

# Attendance Policy

**Recommended by:** Vice Principal Behaviour  
**Recommendation Date:** 30 / 11 / 2020

**Ratified by:** Chair of Governors

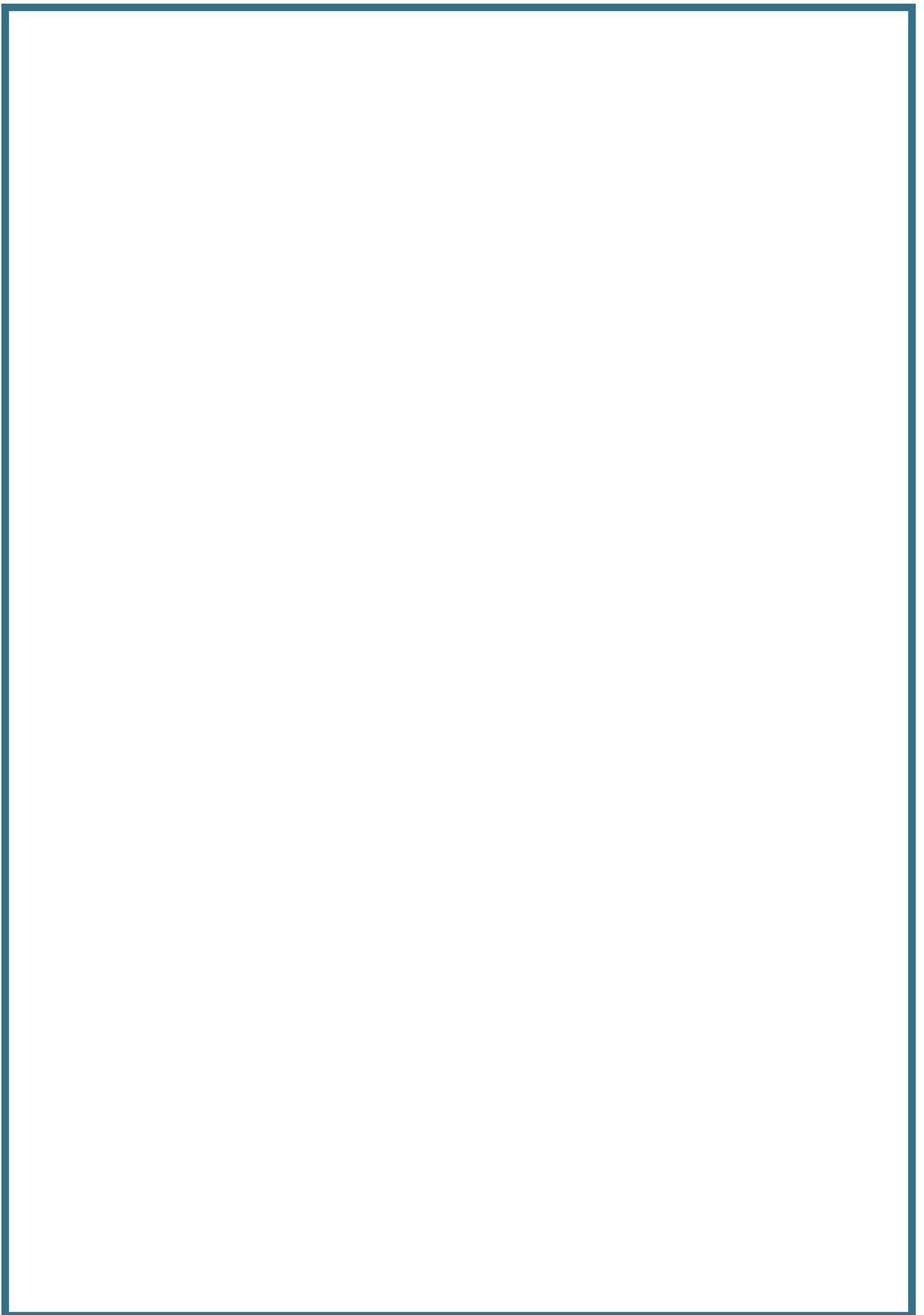


**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Position on the Board:** Chair of Governors

**Ratification Date** 08 / 12 / 2020

**Next Review:** Nov / 2020

**Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School):** School



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## Statement of intent

RSA Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2019) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

## 2. Definitions

2.1. The school defines “absence” as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

2.2. The school defines an “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

2.3. The school defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

2.4. The school defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

- 3.1. The Principal and SLT are responsible for:
  - The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents.
- 3.2. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:
  - Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
  - Modelling good attendance behaviour.
  - Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 3.3. Teachers will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.
- 3.4. The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 3.5. The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
  - Are being educated from home.
  - No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
  - Have an authorised medical note.
  - Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
  - Have been permanently excluded.
- 3.6. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their children during term-time.
- 3.7. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure their children attend school every day.
- 3.8. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- 3.9. All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

## **4. Training of staff**

- 4.1. We recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their inductions and annual refresher training.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## **5. Pupil expectations**

- 5.1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day
- 5.2. The school expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.
- 5.3. Pupils will be expected to report any absence immediately to the relevant member of staff.

