L' code**. Any pupil not registered by 9.10am has to register with the front office. Pupils arriving after 9.10am without a genuine reason or contact from home will be marked as 'Unauthorised Late', **using the 'U' code**.

If a pupil has a reason for being late that the Attendance Officer deems acceptable (e.g. there is a genuine delay on the tube/bus or a medical appointment) then no sanction **e.g. a detention is applied but the pupil is still recorded as late to school using the 'L' code**. **Repeated lateness will lead to sanction being applied e.g. Deputy Head's late detention or placed on a punctuality card**.

8. Arriving late during registration

If a pupil is late for no acceptable reason (e.g. got out of bed late, took sibling to school) then he/she will be in the Deputy Head's late detention.

Persistent unauthorised lateness may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

9. Reporting Absence

It is understood that some pupils will be absent from school occasionally, with good reason. Parents should telephone the school and leave a message on the absence answer phone or email before 8.30am on the first day of absence. The answer phone is available 24 hours a day. On the rare occasion where a parent has not contacted the school the school will attempt to make contact with them. Contact will usually be done via a call or using the school

text messaging system. Parents should also inform the school if a pupil will be late to school for any reason. If we are unable to contact parent/carers then home visits will be carried out. Contact details: telephone 01582 870912 or you can call the main school number on 01582 870900 and select Option 1. Or email the attendance team: attendance@stopsleyhighschool.co.uk

10. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school can officially authorise an absence if it is for a good and legitimate reason e.g. illness, bereavement or religious observance. Even if a note is provided or a call has been made to the school, an absence can be unauthorised if there is no good and proper reason to explain it e.g. birthday celebrations, taking relatives to the airport and holidays during term time.

If parents are in any doubt about what constitutes authorised or unauthorised absence they should contact the school's Attendance Officer. If a pupil is sent home **from school unwell**, then that day will be authorised **by the school** but any additional days' absence will need to be authorised in the usual way i.e. a note, a phone call or medical evidence. ~~require medical evidence in order to be authorised.~~

A pattern of unauthorised absence will be reported to the Education Welfare Service. Any pupil with an absence percentage of less than 90% will not have any absence authorised unless medical evidence can be produced.

For your guidance the school considers attendance levels as follows:

100%-97% = High

96%-95% = 'Stopsley good'

94% - 93% = Needs improving – as not yet 'Stopsley good'

Under 93% = Low

Under 90% = Persistent Absentee

11. Applications for Leave of absence

Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised. All requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to the Headteacher. A parent/adult with whom the child resides with must make the application even though the pupil may not be taking the proposed leave with them. You will receive a written response confirming whether the request will be authorised or not. **If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply us with confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school reception for us to copy.**

12. Unauthorised Absence If you take your child out of school without the school's prior authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (which is illegal) and noted in your child's school records. Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during term time for 5 consecutive school days or more, without the Headteacher's authorisation, Luton Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice. In these circumstances a warning will not be given.

Penalty Notices are per parent, per child as appropriate, so if there are 2 parents both will need to pay the fine. From 1 September 2013 penalty notices will need to be paid within 21 days at £60 or £120 within 28 days. Unpaid Penalty Notices will result in prosecution for the absence in the magistrate's court. The school makes the decision as to whether the request

of leave should be granted or not and the Local Authority makes the decision to impose a penalty for this.

13. Failure to return to school on the date expected after a leave of absence

If there is a reason which delays the student in returning to school the parent/guardian must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. For any travel arrangements outside of the UK we require proof of return flights, prior to the leave being taken. This may prevent you from receiving unauthorised absence for your child and being fined if they are unable to return on the date expected. Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad will not be accepted routinely as evidence that a student was unable to attend school.

14. Requests for permission to take time out of school for sporting activities, acting commitments etc.

Please put your request in writing to the Headteacher. The decision will be based on current attendance, behaviour and progress.

15. Dental and Medical Appointments

Routine appointments should be, where possible, made outside school hours. The original appointment card or letter from the Orthodontist, GP, Dentist or **Optician** should be provided. **The** school should be informed if appointments are going to make a student late for school. Students are expected to attend school before and after routine appointments and ensure that they sign in and out at reception.

16. Holidays in Term Time

Holidays taken in term time will not be authorised. Requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher. Where a student is absent due to unauthorised holidays the school may issue a Penalty Notice Warning letter, which may result in a fine. Regrettably each year we are informed by parents that relatives living overseas are unwell and they need to travel urgently, the school will always ask for original evidence that travel arrangements have been made at the last minute. Based on this evidence the school will consider whether any of the absence can be authorised. Such absences are not authorised without evidence, and may be subject to a Penalty Notice. From time to time the school has also become aware that although a student has been reported as unwell to the school they are, in fact, on holiday. Parents should expect to be asked for medical evidence where an absence directly precedes or follows a school holiday. The school will actively pursue a Penalty Notice fine in situations where they have not been correctly informed of the reason for absence.

There is a common myth that schools are allowed to grant up to 10 days absence for holidays for each child each year. This is NOT TRUE. The default position is no leave of absence or holiday is granted except in exceptional circumstances e.g. a parent or sibling is dying and these are the last days together. If a parent applies for a holiday and it is not granted but the parent takes the student out of school anyway, then the absence is unauthorised, using the 'G code'

17. Education Welfare Service

Stopsley High School actively uses the Luton Borough Council Education Welfare Service.

The school is accountable to the local authority for the level of pupil attendance, and Education Welfare officers regularly inspect the school registers and receive information

about the attendance of pupils. Education Welfare Officers phone and visit parents where poor attendance is an issue.

18. General

Stopsley High School seeks to promote the best possible attendance because it seeks to achieve the highest possible standards in all aspects of school life. There is a clear link between good attendance and good results, and teachers will celebrate excellent attendance just as they celebrate other positive aspects of school life. Please feel free to contact the schools Attendance Team to discuss any issues concerning your child's attendance.

19. Rewards

Rewards are given to students with 100% attendance, and those with high and attendance that improves to be 'Stopsley good' over a substantial period of time. Attendance is included in all reports coming home so parents should be fully aware of how well their child is attending school.

20. Sanctions

Sanctions will be given to students who are repeatedly late for school or are frequently absent from school – what ever the reason. Attendance at school matters and is directly related to examination success, preparation for college and later employment. Students with attendance below 95% will not be automatically included on any school trips or visits. Parents will need to 'apply' for them to be able to take part.

If attendance drops below 95% or there is a pattern of poor punctuality or attendance to school or attendance to lessons, then the student will be placed on an Attendance and Punctuality card that must be completed and signed each day by the adult assigned to oversee the card for that student.

If attendance does not improve then the school will invite parents to an attendance meeting where reasons will be discussed and an action plan agreed.

If attendance still fails to improve then the School Attendance team will refer the case to Luton and the Education welfare service, leading to possible issue of a parenting order, a fine/penalty notice, or prosecution in court.

21. Parents

Old fashioned **truancy** where a student is absent from school and the parent did not know is thankfully rare, but it could count as a safeguarding concern. Sadly **truancy from lessons** is much more common. This is when a student registers at school but in not in one or more lessons.

Other types of unauthorised absence occur when a student is frequently absent from school and notes/phone calls are made but the type of illness/reasons do not support the sheer high numbers of days missed. This is known as **parentally condoned absence** and is the reason that medical evidence is asked for by the school.

In the end, all absence from school – whatever the reason, and however unavoidable it might be, affects how well students do. Poor attendance affects how well your child does at GCSE and therefore their chances of progressing to the college they want to do A-level or other courses at the next level after GCSE. Absence from school also affects how well they get on with other adults preparing them for the world of employment. And how well they are able to

interact socially, share interests and develop other talents (such as in music, sports or the arts) as part of the wider school curriculum.

Appendix 1

Punctuality Counts Why is Punctuality Important for your child? Being on time:

- Gets the day off to a good start for students and puts them in a positive frame of mind, so that they can make the most of all their learning opportunities.
- Sets positive patterns for the future. You can't expect to keep a job if you're always coming in late!
- Leads to a good attendance record, which in turn leads to better achievement because they attend the whole of the class.
- Leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable.
- Helps develop students' sense of responsibility for themselves and towards others and is a sign of good character.
- Is respectful to their teacher and their fellow students as arriving late causes disruption to the whole class.
- Research shows that attendance and punctuality are the single most important factors in school success.

At Stopsley High School all students are expected to be in school in good time for period 1 when they are registered, with time allowed for visiting lockers (we suggest, before 8.30am). There is a warning bell sounded at 8.35am, then the registration bell at 8.40am when the register is taken promptly.

What happens if a student is late?

- Our Deputy Headteacher, Mr Williets, meets students at the Student Entrance every morning, recording any latecomers, who will be required to attend late detentions. These run every evening after school, for 20 minutes.
- Students who arrive between 8.45am - 9.10am are asked why they are late and have their names recorded by Mr. Williets or reception. Students then go straight to period 1. Students will serve a detention the same day. A text message will be sent home advising of this.
- If a student arrives after 9:10am, they will receive a C4 detention unless contact has been received from parents/carers. A text message will be sent home informing parents/carers that their child has arrived late to school.
- If lateness persists the school will make contact with home and try to resolve the issue offering support and or advice as required.
- **If punctuality is still not good enough, then the student will be place on a punctuality card.**

Appendix 2

Attendance Matters 'Every student, Every day, Every lesson'

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life. Talking to your child and their teachers could help solve any problems you may have in getting your child to go to school and there are other forms of support available if you still have problems. The law requires parents to make sure their children receive full-time education suitable to their needs. As a last resort, schools and the Education Welfare Authority have legal powers to deal with persistent absence (i.e. under 90% attendance).

What the law says about attendance

As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child attends school regularly unless you provide evidence for absence. Missing school causes severe disruption to a child's education, and affects their performance in exams and chances later in life. **There are two offences for not attending school.**

1. **Section 444(1) Education Act 1996** – If the child is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.

2. **Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996** – an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent knew about the child's absence and failed to act then the parent is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

Penalty notices and prosecution

Schools, working in conjunction with the Education Welfare Team may decide to give you a penalty notice if your child regularly misses school and you have not taken action or asked for help. If you are found guilty of an offence you may be prosecuted and fined up to a maximum of £2500.

Education is not an option – it's compulsory. Schools have to regularly inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission.

Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under **Section 175 Education Act 2002**, to investigate any unexplained absences.

Family holidays

You can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Any child who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with their school work.

In each Academic Year there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days – this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time.

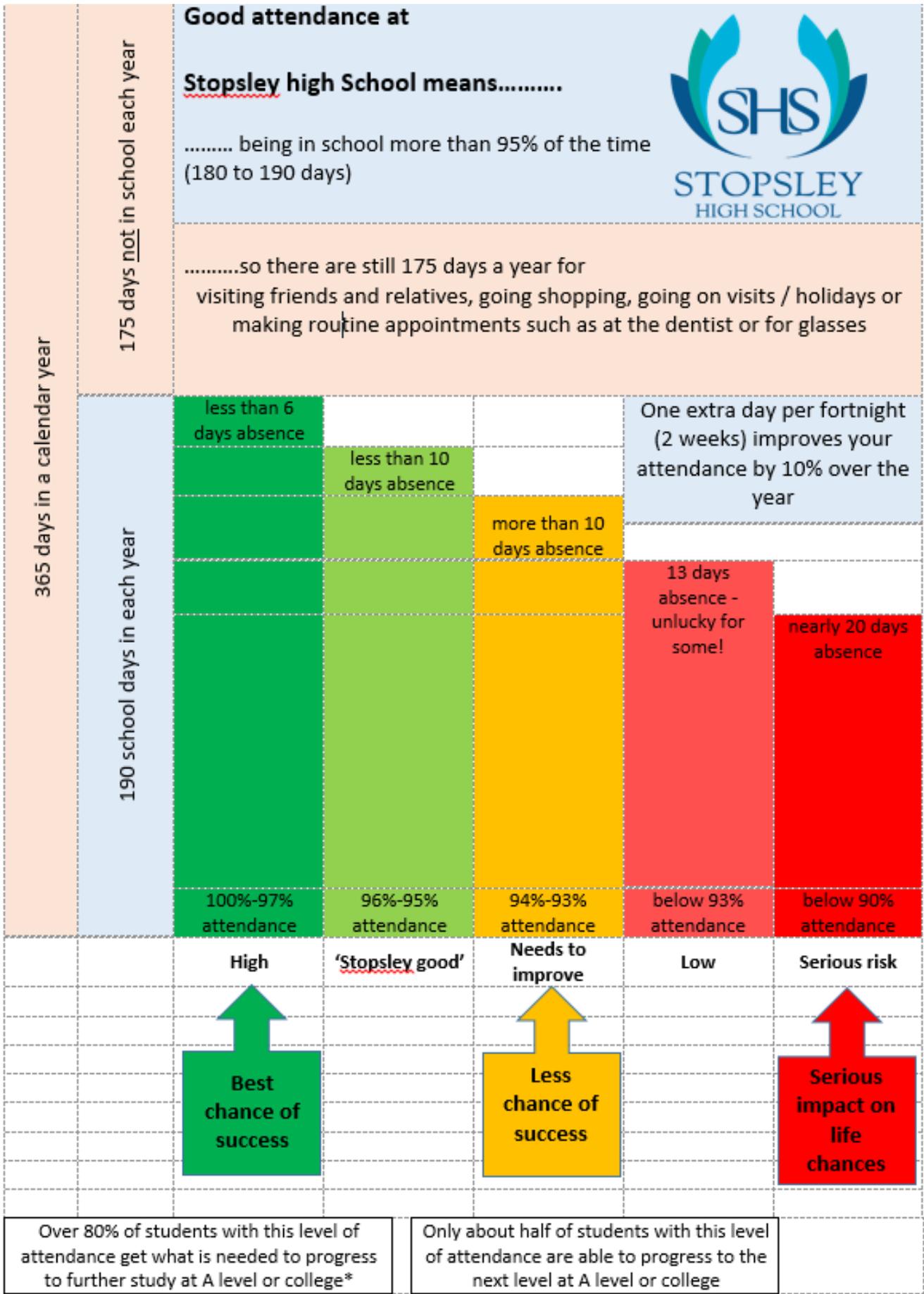
Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as unauthorised. The Local Authority can give you a fixed penalty fine of £60, which rises to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days. If you don't pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

Appendix 3

How parents can help with attendance

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- **Make sure they get enough sleep and are not too tired or over-stimulated with screen time.**
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- **Ensure your child has a good understanding of why good attendance is important.**
- **Remember the well-known saying 'that 80% of success is just showing up!'**
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time – not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school **promptly on the first day of absence** if your child is absent due to illness.
- Take truancy seriously – if your child is not attending school as you expect, they may be putting themselves at risk – Who are they with? What are they doing?
- Take family holidays outside term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work.
- **Encourage your child to take part in other activities in school e.g. clubs, school productions, sports teams.**
- **Encourage your child to take positions of responsibility in school e.g being form rep or a prefect.**
- Attend parents' evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- **Offer support with homework and take an interest in their learning.**
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school – staff are there to help and will be supportive.
- **Don't allow your child to stay off school for a minor ailment.**
- **If your child is unwell, insist they stay in bed with no screens (TV, phones or computers) so they can rest properly. They can read or just listen to music to help them relax.**
- **If you are unsure if they are sufficiently ill to be off school, suggest they come to school and can talk to an adult in school and may be able to come home later in the day if needed.**
- **If your child is anxious or worried about going to school please do ask the school for help.**
- **Every child is entitled to additional support from the school to help them engage with learning and there will sometimes be named staff who have a specific responsibility for what a school might call guidance, pastoral care or personal support. Some children may find regular support helps to improve school attendance.**

In most areas of life 90% is a great result! But this is NOT the case with attendance. Only 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week, 1 day a fortnight (every two weeks) or nearly 20 days of school during the school year – that's 4 school weeks – or a whole month of school missed. **See the chart.**



*From DfE report 2015 *The link between absence and attainment*

Appendix 4

Registration codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Attendance codes		
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed – the number of minutes late is also recorded
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
Other registration codes		

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