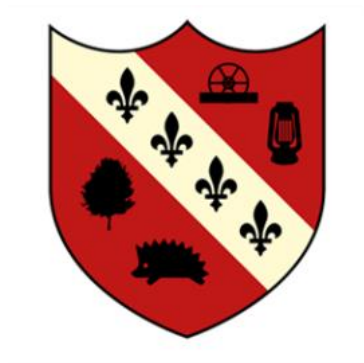


Poolbrook Primary Academy



Attendance Policy
2025-28

Date policy ratified by the Local Governing Body: 1.11.25

Date of policy publication: 1.11.25

Author of policy: Chris Stewart (Headteacher)

Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

By law, all children become compulsory school age at the beginning of the first term following their 5th birthday. Once a child is of compulsory school age, children must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering their child at a school. However, some choose to make other arrangements to provide a suitable, full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk getting a penalty notice or being prosecuted in court.

Our Ethos

We expect all our children to attend school every day that school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures to ensure this is the case.

At Poolsbrook Primary Academy, we believe that the most important factor in promoting excellent attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school an environment that is built on respectful relationships with staff, pupils and families and is a happy and rewarding experience for all in the community.

As a result, we expect all staff members to:

- treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries.
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively.
- understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy
- trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
- communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being.

In return, we expect all parents and carers to:

- treat staff with respect.
- actively support the work of the school with regards to attendance.
- call on staff for help with attendance when they need it.
- communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.

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

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, 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.

We follow the Derbyshire County Council policy on absences.

Going to school regularly is important to a child's future. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams.

Excellent attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

The school's designated Attendance Leads is **Ben Chalkley (Deputy Headteacher)** whose responsibilities are identified within this policy.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to ensure:

- excellent attendance of all of our children
- all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the school's tiered approach
- our universal provision for promoting excellent attendance is shared
- our families, where a child is at risk of persistent absence, receive individualised support
- our families, where a child's attendance is cause of concern, receive targeted support

Definitions

Authorised absence

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

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent / carer, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even if the absence is supported by the parent.