## **6. Absence procedures**

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence.
- 6.2. Parents are required to send a note on the first day their child returns with a signed explanation as to why they were absent. This must be done even if we have already received a phone call.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents may contact the school and report to the attendance team where there is an absence.
- 6.4. A telephone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.5. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
  - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
  - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
  - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
  - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- 6.6. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Year Team and/or attendance team.

- 6.7. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90% a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.
- 6.8. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

## **7. Contact information**

- 7.1. Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 7.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.
- 7.3. Parents must provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.

## **8. Attendance register**

- 8.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:
  - Present.
  - Absent.
  - Attending an approved educational visit.
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 8.2. The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:
  - / = Present in the morning
  - \ = Present in the afternoon
  - L = Late arrival before the register has closed
  - C = Authorised absence
  - E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
  - H = Authorised holiday
  - I = Illness
  - M = Medical or dental appointments
  - R = Religious observance
  - B = Off-site educational activity
  - G = Unauthorised holiday

- O = Unauthorised absence
  - U = Arrived after registration closed
  - N = Reason not yet provided
  - X = Not required to be in school
  - S = Study leave
  - T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
  - W = Work experience
  - V = Educational visit or trip
  - P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
  - J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
  - D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
  - Y = Exceptional circumstances
  - Z = Pupil not on admission register
  - # = Planned whole or partial school closure
- 8.3. When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example, induction days.
- 8.4. All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.
- 8.5. Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## **9. Attendance officer**

- 9.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer or Year Team who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.
- 9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve then the academy may request the Attendance and Prosecution Service to consider issuing a penalty notice for any pupil with irregular school attendance
- 9.3. Parents/carers do not have a right to take their children out of school during term time and may be fined for taking holidays without the school's consent. A penalty notice (similar to a parking ticket) may be issued where parents/carers fail to ensure regular school attendance

## 10. Lateness

- 10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 10.2. The school day starts at **8:30am**; pupils should be in their designated classroom or meeting point at this time.
- 10.3. Registers are marked by **8:30am**; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their designated classroom or meeting point at this time.
- 10.4. The register closes at **10:30am**; pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 10.5. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

## 11. Truancy

- 11.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 11.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 11.3. All pupils are expected to be in their designated classroom or meeting point by **8:30am** and **2:00pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 11.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out via their Head of Year and sign back in again on their return.
- 11.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting.
- 11.6. If truancy is suspected, the **Year Team, attendance team or safeguarding team** will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 11.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
  - In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
  - If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
  - A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

## 12. Missing children

- 12.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from their Year Team.
- 12.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:
- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **safeguarding team** immediately.
  - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
  - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the **safeguarding team**.
  - The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - **All classrooms**
    - **All toilets**
    - **Changing rooms**
    - **The library**
    - **Any outbuildings**
    - **The school grounds**
  - Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone/radio with them so they can be contacted.
  - If the pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
  - The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
  - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil within 30 minutes, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
- 12.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 12.4. When the pupil has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 12.5. The **Year Team** will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 12.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

- 12.7. The **Year Team** will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 12.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the **Behavioural Policy**.
- 12.9. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses 6.7-6.9 of this policy.
- 12.10. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

### **13. Term-time leave**

- 13.1. Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 13.2. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.
- 13.3. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 13.4. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school, unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
  - Immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
  - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **5** percent for any reason
- 13.5. If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions such as a penalty notice.

### **14. Religious observances**

- 14.1. Parents must inform the school at least **7** days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- 14.2. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

### **15. Appointments**

- 15.1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 15.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school.

15.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent.

15.4. Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **16. Young carers**

16.1. The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

16.2. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **17. Exceptional circumstances**

17.1. When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.

17.2. Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

17.3. The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

## **18. Rewarding good attendance**

18.1. The school acknowledges good attendance in the following ways:

- Letters home thanking parents
- Certificates
- Celebration assemblies
- Tutor board
- Tutor group: experience rewards
- Individual experience rewards
- Tangible rewards
- Bowling trips
- Band experiences
- Cinema Experiences

- Muffin Mornings
- Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:
- Postcards home
- Rewards raffle
- House points

NB: School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance is not good or improving these privileges may be taken away.

