ATTENDANCE POLICY

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January 2022	New policy – based on Entrust policy dated 2015
January 2024	Updated policy – links to new guidance and added clarification on school process to challenge and support attendance.
October 2024	Updated policy in line with new guidance for schools 19th August 2024
Sept 2025	Reviewed- penalty notices to be issued for more than two days holiday as agreed by Governors in Oct 2025 *New messaging system- no longer using Marvellous Me
Sept 2026	Changed name of chair of Governors to Laura McGee Added a link to new Gov document in school responsibilities A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance

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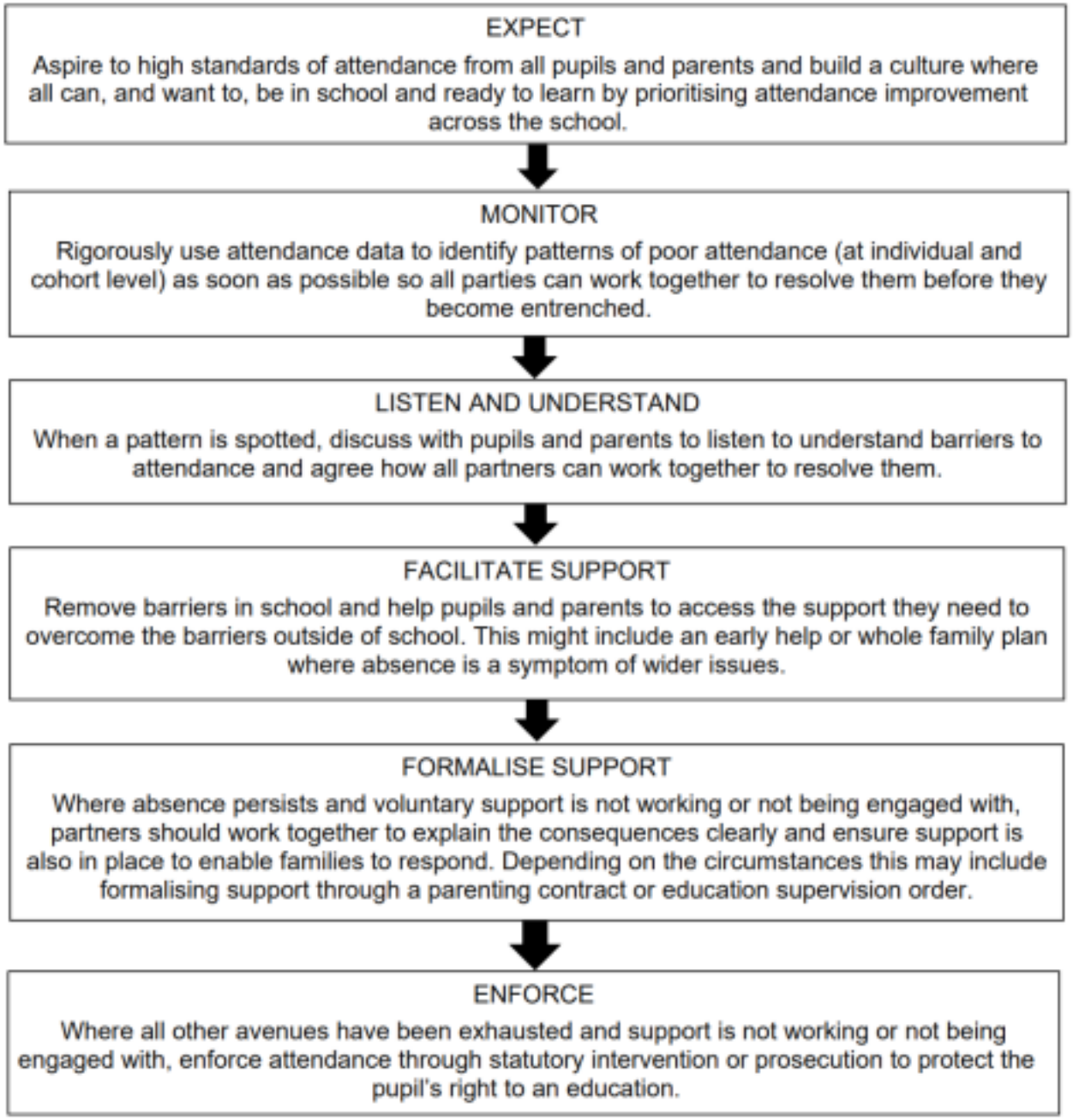
INTRODUCTION

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. The doors open at 8.40am for registration at 9am. Registration closes at 9.15am.
We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance and punctuality is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also

make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

The new government guidance, 'Working Together to Improve Attendance' (2022) states; successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.

