



Straits Primary School Attendance Policy 2025-26



At our school, we believe every child belongs and every day counts. We are committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment where all children feel happy, included, and excited to learn. We will work together with families and our community to understand and overcome barriers to attendance, so every student has the opportunity to grow, succeed, and thrive—every single day.

This policy is based on the DfE guidance - [Working together to improve school attendance](#) – August 2024.

“Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.” (DFE 2024)

Senior Attendance Champion: Mr Freear

Attendance Statement

Our approach to attendance is rooted in an inclusive attendance model designed to ensure that everyone - our staff, families, and children - fully understands their individual roles and collective responsibilities in supporting school attendance, active engagement in learning, and addressing potential barriers.

To achieve this, we use a Multi-Tiered System of Support, a tiered approach that caters to the unique needs of all children. It begins with our universal offer, progresses to Tier 2, which provides additional support for some children through early help services within the school, and finally, Tier 3, where we ensure that certain children and families have access to specialised resources if required.

Together, we aim to empower children to attend school regularly and overcome any potential barriers they may face in their educational journey.

Our Attendance Values

- **A Child-Centred Approach:** placing children's health, safety and emotional well-being at the centre of our efforts. We will promote a caring environment that helps pupils feel safe and ready to learn.
- **Shared Responsibility:** fostering a collective belief that attendance is a responsibility shared by pupils, staff, families, and the wider community.
- **Culture of Belonging:** creating an environment where students and families feel connected and supported to promote consistent attendance.
- **Addressing Barriers:** working collaboratively to identify and overcome obstacles that hinder attendance for individual pupils. We will recognize that families face different challenges and respond with empathy, support, and solutions—not judgement.
- **Evidence-Based Strategies:** we will use research and proven methods to inform and strengthen attendance interventions.
- **Positive Outcomes:** recognizing attendance as a catalyst for improving lives, building stronger connections, and ensuring brighter futures for pupils and communities.
- **Empowerment:** equipping children and families with the tools and support needed to thrive and remain engaged in education.
- **Celebration:** we will recognise growth, effort, and positive attendance—big or small—encouraging children to take pride in showing up.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- All schools, except those where all the pupils are boarders, must keep an attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Regulation 10 sets out the contents of the attendance register. The attendance register must be kept electronically to aid accuracy and reduce the burden of information sharing.
- A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

Managing Attendance

To manage and improve attendance effectively, we will:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels (newsletters/website/parents' meetings)
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance including regular professional development for our staff.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Collaborate with an organisation known as Inclusive Attendance to reflect and adapt our attendance procedures.
- Accurately complete admission attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place (track children at risk of becoming a persistent absentee, 10-14 days and 15-18 days).
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, abuse and child exploitation.

To promote regular attendance we will:

- Celebrate and share attendance information in our monthly Newsletter.
- Issue bulletins and updates and create a page sharing information about attendance on our website.
- Celebrate good attendance both individually and as a whole class achievement (weekly attendance cup and award for three consecutive cup wins).
- Use a Multi-Tiered System of Support, a tiered approach that caters to the unique needs of all children.
- Celebrate good or improving attendance through certificates and recognition.
- Report attendance by the number of days missed. This will simplify the process, enhance communication, and help all children and families have a clear understanding of the impact of missed school days on education.
- Adopt a recognition-based approach that allows us to be more inclusive and creative in acknowledging personal achievements and promoting the importance of regular school attendance among both our children and families.

Attendance procedures

Attendance registers are completed by each class teacher at the start of morning and afternoon sessions and then an attendance check is completed by the office staff. Any absences are recorded and every half-day absence (either morning or afternoon) from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required. The office team make contact with the parent/carer if no information has been shared regarding the child's absence and for identified vulnerable pupils, the headteacher is informed (calling on day 1,3 and 5 for most children but every day for identified pupils who are vulnerable or who are at risk of becoming PA).

Authorised or unauthorised absences

The school may grant an authorised absence for reasons such as genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

