Attendance Policy

Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy

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Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
5.0	30/09/26	SC	Section 6 - Updated attendance priorities
4.0	25/8/26	SJ	Updated to align with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, July 2026 Statutory Guidance). Section 15.3 - addition of allergy-related absence Section 15.4 –addition of remote education Section 19 – addition of staff training Section 23.1.1 – clarifying tracking and monitoring. Section 32.5 – clarifying leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
3.0	05/08/2025	GA	Section 16 - Clarification of the purpose of home visits Section 23 – Updates to Part time & bespoke timetables Section 24 – Addition of Elective Home Education Section 28 - Updates to Penalty notices
2.0	26/06/2024	GA	Rewrite to incorporate new statutory guidance from 19th August 2024 i.e. inclusion of new national coding, penalty notices, and local priorities.
Earlier versions are available on request			

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Scope 3
3. Principles 3
4. Aims and Objectives 3
5. Legislation and guidance 5
6. Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy Priorities 5
7. Attendance Bands 5
8. Daily Routines 6
9. The Attendance Register 7
10. Punctuality 7
11. Following up absence 8
12. Following up Unexplained Absences 8
13. First Day of Absence Response 8
14. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence 8
15. Authorised Absence 9
16. Home Visits 12
17. Roles and responsibilities 12
18. Promoting good attendance and Incentives 13
19. Staff training on attendance 14
20. Safeguarding and Attendance 14
21. Children Missing Education 15
22. Support for pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities 15
23. Tracking and monitoring attendance 15
24. Part time or bespoke timetables 16
25. Elective Home Education (EHE) 17
26. Reporting to parents 18
27. Escalation of procedures 18
28. Formalising support 18
29. Penalty Notices 19
30. Persistent Absenteeism & Severe Absenteeism 20
31. Unauthorised absence 20
32. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances' 21
33. Holiday Absence Policy 22
34. Links with other policies 22

Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes 24

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy recognises that pupils will only benefit fully from their education if they attend school regularly and on time. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Attendance will be maximised through an effective partnership between pupils, their parents/carers and the school.

1.2. The Mead Educational Trust will ensure that this partnership and associated actions are undertaken rigorously; monitoring and evaluating action and impact, through regular analysis of data and review of practice.

2. Scope

This policy is effective for all schools within The Mead Educational Trust.

3. Principles

To manage and improve attendance effectively we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when 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.

4. Aims and Objectives

4.1. Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the principal and academy councillors at our schoolwork together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

4.2. Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and we recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. We recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of our school's ethos and culture.

4.3. We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Providing an environment for pupils in which they feel valued and safe.

- Promoting a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance, including through rewarding and incentivising good attendance.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and putting effective strategies in place, offering tiered/graduated support to improve the attendance of identified pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any intervention(s) and making adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family.
- Working in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- Prioritising attendance in strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils.
- Sharing information and working 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.
- Making referrals to services and organisations that can provide support to address and overcome barriers outside of the school's control.
- Considering provision of mentoring, careers advice, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision where specific barriers exist for individual pupils.
- Communicating attendance expectations broadly and on an individual basis with families, providing opportunities to meet with families to understand barriers to attendance and explaining the help that is available to avoid the need for legal intervention or consequences.
- Working closely with the Local Authority to address Persistent and Severe Absenteeism where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with by:
    - Putting formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or an education supervision order.
    - Issuing a Notice to Improve 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.
    - Intensifying support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
    - Prosecuting 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.
- Setting targets for improvement to improve the attendance of individual pupils, cohorts and the whole school.
- Showing understanding of our community's religious and cultural beliefs and the significance of religious observance to our pupils.

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

5. Legislation and guidance

5.1. This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- The Equality Act 2010
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (Feb 2023)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, July 2026)

5.2. Relevant government guidance:

- Children missing education
- Keeping children safe in education and working together to safeguard children
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Elective home education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Providing remote education

5.3. This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

6. Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy Priorities

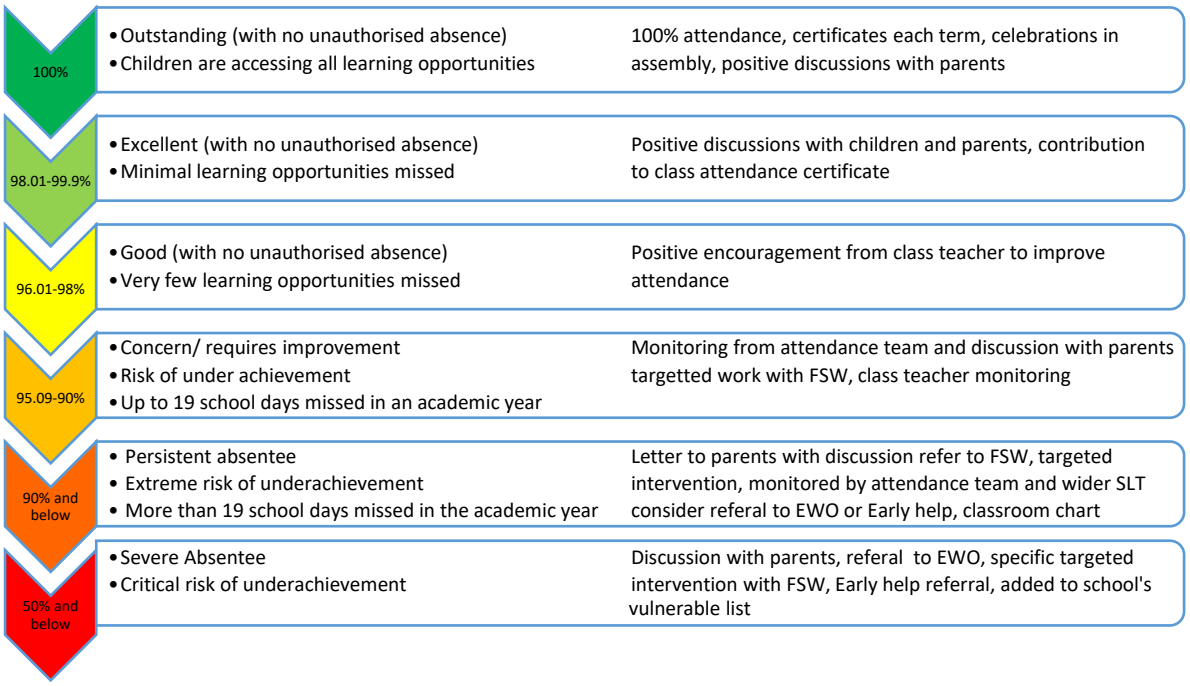
6.1. Through analysis of our attendance data, Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy have determined that our attendance priorities this year are:

- **Prioritise early identification and intervention**
  Use rigorous attendance monitoring and a graduated approach to identify concerns early, understand barriers and provide timely, personalised support before absence becomes persistent.

- **Strengthen partnerships with families and external agencies**
  Build positive, trusting relationships with families and work collaboratively with relevant professionals to remove barriers to attendance and improve outcomes for pupils.
- **Improve attendance and reduce attendance gaps**
  Improve whole-school attendance and reduce persistent and severe absence, with a particular focus on Early Years, SEND, disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.

7. Attendance Bands

7.1. At Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy, we strive for all children to achieve their full academic potential and aim for them to have the best possible attendance. Our classification of the different attendance bands are as follows:



8. Daily Routines

8.1. <u>Daily routines for children</u>

8.1.1. External school gates are opened at 8:35am daily, with designated staff present to supervise each school entrance and welcome pupils onto the school site. Pupils should enter the school building promptly and go directly to their classrooms. Staff members on duty at the entrances can receive any brief messages from parents/carers and pass these on to the appropriate member of staff.

8.1.2. Children arriving before 8:35 must be supervised by their parents at the school gates.

8.1.3. External school gates will be closed promptly at 8:50 as part of our safeguarding protocols. Any families arriving at school after this time will be required to make their way to main reception. These children will then enter via main reception where they will officially be signed in by a member of the office team.

8.1.4. The school offers a breakfast club facility daily for families who require this. The breakfast club runs daily from 7:45 and is run by school staff at the cost of £1 per session. Following breakfast club, children are escorted to their drop off points where they will join their classes.

8.2. <u>Daily routines for parents</u>

8.2.1.Parents are expected and encouraged to promote strong attendance habits with their

children.

8.2.2. If a pupil is unwell and unable to attend school, parents should call the school before the school day to inform staff of the absence.

8.2.3 Parents are able to either speak to a member of staff in the office from 8:15am daily or are able to leave a voicemail on our phone system at any time. The office team will record reasons given for absence on our attendance register and contact parents, where appropriate, to follow up or request further information surrounding absence.

8.2.4 Parents are able to contact the school office to discuss reasons for absence throughout the school day and the school will be able to signpost/offer advice wherever possible.

9 The Attendance Register

9.1 The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (morning) and once during the second session (afternoon). On each occasion, the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

9.2 Present at School

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken.

- Our pupils must arrive by 8:50am each day
- Our morning register is taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:05am
- Our afternoon register is taken at 12:45pm for Year 1 and closes and 1:00pm for the rest of the school and will be kept open until 1:20pm

10 Punctuality

10.1 It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens classroom disruption.

10.2 Any child arriving after the gates have closed misses the vital settling in period at the beginning of the day.

10.3 Children are expected to arrive between 8:35 and 8:50 where they meet their teachers on the relevant playgrounds or classrooms.

10.4 Any children arriving after this time must report to the school office as gates are locked promptly for safeguarding purposes. The office staff record latecomers and ask for a reason for lateness in a late log.

10.5 A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) – which counts as present.

10.6 A pupil who arrives late after the registers close will be marked as absent. If the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be coded accordingly.

