

Attendance and Absence Policy

Version Number 5

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Who should read this document	
Mandatory	Headteacher, Teacher, Attendance, Safeguarding, Teaching Assistant, Access and Inclusion, Personal Development Lead
Optional	All

1. INTRODUCTION

River Tees Multi Academy Trust believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We firmly understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Support all learners to improve attendance from their starting point and become in line with mainstream expectations of 95% or above, apart from those with chronic health issues or other circumstances that prevent a child from accessing school full time
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

2. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Equality Act 2010
- Education act 1996
- DFE 2025 Children missing education
- DFE 2025 Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DFE 2024 Working together to improve school attendance

3. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICERS:

OFFICER	SCHOOL SITE	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
Sofia Stockdale	River Tees Hospital School	sstockdale@rtmat.org.uk	01642 203876 ext.1098
Victoria Hobday Jess Boyd	River Tees Secondary Academy	vhobday@rtmat.org.uk jboyd@rtmat.org.uk	01642 213799 ext. 1053 01642 213799 ext. 1018
Charles Keen	River Tees Academy Grangetown	ckeen@rtmat.org.uk	01642 203873 ext. 1019 07849481609
Khadine Edwards	River Tyne Academy Gateshead	kedwards@rtmat.org.uk	0191 4200606 Ext. 1100 07541379396

Rebecca Skelton	River Tees Primary Academy	rskelton@rtmat.org.uk	01642 203870 ext. 1091
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4. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency
- Leave of absence under exceptional circumstances granted by school
- Parent/carers travelling for occupational purposes
- Suspended or permanently excluded
- Unable to attend school for a reason identified in DFE guidance
- Attending another place of study granted by the school
- Approved study leave granted by school
- Those on an approved bespoke programme of study
- Attending an interview related to employment or education
- Participating in paid employment where approved by the local authority
- Sporting activity approved

Unauthorised absence:

- Parent/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- Absconding from school site

Persistent absence:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and supporting improvements.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

At River Tees Multi Academy Trust, we have an Attendance and Safeguarding Committee which comprises of two Trustees, one of whom is the Trustee with designated responsibility for Safeguarding. Due to the complex nature of the pupils who attend our schools, this committee meets with the Attendance Officer, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher at least termly to review attendance data and procedures. The findings of this meeting are shared with the Local Governing Committee and Trust Board as required.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Regularly checks on attendance data for children on CIN (Child in Need) or CP (Child Protection) plans and takes appropriate action based on any concern
- Regular liaison with parents/carers; including the implementation of timely action plans and regular meetings to review progress against targets
- Referral to external services for additional support
- Communicating absences to other agencies: Local Authority, Social Care, Youth Justice.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- Completing the daily register accurately and on time
- Modelling good attendance attitudes
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated
- Making calls home in line with absence protocols to follow up on any absence for any learners they have responsibility for

The Attendance officer is responsible for:

- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Head teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- Ensuring registers are completed using the correct coding
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regards to attendance
- Following up on patterns of persistent poor attendance
- Co-ordinating requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the head teacher as requested
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers
- Following legal processes as part of attendance proceedings

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Legally responsible to ensure their child attend school regularly and promote this on a regular basis
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Providing the school with at least one emergency contact number
- Updating the school if their details change

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending school on time and regularly
- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school #

6. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents/carers and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day that the school building is open to them during term time
- Attend school punctually
- Attend every timetabled lesson

7. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Parents/carers will be required to contact the relevant Attendance Officer/School before **8:30am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Gain evidence of the reason for absence i.e medical appointment/planned appointment
- Ensure the most appropriate safeguarding action is being taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system

This will be conducted in line with the attendance protocol appendix 1.

The Trust will add and remove pupils from roll in line with the law.

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour and the elevated risk this presents, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion must be authorised by the Headteacher. In the absence of the Head teacher, The Regional Headteacher and/or CEO will need to authorise an exclusion. The school will notify the parent of the exclusion.

If the pupil is a Looked After Child, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

If the child has an EHCP, the SEN team will also be notified that the child has received an exclusion.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

8. ATTENDANCE REGISTER

The school uses the Arbor MIS System to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

The attendance register is taken at the start of each school day, and again in the afternoon. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Accessing a part time timetable

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way (see appendix 4 for codes).

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years.

