

Pathfinder Schools

Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

ROTHWELL SCHOOLS

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1. Notes

1.1 Throughout this policy the term 'parent' refers to all adults or carers with either

- Parental Responsibility (**Appendix A**) or
- Responsibility for the day-to-day care of the pupil.

1.2 Throughout this policy the term 'attendance' may also refer to absence and punctuality (lateness)

1.3 Abbreviations used throughout this policy;

- CEO Chief Executive Officer
- CME Child Missing in Education
- DFE Department for Education
- DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead
- EAL Pupils with English as an Additional Language
- EHCP Educational Health Care Plan
- FSM Free School Meal Pupils
- IHCP Individual Health Care Plan
- LA Local Authority
- LAC Looked After Child (A child is looked after by LA if he or she is in their care or if he or she is provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours by)
- PA Persistent Absence (attendance less than 90%)
- PP Pupil Premium
- PPOE Pupil Missing Out on Education
- SA Severely Absent (attendance less than 50%)
- SEND Special Educational Need/Disability
- SENDSCO Special Educational Needs/Disability Co-Ordinator
- SW Pupils with a Social Worker

1.4 Other documents and legislation which relate to this policy include:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance – Department for Education 2022
- Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on Rights of The Child 1992
- Education Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Department for Education 2022
- Children Missing in Education - Department for Education 2016
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs - Department for Education 2013
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2012 & 2013
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Education Needs/Inclusion Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Complaints Policy

1.5 This policy applies to all schools within Pathfinder Schools.

2. Principles and Ethos

2.1 Excellent school attendance, high expectations and future prospects

Pathfinder Schools consider excellent school attendance as paramount to pupils achieving their full potential and therefore, enhancing lifelong outcomes. Excellent attendance is central to academic attainment, moral and social development and it is critical in enhancing well-being. It is with this in mind, that we set expectations of excellent attendance for all of our pupils.

Evidence shows pupils 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.

Excellent attendance is a learned behaviour. Therefore, we place equal importance on high attendance and excellent punctuality to all our pupils, including those who are not of statutory school age (**Appendix B**).

We believe that excellent attendance and punctuality in the early years of school develops and establishes attitudes towards school attendance which impacts on future school attendance and ultimately academic success and social and emotional well-being. Similarly, excellent attendance and punctuality post 16 establishes and develops attitudes to towards attendance in the workplace and thus lifelong achievements.

Therefore, each child enrolled at each of our schools is expected to attend every day, on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups according to this policy and statutory guidance. It is acknowledged however, that parents of children who are not of statutory school age cannot be subject to legal processes if their child has poor school attendance.

Department for Education – ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ Sept 2022

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%)

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent)³ and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study)

2.2 Attendance is everyone’s responsibility

Securing excellent school attendance and promoting the importance of such, is the responsibility of the whole school community. This includes, but is not limited to; Pathfinder Schools CEO and Trust Board, the Director of School Improvement, Senior Leadership Teams in schools, school staff (teaching and support), governors, parents, carers and the pupils themselves. Each school ensures that every member of the school community understands their roles and responsibilities with regard to attendance, is consistent in their communication with parents and pupils and receives the relevant training required to support excellent attendance.

Each school has a named senior leader responsible for the strategic lead of attendance. Attendance is a standing item at LGB and TB Committee meetings.

2.2.1 Specific Responsibilities

CEO and Trust Board – including but not limited to;

- Recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Challenge and accountability regarding attendance across the trust.
- Having an understanding of the attendance trends across the trust and the actions in place to improve/sustain high attendance including for vulnerable groups.
- Having an understanding of trust attendance performance in comparison to national averages and progress towards targets
- Receiving regular reports on attendance

Trust Director of School Improvement – including but not limited to;

- Providing strategic leadership across the Trust on the national attendance agenda and leading on the development of, and compliance with, the Trust's Strategic Plan for Attendance
- Leading on a strategy that supports pupils and families to ensure at least good attendance and tackle barriers to attending across the Trust, it's schools, specific cohorts of pupils and individual pupils.
- Ensuring that each school in the Trust consistently implements current statutory guidance, legislation, Pathfinder Schools Policy, procedures and ethos
- Advising and guiding the CEO
- Developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Trust's Strategic Plan for Attendance
- Monitoring overall Trust and individual school targets for attendance including vulnerable groups
- Holding schools within the Trust to account for compliance with attendance policies, processes and strategies.
- Designing and implementing systems for monitoring compliance across the Trust in collaboration with the Head of Governance
- Reporting to the CEO, Trust Board and other relevant groups within the Trust