10.7 If the pupil is late for no exceptional reason, they will be marked with the most appropriate unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U).

Summary

- Registers in class close promptly at 9.00am
- Late registration code (L) between 9:00-9:05
- Unauthorised lateness code (U) given after 9:05am leading to an unauthorised absence for the morning session.
- If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration for an appointment, they must be signed out of school by an appropriate adult.

- The Senior Leaders with responsibility for attendance will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late to school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

11 Following up absence

11.1 Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by making a telephone call to contact 1 on the child's record;
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- Record the absence using the most appropriate attendance code.

12 Following up Unexplained Absences

12.1 Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by telephone to try and establish the reason for a child's absence.

12.2 When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence.

12.3 If we are unable to establish the reason for absence by the end of the first day of absence, we will mark the absence as unauthorised, using the O code.

12.4 If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

12.5 If we are still unable to reach a family member on Day 1 and hold safeguarding concerns, a home visit will be conducted by school staff.

13 First Day of Absence Response

13.1 If the school has not been informed as to the reason for a child's absence, then we will contact the person allocated as priority 1 on the child's emergency details by 9:30am daily. The school will prioritise those children considered vulnerable e.g., Looked After Children; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing; primary aged pupils who make their own way to school.

13.2 Parents will be asked to supply details of at least three people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed twice a year through parents' evenings and/or newsletter reminders. If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we will make a home visit or request a Welfare Check from the police.

14 Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

14.1 The school will record reasons for absence using the school data system Bromcom. Office staff will include as much detail as needed. If a phone call is made home, then the time and details of the phone call and any details of messages left will be recorded.

14.2 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

14.3 We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made in line with National Guidance.

15 Authorised Absence

15.1 'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered as justification for absence.

15.2 <u>Illness (I code)</u>

15.2.1 In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. This concern might arise from repeated or unexplained periods of sporadic or sustained absence, where there are no known underlying medical conditions preventing pupils from attending school.

15.2.2 We recognise that some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support can be discussed and identified. This could include referrals to the school nursing service, local mental health services, and the local authority's special educational needs and disability team(s) to ensure joined up support for families facing health or disability related barriers to attendance.

15.2.3 If support has been offered and the school remains unsatisfied about the frequency, duration or authenticity of illnesses, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised to formalise support with other agencies.

15.2.4 Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence to authorise any future absences. If this is the case, a member of staff from the school will communicate this with the parent in advance and discuss forms of medical evidence that will be sufficient to authorise a further period of absence; this may include confirmation of a doctor's appointment or prescribed medication.

15.2.5 The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised retrospectively.

15.2.6 Parents should telephone the school by 9:00am on the first day of absence. There is a dedicated absence line and parents are encouraged to leave a messages - these are checked throughout the day.

15.2.7 If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

15.2.8 It is the responsibility of Farha Valli and Lisa Shepherd to record absences from the absence line and make an accurate recording of these on the attendance register.

15.3 Allergy-related absence

15.3.1 Absences resulting from a pupil's diagnosed allergy or allergic reaction will be recorded using the appropriate attendance code in accordance with current national attendance guidance. In most cases, this will be authorised and recorded using the I (Illness) code where the pupil is unable to attend school due to their condition.

15.3.2 Where a pupil has a diagnosed allergy that may impact their attendance or requires ongoing management in school, parents/carers are asked to work in partnership with the school to develop and regularly review an Individual Healthcare Plan (or other appropriate medical care plan) to ensure that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are in place to enable regular attendance wherever possible.

15.4 Remote education

15.4.1 Remote education will only be used where appropriate, as a temporary measure, and normally as part of a planned reintegration back into full-time school attendance. It will not be used as an alternative to regular attendance except where permitted by statutory guidance.

15.5 Pupils taken ill during the school day (I Code)

15.5.1 If a pupil falls ill during the school day and it is felt they should be sent home, this will be agreed with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book.

15.5.2 It is the responsibility of Farha Valli and Lisa Shepherd to record the details of any pupils who are sent home during the school day and to make an accurate recording of these on the attendance register.

15.6 Medical/Dental Appointments (M Code)

15.6.1 Parents are encouraged to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents are to seek the school's agreement in advance of the appointment and ensure the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

15.6.2 It is not acceptable for a pupil to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

15.6.3 If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

15.6.4 Advanced notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it is an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card, letter, text message or email – only then will the absence be authorised.

15.7 Religious Observance (R Code)

15.7.1 Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of our school community and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends.

15.7.2 Should a day exclusively set apart for religious observance fall upon a school day, then the school will authorise a single day for religious observance in accordance with the law. In order for a day to be authorised, parents are asked to communicate the request in advance to avoid the school having to call to follow up absence during the observance.

15.7.3 In these circumstances, the school will authorise up to one day of absence for the specific date exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Where more than one festival/observance falls within an academic year, we ask that parents consider arrangements carefully to minimise the potential impact upon their child's learning.