- **Monitoring and review**

- **The Academy** monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- The school's attendance target is **97** percent each year.
- Details of our absence levels can be found on our **website**.
- This policy will be reviewed **annually**
- Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

## Appendix One: Attendance Monitoring Procedures

- 1 •A red, amber, green (RAG) rated spreadsheet will be sent **weekly** to form tutors (FT) detailing **weekly and annual** attendance to date.
- 2 •Attendance will be discussed with FT and pupils will record their attendance. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by FT should be passed immediately to heads of year (HOY).
- 3 •Contact will be made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. HOY will contact home reporting any welfare concerns to teh safeguarding team Any N codes not established after 14 days will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- 4 •Pupil attendance drops below 97% – HOY will speak to pupils to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. AO will make a phone call home, if applicable.
- 5 •Pupil attendance drops below 95% – a letter will be sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the school target of 97%. The letter will also have a leaflet attached outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to help improve attendance.
- 6 •Pupil attendance drops below 93% – a letter will be sent home explaining that a pupil's absence is now being monitored. HOY will contact parents. Attendance monitored for two weeks. If attendance has not improved, then parents will be required to attend a meeting in school with their child's HOY. If parents are unwilling to co-operate, or genuinely unable to attend, a referral to teh local authority may be required.
- 7 •If attendance has not improved within the two week monitoring period (likely to be close to 90% or below), or if attendance has fallen rapidly, parents will be invited to either: a school attendance meeting with HOY, AO and EWO if appropriate, or a medical action planning meeting with the school nurse, HOY, AO and SENCO. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance. This will be monitored over a further two week period.
- 8 •After the two week monitoring period, if targets are met, a letter will be sent home to congratulate the pupil and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises – if targets are not met, the HOY will make a referral to the AO
- 9 •Education Welfare protocol will be followed and a parental contract will be drawn up – there will be a four week monitoring period. No improvements in this time will result in a final written warning. If there is still no further improvement following this, then a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

## Appendix Three Attendance Agreement Forms

### Student Attendance Agreement

I, name of pupil, agree to attend school and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below XX percent. I will ensure that name of school is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the school full details of my absence.

As a pupil of name of school, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to school and lessons.
- Informing the school of the reason for any absence.
- Not missing school for trivial reasons.



<b>Pupil name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Form tutor name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

### Parental Attendance Agreement

I, name of parent, understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to school. I agree to send my child to school every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When my child is absent from school due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

<b>Parent name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Form tutor name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## **Appendix Four**

### **Attendance During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

From September 2020, all pupils will be required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government guidance to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

#### **1. Attendance expectations from September**

- 1.1 From the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year (September), attendance is mandatory for all pupils.
- 1.2 From September, the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) will apply, including:
  - Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
  - The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures set out in the main body of this policy.
  - The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

#### **2. Shielding or self-isolating pupils**

- 2.1 Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August. This means that pupils who were shielding can return to school, as can pupils who have family members who were shielding.
- 2.2 Pupils who are no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional should discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. Parents should inform the school of any particular measures that need to be in place to ensure their child can return to school safely.
- 2.3 The school understands that there will be occasions where some pupils may not be able to attend school due to coronavirus, including for the following reasons:
  - They are self-isolating and have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus.
  - Rates of coronavirus in the local area have risen and certain individuals are asked to temporarily shield.
- 2.4 Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised.

#### **3. Reluctance to return to school**

- 3.1 Parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.

- 3.2 If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

#### **4. Monitoring attendance**

- 4.1 The attendance lead David Lee, will monitor the school's attendance rates once the school is open to all pupils in September.
- 4.2 Any trends in non-attendance will be identified (e.g. due to anxiety) and measures will be put in place to reengage affected pupils with the school.

## 1. Attendance codes

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where students cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

A new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ has been added to the existing list of attendance codes (see appendix 1)

This category will only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)<sup>3</sup>
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session. This new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

## 2. Present codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
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### 3. Authorised absence

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on a holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their GCSEs
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

#### 4.2.1

### 4. Unauthorised absence

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

## 5. Administrative codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend  Code X - not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to, for example, half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## 6. Example Scenarios & Coding related to corona Virus

Scenario	Code
<p>Pupils who have to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results</p> <p><b>Note:</b> use this code only until they get their test results</p>	X
<p>Pupils who remain unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)</p>	I
<p>Pupils who have to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive</p> <p><b>Note:</b> they should self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and should only return to school if they don't have symptoms other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste</p>	I
<p>Pupils who have to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive</p>	X
<p>Pupils who have to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a <u>close contact</u> of someone who tested positive</p>	X
<p>Pupils who have to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a <u>non-exempt country</u></p>	X
<p>Pupils who are required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or live with someone who is required to shield</p> <p><b>Note:</b> you can ask to see the family's shielding letter. Use this code until shielding is paused and you've contacted the pupil's parents to set the expectation that the child needs to return to school</p>	X
<p>Pupils who are asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown</p> <p><b>Note:</b> follow PHE or DHSC guidance on whether you need to prevent some pupils from attending.</p>	X