Attendance register Part-time timetables

Occasionally pupils require a part – time offer to support them with their education. River Tees Multi Academy Trust use these under the following circumstances:

- Safeguarding
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- School Avoidance/EBSA
- Curriculum/SEN need

The detail for this support is then recorded on an adapted learning plan and regularly reviewed.

Where a learner is accessing a part-time offer their registration period is the first 30 minutes of their timetabled am/pm sessions*. If they are not timetabled during an am or pm session then the C2 mark is used and the reason recorded.

*In some cases commissioners may request specific registration practice and those are detailed in Appendix 5.

9. AUTHORISING ABSENCE REQUESTS

Parents/carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Attendance Officer in the first instance and referred to the Head teacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents/carers, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher using a Holiday Request Form (this can be issued by the main office) at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Any pupil who doesn't attend school and has been taken on holiday during term time for a period longer than 5 days may be issued a financial penalty per child per parent for this unauthorised absence.

For details relating to financial penalties refer to: Department for Education, Working Together To Improve Attendance, 2024

Illness

We recognise that children will become ill from time to time and it can be difficult to decide whether a child should attend school or not. If your child is well enough to attend school, they should. To help with this decision we have included current NHS guidance in this document Appendix 3.

Where a child has 15 days cumulative or consecutive absence the school is required to report the child's details to the local authority.

Healthcare appointments

Parents/carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents/carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND and Health-Related Absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days (Cumulative or consecutive).
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Provide the pupil and family additional support through the Specialists in Trust (SIT) Team
- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Carrying out full formulation of need.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Use of blended approaches to learning
- Use of AV1 robot to support learning from home
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent/carers is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.

- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

10. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

If the child's placement is commissioned by the Local Authority and they are in year groups 3 – 6, the Local Authority are responsible to provide home to school transport to ensure the child can maintain regular attendance and attend school safely.

The local authority will fund transport for pupils in year 7-11 who meet their criteria. Refer to your local authority home to school transport guidance for further information or contact the school who will be able to provide some guidance around your child's eligibility and if required they can support you to submit a transport request. For dual registered pupils, it is the responsibility of the home school to support with transport arrangements based on distance.

If the child requires additional support whilst being transported i.e. provided with a transport assistant, then this is to be heard at a local resource panel. If it is felt that child requires an assistant, again this is the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide, not the school

Parent/Guardian/Carer **must** bring the passenger onto the taxi/bus each morning and collect off the taxi/bus each evening, as the Passenger Assistant (if one is provided) is unable to leave other passengers unattended or leave the vehicle.

Parent/Guardian/Carer **must** be aware that if your child or adult has poor behaviour whilst being transported to and from school or day care centre, transport may be withdrawn for a period of time. During this time it will be your responsibility to convey your child / adult to and from their school or day care centre.

The safety of all passengers and road users is paramount. The council reserve the right to use safety precautions such as door locks, seat clips, car seats and in some cases restraints (with parental/guardian consent).

All passengers **must** wear their respective seatbelt and or safety harness. All passengers must remain seated and strapped in at all times during their journey. Refusal to do so may result in the transport being withdrawn. During this time it will be your responsibility to convey your child / adult to and from their school or day centre facility.

No food or drink may be consumed at any time whilst on transport.

Consent for my child/adult to be taken to an A&E Department or to be treated by Emergency Service Personnel in case of a medical emergency unless otherwise stated on this form.

All medications must be carried in the passenger's bag. They must be in a container with the passenger's name on them. Details and location of all medications should be noted on this Emergency Contact and Care Form. Transport Staff are not certified to administer medications.

If it is known in advance that the passenger will not be attending school, the attendance officer must be informed.

11. DUAL REGISTERED PUPILS

It is in agreement with all dual registered pupils when they commence at RTMAT that their main registered school are kept updated on a weekly basis with regards to individual pupil attendance.

A copy of the pupil's attendance certificate is emailed every Friday to the pupils main registered school allocated attendance officer.

If the pupil is demonstrating difficulties in attendance, then a joint meeting is held between the main registered school and RTMAT to identify and barriers and have an action plan in place to improve attendance.

All dual registered pupils are still the responsibility of the main registered school, should there be any concerns regarding a child's welfare then a member of the DSL will contact the main registered school to make them aware.

The Trust have a duty to supply evidence in relation to attendance however the main registered school must complete minutes and action plans for the planned meeting.