15.7.4 We remind parents that pupils should attend school as usual for all other days during weeks where there is a single day of religious observance. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence and be followed up accordingly.

15.7.5 Where necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body and place of worship, to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance.

15.7.6 Our school and Trust will seek to minimise the adverse effects of religious observance on a pupil's attendance and attainment by considering approaches such as:

- Considering term dates and INSET days where possible;
- Working with local faith groups to develop guidance on absence for religious observance;
- Considering individual support for pupils who miss sessions on days exclusively set apart for religious observance.

15.8 Traveller Absence (T Code)

15.8.1 The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him/her to travel from place to place.

15.8.2 This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

15.8.3 To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

15.8.4 Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are

subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

15.9 <u>Exclusions (E Code)</u>

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

15.9.2 Only the Principal (or Acting Principal) can exclude a pupil.

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

15.9.4 See TMET Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy for full details.

16 Home Visits

16.1.1 Home visits are an important part of our school's approach to promoting and ensuring good attendance across all schools within the Trust. They are conducted as part of our safeguarding duties and to support families in overcoming any barriers to regular school attendance.

16.1.2 Home visits may be **announced or unannounced**, depending on the circumstances and rationale for the visit. **Unannounced visits** may be necessary when there are safeguarding concerns, a lack of engagement from the family, or where prior contact attempts have been unsuccessful. **Announced visits** are typically used when ongoing dialogue with parents/carers is in place and collaboration is needed to support improved attendance.

16.1.3 Visits are made for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- **Unexplained absence**: where a pupil has been absent from school and no satisfactory reason or contact has been provided.
- **Emerging patterns of absence**: to explore concerns where attendance is becoming irregular or there are frequent short-term absences.
- **Sustained absence across a week**: particularly where a pupil has missed **three or more consecutive days** without medical evidence or clear justification.
- **Absences close to a school holiday**: to confirm that the child is at the address and has not travelled abroad.
- **Welfare checks**: when there are concerns for a child's safety or wellbeing in the context of non-attendance.
- **To support reintegration** following a prolonged period of absence or significant barriers to attendance.

16.1.4 Home visits provide an opportunity to engage with families in a supportive, non-judgemental way, enabling staff to assess the situation more fully and offer targeted interventions

17 Roles and responsibilities

17.1 Good attendance is the foundation for success, and we believe that supporting and promoting good attendance is a whole school responsibility. The Academy Council, Principal and Staff in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy.

17.2 Key staff

Senior Attendance Champion: Sonal Chauhan

Office Administrator with responsibility for Attendance: Farha Valli

All staff at Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy recognise the role they play in promoting good attendance:

- **Class teachers** are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- **Office staff** are the front line in highlighting the daily absence of identified vulnerable children to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) or Attendance Officer so that actions can be followed up in a timely manner.
- **The Principal and DSLs** ensure that the office staff are aware of vulnerable children to monitor their daily absence and punctuality. If there is no reason given, or there is reason to think that a child may be at risk, then a DSL will conduct a home visit, contact children's social care or request a Welfare Check by carried out by the police.
- The **Principal** is responsible for:
    - Implementation of this policy at the school;
    - Ensuring the monitoring of school-level absence data and reporting it to the Academy Council;
    - Authorising the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** will ensure the Early Help process will be instigated for families with issues that impact on attendance and ensure support is put in place to improve attendance. This may be in conjunction with other professionals, such as the Attendance Champion and Education Welfare Service.
- The **DSL** regularly checks attendance data for children on CIN (Child in Need) or CP (Child Protection) plans and takes appropriate action based on any concerns. Regular liaison with parents will include the implementation of timely action plans and regular meetings to review progress against targets.
- The **Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance team** will carry out a number of roles, including:
    - Monitoring attendance data at a school, cohort and individual pupil level.
    - Reporting concerns about attendance to the DSL as appropriate.
    - Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
    - Co-ordinating requests for term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advising the Principal as required.
    - Follow-up action-plans for pupils with low attendance.
    - Timely liaison with home – this may be through letters, phone calls or emails.
    - Referrals to outside agencies.
    - Working with other agencies, including the Education Welfare Service, to tackle persistent or severe absence.
    - Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- The **Academy Council is** responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis through scrutiny of attendance data included in the Principal's report. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

18 Promoting good attendance and Incentives

18.1 At Rowlatts Mead Academy, we recognise the importance of building good habits of attendance and support pupils in doing so. One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote the highest levels of attendance for all our pupils, and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

- Every week, during the Friday Celebration assembly, we present the top attending class in KS1 and KS2 with a ping pong ball in the tube on the school leader board.
- *Across each half-term, attendance is tracked for each class. The KS1 and KS2 classes that has received the most attendance crowns across the half-term, receive a special reward. This might take the form of a class trip (ice skating, cinema, laser quest) or be a monetary reward to be spent as a class to promote collective responsibility and belonging (£50).*
- *Children with 100% attendance for the whole academic year, receive a special attendance certificate.*
- *On occasions, additional attendance incentives are run for* individual pupils, classes and/or cohorts in order to promote strong attendance patterns.

