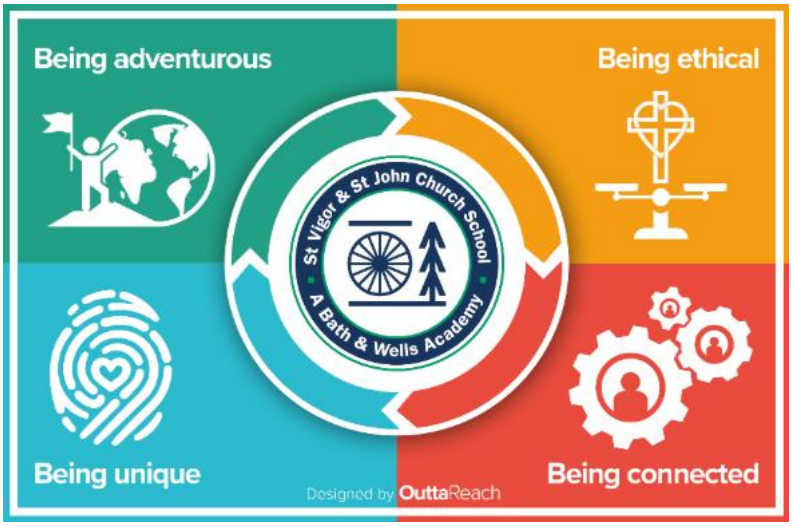
BATH & WELLS
Multi Academy Trust

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

St Vigor and St John and The Mill Nursery



Attendance policy

Approved by: Bath & Wells Multi Academy Trust Board **Date:** December 2025

Next review due by: September 2026

Aim of this policy

1.1 To support excellent levels of attendance for all children to enable fulfilment of their potential at St Vigor and St John Church School. Regular attendance at school is essential to each child's academic success and life-chances. Research links attendance with achievement, indicating that even occasional broken weeks can have a negative effect. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. In promoting good attendance, it is also hoped that this will lead to the development of habits of good attendance and punctuality for the future. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age, therefore the school will expect parents/carers of Nursery children and Reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session available to them. If the child is unable to attend for any reason, the parents should inform the school/nursery in the same way as with children of compulsory school age. Information specific to nursery children is in section 10 below.

1.3 The Trust and our schools recognise that patterns of poor attendance, unexplained absence, or reluctance to attend **may** be indicators of safeguarding concerns including neglect, abuse, exploitation, or mental health difficulties. All attendance concerns are monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and cross-referenced with safeguarding records.

2 Key principles

Our attendance policy and strategy

has been developed with the following principles at its heart:

- Every day counts… All day, every day, on time.
- Attendance is everyone's responsibility.
- We focus on understanding the barriers, taking preventative, supportive action and swift intervention
- We build strong relationships with parents/carers and children

3 Roles and responsibilities

Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or children have should be discussed with the class teacher. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and children should contact Mrs Leah Sheppard, Head of School.

The School will:

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- work with children and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance

- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying support and, where necessary, sanctions where appropriate

- be aware that sudden or gradual changes in attendance may indicate safeguarding issues, and we work in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy available at: Bath and Wells Multi School Trust - Policies (bwmat.org)

- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

- share information and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance

- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future

- ensure that all children can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case

- ensure that the Local Governing Committee and the School's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy

- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the non-statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, *Working together to improve school attendance (2022)*

- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy available at Bath and Wells Multi School Trust - Policies (bwmat.org).

- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education

- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels

- support children who are returning to education following long term absence

- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system

- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the School to a designated senior leader

- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education (Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child daily arrives at to school on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment

- promote the importance of regular attendance at home, where in law regular means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", so therefore, if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular

- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the School (see section 6.1 below)

- avoid unnecessary absences

- provide an explanation as to why their child is absent from school as early in the day as possible, so the school knows the child is safe

- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance

- avoid taking their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6 below)

- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live

- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk).

Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- attend school all day, every day and on time

- be punctual to all lessons

- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the School late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Admin Responsibilities

- If children are absent, make a daily call to families if they have not already contacted school
- Alert Attendance Lead to children who are regularly late
- Support Attendance Lead with tracking attendance by using Arbor
- Support Attendance Lead with home visits, if needed

Teacher Responsibilities

- Where necessary, communicate with parents reminding them about the benefits and importance of good attendance; praise positive good attendance
- Alert Attendance Lead to dips in attendance or lateness for children in their care
- Promote positive attendance on social media, if used
- Promote positive attendance to the children in the classroom.
- To support the Attendance Lead in meeting with parents, if requested

Attendance Lead Responsibilities (where applicable - this may be the Headteacher)

- Support admin with calling families daily who have not contacted school
- Carry out daily attendance checks by using Arbor and alert parents to concerns around their child's attendance.