Headteachers/SLTs – including but not limited to;

- Understanding the Trust Strategic Plan for Attendance and supporting the Trust in its development, implementation and review.
- Accountable for attendance data, developing and implementing robust data collection and analysis to identify attendance patterns and trends, providing recommendations on action.
- Promoting positive attitudes by pupils and families towards education
- Engaging with and supporting pupils and families in overcoming barriers to attendance/punctuality, using innovative strategies.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Visiting and working with families in order to pursue concerns about attendance and other welfare issues. During such visits, formulating strategies, as appropriate, to the family.
- Facilitating effective partnerships between pupils, parents/carers, families, the school and external agencies.
- Liaising between student's home and school involving other support agencies as appropriate, including social services, education, psychologists, medical and counselling services.
- Providing pupils, parents/carers and schools with an effective advice and support service to develop best practice.

- Developing and reviewing Attendance Action Plans/Parenting Contracts to support the improvement of pupil attendance/punctuality
- Develop and implement strategies of rewards, incentives and competitions to encourage good attendance

Teaching Staff/Support Staff - including but not limited to:

- Follow and implement the school's attendance expectations
- Ensure the accurate and timely recording of attendance via pupil registers
- Understand and follow the school's procedures for student absence
- Understand and follow child missing from education procedures
- Report concerns around attendance for a student to the school's attendance lead or designated safeguarding lead as appropriate
- Have an understanding of the attendance trends for the classes that you teach
- Act as a support to students who maybe struggling with poor attendance and help them to overcome barriers to attendance
- Create a welcoming environment for all students who return to school following an absence
- Work in collaboration and communicate effectively with parents through parent consultations where absence is having an impact on achievement (teaching staff only)

Governing Bodies – including but not limited to;

- Providing support, challenge and accountability to the Head Teacher/ School Strategic Lead for Attendance regarding attendance
- Having an understanding of the attendance trends across the school and the actions in place to improve/sustain high attendance including for vulnerable groups.
- Having an understanding of school attendance performance in comparison to national averages and progress towards targets
- Receiving regular reports on attendance from the Head Teacher/School Strategic Lead for Attendance
- Ensuring the consistent implementation of this policy and that it does not discriminate on any grounds
- Handling any complaints regarding this policy in line with the school's complaint procedures

School's Attendance Lead / Attendance Officer / Family Support Worker – including but not limited to;

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy and attendance management procedures
- Ensuring all staff, parents, carers and pupils are aware of the school's attendance expectations
- Monitoring attendance data and identifying trends (including for vulnerable groups and individual pupils)
- Developing, implementing and reviewing strategic approach and action plans to address areas of development/improving attendance
- Monitoring the impact of attendance interventions
- Ensuring the effective deployment of resources to promote excellent attendance across the school, vulnerable groups and for individual pupils
- Ensuring the accurate and timely reporting of attendance data to the Trust
- Ensuring that relevant staff with key responsibilities (eg PP, EAL, SENDCOs, heads of year etc) are aware of attendance performance and are accountable for excellent attendance within their areas of responsibility
- Communicating with pupils and parents regarding attendance, including individual pupil attendance
- Ensuring that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education
- Informing the LA of CME, PPOE, pupils on a part-time timetable and pupils being deleted from the admissions register

Parents/Carers– including but not limited to

- Providing up to date and accurate contact information
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact
- Ensuring that their child(ren) attend school regularly and have excellent school attendance
- Ensuring that their child (ren) are punctual
- Not taking their child(ren) out of school during term time for holidays
- Informing the school of their child's absence on the first day of absence
- Keeping in regular contact with the school during a period of absence
- Contacting the school for support if school attendance/punctuality is a challenge

2.2.2 The law on school attendance

Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their child receives an education at school or by education otherwise than at school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
Department for Education – ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ Sept 2022

2.2.3 Both parents, with parental responsibility, are equally liable for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time, regardless of who the child resides with or who is the main carer. Therefore, they may both be contacted when deemed necessary in managing attendance and punctuality. Similarly, where it is necessary to enforce statutory action (such as issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices) both parents will be liable.

Pupils – including but not limited to

- Attending lessons and off-site activities as arranged by the school
- Being punctual to lessons
- Talking to an adult in school if they find attending school/being punctual a challenge

2.3 Attendance is integral and linked to all aspects of school life

Schools within Pathfinder Schools promote excellent attendance in the first instance, by ensuring that pupils and their families are provided with an environment where they feel safe, included, valued, supported and are inspired by an accessible and innovative curriculum. We recognise that excellent attendance is integral to the school's ethos and culture and that approaches to the curriculum, behaviour management, well-being, inclusivity and attendance are all inextricably linked and impact upon one another.

2.4 Culture of support and inclusivity

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance or attendance is a challenge, it is our aim to work with our pupils and their families in a supportive manner to improve attendance by removing any barriers. Pathfinder Schools and all of our schools recognise the importance of building strong relationships with our pupils and their families.

Where a pupil has a medical condition (physical or emotional), a disability, a special educational need or indeed any other factor which may present a barrier to attendance we uphold our expectation of excellent attendance. We endeavour to work with these pupils and their families, taking into account their individual needs, in order to make reasonable and supportive adjustments to facilitate excellent school attendance.

Where parents are facing challenges in getting their child to attend school they should contact the school in order to seek support and resolve any potential underlying issues so that attendance can be improved. Older pupils are encouraged to be proactive in speaking to a trusted adult in school, should they have concerns about attending school.

Offering bespoke, individual support, encouragement and making reasonable adjustments to facilitate excellent school attendance, for those facing challenges or overcoming barriers, is always our priority.

2.5 Use of resources

As part of our commitment to promoting excellent school attendance schools ensure that attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced. This may include both financial (for example, effective use of pupil premium funding) and human (deployment of senior leaders, attendance and pastoral staff, external agencies and professionals) resources.

2.6 Celebrating and Incentivising Excellent and Significantly Improved Attendance

Each school has individual ways of promoting and incentivising excellent and significantly improved attendance. All schools will demonstrate the benefits of excellent school attendance throughout school life (For example, through displays, assemblies, registration periods and where appropriate through praise and reward to year groups, classes and individual pupils)

2.7 Our Commitment

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- 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 them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.
- Working across schools, MATS and LAs to share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

3. Definition of Excellent Attendance and Categories of Absence

We aim for our pupils' attendance to be in line with or above national averages.

Excellent = 97% and above (no more than 6 days/12 sessions absent in any one year)

Good = 95% and above (no more than 10/20 sessions days absent in any one year)

Persistent Absence = 90% and below (19 days/38 sessions or more absent in any one year)

Severely Absent = 50% and below (97 days/195 session or more absent in any one year)

NB: There are 390 possible attendance sessions/195 days (5 of which are INSET days) in one academic year. Each day being divided into 2 sessions.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence from School

The law states that '*children must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school*'. Department for Education – 'Working together to improve school attendance' Sept 2022

Absence from school falls into 2 categories – authorised and unauthorised. Only the school can authorise an absence, not parents or carers.

An **authorised absence** is where:-

- 1) A child is too ill to attend school and
 - o after a period of 5 days medical evidence has been provided
 - o for a child at a level of persistent absence (less than 90%) medical evidence is provided
 - o medical evidence is provided for absence immediately before or after a period of school holiday
 - o medical evidence is provided where there is a regular pattern to illness absence
- 2) Evidence is provided for exceptional medical appointments
- 3) The absence is unavoidable and exceptional
- 4) A leave of absence for exceptional circumstances has been granted by the school

An **unauthorised absence** is where:-

- 1) The school considers that the pupil was well enough to attend school but did not
- 2) Medical evidence is not provided for an illness absence of 5 days or more
- 3) Medical evidence is not provided for a child at a level of persistent absence
- 4) Medical evidence is not provided for illness absence immediately before or after a period of school holiday
- 5) Medical evidence is not provided where there is a regular pattern to illness absence
- 6) The school considers that the absence was not unavoidable or exceptional
- 7) A leave of absence request is declined but still taken (this includes holidays in term time)

4.1 Illness

All pupils should attend school unless they are too ill to do so. Illness may be either a physical illness or a mental health/emotional wellness issue.

However, illnesses may not mean a child cannot attend school. Schools and parents are asked to refer to the UK Health Guidance ['How long should you keep your child off school'](#) (**Appendix C**)

Where a child requires medication throughout the school day to enable them to attend school parents/carers should liaise with the school who may make suitable arrangements in line with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy. If there are circumstances affecting a child's health and ability to attend school parents/carers should again liaise with the school so that reasonable adaptations can be made (For example, in hay fever seasons it is not necessary to keep a child at home when school may be able to make adaptations).

Where a pupil has significant health or medical needs schools may develop a personalised 'Health Care Plan' which it will implement to ensure that the pupil continues to have excellent school attendance.

Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention.

Medical evidence is required for periods of absence due to illness of **5 days** or more. Medical evidence for any absence due to illness may be required for pupils at a level of persistent absence (attendance of 90% or less).

Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

All pupils should return to school as soon as they are well enough.

4.1.1 Pupils too ill to attend school and the Local Authority

*Where it is clear that the child will be away from school for **15 days** or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.* – DFE 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Statutory guidance for local authorities' January 2013

4.2 Other absences

There are very few circumstances where other absence from school will be authorised.

4.2.1 Medical Appointments Parents and carers are required where possible to make routine medical, dental and opticians outside the school day. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of medical appointments which fall inside the school day.

4.2.2 Hospital Appointments Parents are required to provide evidence of hospital appointments which fall inside the school day. Parents should avoid taking the child out for the entire school day for an appointment when it is practical for them to attend for part of the day. If the school considers that the child could have attend for part of the day but is absent for the whole day a proportionate unauthorised absence will be recorded.

4.2.3 Requests for Leave of Absence – exceptional circumstances

Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made at **least 2 weeks in advance** of the event and in writing using the Leave of Absence Request Form given in **Appendix D**. Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted. Parents do not have the right of appeal if a request for a leave of absence is declined, the head teacher's decision is final. We understand that in some circumstances notice of 2 weeks will not be possible. In these circumstances please contact the school office and arrange to speak to the Headteacher / Principal.

Leave of absence will NOT be granted for pupils who are at a level of persistent absence (less than 90%) or where attendance/punctuality are a concern.

Leave of absence will NOT be granted during periods of public examinations or internal school assessments.

Leave of absence will NOT be granted for holidays during term time regardless of circumstances.

Where leave of absence is NOT authorised and parents decide to take pupils out of school despite the school's decision, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and subject to a fixed penalty notices (fine). Only in extraordinary circumstances will unauthorised absence not be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

If the school grants a leave of absence request and subsequently obtains evidence that indicates an application was falsified, the school reserves the right to amend the child's attendance records to record the absence as unauthorised and apply for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

Circumstance	Number of Days which maybe be authorised	Additional Notes All requests MUST be made in writing, 2 weeks in advance using Appendix D
Religious Observance	2 day in any one academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice
Family wedding / religious celebration	2 days in any one period of absence Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice
Family Emergency/compassionate leave	2 days in any one period of absence Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice
Participation in a performance	Dependent on LA license Absence must <u>not</u> be authorised if licence is not obtained by parents from LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice Parents are required to obtain a licence from the LA Not to be authorised if a pupil's attendance would fall below 96% School to make arrangements for pupil to receive a suitable education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For not less than 6 hours per week and During each complete period of 4 weeks or if less than 4 weeks during that period, for periods of time not less than 3 hours a day and On days where pupils would be expected to attend school and For not more than 5 hours on any such day
Participation in a sporting event – competing at a county level or above only	Maximum of 4 days in any one academic year unless there are extraordinary circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice
Gypsy/Roma and Traveller Absence	NA but only travel for occupational circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absences will not be granted for any other reasons other than occupational circumstances

Schools are under no obligation to provide work for pupils who are absent from school, unless parents/carers have received a licence from the LA for their child to take part in sporting/arts/theatre events as part of a professional organisation, as detailed above.

Remote learning for pupils unable to attend school will only be provided in exceptional circumstances (e.g. long term illness supported by medical evidence, unexpected school closure).

Where a pupil fails to return to school after an agreed period of leave of absence, absence will be recorded as unauthorised, a fixed penalty notice (fine) requested and they may be reported to the Local Authority as 'A Child Missing in Education' and potentially lose their place at the school.

Grounds for Deleting a Pupil from School register – DfE – 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Sept 2022

Ground F - a pupil has not returned following a leave of absence - regulation 8(1)(f)

170. Where a pupil has been granted a leave of absence (under regulation 7) and the pupil has not attended school within the **ten school days** immediately after the end of the period granted, and:

- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and
- the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location, but they have not succeeded.

171. DfE's guidance on Children Missing Education sets out the expectations for schools and local authorities in respect of making reasonable enquiries.

5.0 Day to Day Procedures

5.1 Admissions Register

All pupils are placed on an admissions (school roll) and attendance register. The admissions register must include specific information.

5.1.2 Expected First Day of Attendance

Pupils (both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) must be entered on the admissions register on the first day they are expected to attend. If a pupil fails to attend on the expected first day of attendance the school must strive to locate the pupil and establish the reason for not attending.

When a pupil is added to the admissions register (other than at the usual transition points, for example, pupils who are registered at secondary school at the start of year 7) the school must notify the LA within **5 days**.

5.1.3 Deletion of a pupil from the admissions register (removal from school roll)

There are specific circumstances where a pupil maybe removed from the admissions register (school roll)

5.2 Attendance Registers

Schools must take an attendance register at the start of each morning session and once during the afternoon session. Our schools use information management systems to ensure the accurate recording of attendance information, the ease of data analysis and information sharing.

Attendance registers are legal documents and must be preserved for a period of **3 years**.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are recorded in a consistent way.

Attendance registers should not be amended or altered unless the reason for absence is established after the register has closed. Any amendments to the register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Schools must include specific information in attendance registers.

5.2.1 Morning Registration

The school gates open to welcome pupils at 08.40 (RJS) and 08.45 (RVIS) and close at 15.15 (RVIS) and 15.20 (RJS) Pupils arriving after the gates have closed should report to the school office, be signed in by parent, reason for lateness given and recorded. Pupils who are late, after the gates have closed, will be marked as late before the register closes.

Morning registration is open from 08.40 (RJS) and 08.45 (RVIS) arriving after registration closes (after 08.55) (RJS) and 09.00 (RVIS), will be marked as late after register closes. This is an unauthorised absence and negatively impacts a pupils attendance percentage. When a late pupil arrives on site they must register at Reception and a reason for lateness must be provided.

5.2.2 Afternoon Registration

Afternoon registration is open from 13.00 (RVIS) (RJS) Pupils arriving after registration closes (after 13.05) will be marked as late after register closes. This is an unauthorised absence and negatively impacts a pupil's attendance percentage.

5.2.3 Lesson Registration

In secondary schools attendance and punctuality registers are also taken for individual lessons.

5.2.4 Leaving The Premises During the School Day

Children that leave the school premises during the school day can only do so if an adult comes to collect them. At the Infants the adult will need to have the password if they are not the normal adult collecting. Proof of medical appointments etc. needs to be shown or a special leave of absence/holiday form has to be completed. Parents/Carers will need to ring the school if they intend to pick their child up from school during the day and give a reason why.

5.3 Notifying the school of your child's absence

Parents/carers must notify school on the first day the child is unable to attend school by 08.30

Parents must give detailed reasons for absence. For example, 'child has a throat infection/been sick etc' rather than just 'unwell/poorly'.

Parents and carers are expected to leave a message via the use of the 'Studybug's app. There is a link to the app on the Rothwell Schools website.

Where a child (including those of non-statutory school age) is absent from school and parents/carers have not contacted the school to inform them of the reason for absence the school will record an unauthorised absence and follow safeguarding procedures to ascertain the reason for absence and whereabouts of the pupil. This may involve the school making contact with parents and other named contacts on record. If by the third day of absence no contact has been made the school will carry out a home visit and report the absence to the DSL as a safeguarding concern. Where there are pre-existing concerns about the safety or well-being of a pupil the school may carry out a home visit on the first day of absence. Where there are serious concerns about the safety and well-being of a pupil whose reason for absence is not known the school may contact the police, local authority or social services.

6. Supporting Attendance and Punctuality

The Trust and our school's set high expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils. We strive to work with pupils and families in a supportive manner to remove any barriers to excellent attendance and punctuality; endeavouring to make mutually agreeable and reasonable adjustments and implement interventions to support this approach.

6.1 Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing attendance and absence the school and trust will follow a 'Graduated Response' (**Appendix E, F and G**). Schools may also:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Consider if an Early Help Assessment is appropriate
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures and develop an Attendance Support Plan
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

6.2 Working with parents to improve attendance

All pupils and parents/carers are urged to contact the school if they feel that they are facing any such challenges. Parents should contact Natasha Cross at the Infant School via parentsrvis@rothwell.pfschools.org.uk and Bridget Leder via parents.rjs@rothwell.pfschools.org.uk in the first instance.

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation. The school will regularly ensure that these emergency contacts are up to date.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer / Education Welfare Officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into

consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENDCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

6.3 SEND and health-related absences

We recognise that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with disabilities to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCP plans or IHCPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than **15** school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will implement an Attendance Support Plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

6.4 Persistent Absence PA (attendance less than 90%)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA. The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These may include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHCP plan or IHCP may be appropriate.
- Considering whether an Early Help Assessment may be appropriate

- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who are severely absent (attendance less than 50 %) and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6.5 Legal Intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect or parents fail to engage in the support being offered, the Attendance Officer will consider statutory action. This may involve requesting the LA to issue a fixed penalty notice (fine); referring to the LA for prosecution as a final resort and referring to children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Further information on legal intervention can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DfE Sept 2022

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106422/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance.pdf)

7.0 Monitoring and Analysing Attendance and Punctuality

The Strategic Lead for Attendance in each school will monitor and analyse attendance data **weekly** to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address attendance issues.

The school will collect and report attendance data to the Trust, Governors, School's Senior Leadership Team, lead professionals for vulnerable groups (e.g PP, SENDCO, EAL, heads of year etc) at least half-termly. Attendance will be reported to the CEO and Trust Board at least termly.

Data collected and analysed will include data for attendance, persistent absence and severe absence for:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Pupils from vulnerable groups
- Any other groups deemed to be at risk of poor attendance

A thorough analysis of data will be undertaken at both school and Trust level half-termly, termly and annually to identify patterns and trends; individual or groups of pupils needing support/intervention. Analysis will be used to develop and implement both cross Trust and individual school training and action plans/interventions to improve attendance.

Analysis will also include identification of:

- Types of absence (codes)
- Patterns in days of absence
- Lessons which have poor attendance
- Barriers to attendance

Attendance data will be bench marked against national data. The Director of School Improvement will visit each school within the trust at least termly to review attendance data, analysis, trends, impact of intervention and progress towards targets.

Schools are legally required to share information from their attendance registers with the local authority and in the future with the DFE.

8.0 Children Missing in Education

Where a pupil has been absent from school for a period of **10** consecutive school days without authorisation or has not returned within **10** days after an authorised absence a pupil can be removed from the admissions register when the school and LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupils. The LA will refer the case to a CME Tracking Officer who will complete further investigations and feedback to the school. The CME Tracking Officer will let the school know (usually within 10 working days) if the child can be removed from the school roll.

9.0 Reduced Timetables

Placing a pupil on a reduced timetable may be used as a strategy to support a pupil who is finding attending school a challenge. The use of part time or reduced timetables are used as a short term (ideally for no more than **6 weeks**) measure to ensure the successful return to full time education. The decision to place a pupil on a reduced timetable must be approved by the Headteacher following the completion of an Attendance Support Plan. These pupils must also be reported to the LA on a half termly basis.

10.0 Flexi-Schooling and Home Education

Parents are within their rights to make requests for flexi- schooling arrangements or to home educate their children. Any such requests should be discussed with the Headteacher. However, it is the ethos of Pathfinder Schools that children are best placed to learn in school and therefore requests for flexi- schooling arrangements will not be granted and home education will be discouraged.

11.0 Summary

Pathfinder Schools and its schools are committed to promoting excellent school attendance for all its pupils (both of statutory and non-statutory school age). We are also committed to working in a collaborative and supportive manner with pupils, families, external agencies and other schools and trusts to support excellent attendance.

Appendix A: Definition of Parental Responsibility

Taken from [Parental rights and responsibilities: Who has parental responsibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/parental-responsibility)

Who has parental responsibility

A mother automatically has [parental responsibility](#) for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he's either:

- married to the child's mother
- listed on the birth certificate (after a certain date, depending on which part of the UK the child was born in)

You can [apply for parental responsibility](#) if you do not automatically have it.

Births registered in England and Wales

If the parents of a child are married when the child is born, or if they've jointly adopted a child, both have parental responsibility.

They both keep parental responsibility if they later divorce.

Unmarried parents

An unmarried father can get parental responsibility for his child in 1 of 3 ways:

- jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (from 1 December 2003)
- getting a parental responsibility agreement with the mother
- getting a parental responsibility order from a court

Births registered in Scotland

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother when the child is conceived, or marries her at any point afterwards.

An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named on the child's birth certificate (from 4 May 2006).

Births registered in Northern Ireland

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother at the time of the child's birth.

If a father marries the mother after the child's birth, he has parental responsibility if he lives in Northern Ireland at the time of the marriage.

An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named, or becomes named, on the child's birth certificate (from 15 April 2002).

Births registered outside the UK

If a child is born overseas and comes to live in the UK, parental responsibility depends on the UK country they're now living in.

Same-sex parents

Civil partners

Same-sex partners will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg donor insemination or fertility treatment.

Non-civil partners

For same-sex partners who are not civil partners, the 2nd parent can get parental responsibility by either:

- [applying for parental responsibility](#) if a parental agreement was made
- becoming a civil partner of the other parent and making a parental responsibility agreement or jointly registering the birth

Appendix B: Definition of Statutory (compulsory) School Age

Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

5 years old

Your child is of "compulsory school age" on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday. Children becoming **5 years old** between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1st April.

Notes:

Pupils who are not of statutory school age cannot have an absence coded as 'unauthorised'

Once children are of school age (even if they are in a Reception Class). They are subject to the same register coding and absence procedures as any other child.

Appendix C: How Long Should You Keep Your Child Off School

Taken from [How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster \(text version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-long-should-you-keep-your-child-off-school-checklist-poster-text-version)

Promotional material

How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster (text version)

Updated 27 April 2022

Applies to England

Yes	Until
Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics
No	But make sure you let their school or nursery know about
Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek

Further advice and guidance on [managing cases of infectious diseases in all education and childcare settings](#) is available.

Appendix D: Request for Leave of Absence



Request for Leave of Absence

To be made to the Head Teacher -at least **2 weeks** in advance of date of requested absence

Name of School:		Name of Pupil:	
Class:		Year Group:	
Dates of planned absence:		From:	To:
Confirmed date of return to school:			
Reason for Request (continue overleaf if necessary):			
Name of Sibling		Name of Sibling	
School	Class/Year Group	School	Class/Year Group
<p>Parents are asked to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pathfinder Schools Attendance Policy fully complies with Government regulations. Statutory guidelines state "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances". The school may seek advice from the Trust Strategic Attendance Manager and liaise with the head teachers of the schools' any siblings attend. Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made at least 2 weeks in advance of the event. Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted. Parents do not have the right of appeal if a request for a leave of absence is declined, the head teacher's decision is final. Leave of absence will NOT be granted for pupils who are at a level of persistent absence (less than 90%) or where attendance/punctuality are a concern. Leave of absence will NOT be granted during periods of public examinations or internal school assessments. Leave of absence will NOT be granted for holidays during term time regardless of circumstances. Where leave of absence is NOT authorised and parents decide to take pupils out of school despite the school's decision, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and subject to a fixed penalty notices (fine). If the schools grants a leave of absence request and subsequently obtains evidence that indicates an application was falsified, the school reserves the right to amend the child's attendance records to record the absence as unauthorised and apply for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice. Where a pupil fails to return to school after an agreed period of leave of absence, absence will be recorded as unauthorised, a fixed penalty notice (fine) requested and they may be reported to the Local Authority as 'A Child Missing in Education' and potentially lose their place at the school. Schools are under no obligation to provide work for pupils who are absent from school, unless parents/carers have received a licence from the LA for their child to take part in sporting/arts/theatre events as part of professional organisation, as detailed above. 			
Circumstance	Number of Days which maybe be authorised	Additional Notes	
Religious Observance	2 day in any one academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice 	

Family wedding / religious celebration	2 days in any one period of absence Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice
Family Emergency/compassionate leave	2 days in any one period of absence Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice
Participation in a performance	Dependent on LA license Absence must <u>not</u> be authorised if licence is not obtained by parents from LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice Parents are required to obtain a licence from the LA Not to be authorised if a pupil's attendance would fall below 96% School to make arrangements for pupil to receive a suitable education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For not less than 6 hours per week and During each complete period of 4 weeks or if less than 4 weeks during that period, for periods of time not less than 3 hours a day and On days where pupils would be expected to attend school and For not more than 5 hours on any such day
Participation in a sporting event – competing at a county level or above only	Maximum of 4 days in any one academic year unless there are extraordinary circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice
Gypsy/Roma and Traveller Absence	NA but only travel for occupational circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absences will not be granted for any other reasons other than occupational circumstances

Name and Address of **both parents** (to be completed in all cases for all applications)

Signed (Parent with Parental Responsibility):

Date:

To be completed by school – copied retained on record – copy to parents (Tick as appropriate)	
Pupil's current attendance % (YTD)	Leave absence already taken this academic year

Absence authorised	No further action	Register Code/Reason	
Unauthorised Absence	Fixed Penalty Notice 5 continuous days or 10 unauthorised sessions in a 6 week period	Register Code/Reason	
	Yes No	Not deemed as exceptional circumstances	○
	Yes No	Unauthorised Holiday	G
	Yes No	Pupil at level of persistent absence	○
	Yes No	Religious observance above 1 day in academic year	○
	Yes No	Family celebration above 2 days in academic year	○
	Yes No	Exam period	○
	Yes No	Other – please specify	○
Head Teacher Signature:		Date:	

Appendix E: Graduated Response to Absence

GRADUATED RESPONSE TO ABSENCE

NOTES:

- **Any safeguarding concerns should be dealt with as a priority and following policies and procedures**
- **Process applies to ALL pupils including those of non-statutory school age**
- **Process can be expedited where there are attendance/safeguarding concerns**
- Suggest attendance is reviewed half termly
- Starting point will depend on the needs and priority in each school
- Starting point will depend on needs of family
- Make letters personal to pupil
- Send via post, email etc directly to the parents, not to be given to pupil to take home

	Scenario	Action	Documentation
First Day of Absence	No reason given for absence	School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil	School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls
Second Day of Absence	No reason established for absence	School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil	School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls etc
Third Day of Absence	No reason established for absence	School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil Carry out home visit Log on CPOMs	School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls etc
Day 4-10 of Absence	No reason established for absence	School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil Follow CME procedures (ask class mates, liaise with schools attended by siblings, check with previous school, contact with other agencies known to family/police) Escalate Safeguarding Concerns Continue to make home visits	School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls/visits etc
Day 10-20 of Absence	No reason established for absence	Refer to LA as CME	School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls/visits etc

Appendix F: Graduated Response to Attendance

GRADUATED RESPONSE TO ATTENDANCE			
General notification		Notification to all parents/carers of pupil attendance percentage via app, notification letter. Minimum: Termly	Attendance Percentage Notification Letter
	Scenario	Action	Documentation
STEP 1	Attendance is beginning to slip below school target of 97%	Informal support from school offered e.g. FSW support	
STEP 2 <i>Monitor from Autumn 1 term or when trigger is hit.</i>	Attendance trigger of 5 days/10 sessions or more of absence is hit.	School to send letter to parents from Headteacher Informal support via telephone or in person from school attendance lead	Attendance Letter 1 with attendance certificate or Attendance Letter 1 NS (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate
STEP 3	Further absence from school (5 weekly monitoring undertaken to reach 98% in period)	School to letter send to parents from Headteacher Informal support via telephone or in person from school attendance lead	Attendance Letter 2 with attendance certificate or Attendance Letter 2 NS (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate
STEP 4	Further continued absence from school (5 weekly monitoring undertaken to reach 98% in period) (where below 90% medical evidence needed for any absence due to illness)	Parents/carers asked to meet with Headteacher/member of SLT Notes of meeting kept (can be hand-written and scanned) Use RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING document alongside Attendance support plan (review in 5 weeks – if improved action close, if not progress to Step 4)	Attendance Letter 3 invite to meeting RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING Attendance support plan established
STEP 5 PATHFINDER SCHOOLS AIM involvement	Further continued absence from school and below 90% or cause for concern-referral for external support	Parents/carers asked to meet with Attendance Support Officer and member of school SLT School send request for involvement to Attendance Support Officer with 1) Copy of Attendance Intervention record 2) Copy of current attendance certificate 3) Copy of RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING	
OTHER POSSIBLE STEPS	Referral to EIPT Referral to OFPCC		
Early Help	FPN/Statutory Action		
Attendance Improves			Well done letter

Appendix G: Graduated Response to Punctuality

GRADUATED RESPONSE TO LATENESS

NOTES:

- Any safeguarding concerns should be dealt with as a priority and following policies and procedures
- Process applies to ALL pupils including those of non-statutory school age
- Process can be expedited where there are attendance/safeguarding concerns
- Suggest attendance/punctuality is reviewed half termly
- Starting point will depend on the needs and priority in each school
- Starting point will depend on needs of family
- Make letters personal to pupil
- Send via post, email etc directly to the parents
- Any safeguarding concerns should be dealt with as a priority and following policies and procedures

	Scenario	Action	Documentation
STEP 1	Lateness a concern (late before or after register closed on a regular basis)	School to send letter to parents from Headteacher	Lateness Letter 1 with attendance certificate or Lateness Letter 1 NS (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate
STEP 2	Punctuality not improved	School to send letter to parents from Headteacher	Lateness Letter 2 with attendance certificate or Lateness Letter 2 NS (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate
STEP 3	Punctuality not improved (where below 90% medical evidence needed for any absence due to illness)	Parents/carers asked to meet with head teacher/member of SLT Notes of meeting kept (can be hand written and scanned) Use RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING document (review in 6 weeks – if improved action close, if no progress go to Step 4)	Lateness Letter 3 invite to meeting with attendance certificate RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING
STEP 4 PATHFINDER SCHOOLS AIM involvement	Punctuality not improved and more than 15 lates in 12 week period	Parents/carers asked to meet with Attendance Support Officer and member of school SLT School send request for involvement to Attendance Support Officer with 4) Copy of Punctuality Intervention record 5) Copy of current attendance certificate 6) Copy of RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING	
OTHER POSSIBLE STEPS	Referral to EIPT Referral to OFPCC		
Early Help	FPN/Statutory Action		
Punctuality Improves			Well done letter