19 Staff training on attendance

19.1 The school will ensure that all staff receive training appropriate to their role, so that they are equipped to support and improve pupil attendance and to safeguard pupils effectively.

19.2 <u>All staff</u>

Training on attendance will form part of the school's continuing professional development programme for all staff. As a minimum, all staff will understand:

- the importance of good attendance
- the legal duties placed on schools in relation to attendance, including the requirement to keep accurate registers
- the school's procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance
- the process for referring pupils who need more intensive support to other partners and services.

19.3 <u>Staff with a specified attendance function</u>

Staff whose role includes a specific attendance responsibility; including administrative, pastoral, family support staff and senior leaders, will receive additional, dedicated training. This will include:

- the skills needed to interpret and analyse attendance data
- further training, as appropriate, to help staff support individual pupils and pupil groups in overcoming the barriers to attendance most commonly seen in the school.

19.4 The school will review the content and delivery of this training on a regular basis to ensure it reflects current guidance and the evolving needs of pupils and families.

20 Safeguarding and Attendance

20.1 Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy it is our legal responsibility to ensure that every child is safe and receives a suitable education. We will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the

details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and are concerned for the pupil's welfare.

20.2 If we have not received a reasonable explanation for a child's absence, have reasonable grounds to doubt an explanation received, or have been unable to contact a parent or carer to explain an absence, a 'safe and well' check will be carried out at the child's home address. This will be undertaken by a member of the DSL team, by the Education Welfare Officer, or by a member of the Police.

20.3 For pupils with a social worker, we will inform the social worker if there are any unexplained absences and/or their name is to be deleted from the school register.

21 Children Missing Education

21.1 No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Principal/Attendance Team and the Education Welfare Service (where appropriate). Please see the circumstances below.

21.2 Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area, but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

21.3 To assist with the transfer of pupils from one educational establishment to another, or to accommodate a parental request for home education, we ask that parents discuss matters with the Attendance Teams at the schools. To progress with these requests, there are a number of statutory forms/letters required to aid in the process. Further details of these can be provided through discussions with the Attendance Team.

22 Support for pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

22.1 We are committed to supporting pupils and families of pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) to maximise their attendance.

22.2 Pastoral support staff and the SEND team will work with families and pupils to identify and address any barriers to attendance. Where required, we will put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plans and, if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.

22.3 This support may be delivered by school staff, or through signposting and working with external partners, through timely referrals.

22.4 We will proactively and regularly monitor data for such groups, including at Trust and Academy Council levels to ensure attendance for these groups is maintained and maximised.

23 Tracking and monitoring attendance

23.1 Data & Monitoring

23.1.1 Attendance analysis will include benchmarking against Trust, Local Authority and national attendance data, together with regular review of key cohorts including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, young carers and pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

23.1.2 In order to support good attendance, we will monitor attendance on a regular basis through a range of measures.

23.1.3 Attendance data will be generated, analysed, and actioned in order to ensure that effective intervention strategies are implemented as a matter of routine. This data will be used to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify pupils who need support
- Monitor and evaluate those pupils identified as being in need of intervention and support
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data sets
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Devise strategies based on the data sets
- Benchmark against local, regional and national levels

23.2 Attendance monitoring

23.2.1 Class teacher & Phase Leaders will be provided with regular updates to monitor patterns of attendance. Regular liaison occurs in school with key members of staff including senior leaders, heads of year, Designated Safeguarding Leads and other members of the pastoral team to discuss and implement strategies for dealing with poor attendance/punctuality.

23.2.2 Sonal Chauhan (Assistant Principal) at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and termly basis.

23.2.3 Where an unauthorised absence has been recorded the attendance team will liaise with parents to investigate the reason for absence, highlighting that further unauthorised absence could result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

23.2.4 In the case of a pattern of unauthorised absence developing, a face-to-face meeting will be held with parents to understand more about the situation. During this Attendance Meeting, school staff will look to identify barriers preventing regular attendance, identifying push and pull factors which could support improvements in attendance. If necessary, interventions will be identified and put into place over an identified period to further support improvements. Parents will also be informed of the impact of absence on their child's academic, social and emotional development, outlining possible next steps should attendance not improve through the voluntary support stage. In some cases, this may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service, whereby further options could be explored, including the issuing of an Attendance Contract. The Attendance Contract would be intended to identify and provide further support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

23.3 Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Academy Council on a termly basis.

23.4 The Trust reviews attendance through the academy data dashboard and through our Management Information System (Bromcom) and FFT Aspire subscription. Trust Schools Directors and Directors of Education of each phase will review the overall attendance reported for each school, reporting to the Trust Board's Education Committee on four occasions each academic year.