Main registered schools have the joint responsibility of completing any welfare checks/home visits in relation to poor attendance. This is to be communicated between allocated attendance officers.

12. LOCAL AUTHORITY MONITORING

Local Authority commissioned places receive weekly attendance updates to the designated persons.

Sickness absence of 15 days (cumulative or consecutive) is reported to the local authority.

Where a pupil is absent for 10 consecutive days this is reported to the local authority.

13. TRUANCY

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Personal Development Lead (PDL) is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a parent/carers meeting will be held with the PDL, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

14. MISSING CHILDREN

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil absconding whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Personal Development Lead (PDL) immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the PDL.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The school grounds
- Authorised staff will check the CCTV footage to identify the potential whereabouts of the pupil and/or if the pupil has left the site
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take their school radio with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 1 hour, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will contact parent/carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parent/carers have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The incident will be recorded in full on the pupil's daybook entry on Arbor, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parent/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. Following the incident, the pupil's risk assessment will be updated, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

15. ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the Monitoring and Absence section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will aim to improve attendance in the overall school cohort by acknowledging good attendance in a range of different ways, including rewards and incentives.

Non-curriculum based school trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away, however, the school recognises that, in some cases, these trips support the staff team to build relationships with the most challenging of pupils and therefore this decision will be taken on a case-by-case basis. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

16. WORKING WITH PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. These expectations will be shared with the pupils and their families during the initial Meet and Greet meetings. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents/carers will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been

authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally. Where a pupil is dual registered, this communication will be provided to their home school in addition to their family.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the head teacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

17. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and persistent absence, such as:

- Children in need (CIN)
- Children in our care (CIOC)
- Child protection (CP)
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

18. LEGAL INTERVENTION

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Arrange an Attendance Case Conference meeting with all professionals involved, as well as the child and family.
- Create an action plan that is achievable and measurable.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

19. MONITORING AND ANALYSING ABSENCE

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. This data and analysis will be shared with the wider SLT and with trustees during the safeguarding and attendance committee.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, CIOC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence

The attendance officer will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to wider SLT team to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Attendance and Safeguarding Committee will conduct a thorough review of the reported data including specified attendance and safeguarding case-studies. The rigor of this review will ensure the school has considered and applied all options, has maintained a high profiling of safeguarding and identify successful strategies that can be shared and/or implemented more widely.

The Local Governing Committee will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

20. TRAINING OF STAFF

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

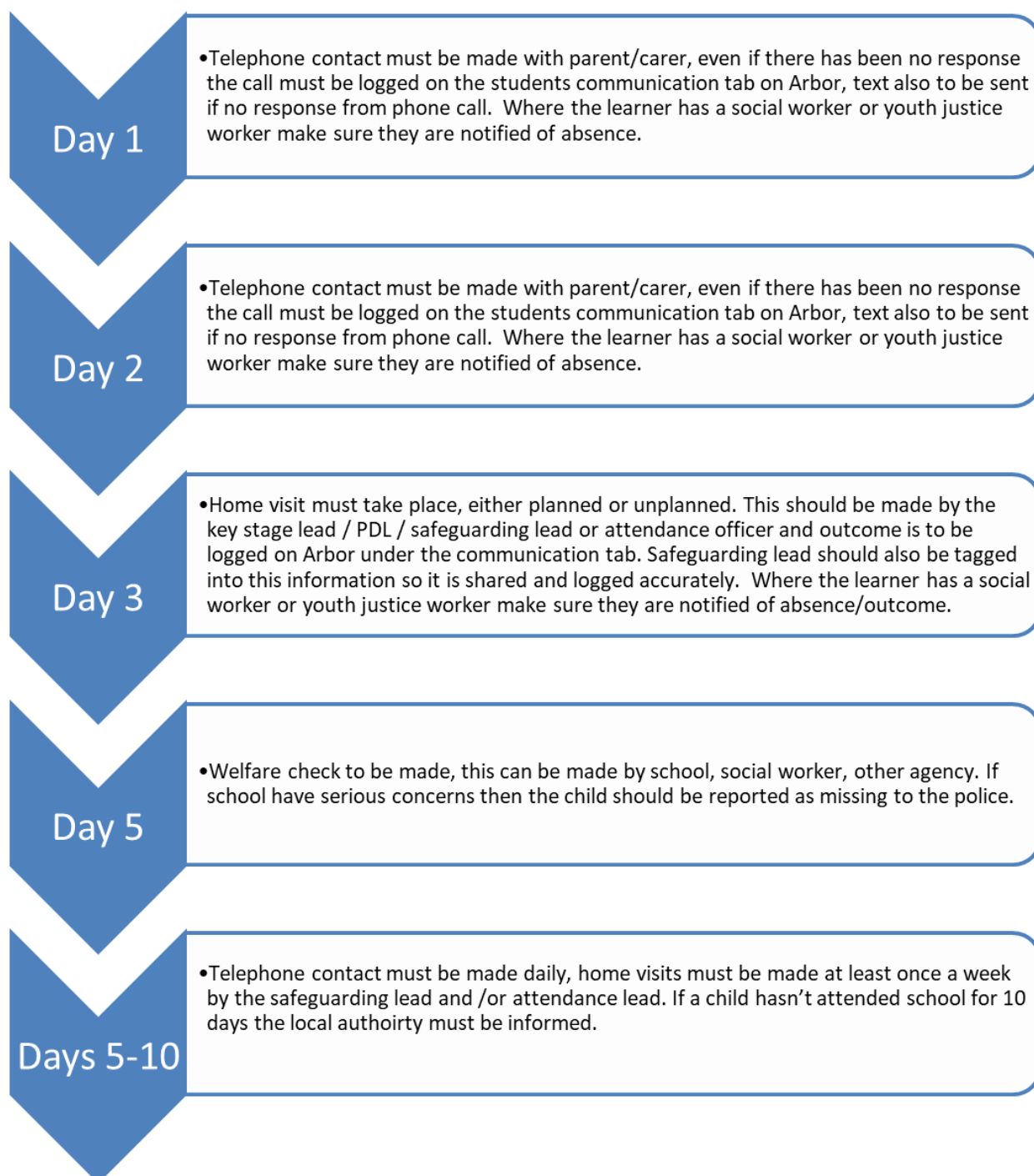
- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The Trust board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Process for following up absence



Attendance referral to attendance lead

When a child's attendance becomes a concern:

- Attendance officer will review Arbor and liaise with key staff involved with the learner to obtain a full overview of the circumstances around the learner.
- Attendance officer will make contact with parent/carer of the child and arrange a home visit to speak about the child's attendance and if there are any barriers preventing their child from attending school.
- An ACC (attendance case conference) is agreed and arranged, this is a formal and legal meeting to discuss the child's attendance, progress, behaviour within school and gives the child the opportunity to speak openly about any issues they may be having. Any agencies involved with the family are also invited to attend this meeting.
- The child's attendance is then reviewed in 4 weeks, and monitoring will also take place weekly during this period.
- If the child's attendance continues to fall without any form of evidence and the child gains 10 unauthorised absences or more, then a fixed penalty warning letter is requested by school and issued by the Local Authority.
- If the child's attendance still continues to fall then a fixed penalty notice is requested by school and issued by the Local Authority.
- If the child's attendance is seen to have no increase from the fixed penalty notice being issued then school must make a court request. New court requests must be completed accurately, honestly and all evidence must be provided.
- A court date is then set, school are informed of the outcome.

NOTE:

- A CIOC child cannot be put through attendance procedures and must be reviewed at a multi-agency meeting.
- If the child is dual registered then the child's main registered school must initiate attendance procedures. RTMAT will support with additional evidence
- Any child who has particular vulnerabilities i.e. is subject to a child protection plan or deemed as child in need then all efforts need to occur in order to locate the child's whereabouts and relevant agencies to be informed.

ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT FORM**Pupil Attendance Agreement**

I agree to attend school and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100 percent. I will ensure that the school is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend and will give the school full details of my absence.

As a pupil of River Tees Multi Academy Trust, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to school and lessons.
- Informing the school of the reason for any absence.
- Not missing school for trivial reasons.

Pupil name:	Date:
Tutor name:	Date:

Parental Attendance Agreement

I understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to school. I agree to send my child to school every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When my child is absent from school due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Parent name:	Date:
Tutor name:	Date:

IS MY CHILD TOO ILL FOR SCHOOL

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school, nursery or playgroup when they're unwell.

There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about [managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK](#). These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day. Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason.

If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, let their teacher know.

High temperature

If your child has a [high temperature](#), keep them off school until it goes away.