All partners should work together to:



PRINCIPLES OF THIS POLICY

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

- This policy should not be read in isolation but with other school policies such as safeguarding, behaviour, bullying etc.

- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through our use of the curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.

2. We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the school nurse or local support team. Use the advice in the document A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance to give timely reminders about the importance of attendance and offer ways to support.

3. We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children, should this become a concern.

4. We will ensure parents are fully aware of their child's attendance and keep them informed if it is improving or falling.

PARENTS OR CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- They should inform school by 8.30am if their child cannot attend school and provide a reason why.
- Try to make medical, dental and other appointments outside of the school day.
- Ensure school is aware of any circumstances outside of school which may impact attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote punctual and high attendance, e.g. an effective sleep routine.
- Talk to your child about school and inform school if your child is worried about anything.
- Do not book holidays or events during term time.
- Seek advice from your G.P or 111 if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has up to date contact details of all named contacts.
- Encourage your child to make the most of all of the opportunities offered to them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

It is clear from published research the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in school and later exams. Even missing small amounts of school can have a significant effect on achievement.

Being ten minutes late every day adds up to 6 days a school year, which is 36 hours of learning lost. One day absence a month results in an attendance of 94% below the school target of 97% and the national average.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY TEAM

The promotion of excellent attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of everyone, parents/carers and school. At Blakeley we are very lucky that all staff believe attendance and punctuality is a key priority in our school.

Our Attendance Team consists of:

- Miss Richards (Headteacher)
- Mrs Hood – (Attendance Lead)
- Mrs Whitehouse (Attendance Manager)

We are also supported by the education welfare team at Staffordshire council.

PROCEDURES FOR WORKING WITH PARENTS TO SUPPORT GOOD ATTENDANCE

Working in partnership with parents/carers is key to good attendance as stated in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Aug 2024). We will inform you by a termly letter or by a text message if your child's attendance is heading towards **persistent absence** (90% and below).

Every week a text message will be sent to those children whose attendance has fallen below 90% or has continued to fall further below 90%. A positive message will also be sent to those children who have improved their attendance and are no longer classed as persistently absent.

Parents will be informed by letter if their child is at risk of being classed a persistently absent from school. If these sessions are unauthorised, the school could inform the local authority and parents could be fined. A plan of support will be put into place with a view to improve attendance.

In most cases this letter or message prompts better attendance, however in some cases the next step will be a formal letter asking parents/carers to come into school to discuss your child's attendance with a member of our Attendance Team. In this meeting we will discuss the importance of good attendance and offer ways we can support.

Following this meeting, if attendance does not improve a formal meeting will be arranged with the Attendance Lead to put a parental contract in place.

If attendance does not improve, as support has not been effective and/or actions have not been engaged with, then school will work with the local authority to:

· Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
· Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with.
· 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.

At the end of each term we send out your child's attendance record, with a letter explaining how school monitors and tracks attendance. The letter clearly shows your child's attendance in relation to our school and national expectations.