24 Part time or bespoke timetables

24.1 Our ambition for our pupils is that they attend school full time, however, where a pupil's individual needs mean they are not able to do this, a part time or bespoke timetable may be appropriate for a set period of time. This decision will be made by the principal and always in conjunction with parents. Where possible, advice will be sought from professionals involved with the pupil to ensure the decision is in their best interest. A plan will be created and parents will be expected to confirm they are happy in writing (an email or text message will be evidence of written permission as we recognise that for many families, this is the most efficient way for them to communicate with the school).

24.2 These decisions will be reviewed termly with parents to ensure they continue to meet the needs of pupils. Parents always have the option for their child to return to school full time.

24.3 The school will make an electronic notification to the Local Authority for all statutory aged pupils on a part time or bespoke timetable. In the event of a Part-time timetable extending beyond half a term the LA will be notified in accordance with LA's procedures.

25 Elective Home Education (EHE)

25.1 Parents have a legal right to educate their child at home, rather than at school. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE). If a parent/carer chooses to withdraw their child from the school roll for this purpose, the school has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed.

Notification and Process:

25.2 Parents must provide written communication to the school stating their intention to home educate. This must include:

- A clear statement of their decision to withdraw the child for the purpose of home education.
- Confirmation that they understand their legal duty to ensure the child receives a full-time, efficient education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

25.3 On receipt of this written notice, the school will:

- Acknowledge the request in writing.
- Refer the case to the Local Authority's Elective Home Education Team who will follow up with the family to assess suitability and provide any guidance or support needed.

- **In the majority of cases, the school will implement a cooling-off period of 5 school days before removing the child from roll. This period provides time for:**
  - Further discussion with the family about their decision.
  - An opportunity for the Local Authority to make early contact.
  - Reflection on the implications of elective home education, particularly if a parent has made the decision due to behaviour, or as a response to unmet needs or school-related concerns.

25.4 **Important Notes:**

- A child cannot be removed from roll to be home educated if they are subject to a School Attendance Order.
- If the child is on roll at a **special school**, the Local Authority must approve the withdrawal.
- The school will not remove a child from roll until all necessary steps have been taken, and confirmation has been received from the Local Authority where appropriate.

25.5 We are committed to working in partnership with families and the Local Authority to ensure that any transition to home education is made in the best interests of the child.

26 Reporting to parents

26.1 We recognise that having up to date information about your child's attendance is key to building positive attendance habits. Parents can view their child's attendance daily through our school communications app (Bromcom). In addition, attendance is regularly shared with parents/carers (at least on a termly basis).

26.2 For pupils where there is an attendance concern, regular communication will take place in person, via telephone conversation, and in written forms through text messages, email and letters as appropriate.

27 Escalation of procedures

27.1 Sometimes, pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can often make things worse.

27.2 As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

27.3 When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance at the earliest possible convenience and give them the opportunity to address this.

27.4 We recognise that working with parents to improve attendance is fundamental. At all stages of attendance monitoring, we will openly discuss successes and concerns surrounding attendance with parents so to put in place the right support. If a pupil's absence is a cause for concern, taking account of the point in the year, the school will contact parents/carers of the pupil to inform them of the attendance, to discuss the reasons for this, and to understand whether there are any barriers affecting attendance.

27.5 In a minority of cases, where parents fail to engage with school staff to improve attendance and address concerns, meeting notes from Attendance Support Meetings and missed appointments may be used to evidence a lack of engagement. In these rare situations, a lack of engagement would not in any way hinder the process of referring the case to the Education Welfare Service for the issuing of a penalty notice or prosecution.

28 Formalising support

28.1 We will support pupils and parents to address any in-school barriers; however, if a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will intensify our support through our graduated response. Where attendance does not improve, or earlier support is not engaged with, we will engage with the Local Authority and other local partners to support families with out of school barriers.

28.2 The school will use a range of strategies to engage families and support them in meeting their responsibilities regarding attendance. This could include Attendance Contracts, the issuing of a Notice to Improve, Prosecution, or the engagement of social care.

29 Penalty Notices

29.1 The Penalty Notice is designed to be an early intervention and alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they have chosen for them to be registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices are used where a pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences.

29.2 Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and will only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

29.3 Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of our pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. The threshold is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). 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).

29.4 In some circumstances, penalty notices will be considered for 8 consecutive sessions (4 consecutive days), where the absence immediately precedes, or is attached to, a school closure (e.g. school holidays, INSET, school closure, etc.)

29.5 If Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy refers a case of poor attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will rely upon this policy, any general school communications, alongside any specific letters to parents, to evidence that we have informed parents of expectations around attendance and warned them that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction if they do not ensure regular attendance.

29.6 We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances without first exhausting our voluntary offer and internal support systems. In such circumstances, our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parents that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

- For unauthorised absence from August 2024, Penalty Notices will increase to £160 per parent per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days).
- If there is occasion to issue a second Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence within a rolling 3-year period, it will be issued at the higher rate of £160 per parent per child, with no opportunity to pay at the lower level.