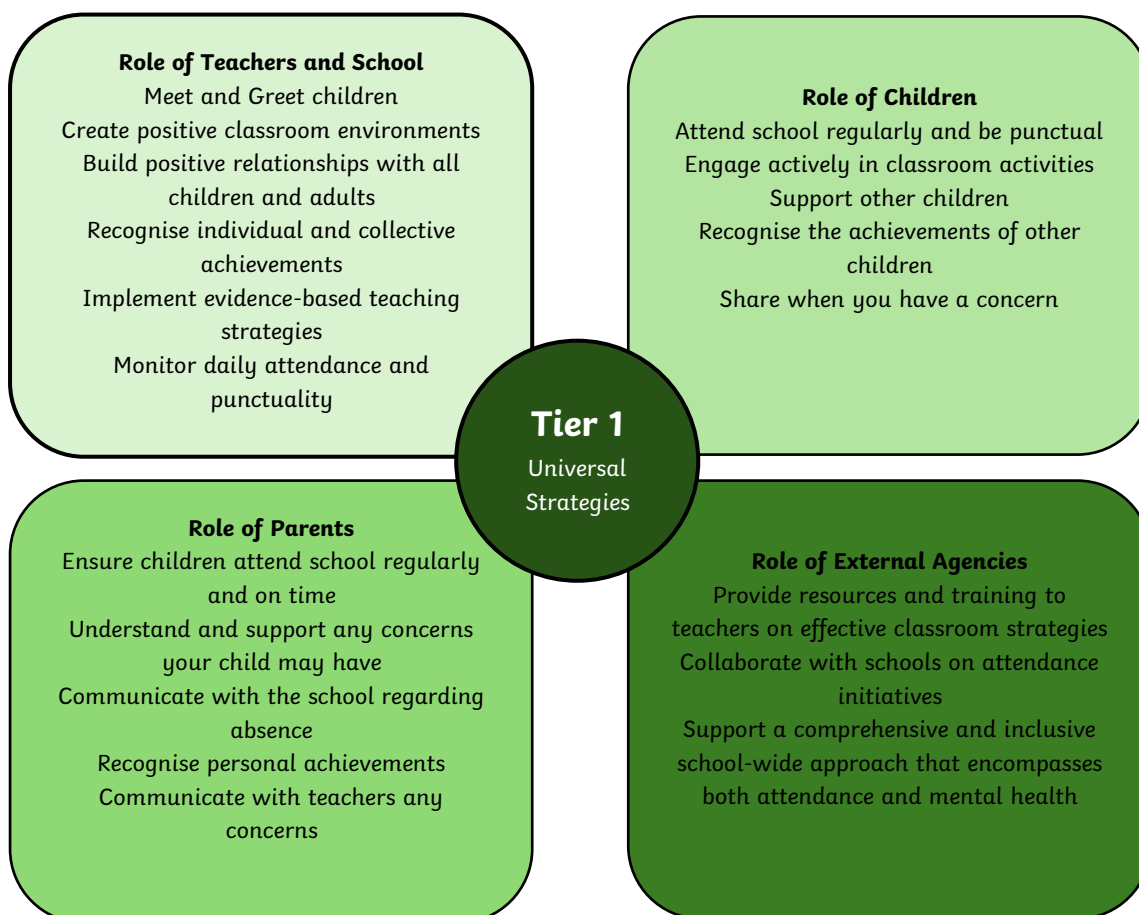
Procedures

At Poolsbrook Primary Academy, we are relentless in our pursuit of excellence for pupils.

We have established robust attendance monitoring and escalation procedures which are initiated in an attempt to prevent absence becoming a problem by taking the following action to ensure that persistent absence is kept as low as possible:

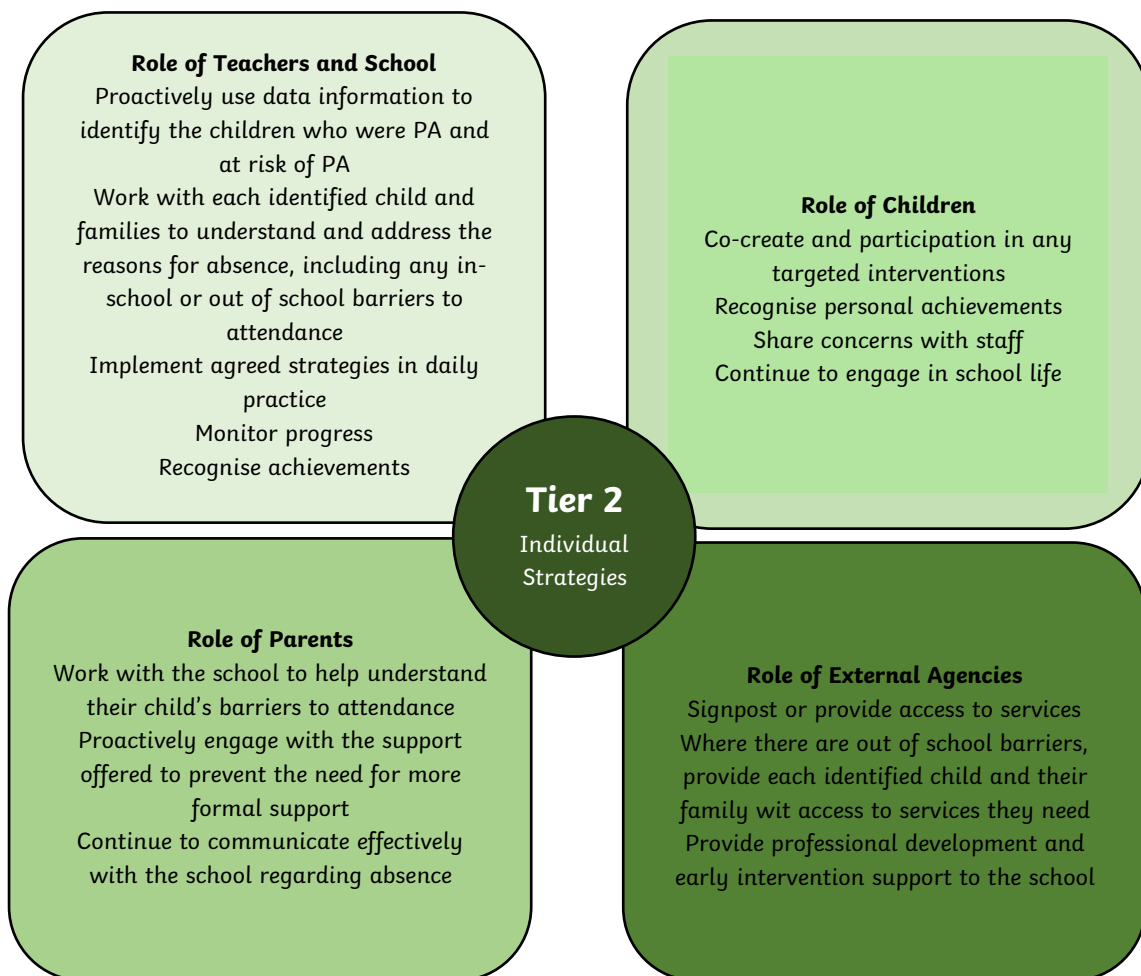
To develop and maintain a culture within our school community where excellent attendance is important, we deliver the following **universal** offer:

- deliver weekly assemblies to promote and celebrate excellent attendance
- pastoral support from Nurture Lead. E.g. ELSA
- communicate the school's attendance on Class Dojo
- reward children by class for excellent attendance, weekly
- reward individual children termly for excellent attendance and inform their parents
- maintain a relational approach with our children and families; upholding positive relationships
- explicitly teach the importance of attending school every day through assemblies and the curriculum
- first day absence procedure (see Appendix 2 for flowchart)



For all pupils who are below national expectation and at risk of becoming persistently absent, we deliver the following **targeted** approach: (see Appendix 1 for flowchart).

- Weekly monitoring of pupils who have fallen below 96% by our Attendance Team to ensure that support is offered as early as possible in order to prevent them from becoming persistent absentees.
- Informing parents/carers that their child's attendance has fallen below the national expectation and that their attendance will continue to be monitored in order to ensure they don't become persistently absent from school.
- Outlining to parents/carers the action that will be taken if their child's attendance falls below 90%.



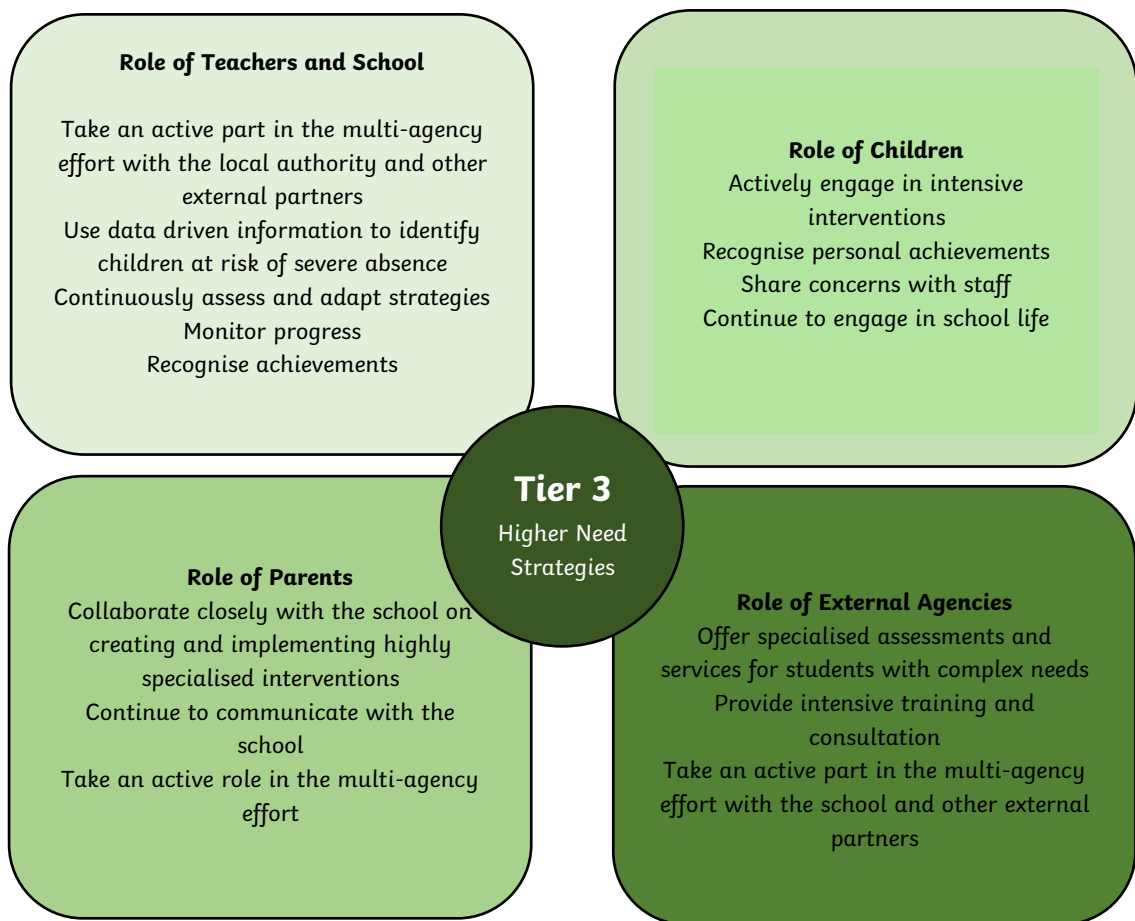
For all pupils who have become persistently absent, our procedures are **specialised**: (see Appendix 2).

- Weekly monitoring of pupils, by our Attendance Team, who have become persistently absent from school.
- When a pupil falls below 90%, a wellbeing call is made to the parent/carer by our Nurture Lead or Deputy Headteacher to inform parents/carers of their child's attendance and offer support in order to improve the pupil's attendance.

- Weekly check-ins with the Nurture Lead or Deputy Headteacher to continue to review progress and impact of support given. Where there is no improvement, the following action is taken:
 1. If there is no improvement in the pupil's attendance over the next 5 days, this will trigger a letter (Letter 1) to parents/carers offering them a face to face meeting to discuss their child's attendance with the Deputy Headteacher and Nurture Lead. As there has been no improvement, further time off school will be unauthorised without medical evidence.
 2. If there is no improvement, a further letter (Letter 2) will be sent informing them of a given time and date for a face to face meeting with the Deputy Headteacher and Nurture Lead. A follow-up fortnightly check-in will be agreed. The letter will remind parents /cares, that further time off school will be unauthorised without medical evidence.
 3. If there is no further improvement in attendance, a further letter (Letter 3) will be sent informing them of a given time and date for a face to face meeting with the Head Teacher and Deputy Headteacher. This letter will also give warning of a penalty notice. A follow-up fortnightly check-in will be agreed.
 4. 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a 10-week time frame will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being applied for from Derbyshire County Council.
 5. The Attendance Team will make regular contact via phone and Class Dojo to continue to offer help/support and to keep communications open.

For all children who are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding:

- The attendance of all pupil premium children is monitored weekly by our Attendance Team.
- The individual needs and vulnerabilities of all our pupils is of great importance to us and taken into consideration when monitoring attendance. Working with members of SLT, the SENDCo and the Nurture Lead, we seek to proactively engage with pupils who have poor attendance.



Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance.
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers.
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including interpreting and analysing attendance data.

The Attendance Team

The Attendance Team consists of the **Attendance Lead and Deputy Headteacher (Ben Chalkley)**, **Nurture Lead (Christine Goodwin)** and **Administrative Assistant (Natasha Tighe)**. The Attendance Team plays a crucial role in monitoring and promoting regular excellent attendance. The team's main objective is to ensure that pupils attend school regularly, identify barriers to attendance, and implement strategies to improve attendance rates.

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carer
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Update and maintain the attendance tracker system fortnightly
- Meet fortnightly to monitor and analyse attendance data, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups
- Meet with families in line with graduated attendance procedures
- Identify patterns and trends in individual / group / whole-school attendance
- Identify children at risk of persistent absence and action
- Consider barriers to attendance for individual / group / whole-school attendance
- Collaborate with parents / carers through formal and informal meetings
- Initiate Attendance Support Plans
- Report to the DSL team and Head Teacher, specifically highlighting cases of concern
- Prepare data and present to the Governing Body
- Work with external agencies to support and further challenge families
- Continuously reviewing the effectiveness of strategies
- Administer letters to families
- Recognising and rewarding excellent attendance

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Taking daily AM and PM registers to record attendance and absences
- Building and maintaining positive relationships with children and families
- Sharing pupil attendance % at parent's evening and in the end of year report
- Sharing any concerns affecting attendance with the Attendance Team
- Addressing initial attendance concerns and offering support to families
- Promoting a culture of excellent attendance through education

Headteacher

Head teacher is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of excellent attendance to children and families
- Modelling personal commitment to attendance and punctuality
- Establishing and implementing the attendance policy in line with current legislation
- Ensuring consistent enforcement of the attendance policy
- Overseeing the Attendance Team
- Supporting the implementation of support strategies
- Attending attendance meetings in line with the graduated response to persistent absence
- Reporting on attendance to the Governing Body and Flying High Partnership
- Collaborating with external agencies to improve attendance
- Building staff capacity to ensure excellent attendance