Feeling anxious or worried

It's normal for children to feel a little anxious sometimes. They may get a tummy ache or headache, or have problems eating or sleeping.

Avoiding school can make a child's anxiety about going to school worse. It's good to talk about any worries they may have such as bullying, friendship problems, school work or sensory problems. You can also work with the school to find ways to help them.

If your child is still struggling and it's affecting their everyday life, it might be good to talk to your GP or school nurse.

[Find information and advice about how to help children with anxiety](#)

Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor [cough](#) or [common cold](#). But if they have a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

Chickenpox

If your child has [chickenpox](#), keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over.

This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

Cold sores

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](#).

Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](#), unless they are feeling very unwell.

Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

COVID-19

If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school.

Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities

What to do if your child has tested positive

Your child is no longer required to do a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. But if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test.

Ear infection

If your child has an [ear infection](#) and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

Hand, foot and mouth disease

If your child has [hand, foot and mouth disease](#) but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

You can treat [head lice and nits](#) without seeing a GP.

Impetigo

If your child has [impetigo](#), they'll need treatment from a pharmacist or GP, often with antibiotics.

Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.

Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

Measles

If your child has [measles](#), they'll need to see a GP. Call the GP surgery before you go in, as measles can spread to others easily.

Keep your child off school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears.

They should also avoid close contact with babies and anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system.

Ringworm

If your child has [ringworm](#), see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP.

It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

Scarlet fever

If your child has [scarlet fever](#), they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks.

Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease)

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [slapped cheek syndrome](#) because, once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious.

But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](#). But if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away.

A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of [tonsillitis](#).

Threadworms

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [threadworms](#).

Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

Vomiting and diarrhoea

Children with [diarrhoea or vomiting](#) should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

Page last reviewed: 5 April 2024

Next review due: 5 April 2027

REGISTER CODES

Code	Meaning	Definition	Authorised user
Counted as Present			
/ \	Present	Present in school for registration (am & pm)	All
L	Late	Late before the close of registration (before 9:30am)	Reception, attendance and safeguarding team
U	Late	Late after the close of registration (9:30am)	Reception, attendance and safeguarding team
K	Education provision funded by the Local Authority	Accessing an off-site educational provision that is funded by another provider that is not school	Attendance and safeguarding team. Access and inclusion team.
P	Sporting activity	Student is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school	Attendance and safeguarding team.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation	PDLs, attendance and safeguarding team.
W	Work experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience. This is to be an identified work placement.	PDLs, attendance and safeguarding team.
These codes are counted as the student being absent but the absence is authorised			

C1	Other authorised circumstances	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad	Attendance and safeguarding team.
C2	Other authorised circumstances	Pupils who are on a part time timetable	Attendance and safeguarding team.
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution	Attendance and safeguarding team.
E	Suspension	Student is suspended from school, unable to return until a specific date and has been authorised by the head teacher	SLT, PDLs, Attendance and safeguarding team.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.	Attendance and safeguarding team.
R	Religious observance	Absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body i.e religious holiday	Attendance and safeguarding team.
S	Study leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.	Attendance and safeguarding team.
T	Traveller absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.	Attendance and safeguarding team.
I	Illness	Used for any form of illness	Attendance and safeguarding team.
These codes are an unauthorised absence and counted as the student being absent from school			

G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Holiday was not authorised by head teacher and school will request a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine)	Attendance and safeguarding team.
O	Unauthorised absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.	All staff
Other codes: do not count towards attendance figures			
D	Dual registration	The student is registered at another school and is attending this provision/site for a set period of time of the school day	Attendance and safeguarding team.
X	Non statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early year's students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.	Attendance and safeguarding team.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available	Attendance and safeguarding team.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel i.e strikes	Attendance and safeguarding team.
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed i.e certain year groups	Attendance and safeguarding team.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure	Attendance and safeguarding team.
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system	Attendance and safeguarding team.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law	Attendance and safeguarding team.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.	Attendance and safeguarding team.

Z	Pupil not on roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining	Attendance and safeguarding team.
#	School closed to pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.	Attendance and safeguarding team.

LOCALISED AGREEMENTS

Gateshead

Gateshead Local Authority stipulate their commissioned who are accessing a part – time offer and are not timetabled to start within 30 minutes of the full time am/pm sessions commencing to be marked C2 and their attendance recorded in the notes.