- To support families with attendance if needed
- To liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL around Early Help/Social Care referrals if needed
- To refer children to nurture or other support if needed around attendance
- Visit absent children at home as per policy
- Escalate urgent attendance issues to the appropriate service (e.g. Children Missing Education / Local Authority Inclusion Team)
- To take statutory action legally with families around non-attendance in line with Local Authority procedures
- To lead on attendance incentives across the school
- Communicate clear guidance about the impact of absence and lateness
- Publish the following year's academic calendar by the previous Spring Term. Share bank holidays and inset days where possible.

SLT Responsibilities

- Promote positive attendance across the school, including adding attendance onto meeting agendas where appropriate
- To support the Attendance Lead in meetings with parents
- To make contact with families for children under their remit who are falling behind with learning due to poor attendance.
- To complete home visits to children who are significantly poor attenders alongside the Attendance Lead or School Admin.
- To feedback to Local Authority (where required), Trust Central Team and OFSTED around attendance
- To engage with the daily attendance check where possible
- To ensure that teachers are promoting good attendance

Headteacher Responsibilities

- To ensure the Attendance Policy is adhered to and staff receive adequate training
- To support the Attendance Lead to carry out their duties.
- To report to LGC, Trust Central Team and OFSTED around attendance.
- To liaise with the Attendance Lead on the daily attendance check.
- To ensure the school website is up to date, including dedicated information about attendance
- Develop effective parental relationships, including parents of new starters, to educate and support with good attendance

Local Governing Committee Responsibilities

- To take an active role in monitoring and challenging attendance at a local level to improve it where necessary.

Trust Central Team Responsibilities

- Report, collaborate and challenge to improve attendance at a regional level.
- Trust-wide designated staff sharing national updates and collaboration
- Regular agenda item on half-termly Headteacher Briefings
- Ensure up to date resource storage on SharePoint for Headteachers
- Share effective practice on attendance and improvement

The Board of Trustee Responsibilities

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust
- Ensure the Trust fulfils expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help the Trust's leaders focus improvement efforts

4 Registration

4.1 Each school maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each child's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Start time	End time
Morning	8.50am	9.00am
Afternoon	1.05pm	1.15pm

4.2 Registers will close 10 minutes after the morning session starts. Children who arrive after the start of a registration session, but before the end of a registration session will be marked as late. Where children arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies. The registration session in our school is as above.

4.3 The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on attendance - Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk).

5 Late arrival

5.1 If a child arrives at school after the relevant registration period has ended, the parent must immediately go to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.

6 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

6.1 ***Authorised absence*** - absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a child to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence. The main circumstances for authorising an absence include: illness, medical/dental appointments and religious observance.

6.2 ***Unauthorised absence*** - absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

6.3 Reporting absence from the School

6.3.1 Where a child is to be absent from the school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the school by 8.50am on the morning of the day of the first absence to ensure the school know the location and safety of the child. The parent should let school know when they expect the child to return to school. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence. After registration any absence not confirmed will be followed with a phone call in the first instance.

6.3.2

In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

6.4 Appointments

6.4.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a child should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

6.4.2 Where an appointment must take place during school time, the child should attend the School for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given in writing to the school office.

6.4.3 For the time absent from the school to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter must be provided.

6.5 Children with Health Needs

6.5.1 Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence, with supporting information, the school will consider an Individual Health Care Plan. Parents and staff should refer to the Medical Conditions Policy for more information about medical needs, IHPs, and to children with health needs who cannot attend school available at: Bath and Wells Multi School Trust - Policies (bwmat.org)

6.5.2 Where a pupil cannot attend school because of health needs, unless it is evident at the outset that the pupil will be absent for 15 or more days, the school will initially follow the usual process around attendance and mark the pupil as ill for the purposes of the register.

6.5.3 The school will provide support to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period shorter than 15 days. This may include providing pupils with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.

6.5.4 In accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance[1], where a pupil is unable to attend school for more than 15 days due to illness:

(i) the local authority should be ready to take responsibility for arranging suitable full-time education for that pupil; and

(ii) the local authority should arrange for this provision to be in place as soon as it is clear that the absence will last for more than 15 days.

The school will inform and work collaboratively with the local authority to support these responsibilities

6.5.5 Where a parent/ carer maintains that absences are regularly the result of ill-health, yet no evidence of this is provided, the school may choose to not automatically authorise such absences unless there is medical evidence to do so.

6.6 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

6.6.1 Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking children out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The Trust will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

[1] Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK *(Updated Dec 2023)*

6.6.2 To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Head Teacher and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.

6.6.3 Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Head Teacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:

- will be confirmed in writing
- is solely at the Headteacher's discretion and
- is final.

6.6.4 Where permission is granted, the Head Teacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

6.6.5 If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that the school knows you are intending to remove your child from school, and the child is safe, rather than missing.

6.6.6 Parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below for unauthorised absence) for unauthorised leaves of absence.

6.7 Religious observance

6.7.1 We recognise that children of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

6.7.2 falls during school time and

6.7.3 has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child belongs,

the absence from school will be authorised.

6.7.4 We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing to the Head of School in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

6.8 Children Missing from Education

The school is committed to safeguarding all pupils and ensuring that no child is at risk of becoming missing from education. We recognise that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

6.8.1 CME Definition

A child is considered to be missing from education if they are of compulsory school age and not registered at a school, not receiving suitable education otherwise (e.g. home education), or have been absent for a prolonged period without explanation.

6.8.2 Safeguarding Integration

CME concerns are treated as safeguarding matters and recorded on the school's safeguarding system. Attendance data is routinely cross-referenced with safeguarding indicators. Staff are trained to recognise signs that poor attendance may indicate wider welfare concerns.

6.8.3Partnership with the Local Authority

The school works closely with the Local Authority to:

- Share information about pupils at risk of CME.
- Follow local CME protocols and escalation pathways.
- Ensure timely referrals and updates.

6.8.4 Identification and Monitoring

- The school monitors attendance daily and investigates any unexplained absences immediately.
- If a pupil is absent for five consecutive school days without contact or explanation, the school will initiate a CME concern.
- The Attendance Lead will attempt to contact parents/carers and all emergency contacts.
- Home visits may be conducted to establish the child's whereabouts and welfare.

6.8.5 Escalation Procedures

If the child's location remains unknown after reasonable enquiries:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed.
- A referral will be made to the Local Authority CME Officer.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, the school will also refer to Children's Social Care and/or the police.

6.8.6 Removal from Roll

The school will only remove a pupil from roll in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), and only after:

- Reasonable enquiries have been made to locate the pupil.
- The Local Authority has been notified in writing.
- A CME referral has been submitted and acknowledged.

If no contact has been made with the school on the first day of absence the school will take steps to ascertain the location of the child and their safety. The school will refer to Child Missing from Education section of the Child Protection Policy and the specific school procedure.

6.9 Part-time/Reduced timetables

6.9.1 Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

6.9.2 If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent/carer and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any part-time timetables will be applied for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to

support the pupil's return to a full-time timetable. School leaders will follow the Trust Reduced Timetables guidance which ensures that:

- Part-time timetables are exceptional and temporary.
- They must be agreed in writing with parents / carers and reviewed regularly.

They must be reported to the local authority.

Safeguarding considerations must be central to any decision to implement a reduced timetable. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed, and the arrangement must be risk assessed to ensure the pupil's safety and wellbeing during any time not spent in school.

6.10 Approved Educational Activity (AEA) and Alternative Provision

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case. (See DfE 2022 School Attendance guidance for more information.) Common examples include an approved sporting activity or an Alternative Education Provider.

6.11 Traveller absence

6.11.1 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 to travel from place to place. 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 the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

6.11.2 To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, 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.

6.11.2 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.

6.12 Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

6.12.1 The school will record pupils as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances in accordance with the DfE attendance guidance, if for instance:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable closure;
- The transport provided by the school or the local authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's 'Home to school travel and transport' guidance document;
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

6.13 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's wellbeing can contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Leah Sheppard.

7 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

7.1 The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the children or groups of children who need it most. In doing so, the school will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
- identify children who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark school attendance data at each level against Trust, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of a schools strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of children who the Trust and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

7.2 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found here and in section 6.8 above (CME) and further information is available in the Appendices.

7.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent absence, truancy or lateness
- a safeguarding concern

the school will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality, with reference to the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, as appropriate.

7.4 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and support services and/or seeking to put in place a parenting contract.

7.5 Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the School will signpost and support access to any additional services.

7.6 Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. Our Trust encourages parents and pupils to be open and honest with the School 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 make things worse. The School needs to understand the

reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

7.7 When the School has concerns about the attendance of a pupil, it will make every effort to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this.

7.8 If parents have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate, effective, or has not been made use of, the School may consider issuing a penalty notice and legal sanctions via a referral to the local authority. A penalty notice is a fine imposed on parents by the local authority.

7.9 If the School refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, it will show it has warned parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.

7.10 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, the School will have regard to:

- section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, Working together to improve school attendance: Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

7.11 In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

8 Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

8.1 If the school decides to suspend or exclude a pupil, this will be recorded using the appropriate registration codes and the school will follow the Trust policy available at; Bath and Wells Multi School Trust - Policies (bwmat.org)

9 Removal from Roll

9.1 There are strict legal grounds on as to when schools may remove pupils from the admissions register, and when the School decides to delete a pupil from their admission roll it must immediately notify the local authority.

9.2 If the School is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the School has confirmation that the child has started at the new school, its records will be updated.

9.3 If a child has 'disappeared' from school, the School must refer to the Child Missing Education Policy from the local authority and the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10 Nursery Attendance

10.1 It is important that our records of children's nursery attendance are accurately kept and regularly monitored to ensure that the School can identify any potential problems and look for patterns. All managers and staff are alert to signs that children and learners who are missing might be at risk of abuse or neglect, and appropriate action is taken when children and learners stop attending. We are aware that attendance is not statutory, but that non-

attendance could be an indicator of other concerns. We are particularly aware of the need to monitor groups such as children who are in receipt of two year old funding, and those for whom we receive Early Years Pupil Premium, as these groups are considered to be vulnerable learners.

10.2 Nursery attendance is monitored through Tapestry and attendance trends and patterns are monitored by Sophie Dent (Nursery Manager) on a regular basis so that appropriate actions can be taken if attendance is of concern.

10.3 All absences will be recorded and frequent absences will be investigated and further action or monitoring considered. The School will always discuss our concerns with parents and endeavour to enable nursery children to attend as regularly as possible.

10.4 Absence is monitored for the health and well-being of children, for example so that the Nursery is aware of outbreaks of illness which need to be investigated, or to warn parents of infections.

10.5 Monitoring attendance and use of government funded hours may be passed on at the local authority's request

10.6 Detail of how parents should report absences is detailed in [appendix 5 below]. Parents inform the nursery as soon as possible on the day of a child's absence. If the nursery is not contacted, they will make contact with the parents to confirm the child is safe. If there is no further contact the nursery will conduct a welfare assessment of possibility of abuse and neglect and will liaise with partner agencies such as social services and the police, as necessary. The nursery will refer to the Child Missing Education section of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10.7 Details of drop-off and collection arrangements are also outlined [in appendix 5]

11 Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies/guidance where necessary:

- Reduced Timetables
- Alternative Provision Guidance for Schools
- Children with Medical Needs Who Can't Attend School
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Exclusions
- Separated parents Guidance

appendix 1- Approach to promoting good attendance and punctuality

Class attendance percentages are included with our termly newsletter.

Attendance is monitored regularly and parents are notified of concerns about attendance x3 yearly.

For more information, please refer to section 2 of Working together to improve school attendance: Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk):

Appendix 2- School system for reporting absence

Arbor is used to report absences.

Appendix 3 – Steps for dealing with Children Missing Education

6.3 Where a child is absent, the school has a responsibility on the first date of absence to contact

the parent or carer to locate the child. The school must refer to the local authority's

reporting process for a child missing education and requirements on reasonable efforts to

locate the child and assess safety, and should take the following steps:

- discuss with the DSL and undertake a risk assessment on the vulnerability of the child:

- follow up phone calls and contact in writing (including email) with parents and emergency

contacts if the child continues to be missing;

- make a home visit and undertake risk assessment;

- advise the parent to contact the Police if they are unable to locate the child or are

concerned about their safety;