- Recognising and rewarding excellent attendance
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Deputy Head Teacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

Administrative Staff

Administrative staff are responsible for:

- Maintaining attendance records and systems
- Recording / coding absences
- Maintaining positive lines of communication between parents and school
- Building and maintaining positive relationships with families
- Contacting families to gain reason for absences
- Producing weekly reports
- Sharing any concerns affecting attendance with Attendance Team

Parents / Carers

Parents / carers are responsible for:

- Prioritising excellent attendance for their children
- Encouraging a positive view of education and promoting the importance
- Modelling punctuality and responsibility
- Setting routines that support excellent attendance
- Be familiar with and adhere to the attendance policy
- Reporting absences through the correct channels in a timely manner
- Providing updates should an absence exceed one day
- Monitoring their child's attendance
- Addressing barriers to attendance
- Attending meetings about their child's attendance
- Working with school staff to improve attendance
- Producing evidence / documentation for absence upon request
- Seeking support, where necessary, for maintaining excellent attendance, by contacting Christine Goodwin (Nurture Lead)

Registration

- At 8:35am the school doors open and children are welcomed into their classroom.
- At 8:45am all children are seated and the register is completed. Children are expected to be ready to complete early work by this time.
- Registers close at 9:00am. After this time, a child is marked as late.

- Registers will be taken again in the afternoon at 1pm.

A full day counts as 2 sessions (AM and PM)

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using the Arbor software. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Lateness:

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 8:45am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 09:00 will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 09:00 will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M). Please provide advanced notice if your child has an appointment.

Persistent Lateness

The Attendance Team monitors persistent lateness and the Deputy Headteacher or Nurture Lead will contact families where lateness is becoming a concern to inform them and offer initial support. They will aim to work closely with the child and family to identify the cause and help to remove these barriers; this may involve the child accessing additional provision / intervention in school such as a soft start, or external agency involvement for the family.

Where a pupil is persistently late for 10 sessions in a rolling period of 10 school weeks and where these are signified as a "U" in the attendance register, the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support.

The school may decide to refer the case to the LA for formal monitoring. This may proceed to legal action if the attendance does not improve.

Absences:

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent and explain the reasoning.

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process.

Pupil Absence – Day 1 Procedure: (see Appendix 2 for flow chart)

Parents / carers must inform the school by 8:45am if their child is going to be absent through one of the following methods:

- Phoning the school office and leaving an answer-phone message on 01246 472540
- Emailing the school office on info@poolsbrook.derbyshire.sch.uk

Please note Class Dojo is not monitored for absences.

Once the register is closed at 09:00am, the office staff will identify any children who are absent with no reason and the initial text message will be sent before 10am by the Administration Assistant.

If no contact can be made through calling the parents/carers, all other available contacts will be called.

If no contact is made by 11am, the Nurture Lead / Attendance Lead will be informed and will make a further phone call to parents/carers and all other available contacts. If possible, an answer phone message will be left on the parents/carers device informing them that if they do not contact school urgently, then a safe and well home visit will be made.

The Nurture Lead / Attendance Lead will inform DSL's and SLT and a home visit will be conducted.

If no contact can be made from the home visit, a home visit notification will be left (see Appendix 3) at the house requesting immediate contact by the end of the school day.

If a child has a social worker, they will be informed that the child has not been in school today and that they have not been seen when a home visit was carried out.

If contact is not made by the end of the school day, 3:15pm, external professional services will be contacted for advice and to request a safe and wellbeing check. This may include the police.

School will do all they can to contact the pupil each day and continue to follow professional advice. On day 10 of no contact, school will contact Children Missing Education.

Known Pupil Absence – Day 5 Procedure

- Where there has been contact with the parent / carer but a child has been absent for 5 days, a home visit will be undertaken on the 5th day to check on the well-being of the child and to see whether there is anything school needs to be aware of.

- If the child is not seen, the Attendance Team will undertake a risk assessment to decide on level of concern.
- School will contact social services or police for advice and to request a safe and wellbeing check. Professional advice to be followed.

Medical Absence Procedure

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside 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.
- For all appointments, a letter / appointment card or documentation should be provided to the school office of the appointment prior or straight after to ensure that it is marked as a medical absence.

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence Request form (available from the school office) and handed in as early as possible, but a minimum of two school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 97%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Head Teacher and full Governing Body.

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 at least 2 weeks in advance from a parent or guardian.
- Legitimate reasons include illness, medical appointments (only where they cannot be made outside the school day), religious pilgrimage and some family circumstances.
- Only the Head Teacher can make an absence authorised.
- The school may choose not to authorise in some of these circumstances where the child's education may be adversely affected by ongoing absenteeism.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence from school is likely to be recorded as an unauthorised absence when:

- There is no parental explanation.
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation for an absence.
- You have received a letter stating that no further time off ill will be authorised without medical evidence.

The Law states that for your child to be considered to attend school regularly they must be at school every day they are required to be there by the Head Teacher. Therefore, you have to get permission from the Head Teacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

You can only do this if you make an application to the head teacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with). This must be with a minimum of 2 weeks' notice. The head teacher will consider the application and decide whether this is marked as authorised or unauthorised in the attendance register.

- Head Teachers are no longer permitted to agree a Leave of Absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances.
- This includes where parents decide to take their children out of school for a family holiday during term time.
- If a parent intends to take their child out of school for a leave of absence during term time, they must have requested this in advance and had their request agreed by the Head Teacher.
- Failure to do this could result in a fine or prosecution.
- It is at the discretion of the head teacher to determine how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Holidays During School Term Time

In Derbyshire, you could be fined if your child has either:

- 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a rolling 10-week period

- First Offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be £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) -The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.
- If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Parents who decide not to pay a fine and contest the matter in court should seek legal advice before doing so.

If you decide that you wish to take your child for an unagreed Leave of Absence, please do complete a form informing us of this. This means we will not have to undertake daily phone calls to you, all your contacts, conduct home visits or refer to external agencies as we know where your child is.

Where a pupil who fails to attend regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days, schools should follow Derbyshire County Council's Attendance Flow chart.

Attendance Rewards and Incentives

We want to reward pupils for high attendance. We do this in the following ways:

- Class attendance is awarded weekly during the celebration assembly.
- Children who have a good/improved attendance record will be awarded at the end of the year.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Attendance Procedure Flowchart

Attendance Procedure

Attendance monitored weekly by Head Teacher and Attendance Team.

Children with attendance of below 97% receive a text message message to inform them and offer support from our Nurture Lead. See Appendix 4.

Initial Concern: Children with attendance of below 93% receive a well-being call from Attendance Team to inform them and offer support. A three-weekly, supportive check-in until attendance significantly improved. Each case is discussed with the Head Teacher. See Appendix 2.

Attendance falls below 90%

PHASE 1: A wellbeing phone call will be made to the parent/carer by a member of SLT or Nurture Lead. The aim of the call:

- To make them aware of their child's low attendance.
- Find out if any support is required in improving their child's attendance.
- Inform them that their child's attendance will continue to be monitored to ensure that it improved.

PHASE 2: If there is no improvement in the pupil's attendance, this will trigger a letter (*Letter 1*) to parents to:

- Inform them that their child's attendance has not improved and that it will be monitored.
- Inform them that any further illnesses will not be authorised without a medical note (*this will be on a case by case basis*).
- Inform them that 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period will result in a fixed penalty notice.
- Inform them of any other further action that may be taken if there is no improvement in attendance such as enforcement from the LA.

PHASE 3: If there is no improvement, and parents / carers do not arrange a meeting to see how school can support with the child's attendance, a further letter (*Letter 2*) will be sent informing them:

- Of a given time and date to attend a meeting with Ben Chalkley (Deputy Headteacher) and Christine Goodwin (Nurture Lead) to discuss the pupils attendance.
- That failing to attend, and if there is no improvement in attendance, a referral for further support may be made.
- That 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period will result in a fixed penalty notice being requested.

PHASE 4: If parents / carers fail to attend the meeting and there is no further improvement in attendance:

A fixed penalty notice warning letter (*Letter 3*) will be sent informing them:

- Of their child's current attendance.
- That their child's attendance is being monitored and if there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period, a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority will be requested.

If the pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period, a fixed penalty notice letter (*Letter 4*) will be sent informing parents/carers:

- Of their child's current attendance.
- That a referral to the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty notice has been made.

PHASE 6: The Attendance Team and Nurture Lead will make regular contact via phone and text to offer help and support and to keep communications open. This will be logged via CPOMS.

When attendance improves – no further action is taken.
A phone call to the family is made to discuss and celebrate the improvements.

Appendix 2. Day 1 Absence Procedure Flowchart