- A Penalty Notice cannot be issued if there is a third occasion of unauthorised leave of absence in the rolling 3-year period and it is highly likely that the local authority will take direct prosecution action in the Magistrates' Court which can result in you receiving a criminal conviction. Please also be aware that any cases of extended periods of unauthorised absence, linked to holidays or trips away, are highly likely to result in prosecution action by the local authority.
- If your child has unauthorised leave of absence prior to the end of the summer term in 2024, you will either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or, your case will be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.
- If your child has an absence of **20 days or more**, the Local Authority has advised that a Penalty Notice is unlikely to be issued and the matter is likely to proceed to the Magistrates' Court for prosecution action instead. The Local Authority has advised that where a parent is found guilty, or where the case is proven against the parent, that this is likely to result in a fine (up to £2500) and the parent receiving a criminal record. This is because parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school where they are on roll regularly.

29.7 If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

30 Persistent Absenteeism & Severe Absenteeism

30.1 Persistent Absentees are defined as pupils with an attendance percentage below 90%. This is equivalent to having one day off every two weeks. Severe Absenteeism is defined as pupils with an attendance of 50% or below, equivalent to missing over half of all learning opportunities. Persistent and Severe Absentees miss significant amounts of their education and are in danger of falling behind academically, socially and emotionally. These children will be monitored fortnightly by the Attendance Team to ensure support and strategies are put into place to help improve their attendance.

30.2 We adopt a graduated approach of support to ensure pupils facing difficulties receive the right level of support at the right time. This support could include working with partners and external agencies and other local schools (where siblings might attend) to offer consistency of support.

30.3 We will work in partnership with parents, but if parents fail to engage with this process, we will hold more formal conversations and inform them of potential legal intervention in the future.

30.4 If there are safeguarding concerns, we will intensify support through children's social care.

30.5 For severely absent pupils, we will work with the Education Welfare Service and Local Authority to agree a joint approach.

31 Unauthorised absence

31.1 Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not. Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced (O code)
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark (U code)
- Confusion over school dates after these have been publicised (O code)

- Shopping /Birthdays /waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered (O code)
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school) (G code)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised (G code)
- Additional days taken without authorisation surrounding a specific religious observance (O code)

32 Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

32.1 The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

32.2 Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The legal reference states that schools should not authorise leave of absence unless both of the following apply:

1. The Principal considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application AND

2. An application has been made in advance by the parent

32.3 Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance.

32.4 Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

32.5 Each application for leave of absence will be considered on its individual merits. The school will not operate blanket arrangements that automatically approve requests for any particular circumstance.

32.6 Circumstances which could be considered as an exceptional circumstance could include significant family emergencies or funerals at the time the leave is requested. Planned medical treatments for parents or a lack of annual leave availability for parents do not meet the exceptional circumstances.

32.7 In addition, leave of absence for dates in the future, or where travel or accommodation arrangements have been made in advance, demonstrate that the leave would not meet the requirements of 'exceptional circumstances'. In addition, when determining whether leave can be granted, consideration will be given to the reasonability and length of leave being requested, alongside supporting documentation provided by parents. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times. Where these situations occur, a proportionate and minimal amount of time away from school is advised.

32.8 Parents must complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence. Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks; such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

33 Holiday Absence Policy

33.1 There is an established, proven link between good attendance and effective progress. Rowlatts Mead Primary Academy wants to encourage and develop all our pupils' learning throughout their school career and holiday absence in term time can seriously jeopardise pupil progress. For this reason, pupils will not be given authorisation to take holiday leave except in exceptional circumstances. It is very unlikely that requests for holidays or extended leave will be authorised but if parents want the school to consider such a request, they must complete an application form which is available at the school via the school office. Family work patterns or the financial implications of going on holiday in term time would not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances. Parents will then receive a response informing them of the school's decision. If parents/carers still take their child out of school, then the absence is deemed unauthorised and is likely to incur a Penalty Notice (see above policy relating to unauthorised absence).