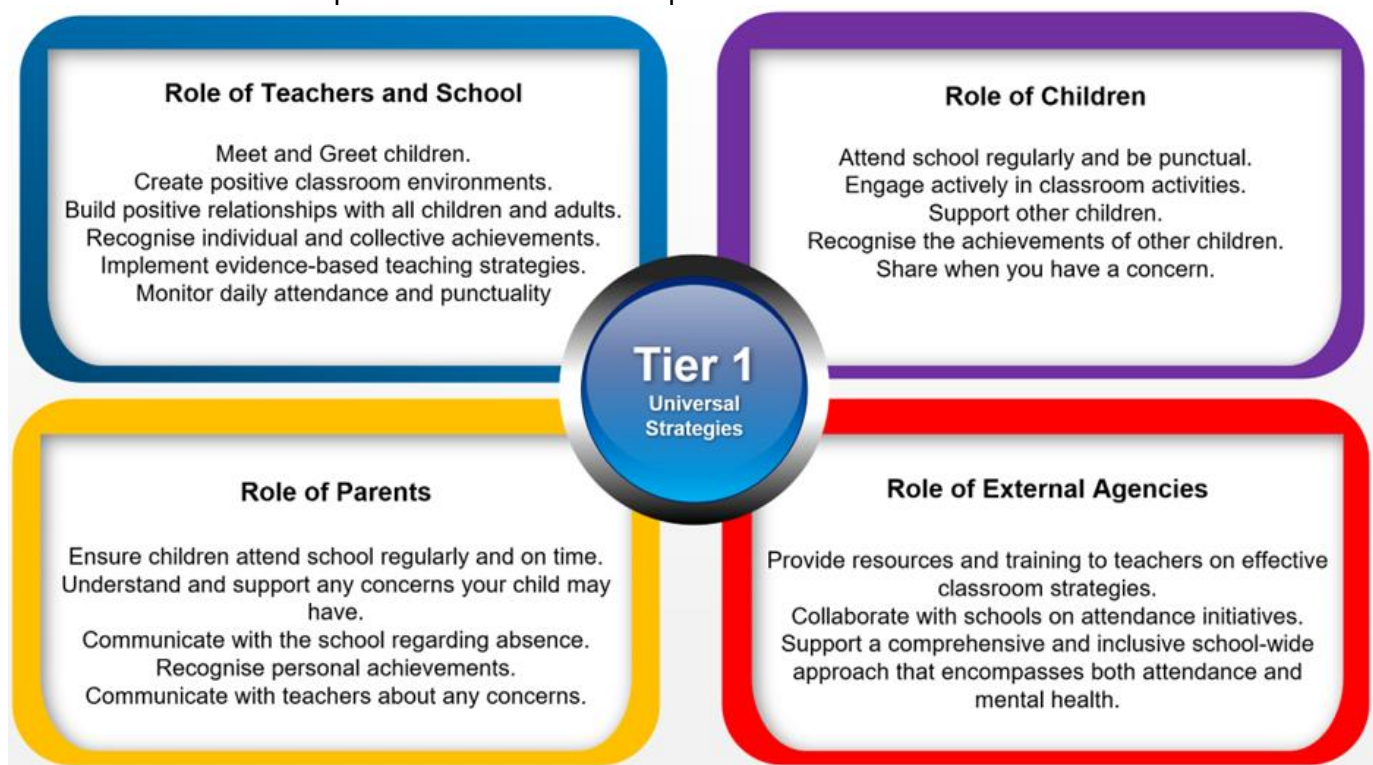
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after class register has closed).
- Shopping, looking after other children, oversleeping, or birthdays.
- Unauthorised leave of absence/holiday or day trips in term time.
- Absences of children whose attendance is a concern and parents have been requested to supply medical evidence.

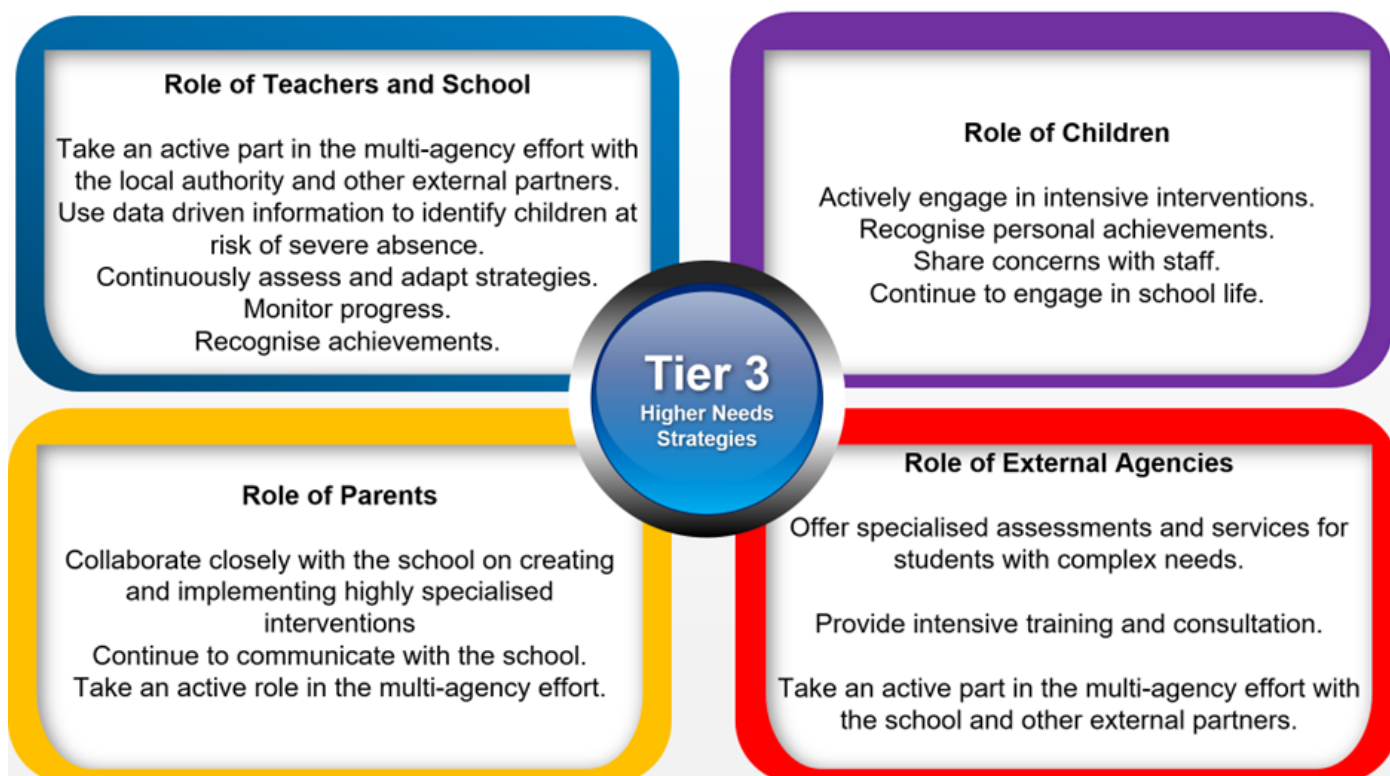
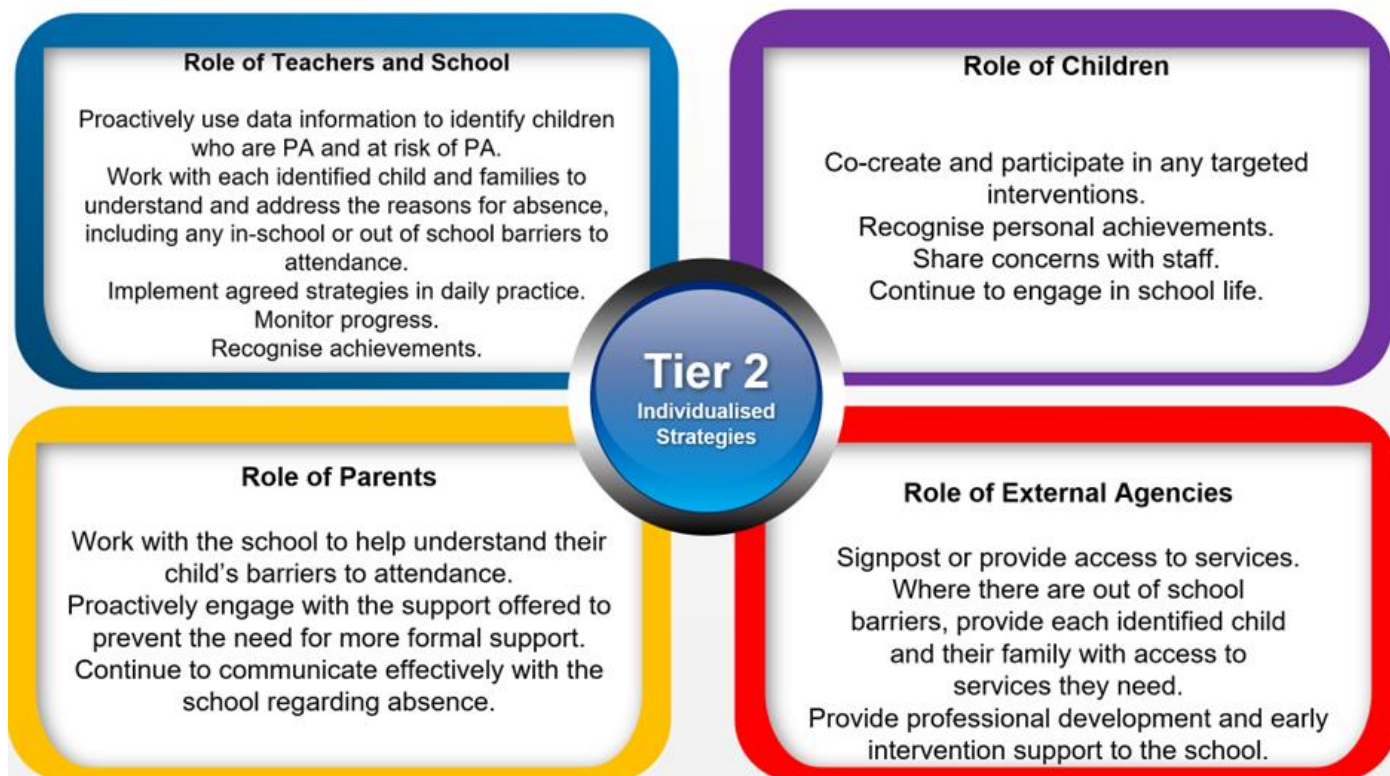
Whilst any child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This can often make a child feel more anxious over time and make matters worse. If there are any problems with regular attendance, we ask parents to contact school to discuss these matters as early as possible so we can support both the family and the child (refer to our tiered approach).

If a child has been identified as being a persistent absentee (greater than 19 days absence in one year) they may have all further absence unauthorised. However, should parent(s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period may be authorised.

Supporting pupils whose attendance is causing concern.

We use a Multi-Tiered System of Support, a tiered approach that caters to the unique needs of all children. It begins with our universal offer, progresses to Tier 2, which provides additional support for some children through early help services within the school, and finally, Tier 3, where we ensure that certain children and families have access to specialised resources if required.





We will:

- Keep parents informed of their child's attendance through letters or face-to-face meetings including updating and sharing attendance information with parents at parents' evenings.
- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we will work with external partners to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with the parents of pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them, this may include creating an attendance support plan and referring to services and organisations that can provide support.

- Provide support through mentoring, counselling, in class support, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, we will hold more formal conversations with the parents. This will be led by the school's senior attendance champion and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with we will work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a Joint Early Warning Notice and/or penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

Punctuality and late after registration

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Regular attendance and punctuality help to instil good habits and promote the development of a positive attitude towards school. Arriving late to school is stressful for both parent and child and is not a good start to the day. Children who arrive late miss essential learning time, instructions for the lesson, disrupt the routine of the classroom and the work/progress of others.

Children should arrive between **8:45am - 8:50am** (when classroom doors are opened) and the class register is completed at 8.55am. If a child arrives late after the gates close, they must come through the main reception, sign in and will receive a 'L' late mark. The school register officially closes at 9:30am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as a 'U' which is classified as an unauthorised late absence.

Attendance/Absence procedures for parent/carer:

- Ensure your child/ren attend school every day the school is open.
- Notify school each day when your child is absent giving reason for absence. (School will decide to authorise or unauthorise the absence).
- Notify School of any changes to emergency contact details or medical issues that may have an impact on your child's attendance.
- Avoid taking holidays/leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Book routine medical appointments outside of school (where possible) or bring your child in for part of the school day when possible.
- Engage with school if your child's attendance starts to deteriorate.
- Engage with further support offered, such as attendance support and family liaison visits, Early help, parenting contracts and the Local Authority to prevent further legal action.

Granting leave of absence

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority must do so.

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).

- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.

Exceptional circumstances

All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with – we ask that all applications must be made in writing to the Headteacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date.

We will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

All schools are also able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend (For full details see code X).

Holidays in term time

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence for a holiday shall not be granted in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the head teacher (not the Local Authority) or his designate may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence for a holiday must be made in writing, on an application form provided by the school - all applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date.

Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. A general guide for parents, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time would not be authorised.

Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice (upon a return from such leave) may be issued.

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday taken in term time).

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher

rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

- The payment must be paid directly to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice.
- If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28-day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. Parent(s) can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at our school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for the school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

A part-time timetable will:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Children Missing Education

If a family moves out of area and the distance is too far to travel to school, parents must notify us immediately. We advise parents to contact the admissions department (of the Local Authority where they now reside) as quickly as possible to obtain a new school place, as often places are limited. If a child ceases to attend school and we have had no contact from parents, we will deem this as a safeguarding issue. We will try to contact the family and may undertake a home visit.

Where a pupil has not returned from a period of leave or has had a continuous period of absence, the school and the School LA may need to carry out joint reasonable enquiries under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is.

In conducting these enquiries the school and the School LA are also expected to liaise with the Home LA and if, following those enquiries, the pupil's name is deleted from the school's register, the Home LA should investigate whether the child is a Child Missing Education.

GDPR

This Policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the School's Data Protection Policy published on the School Website. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed by:

Chair of Curriculum Committee:

Date:

Head teacher:

Date:

Agreed at the Curriculum Committee Meeting on: