



Blue Skies School: Attendance policy

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Part 1 - Policy

1. Introduction

At Blue Skies School, our ambition is for all students to strive for 100% attendance. We set clear expectations for excellent attendance and expect students to be present for every session, every day that school is open. We believe this is fundamental to students achieving their full potential and securing positive lifelong outcomes.

Our Attendance Policy reflects this commitment and acknowledges that regular attendance positively influences student motivation, attainment, and wellbeing. It is a core component of our school ethos.

We recognise that some students may face greater challenges in attending school regularly. Therefore, at every stage of improving attendance, we will work collaboratively with parents/carers, students, and relevant partner agencies to identify and remove barriers. We are committed to building strong, trusting relationships that support sustained attendance. Promoting and securing excellent attendance is a shared responsibility across our school and wider community.

Blue Skies School promotes regular attendance and sets high expectations for all students to attend as consistently as their individual circumstances allow. We recognise that students at Blue Skies School may face additional barriers to attendance, including special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions, mental health needs, and EBSA.

While the national target for mainstream schools is 96%, attendance expectations in special schools reflect a different context. We aspire for our students to achieve attendance that reflects their individual starting points and circumstances, with a clear focus on improvement over time. We recognise that some students joining our provision may have experienced extended periods of absence prior to admission, and we work collaboratively with families to build sustainable attendance patterns.

The school monitors attendance data carefully and works intensively with students and families where attendance falls below expected levels for that individual student.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect current legislation and guidance. The [Department for Education's guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(2024\)](#), states that school attendance is "essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances."

Aims and ethos

Our school aims to meet its obligations regarding school attendance by ensuring every student has access to a full-time and efficient education to which they are entitled. Blue Skies School acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all students want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, all school staff, parents/carers, students, and partners can work together to remove any barriers affecting attendance. This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly. This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our students and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

At Blue Skies School we follow the [DfE Working together to Improve School Attendance Approach](#):

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

¹ Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: to protect the student's right to an education.

At Blue Skies School we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory² school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our students to attend school every day unless they are not well enough to do so. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our students to enjoy school and grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential requirements in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the world.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is **not** authorised by the school, the student's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our students to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any student who may experience any barriers preventing regular attendance.

One of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved and as part of the wider school community.
- Raise students' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, students and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Work with external agencies where required, such as health, the LA and local organisations to support our students, parents and school.
- Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.

² A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

- Celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality.

2.1 Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?

Evidence shows students with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Students who attend regularly are more likely to achieve better results than their peers that do not, both at Key Stage 2 tests in the Primary phase, and in GCSEs at Secondary.

Excellent attendance enables students to be part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each student's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

If attendance over the school year is:	...a student will miss this many days:
100%	0
95%	10
90%	19
85%	29
80%	39
75%	49
70%	58

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

At Blue Skies School we routinely monitor attendance data to identify trends and patterns of absence across all students as part of our standard procedures. We recognise that both sudden and gradual changes in a student's attendance may be indicative of underlying safeguarding concerns.

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#), the school will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding issues to the appropriate authorities. As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, and in accordance with our procedures, we will notify the Local Authority and/or the Police of any student who is absent from school and whose whereabouts cannot be established, despite reasonable enquiries such as home visits. This action will be taken where there are concerns for the student's welfare or safety.

For further details, please refer to our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a student as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For students who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent' (SA).

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any student becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of students; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the statutory DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all students and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a student or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support students and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support students and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in conjunction with relevant partners.

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such students may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, to support students to reintegrate back into education and access full time provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and external partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

In accordance with statutory guidance, school must report to the Local Authority when a student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days without explanation, and also when a student has accrued 15 days of absence due to medical reasons. These reports should be made promptly to ensure appropriate safeguarding and support measures can be considered.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard students. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of student registers
- the schools strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for students who need it.
-

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support students experiencing attendance challenges.

Part 2 - What the Law Says and Our School Procedures

Contents of the Admissions Register

At Blue Skies School, we maintain our admissions register (also referred to as the school roll) in accordance with the requirements set out in [Regulation 8 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). The register must include specific personal details for every student, including:

- Full name and name used at school
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Home address
- Full names and addresses of each parent/carer
- Emergency contact details (at least two telephone number per parent/carer the student normally lives with)
- Date of admission or re-admission
- Name and address of the last school attended (if applicable)
- Any additional addresses where the student will normally reside and the date this begins
- Details of any other school the student is attending concurrently

Students are entered onto the admissions register on the first day the school has agreed with, or been notified by, the parent/carer that the student will attend. If no date has been agreed, the student is entered on the first day they attend.

A student's name may only be lawfully removed from the admissions register if one of the specific conditions outlined in [Regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations applies](#). Any removal outside of these conditions constitutes unlawful off-rolling.

It is essential that the admissions register is kept accurate and up to date. Therefore, Blue Skies School regularly requests updates from parents/carers regarding changes to:

- Home address
- Emergency contact telephone numbers
- Email addresses

The school will formally issue a data collection request once per academic year. Where parents/carers do not respond to these requests, the school will take further steps to obtain accurate information. This may include direct contact, home visits, or referral to relevant agencies if safeguarding concerns arise.

Contents of Attendance Register

In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register during the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. On each occasion the school must record whether each student is:

- Present;

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

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance.

Present at School (and Lateness)

Students are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a student leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

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

The Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our students must arrive by 9:00am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 9:30am and will be kept open until 9:45am

Our afternoon register is taken at 12:30pm and will be kept open until 12:45pm

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**), which counts as present.

If a student arrives after the register has closed (9:45am and 12:45pm) they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code “Late after registers close” (**U**) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the student is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly.

See DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

and [parent/carers guide to Working together to improve school attendance](#)

2.1 Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a student arrives late to school, they miss notable events such as assembly, tutor period, teacher instructions and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

Minutes late per day...	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year...	Which means this number of lessons have been missed...
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

3. Authorised Absence

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

Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence, only the Headteacher can do this. However, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

3.1 Illness

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers 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.

The school follows DfE guidance '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)' which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a student has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first day, or subsequent days of absence may not be authorised.

Parents/Carers should call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, advising when the child is expected to return. If a child is absent for more than one day, parents should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

In accordance with statutory guidance, schools must report to the Local Authority when a student has accrued 15 days of absence due to medical reasons. These reports should be made promptly to ensure appropriate safeguarding and support measures can be considered.

Support for children with medical needs

If your child has a learning disability or autism, these websites can help:

- [Mencap](#) offers expert advice and support for children with learning disabilities, as well as their parents and carers.
- [The National Autistic Society](#) provides valuable resources and support for parents or carers.
- [Ambitious about Autism](#) – A UK charity offering information, training and peer support for parents and carers of autistic children and young people.
- [Contact](#) (formerly Contact a Family) – Supports families with disabled children through advice, helplines and information on accessing services.
- [Family Lives](#) – A national charity providing confidential parenting advice and support, including for families with children who have additional needs.

Local support for families in Medway and Kent:

- [Medway Parent Carer Forum](#) – An independent, parent-led forum supporting families of children and young people with SEND in Medway.
- [Medway Puzzles](#) – A local autism charity offering peer support, activities, coffee mornings and information for families.
- **Medway Autism Group Information Centre (MAGIC)** – Provides information, social groups and activities for autistic children, young people and their families.
- [Medway Small Steps \(Family Action\)](#) – Offers workshops, drop-ins and support for families of children with additional needs, including autism.
- [Kent Autistic Trust](#) – Provides advice, training and support for autistic people and their families across Kent and Medway.
- [Medway SEND Local Offer](#) – Information from Medway Council about local SEND services, education, health and support available for families.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our school supports student mental health and wellbeing following [DfE Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact the school's Attendance Lead, Danielle Atterbury, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Carrie Myhill, for further information about the support available.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: [NHS Children's Mental Health – Every Mind Matters](#).

[Young Minds advice for parents](#)

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Where to find mental health support for children

- The NHS offers advice on [Mental health support for children and young people](#).
- [Action for Children](#) helps children and families look after their mental health with simple tools and support to feel better and cope with challenges.
- The [Childhood Bereavement Network](#) offers guidance on supporting a child through grief.
- Visit [NHS - Advice for parents](#) for support if you think your child may have an eating disorder.
- The [Young Minds Parents Helpline](#) offers parents free and confidential advice via phone, email, or webchat.
- Teachers, school nurses, social workers, and GPs can help you find the right support.
- If you have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline to talk to dedicated child protection specialists. They will be able to advise and take any necessary action. The Helpline is open 7 days a week, and can be contacted by:
 - visiting [the website](#)
 - emailing help@nspcc.org.uk or
 - calling 0808 800 5000.

Where to get urgent help for mental health

If you or your child are in a mental health crisis, get help straight away.

Visit the [NHS urgent mental health support](#) page to find 24/7 helplines, crisis services, and emergency support.

Students taken ill during the school day

If a student needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the student must be collected from the school reception by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

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

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

3.3 Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

3.4 Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller student (mobile child)³ 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 them 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 school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

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 such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (3) "mobile child" means a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place;

3.5 Suspensions

If the school decides to send a student home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an E code, for a suspension or Permanent Exclusion (PEX). The school will follow the statutory [DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance](#).

Any suspension/permanent exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

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

The student must be collected from the school reception by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

4. First Day of Absence Response

Parents are expected to call the school to report their child's absence no later than 9am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence advising when they are expected to return to school.

Where any student who is expected to attend schools does not attend the school will

- call the students parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the students emergency contacts, the school may undertake a home visit.
- If there is no response to the 'calling letter' left at the property, and concerns remain regarding the student's welfare and safety, the school may consider making a safeguarding referral to the Local Authority.
- Parents/carers are expected to provide the school with a minimum of 2 emergency contacts

This procedure is in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and reflects our commitment to safeguarding as outlined in statutory guidance.

School will notify Medway or Kent Local Authority of children who are absent for 10 consecutive days.

5. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

The school operates a reward system to celebrate students' attendance. Students who achieve 100% attendance each term receive a certificate, and students who show an improvement in attendance compared to the previous term are also recognised. In addition, the school acknowledges personal milestones, such as consistent attendance over several weeks, and sends positive notes home to celebrate students' efforts. Non-competitive rewards, such as extra choice of activities or small privileges, are also used to motivate and encourage students. The system is carefully designed to ensure that students who have low attendance through illness or circumstances beyond their control do not feel marginalised, anxious, or guilty about their attendance or its impact on their learning or the learning and rewards of the class.

6. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

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

In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering 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. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Attendance/Designated Safeguarding Lead/Advisory Board. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. 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.

Parents should 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. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered

alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a student is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a student is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Notices to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

Where a Notice to Improve is issued, it will be issued in line with processes set out in the Local Authority Code of Conduct in which the student attends school.

The Notice to Improve is expected to include:-

- Details of the student's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
 - Details of the support provided so far.
 - Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

What sufficient improvement looks like can be decided on a case-by-case basis taking the individual family's circumstances into account. For some families, no further unauthorised absences will be appropriate, for others some absence may be considered acceptable if improvement is seen. Details of what sufficient improvement looks like for each case should be made clear in the Notice to Improve.

Unauthorised absences may result in prosecution.

Persistently and Severely Absent students (PA and SA)

A student is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

A student is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any student that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

8. Approved Educational Activity

When students 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.

9. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record students as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the student'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 student from attending school.
- The student is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the student is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

10. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes students can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and students to be open and honest with us about the reason for the student'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. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a student is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support students and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a student, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer or Headteacher to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan or parenting contract being drawn up.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance, we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and students and that we have warned the parent/carers that they are at risk of legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter and school records will be shared with the Local Authority.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed 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 parent/carers that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.