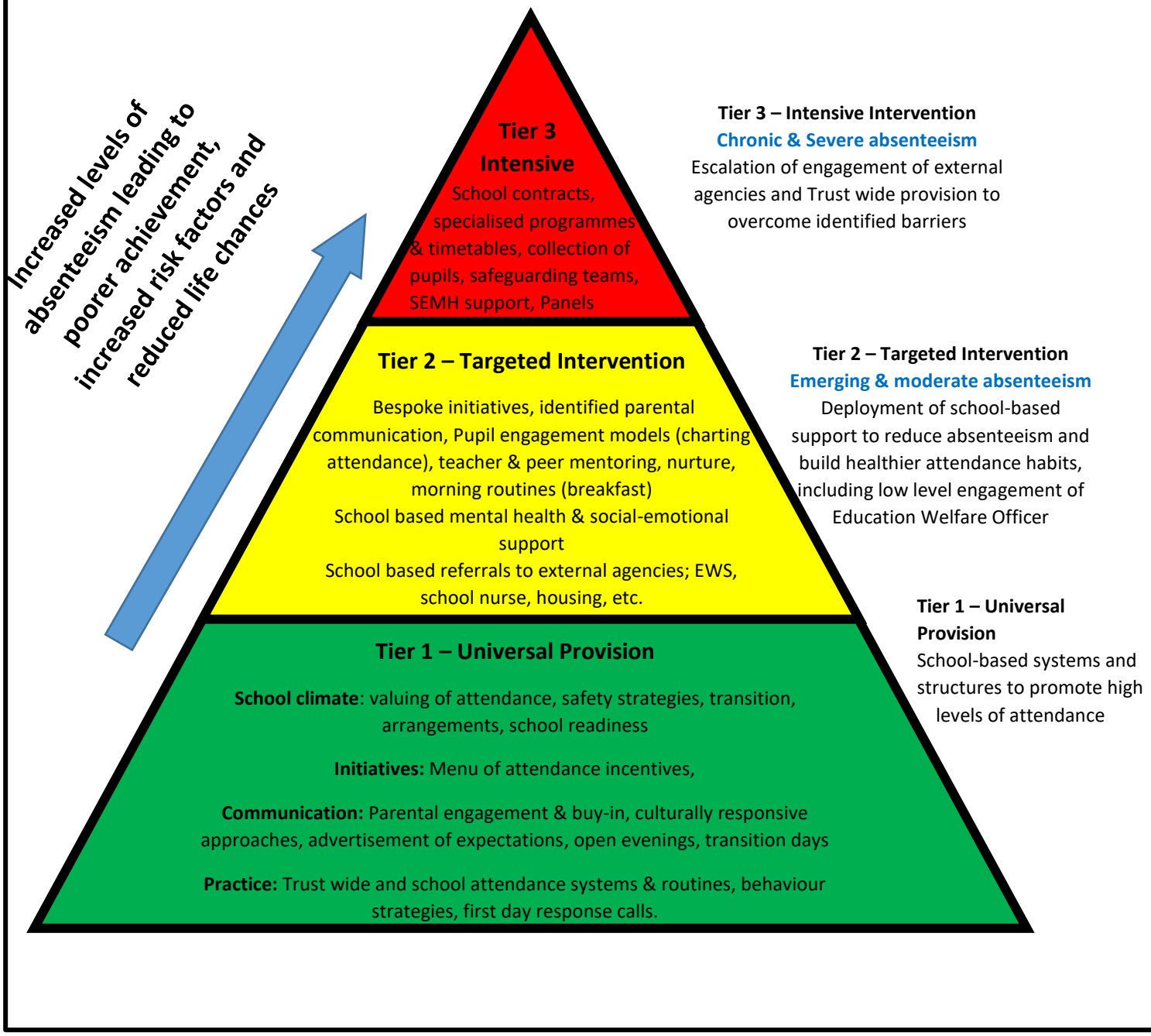
33.2 If the school suspects that a pupil or family have taken unauthorised term-time leave without notification, they will follow safeguarding procedures to locate the child; including, a home visit and referral to the Education Welfare Service. If parents are unable to provide sufficient evidence that a holiday was not taken, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued by the Local Authority, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide evidence to support the reason for absence.

34 Links with other policies

34.1 This policy links to the following policies, as appropriate:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- Home Visits Policy

TMET's Graduated response to promoting high levels of attendance



Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

Attendance and Absence Codes from school year 2024-25 (new codes shown in green)				
New Guidance - Chapter 8	**Code**	**Description**	**Statistical Meaning**	**Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference**
Attending the school	/	Present at the school - morning session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	\	Present at the school - afternoon session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Attending	
Attending a place other than the school	K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority *Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity*	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5) and 11(9)(b)
	V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2 and 11(9)(c)
	P	Participating in a sporting activity	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
	W	Attending work experience	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(2) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
	B	Attending any other approved educational activity *Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity*	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5), 10(11) and 11(10)
	D	Dual registered at another school	Not counted as a possible session	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(9)(a)
Absent – leave of absence	C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(2)
	M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
	J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(4)
	S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(5)
	X	Non-compulsory school age	Not counted as a	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and

New Guidance – Chapter 8	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference
		Pupil not required to attend	Possible attendance	
	C2 (New)	C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11 (6)
	C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
Absent – other authorised reasons	T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	I	I: Illness	Authorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	E	E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Q	Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(12) and (13)
	Y1 (New)	Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y2 (New)	Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y3 (New)	Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y4 (New)	Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(10)
	Y5 (New)	Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(14)
	Y6 (New)	Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y7 (New)	Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10 (6)
Absent – Unauthorised Absence	G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(7), (8) and (9)
	O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(9)(b)
	U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Regulation 10(8)(b)
Administrative Codes	Z	Pupil not yet on roll - Pupil's name entered in advance of start date	N/A	N/A
	#	Planned whole school closure – no session to take place	N/A	N/A