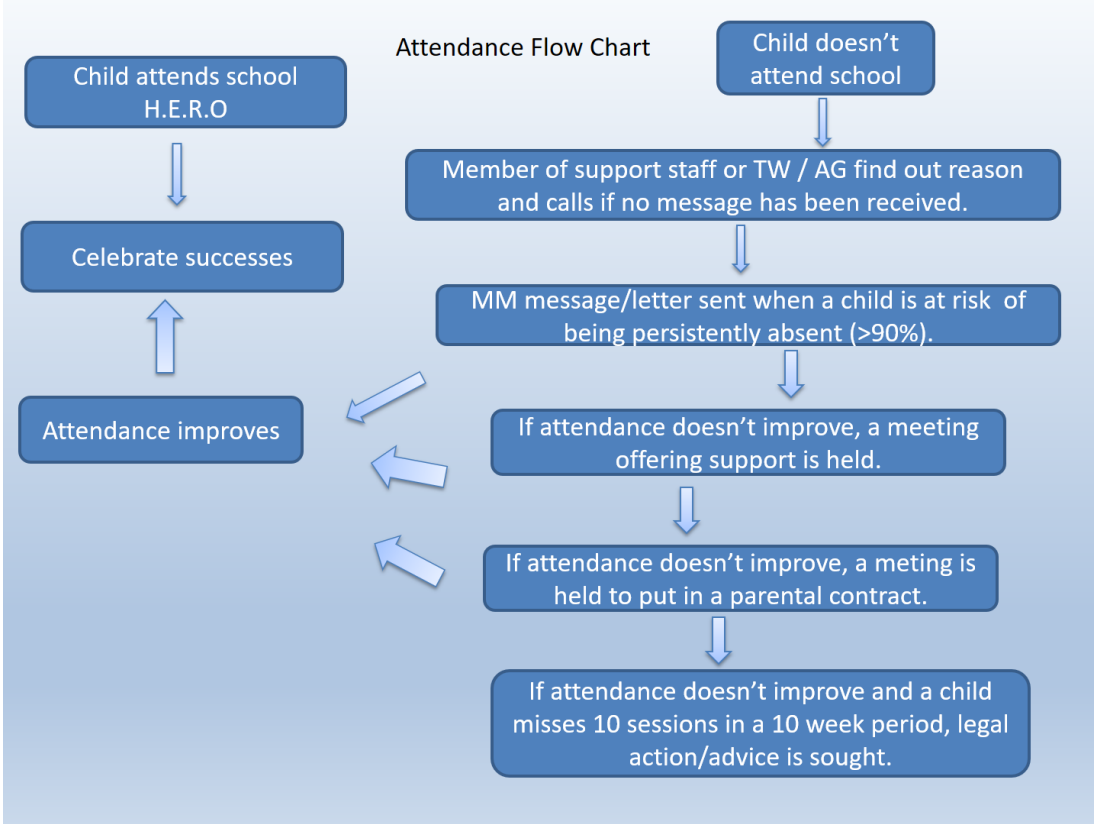
97 – 100% Excellent	93 – 96% Be Careful	90 – 92% Improvement Needed	Less than 90% Persistent	Around 50% Severe
✔				

Our aim is for children to be in the **green** box each term.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least three years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education Regulations 2006 where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.



Outstanding and Excellent Attendance

· A reward will be given each week to the class with the best overall attendance (e.g. additional playtime). Weekly class attendance data will be on display outside the hall.

· Parents will be informed termly if their child has 100% attendance or if their child's attendance is above the school target of 97%

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

School is open from 8:40 am every morning to aid a calm start to the school day. During this period children have the opportunity to take part in a range of early morning activities, such as reading, handwriting and maths fluency activities etc. Children should be in their classroom ready to start the school day at **9.00 am**. The register is taken twice a day (morning and afternoon marks). **A day counts as 2 attendance sessions.**

Morning registration ends at 9.00 am. If a child arrives after the registration period the doors on the playground and to the classroom will be closed and he/she will have to be brought by a parent to the main entrance. An arrival between 9 and 9.15am will be marked in as late. After 9.15 am this will become an unauthorised absence and will not count towards a child's attendance. The afternoon register is taken at 1.30pm. Our school day ends at 3:30 pm.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in/ out system in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

If a child is absent…

If a child is unable to attend school, parents should contact the school office at the earliest possibility, giving a reason for the child's absence. The absence and reason will be recorded on the register. If no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence, a member of staff will contact the parent or guardian by 9.30am the same day.

The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence and **then each morning**, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

Nursery Absence

Although education for Nursery aged pupils is not compulsory, at Blakeley Heath we see full attendance, of chosen hours, within our Nursery setting as essential for a successful start for their school life. If Nursery attendance falls below **85%** we will reserve the right to take the child off our roll and the place will be offered to the next child on our waiting list.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

We recognise that children have medical appointments and would ask, where possible, for appointments to be made outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. The school office should be informed of all appointments during the school day either by phone or email. If your child does have an appointment within the school day, we may ask for an appointment card or letter. All medical appointments are coded as an 'M' in the register.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Under current guidelines, schools are not permitted to authorise absence for leave unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday or take leave during term time. **Taking children out of school time should only happen in exceptional circumstances. Holidays within school time will not be granted.**

If you do wish to take your child out of school for a leave of absence, you must put this in writing, so that we know where all children are. Our **'Leave of Absence Form'** is available from the school office. **This form must be returned to the school office before you take your child out of school.**

When the written request comes into school, the Headteacher will acknowledge receipt with a letter, sent to parents explaining the decision, whether the leave is to be authorised or not. Where required, school will seek advice from the local authority.

If school believes a child is on holiday, they will outline why they believe this is the case and ask families to provide information to contradict the belief. If a child is taken on a term time holiday a G code is used to record the absence. If absence is taken without notification, or the reason for absence is not a holiday but the leave has not been improved, then an O code (unauthorised) will be used.