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

11. Students on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Students 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. Reduced timetables will never be used as a long-term solution or as a disciplinary measure and will always be reviewed regularly with the aim of returning the student to full-time education as soon as possible.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a student with a full-time education due to the student's needs, we will work with the student, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible (max 6 weeks), whilst arrangements are made to support the student's return to full-time provision as soon as possible. For our Medway students, our school will submit all signed reduced timetable agreements to the Local Authority (LA) reducedtimetables@medway.gov.uk in line with [Medway LA Reduced Timetable Policy](#). For our Kent students our school will submit all signed reduced timetable agreements to Kent County Council via the Digital Front Door in line with Kent LA Reduced Timetable guidance.

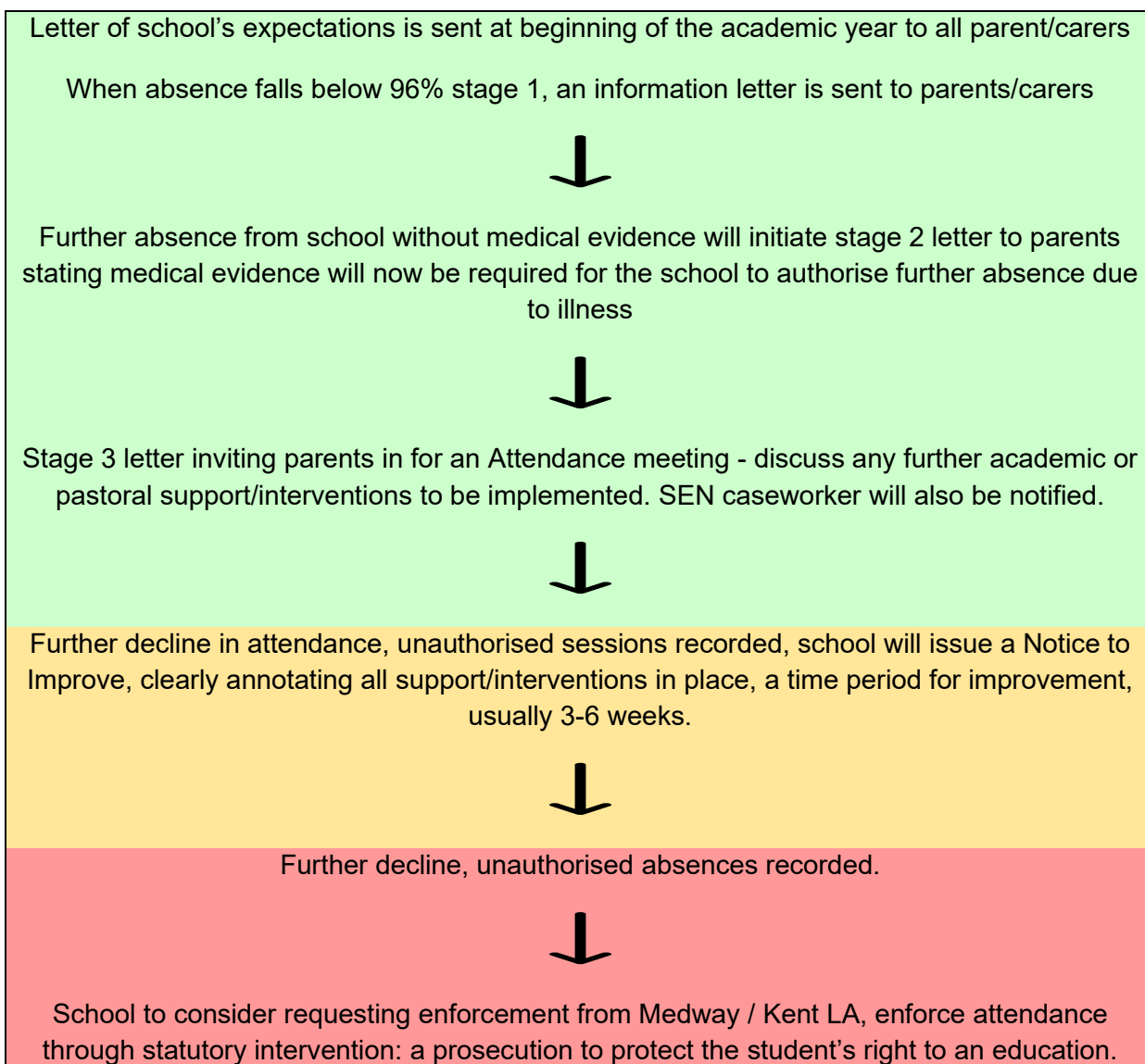
12. Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#) to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered student at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered student at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school their parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

Escalation Procedures for Poor School Attendance.



The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for legal action to the Local Authority unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so.

See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information

Prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent who holds parental responsibility for a child and are applied individually for each child with irregular school attendance. For example, one per parent, per child.

The Headteacher has the responsibility for authorising any absence. Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence however, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider.

13. Children Missing Education (CME)

Blue Skies School will add and remove students from the admissions register in accordance with [Regulation 8 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). A student's name may only be lawfully removed from the register if one of the specific conditions outlined in Regulation 9 applies.

Where the school has concerns that a student may be missing education or has potentially moved out of the Local Authority, we will consult with our Local Authority Attendance Officer within five school days. In line with safeguarding responsibilities, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the student's whereabouts. These may include:

- Conducting a home visit
- Contacting schools attended by siblings
- Liaising with the allocated social worker/keyworker, where the family is known to Social Care/Family Solutions/Early Help

If the student's location remains unknown, or it is confirmed that they have left Medway/Kent, the school will complete and submit a Children Missing Education (CME) referral form to the Local Authority Attendance Officer within ten school days.

This process is aligned with statutory safeguarding duties and reflects the expectations set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Improve School Attendance. It also supports [Medway LA Children Missing Education policy](#), and commitment to identifying, tracking, and supporting children missing education, ensuring that all students receive suitable education provision

14. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parent/carers by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within five school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a student's absence and are unable to contact the parent/carers, we may contact the student's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the student's whereabouts and safety.

15. Reporting to Parents

Attendance information is shared with parents/carers on a termly basis through written reports or as an attendance summary.

Where a student's attendance falls below expected levels, or where patterns of concern emerge, parents/carers will be contacted promptly and directly by the school to discuss concerns, identify barriers, and agree support.

Attendance may also be discussed more frequently through meetings, phone calls, or written communication where appropriate.

16. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

All reasons for student absence are recorded on the daily register and updated on CPOMS. This includes details such as who contacted the school, who was spoken to, and what was said. This ensures a clear and accurate record of attendance and any communications regarding a student's absence.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

The Advisory Board

The advisory board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis (three times a year). They should also support the promotion of regular attendance and provide support and challenge holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Our link governor for attendance, Lee Lucas, who also serves on the Safeguarding and Attendance Advisory Board, monitors student attendance and the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures, providing oversight and support to ensure good practice is maintained.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to advisory board members.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students.

Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion leads the monitoring and promotion of attendance across the school, provides support and guidance to parents and staff, and ensures accurate recording and reporting of attendance data.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL monitors attendance with a focus on safeguarding, identifying patterns of concern, following up unexplained or persistent absences, and working with staff, parents, and external agencies to ensure students' welfare is supported.

Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information electronically during each form time and within the first 5 minutes of each timetabled lesson.

Office Staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents in the case of persistent absence to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

18. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Danielle Atterbury - Senior Attendance Champion. At every review, the policy will be ratified by the advisory board.

19. Links with other policies/procedures

This policy is linked to our Behaviour Policy & Statement of Principles, SEND Policy including Equality information & Objectives, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

20. Attendance codes

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CODES 2025-2026

Present/Authorised Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad

C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes (no fixed abode)
X	non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as student is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause (must affect the student NOT the parent)

Unauthorised Absence

G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	student not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)