

Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School




Attendance Policy

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Author of document:	Amy Goodwin	Job role:	Headteacher
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Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories

Attendance key contact List

If you are experiencing difficulty or require help, people named below can be contacted.

Name	Role	Contact details
Amy Goodwin	Head Teacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net
Karl Barron	Administration Officer Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net
Janet Johnstone	Office Manager	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net
Claire Gartside	Administration Officer	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net

Our parents and carers understand that it is their duty to inform Mrs Johnstone, Mr Barron or Mrs Gartside in the school office (01913869494) by 9:15 a.m. if their child is going to be absent that day

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

Here's what the data shows:

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

At Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School, all staff recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day-to-day life. We will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty – to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. A whole school attendance target of **97%** has been set for the academic year 2023/2024 and various measures have been put in place to help towards this.

We recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- ❖ Safeguarding
- ❖ Bullying
- ❖ Behaviour
- ❖ SEND

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

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



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Expectations

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.
- Annual reports to parents will contain a records of individual pupils' attendance.

2. Attendance data

At Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School, we will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.

We will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

School attendance data will be monitored fortnightly by those responsible for attendance. Teachers will identify children of concern for the attendance team to further investigate. Aspirational targets are set for pupils and school attendance. When the school identifies poor attendance, specific procedures will be followed. (Declining attendance, persistent absence and patterns of non-absence may all be reasons the attendance officer becomes concerned and offers support).

3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

When a pattern is spotted, the school will discuss this with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and make a plan / otherwise agree how all partners can work together to resolve them. (See Attendance Intervention Flow Chart: Appendix 1).

4. Facilitate support

Supportive measures will always be put in place to improve attendance for all children. School intends to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help, or whole family plan, where there are wider issues affecting attendance. Each case will be on an individual basis where personalised support will be put in place to review progress against the agreed targets.

5. Formalise support

Formal support may be put in place in certain circumstances. Formal support may include a written agreement or written support plan, agreed with the attendance team.

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you talk to the school or attendance team about the issues as soon as possible. You may need to attend a meeting in school to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help.

The school will always try to communicate with you regarding your child's attendance if it declines. This communication may involve explaining that attendance is a cause for concern by letter, making telephone calls to you and inviting you to attend a meeting in school – depending on the circumstance. The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation.

6. Enforce

If, following the school's attempts to intervene there's no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation, the school are required to consider referring the matter to the local authority for enforcement action.

The High Court has confirmed that the school's headteacher authorises absences. If your child misses school a lot because of illness, or if the school does not know of any serious health issues that would mean your child could miss school a lot, the school may ask for medical evidence to authorise absences.

We are committed to supporting your child affectively to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

General / frequently asked questions

When can children be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance

- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Your child's headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Attendance and absence management

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The school has established an effective system which acknowledges the efforts of pupils and parents to improve attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Communication

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

On the first day of absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the school office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctor's and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will contact home to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Punctuality:

Registration time is at **8:55am** and **1.00pm** for all children at which point the pupil entrance points will be locked and all pupils arriving after these times must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 20 minutes after this time (on a morning) then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 20 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (Arbor).

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;

Throughout each half term, attendance and punctuality is monitored and where there are concerns, Mrs Goodwin will contact parents to offer support. Following this where punctuality does not improve, a letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this. Incentives to improve punctuality may also be offered to pupils.

If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason;

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Head Teacher or relevant member of staff for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality;

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

Help and Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about this as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed, we can also involve other services to ensure that your child and your family get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Pupils with specific needs

As a school we treat each case individually: understanding the different barriers to attendance. We aim to account for the specific needs of pupils/pupil cohorts, to apply support fairly and consistently while considering the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, we have considered obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to ensure the fair treatment of all our children, parents and carers.

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Please see key contact list and details at the start of this document.

Governing Body:

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. We therefore expect the governing body of Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

School Leadership Team:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Report to the Curriculum and Standards Sub Committee meeting on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

Teachers and support staff:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each lesson and session.

Parents / Carers:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

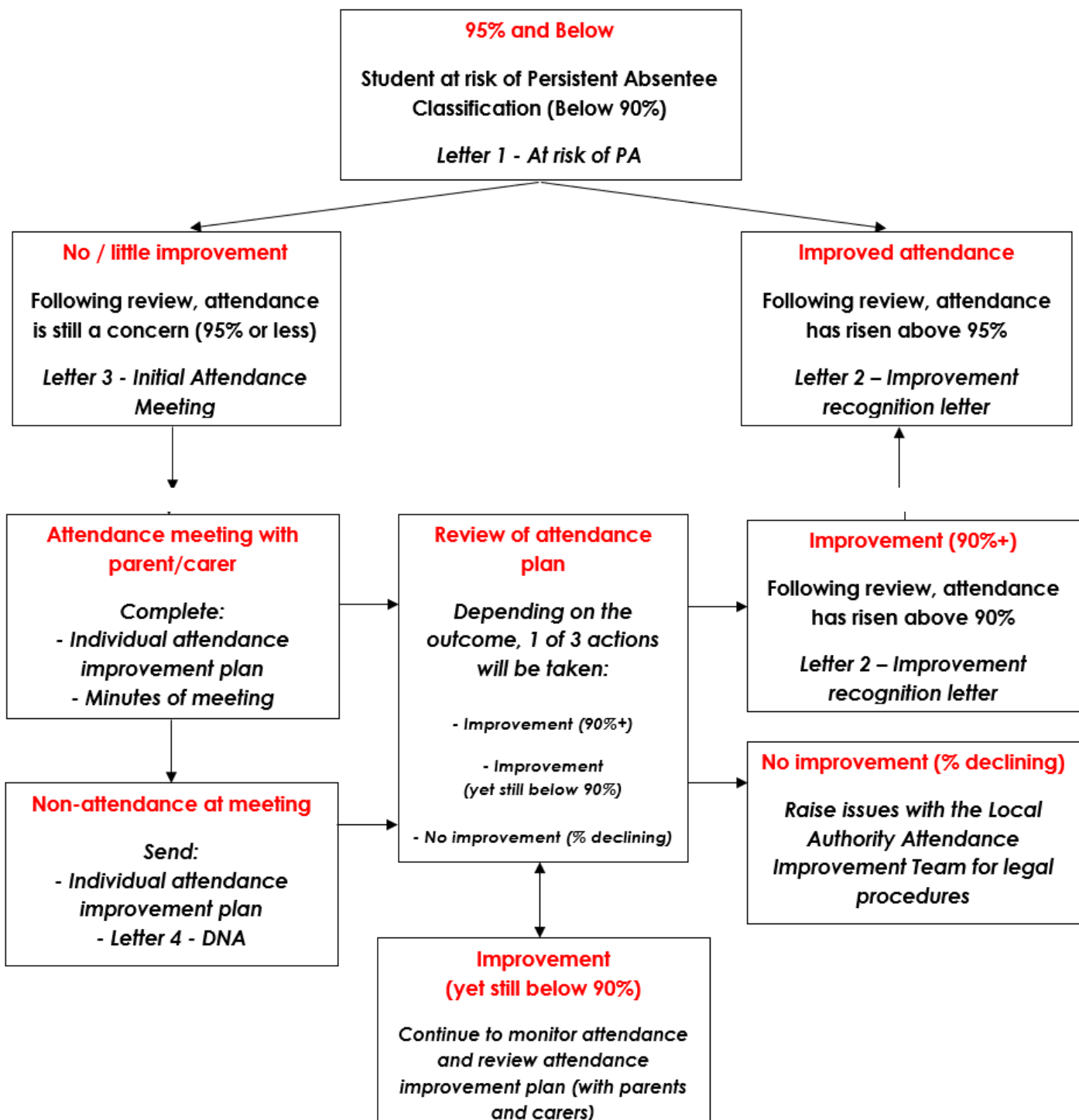
- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.

- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

Appendix 1: Attendance Intervention Flow Chart

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION: FLOWCHART

Throughout the process, consider & engage support required by the child/family



Appendix 2: Attendance and Lateness Overview

Cheveley Park Primary School – Attendance and Lateness Overview

To be read in conjunction with our Attendance Policy

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. At Cheveley Park, we aim to:

- ❖ Set the standard that expected attendance for all pupils is **at least 97%** (this equates to a child being absent for 6 days within the academic year)
- ❖ Ensure our parents and carers recognise that they have a legal duty to guarantee their child attends school regularly and on time
- ❖ Strictly adhere to our school day timings which are as follows:
 - No children are on the yard unsupervised by a parent/carer before 8:45 a.m.
 - The initial bell rings at 8:45 a.m.
 - Entry into school is a flexible 10-minute window
 - The second bell rings at 8:55 a.m. and this is when the school day starts. Classroom doors will be closed at this point
 - Any child arriving after 8:55 a.m., but before 9:15 a.m., will be recorded as late on the register
 - Any child arriving after 9:15 a.m. will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the register
 - All children arriving late will enter school through the main entrance
- ❖ Ensure that our parents and carers understand that it is their legal duty to inform Mrs Johnstone, Mr Barron or Mrs Gartside in the school office (01913869494) by 9:15 a.m. if their child is going to be absent that day
- ❖ Have all children accounted for by 9:30 a.m. Office staff will carry out the following if they have not been informed of a child being absent:
 - Call all emergency contacts in priority order and if there has been no answer, a welfare call will be logged with the police or a home visit will be carried out by 2 members of staff
- ❖ Discourage holidays being taken in term time
- ❖ Monitor attendance, lateness and minutes lost and contact parents and carers to offer support where necessary
- ❖ Tackle persistent absenteeism (PA): The DfE deems a student to be known as a PA, if their attendance drops below 90% - regardless of the reason for the absence
- ❖ Work alongside our local authority colleagues and parents and carers to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children
- ❖ Follow legal, Local Authority and Department for Education procedures, and issue fixed penalty notices where necessary

Our main aim is to be an effective school which consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance at school, sets high expectations for every pupil, communicates those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, and systematically analyses our data to identify patterns to target our improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. We recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation of good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive.

Mrs Goodwin is our Lead Officer for attendance in school.

EACH ACADEMIC YEAR CONSISTS OF 190 SCHOOL DAYS - WHICH MEANS THERE ARE 175 NON SCHOOL DAYS TO SPEND ON FAMILY TIME, VISITS, HOLIDAYS, SHOPPING, HOUSEHOLD JOBS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

PARENTS AND CARERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF ALL MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS THEIR CHILD ATTENDS WITHIN SCHOOL TIME (THIS MAY BE IN THE FORM OF A LETTER FROM THE HOSPITAL, MEDICAL APPOINTMENT CARDS, SCREENSHOTS OF APPOINTMENT SENT VIA TEXT/EMAIL ETC.) OTHERWISE SESSIONS MISSED TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS, WILL BE CLASSED AS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.

Appendix 3: Days off school equal lost learning table



Days off school add up to lost learning!



<p>↑</p> <p>365 DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>190 SCHOOL DAYS EACH ACADEMIC YEAR...</p> <p>...which means there are 175 NON school days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments</p>					
	<p>190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p>	<p><small>6 DAYS ABSENCE</small></p> <p>184 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p>	<p><small>19 DAYS ABSENCE</small></p> <p>171 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p>	<p><small>Half a Term missed 29 DAYS ABSENCE</small></p> <p>161 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p>	<p><small>38 DAYS ABSENCE</small></p> <p>152 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p>	<p><small>47 DAYS ABSENCE</small></p> <p>143 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p>
	<p>100%</p>	<p>97%</p>	<p>90%</p>	<p>85%</p>	<p>80%</p>	<p>75%</p>
	<p>GOOD/EXPECTED Best chance of success</p>		<p>WORRYING Less chance of success, harder to make progress and achieve higher grades</p>		<p>SERIOUS CONCERN Huge impact on academic learning, parents may face court action if no justifiable reason for absence</p>	

Every minute counts!

Punctuality is as important as attendance – every minute lost impacts on learning

In our policy, we state that:

- Any child arriving after 8:55 a.m., but before 9:15 a.m., will be recorded as late on the register
- Any child arriving after 9:15 a.m. will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the register
- All children arriving late will enter school through the main entrance and a reason for lateness must be provided

**5 minutes late each school day equals
3 whole school days lost per year**

Early pick-up from school

We will also calculate ‘minutes lost’ when children are collected from school prior to the end of the school day (for non-medical purposes)