



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

St Peter's Church of England School

Governor with responsibility:

Mr Richard Simmons

Embrace Multi Academy Trust strives to maintain and improve good provision and outcomes at each of its member academies. Based upon our shared values and ethos, we aim to support the learning and development of every person within the trust and our policies are written from this perspective.

Version	Approval Level	Document History	Date	Review Period
1	Local Governing Board	Approved		Annual

Department for Education (DfE): Working Together To Improve Attendance 2022

From September 2022, the DfE: Working Together to Improve Attendance paper replaced all previous guidance on school attendance except for statutory guidance for parental responsibility measures. The Secretary of State has committed to it becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows.

Parents are legally responsible under the Education Act 1996 for ensuring that their child is in school every day and on time.

St Peter's will always challenge falling attendance and reward improvements. We are committed to the future of all children that attend our school, and by working in partnership with the school community we believe that together we can achieve more!

1. Introduction

The governors and staff at Embrace Multi Academy Trust schools are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them, helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The schools that are part of Embrace Multi Academy Trust value all children. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

The Attendance Lead in each school will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success. Attendance concerns will be raised with parents if reasons are not known by the school, e.g. a long period of illness, and this information may be shared with the Local Authority following concerns. Where we have concerns, or lack of engagement from families to improve attendance, we will follow the school's escalated approach to improving attendance. The school's escalated approach is child-centred and prioritises support and developing strong working relationships with families. We will use the early help process to provide support prior to escalation and consider how we can work with families to enable their children to access their right to education.

Our aim is to always work in partnership with parents and any referral for consideration of a penalty notice is deemed to be a last resort at our schools. Attendance figures for each child will be reported to parents as part of the annual report, and we will also share a child's attendance profile if we have concerns regarding a child's attendance. Throughout the school year, the Attendance Lead will report on the overall attendance figures for children groups, which will be closely monitored for support and reported to the governing board.

2. To support good attendance, and safeguarding, at our school we:

- Ensure the school is welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Ensure the school site is open at the stated times.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is completed by every class teacher each day. This further supports our approach to safeguarding within the school.
- Take safeguarding seriously and we will always contact you on the first day that your child is absent from school. If your child arrives late after the close of registration, we will record their arrival at reception and support them into class.
- Consider any requests for leave in term time individually. This will be aligned to the Local Authority code of conduct.
- Notify the Local Authority within 5 days if a new child is joining the school roll.
- Inform the Local Authority of children whose parents have notified the school in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Work closely with the School Attendance Support Team.
- Notify the Local Authority of Children Missing in Education – aligned to the DfE 2022 Attendance paper.

3. A whole school approach to supporting attendance at our school

Securing good attendance at our school cannot be achieved in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve working closely with other leaders within the school. The Attendance Team/Lead – Head (DSL), Deputy Head (DDSL), Administration Officer and Attendance Officer work alongside the SENDCO and class teachers to facilitate a whole school approach.

4. The Strategic Approach

Each of the Embrace schools have adopted the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework, this is modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare. The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all children can attend school and thrive. The approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with children, and parents, prior to escalation. The staged approach we follow ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns, and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internal (in-school) and external (external agencies).

5. Aims of the 5 Foundations Strategy

- Increase school attendance and reduce persistent absence to meet set targets
- Ensure attendance is well managed within the school, with the appropriate level of resources allocated.
- Enable the school to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the 2022 DfE attendance paper.

6. Objectives

- Create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child aims for excellent attendance.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority.
- Set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels.
- Embed the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality.
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, children and develop mutual cooperation between home and the school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues.
- Demonstrate, by using certificates and whole class competitions, that the school recognises that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.

(For further information ref. Appendix 2.)

7. Embrace Schools Will Always Work in Partnership with Parents

Our school recognises that poor attendance is often an indicator of difficulties in a child's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should inform the school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority, and concerns for any child at any time will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding

Lead for child protection in each school. We will always follow the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable, have a medical need or an education, health and care plan (EHCP) will be monitored and supported in school. At our school we will proactively identify and follow up on a child’s non-attendance and gather information about the child. This will result in taking early action to prevent non-attendance developing and monitoring the impact of targeted support.