School work alongside the local authority to take appropriate action, including fixed penalty notices. A penalty notice can be issued for more than two day's holiday or unathorised absence. If the fine is not paid to the local authority then parents may be prosecuted. The penalty notice is applied to every parent with responsibility. Where a child goes on holiday with two parents then each parent will receive a fine.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home or offer remote learning, so that they can keep up their school work. This work will be different according to the needs and age of the child.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact external services, so that arrangements can be made to support the child.

MEDICAL NEEDS AND SEND

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with parents to improve attendance, we are always mindful of the barriers our children face and put additional support in where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include formal and informal conversations with the family and wider professionals to ensure the most appropriate reasonable adjustments are put in place in a timely manner.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and will be reported to the local authority.

If a child is not in school for **10 consecutive days** the school will inform the local authority as this could be classed as a child missing in education (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023). The school may inform the local authority or external agencies prior to 10 days, if they feel there are other contributing factors to consider such as safeguarding concerns.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the local authority and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. The authority may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation. As of Aug 2024, the UK government's new national framework for school attendance requires schools to consider a fine if a student misses 10 or more sessions (5 days) of school for unauthorized reasons within a 10-week rolling period. This includes any combination of unauthorized absences, such as four sessions during term time and six instances of arriving late.

If a child's absence falls below 90% it is classed as a persistent absence (PA). This will be investigated by school and the local authority. A meeting will be called at the earliest point to discuss reasons for the absence and what actions can be implemented to improve the child's attendance. To prevent children becoming a 'persistent absent' we send termly letters home to parents if a child's attendance is heading towards 93%.

The Local Authority has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

A child is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.

A child has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a ten-week period.

There is a single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span over different terms and school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term Time Holiday or Irregular School Attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years of the First Offence)

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. (Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days may result in a prosecution)

Third Offence and any further Offences (within 3 years of the First Offence)

The third time that an offence is committed for either a term time holiday and/or Irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case may be proceeded straight to prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'failure to secure their child's regular attendance at a school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1,000.

Prosecution

Where intervention through the school's process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

Section 4441(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

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

These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

LEAVING BLAKELEY HEATH

If your child is leaving our school to start a new school, you must inform us of the new school details. This enables us to ensure that every child is in education at all times. If we are not provided with this information the child is classed as '**missing from education'**. In this situation all cases will be referred to Staffordshire local authority missing in education.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the local authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admission register. We will use the required form and include all relevant information outlined at: https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Elective-home-education/Elective-Home-Education-School-Exit-Information.aspx

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school sets itself an aspirational attendance target each year. This target is agreed by the senior leadership team and governing body. At Blakeley Heath, our attendance target for the whole school is 97%. We are working to improve our attendance for SEND and disadvantaged pupils to 95% and then in line with the whole school target of 97%.

Attendance data and targets are shared with our full governing body termly, with punctuality data and actions taken to challenge and support persistent absence or lateness.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

The school based 'Attendance Team' meets weekly to monitor attendance and punctuality and plan interventions when necessary. The 'Attendance Team' pays particular attention to attendance and punctuality of pupils that have historically had poor attendance or that face entrenched barriers to attendance. This will also include monitoring trends of pupils who have a social worker, have a long-term medical condition, special educational needs or a disability, or are eligible for free school meals.

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is implemented. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they could be. Attendance data, including a breakdown of significant groups are shared with the governing body on a termly basis as part of the Headteacher's report.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents/carers.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every other year, or earlier if considered necessary or legislation changes.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised Absence

· An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

· Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence as permission for this would not be granted.

Unauthorised Absence

· An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head of School.

Persistent and Severe Absence

· Persistent absence is where pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year). Schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re engage these pupils

· Severe absent is where pupils are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as

such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them.

At Blakeley Heath we ensure that patterns of both persistent and severe absence are a focus of our regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible.

KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Staffordshire County Council Information
https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx

We adopt the government's guidance as set out in '***Working Together to Improve Attendance'*** 2022. Updated Aug 2024
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

Summary Table of Responsibilities for Schools, Parents and Local Authorities: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6274ecb2d3bf7f5e3916fb5f/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

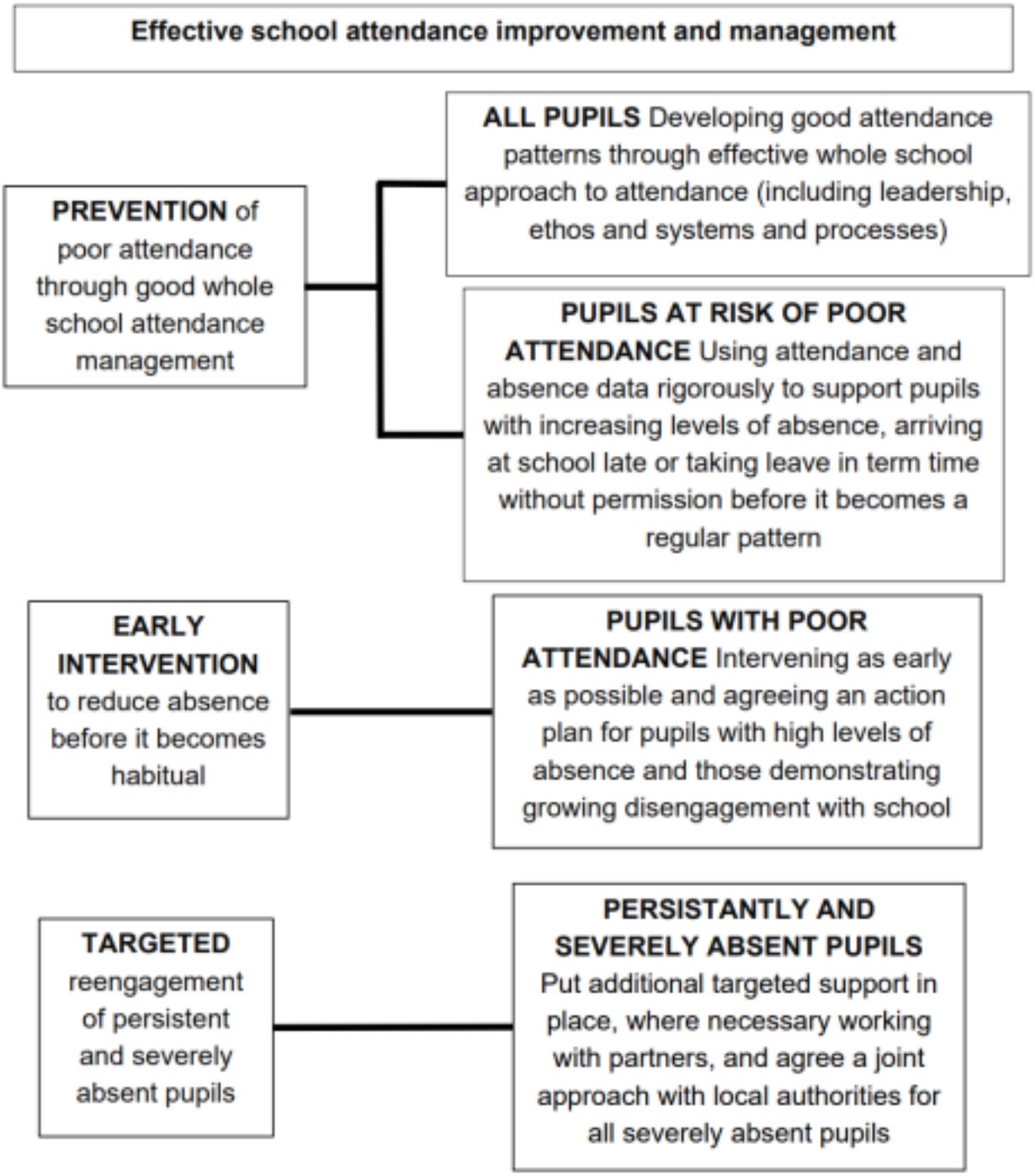
Attendance for children who can not attend school due to medical needs.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657995f0254aaa000d050bff/Arranging_education_for_children_who_cannot_attend_school_because_of_health_needs.pdf

Communicating with parents re attendance
A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance

.

APPENDIX ONE

The flow chart below captures effective school attendance improvement and management:


Effective school attendance improvement and management
PREVENTION of poor attendance through good whole school attendance management
ALL PUPILS Developing good attendance patterns through effective whole school approach to attendance (including leadership, ethos and systems and processes)
PUPILS AT RISK OF POOR ATTENDANCE Using attendance and absence data rigorously to support pupils with increasing levels of absence, arriving at school late or taking leave in term time without permission before it becomes a regular pattern
EARLY INTERVENTION to reduce absence before it becomes habitual
PUPILS WITH POOR ATTENDANCE Intervening as early as possible and agreeing an action plan for pupils with high levels of absence and those demonstrating growing disengagement with school
TARGETED reengagement of persistent and severely absent pupils
PERSISTANTLY AND SEVERELY ABSENT PUPILS Put additional targeted support in place, where necessary working with partners, and agree a joint approach with local authorities for all severely absent pupils