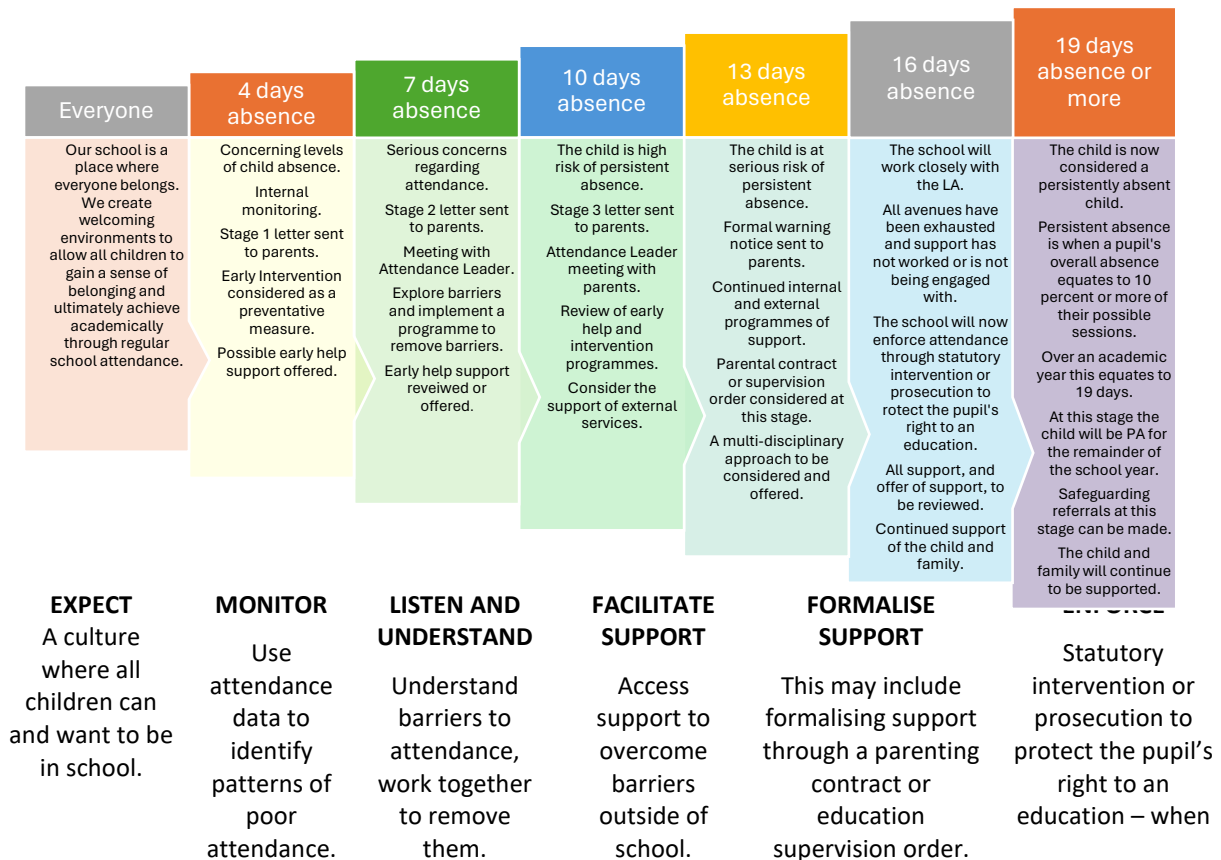
The Attendance Team will initially:

- Check records, including any from other schools that the child has attended previously.
- Discuss with staff how the child is coping with the curriculum.
- Speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to establish whether the child is on the special educational needs register.
- Take into account the voice of the child and understand any difficulties, e.g. curriculum or bullying, and their views on how the issue could be addressed.
- Speak to the class teacher to gain a picture of school life of the child.

Children whose attendance falls below 90% are classified as persistently absent from school. Where a child’s attendance falls under 50%, they are classified as severely absent. Ultimately this will indicate that all the intervention and support offered by our school has not made the expected impact to improve overall attendance. Where all other interventions have not made a significant impact, we will escalate with external partners.

8. Attendance Support Map

We use the Attendance Support Map as guidance to ensure that we prioritise a child’s learning and right to education. As a small school, we work closely with our families, value our relationship with parents and encourage them to share any concerns with us. We look at each child individually, in order to take the appropriate action.



there is no other option.

9. First Day Contact

At our school, we expect parents to make contact at the earliest opportunity on the first day of any absence via telephone call by 8.45am (answer phone outside of school hours, which is checked at 9.00am). If your child does not attend school and we have not been informed of their absence, we will always contact you via Dojo message or by calling you. We will invite parents to meet with a member of staff to discuss any on-going concerns regarding attendance. If we are unable to make contact with families regarding an absence or where we have on-going concerns, we may visit the child's home address for Safeguarding purposes. It is important that parents talk to us first.

10. Parents are responsible for securing full-time education

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis, fairly and equitably and always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern.

The term 'parent' includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children's Act 1989 or have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.

- Absence can only be authorised by the school; parents do not have this authority. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless satisfactory evidence for the child's absence has been received. In the first instance, contact from the parent will be accepted as evidence. However, if a child's attendance continues to cause concern, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where absences occur repeatedly due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescriptions etc. Absence may be coded as unauthorised without evidence.
- Parents should, wherever possible, make all medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, children should attend school for part of the day. Appointment letters/texts /email confirmation should always be provided as evidence of medical/dental appointments.
- Unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it has been accepted by the school, absence will not be authorised.

Please view the list of responsibilities and expectations regarding parents in Appendix 1.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for school uniform.
- Having a child's haircut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- That the child "couldn't get up".
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease.
- Leave during term time, taken without authorisation of the school.
- Head lice (parents should let the school know and letters will then be sent to all parents in a confidential manner).

11. Punctuality

Doors open for children at 8.45 am and the class register will close at 9.00 am. Children arriving after the close of registration will be recorded as late up until 9.30am. After this time, children that arrive significantly late to school are recorded as unauthorised so will count as an absence for the school AM session. Punctuality is recorded and this will be added to your child's record of attendance; lateness marks will also be monitored for persistent lateness. If a child arrives at school after 9.30 am they will be U coded. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if a child has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

12. Transition following long term absence or illness

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of children's learning. During any long-term absence, our school will:

- Maintain contact with the child.
- Carefully plan the transition back to school, ensuring the child feels welcome and gains a sense of belonging.
- Ensure the child once again feels safe in school and if they experience any concerns, they will have an appointed member of staff to work with.
- The class teacher and support assistant will support a child when returning to class and help them with any work they may have missed.

13. Leave during Term Time

From 1 September 2013, the Government amended the England (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Headteachers may only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances'. Our schools observe Leicestershire County Council's 'Leave in Term Time Guidance for Schools and Academies'.

Parents wishing to apply for leave during term time, must send a written request for the attention of the Headteacher before making any arrangements. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each leave during term time request will be considered on an individual basis.

If a child fails to return to school after a leave of absence and contact with the parent has not been made or received, school may take the child off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil registration, England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child may lose their school place.

If permission to take leave is not granted and the child is still absent from school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may consider legal action.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will absence be agreed. In such cases, consideration will be given to cultural needs and the family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin for something other than a holiday. In these cases, granting leave for longer periods than normal, may be considered justified. In all cases, parents will be required to justify why the leave needs to be taken during term time.

14. Using attendance data

Children's attendance will be monitored and shared with other agencies and the DfE.

Weekly attendance meetings will be held between the Attendance Team, half-termly meetings with the Attendance Officer and attendance data reported to the DfE weekly. Actions will be agreed for those children of concern. The purpose of each

meeting will be to understand the progress the school is making when supporting identified individuals or groups of children.

Attendance data will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

It is the responsibility of school governors to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance and regular reports will be presented to the governing board. The governors will examine the information provided closely and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as can be.

15. Persistent Absence

At our school we aim to communicate the importance of attendance with parents and children. We have a particular focus on reducing persistent absenteeism at the school. The persistent absence threshold for children is currently 10% and Ofsted will use this threshold in its inspection of schools.

The threshold means that any child will be classed as persistently absent when they have missed 38 or more school sessions. This equates to 19 or more, missed days during the academic year, which is as little as 6 days a term (the equivalent of 1 day of absence or more, a fortnight across a full school year.)

We will use a 19-day tracking system to make you aware of the number of days your child has missed in education. This will allow us to work together to reduce the number of days and attempt to prevent your child from reaching this number.

Once a child has reached 38 sessions or 19 days' absence, they will be classified as persistently absent from school and we will escalate this if necessary e.g. through our attendance officer or via the to the Local Authority following external legal proceedings (see information below).

16. Statutory Duty

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. Our school recognises Leicestershire County Council's Attendance Team Guidance and will implement prosecution where it is fair and equitable to do so.

In accordance with the regulations regarding pupils' attendance at school, our school keeps an attendance register on which at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session children are marked present or absent. The marks are electronically processed and stored on the school's central management information system, Bromcom. This information is shared with the Department for Education.

17. Legal Sanctions

If there is lack of engagement in attendance support there are sanctions that will be followed:

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A child is absent from school for the purpose of a leave of absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A child has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with the Leicestershire County Council Code of Conduct.

Prosecution

Where intervention through the school's process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in a Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if they are a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. Legal interventions include:

- Parenting contracts.
- Education supervision orders.
- Attendance prosecution.
- Parenting orders.
- Fixed penalty notices.

Please refer to section 6 of DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022 for more information.

18. Children at Risk of Being Missing in Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) are a vulnerable group of children. All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately.

CME includes those children who are **missing** (family whereabouts unknown) and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address **and either:**

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

It is our responsibility as a school to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team, by making referrals.

We can only achieve improved attendance by working in partnership with parents. If you have any concerns or if there is anything that is preventing your child from attending our school, please contact office@stpeters.embracemat.org or telephone 01162 775750.

19. Other Policies Supporting Attendance

- Behaviour Policy.
- Teaching and Learning Policy.
- SEND Offer.
- Pupil Premium Statement.
- Safeguarding offer.

Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities

Expectations – Parents:

- i Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend the school regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this responsibility.
- ii Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, with the correct equipment and in full school uniform.
- iii Parents should support the school by avoiding, if possible, non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school time.
- iv Parents should be aware that they do not have the automatic right to take their child out of the school for a holiday during term time.
- v It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence and in line with the school's procedures for informing of absence.
- vi All unexplained attendances will be monitored and parents will be kept informed about any attendance concerns relating to their own child. Parents are expected to attend meetings when requested and support the school in responding to ongoing attendance concerns.

Expectations – Children:

- i. All children should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record for which there will be appropriate rewards.
- ii. All children are expected to be on the school site on time and ready to learn.
- iii. Children who arrive at school late must follow the correct procedures for recording their lateness and entering their lesson/class.
- iv. Children who need to leave school for a medical appointment must follow the correct procedures for recording that they have permission to leave and have left the building.
- v. Children must not leave the school without permission, 'truant'; this will be seen by the school as a safeguarding concern as well as a health and safety concern.

Expectations - Class Teacher

The class teacher is the key staff member in promoting regular punctual attendance. The class teacher will:

- i. Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration and meeting children at the door and providing a welcoming environment.
- ii. Keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance.
- iii. Follow the Attendance Policy procedures when dealing with absences and punctuality.
- iv. Maintain swift action and effective communication with Attendance Team on all attendance matters concerning the class.
- v. Ensure that children and young people are aware of the importance of the school attendance target and their own individual attendance targets.
- vi. Ensure children receive rewards in relation to attendance and punctuality success.
- vii. Build a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom and provide support as necessary when children return after an absence.

Expectations - The Attendance Team

The Attendance Team take responsibility for monitoring the attendance of children and regularly promote the importance of attendance and punctuality. They will:

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"In everything treat others the same way you want them to treat you" Matthew 7:12

- i. Ensure they are aware of their responsibilities with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality and adherence to the Attendance Policy and procedures.
- ii. Ensure that rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality follow agreed procedures and align to the school Behaviour Policy and Attendance Policy.
- iii. Monitor and track the attendance of vulnerable groups of children.
- iv. Monitor the attendance of class groups, following up on irregular patterns of absenteeism that are not being effectively addressed.
- v. Work together on ensuring that appropriate action is taken in the management of absenteeism and poor punctuality.
- vi. Have attendance as a regular item on Senior Leadership and Governors meeting (termly) agendas.
- vii. Ensure contact is made with parents of children with low attendance levels, always placing support before sanction.
- viii. Be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority's Attendance Team to ensure appropriate levels of intervention take place, referrals are made, and attendance meetings are set up.
- ix. Regularly meet to reporting on progress and next steps planning.
- x. Attend attendance network meetings.
- xi. Implement the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework and ensure that this is monitored and actioned throughout the school year.
- xii. Provide training and support to staff.
- xiii. Participate in pre-legal meetings.
- xiv. Use attendance data to make links with attendance and academic performance.
- xv. Ensure that reference to attendance is included in all school documentation, eg, school newsletters, letters to parents, school prospectus, information for booklets.

Administration officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for regularly checking attendance data and ensuring data is accurate and up to date. The Attendance Officer will:

- i. Ensure that data is input daily into the attendance management system.
- ii. Ensure that parents of absent children are contacted where notification of absence has not been received
- iii. Respond to any parent seeking support on attendance concerns.
- iv. Provide regular attendance and punctuality data for relevant staff and external agencies in line with the agreed procedures and timescales.
- v. Be responsible for disseminating important attendance information, including informing the Attendance Team of children causing concern, in line with the agreed procedures and timescales.
- vi. Be responsible for keeping a record of the interventions in place to encourage attendance and for generating all documentation including letters to parents.
- vii. Be responsible for managing and maintaining attendance records and systems.

Appendix 2



5 Foundations Of Effective Attendance Practice

The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice

The main aim of the framework is to ensure the school promotes a culture of good attendance and celebrates success. Ultimately, the framework will ensure there is a culture of feeling safe and school being a place where children want to be.

Positive health and emotional wellbeing are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice model promotes and supports a whole school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing, ensuring that social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all children.

Each foundation is supported by 5 key performance indicators. These are used to ensure the school can embed the 5 Foundations framework and understand the strategic direction regarding attendance improvement. The school will use the 5 Foundations self-assessment tool to understand what works well and identify what we need to do even better. We then follow the 5 Foundations school improvement process to implement the attendance plan and ultimately improve the lives of the children and families we work with.



Foundation 1
Whole School Thinking
Culture & Climate

The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on the foundations of belonging and connectedness.



Foundation 2
Supportive Policies,
Systems and Processes

The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.



Foundation 3
Professional Learning
Staff Development

The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Lead delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.



Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Lead understands the reason for attendance concerns, and these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.



Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

The table below identifies how the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice underpin the DfE 2022 paper.

DFE Summary of Expectations	 Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate	 Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes	 Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development	 Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention	 Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management
Develop a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have a school attendance policy		✓			
Have day-to-day processes to follow up absence	✓	✓	✓		
Monitor and analyse data to identify those that need support		✓	✓	✓	
Engage with families, understand barriers to attendance and work together to remove them	✓			✓	✓
Provide additional support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND			✓	✓	✓
Share information and work collaboratively with others	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A new focus on persistent and severe absence		✓	✓	✓	✓
Find out what the DfE expects from other stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	

Appendix 3

Relevant legislation

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Relevant government guidance

- Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour
- Children missing education
- Keeping children safe in education 2022
- Working together to safeguard children
- Elective home education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying