Castle View Primary and Nursery School Attendance Policy

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Working together to improve attendance

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parent/carers 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 pupils and parent/carers 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 pupils and parent/carers 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.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Introduction

The Governors and staff at Castle View Primary School are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Castle View Primary and Nursery School values all children. As set out in this policy we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

The Attendance Leader and Attendance Officer will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success! Attendance concerns will be raised with parent/carers if reasons are not known by the school, e.g. a long period of illness, this information may be shared with the Local Authority following concerns. Where we have concerns, or lack of engagement from families to improve attendance, we will follow the schools escalated approach to improving attendance. The schools escalated approach is child-centred and prioritises support and developing strong working relationships with families. Our aim is to always to work in partnership with parent/carers and any referral for consideration of a legal action is deemed to be a last resort at Castle View.

2. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Ensure the school is welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Work closely with the local authority Education Welfare Service.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parent/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority;
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate;
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources;

- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The school's link governor for attendance is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of this through monitoring visits and giving feedback to all governors.

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Referring to the local authority Education Welfare Service when appropriate for consideration of legal intervention. Legal sanctions include Parenting contracts, Education supervision orders, Attendance prosecution under S4441(1A) of the 1996 Education Act, Parenting orders and Fixed penalty notices
- Referring to the *Local Authority Education Welfare Service within 5 days if a new child is joining the school roll (outside of the usual transition points).*

- Inform the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of children whose parent/carers have notified the school in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of Children Missing in Education
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of all suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of all children on part time timetables not accessing a full-time education offer to which they are entitled.
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of any child who has missed or is likely to miss 15 days or more of education due to health reasons.
- Work together with the local authority Education Welfare Service to discuss attendance at Targeted Support meetings in particular children who are persistently or severely absent from school.
- Working with the parent/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Work together with other agencies including the local Authority Early Help Team to access support for families to help address the barriers to poor attendance where appropriate.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parent/carers through all available channels

4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parent/carers/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parent/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parent/carers/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Alicia Sheady and can be contacted via the school's telephone 01928563970 or by request at the school's main office.

4.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/designated senior leader for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when it might be appropriate to consider legal intervention and refer to the local authority Education Welfare Service.

The attendance officer is Mrs Ellie Golding and can be contacted via telephone on 01928 563970.

4.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office immediately after taking the register. Class teachers are also responsible for raising awareness within their classrooms and promoting the value of attending school.

4.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parent/carers/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parent/carers/carers and pupils to the class teacher and attendance officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.7 Parent/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent/carers, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parent/carers, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parent/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least 3 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs Ellie Goulding or Miss Alicia Sheady who can be contacted via telephone on 01928 563970

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and be on time to those sessions.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:40 and ends at 3:10.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via telephone on 01928 563970. If it is not possible to answer your call, a voice mail can be left and will be received by the office staff who may call you if they feel it necessary.

We will mark absence due to physical illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where attendance is identified as a concern or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness or it does not meet the required list of approved reasons, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provide evidence of this appointment.

However, we encourage parent/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Parents/carers of pupils who regularly arrive late will receive a telephone call from the class teacher to discuss and support with reasons for lateness. Where lateness continues, Mrs Sheady, the designated senior leader for attendance will call the parents/carers to discuss and support further. A target plan may be implemented.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit. If this is unsuccessful, the school may contact police to ensure the welfare of the child in line with our Safeguarding policy
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent/carers on each day that the absence continues, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

5.6 Reporting to parent/carers

The school will regularly inform parent/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels following our scaled approach to attendance.

- Below 96% (7 days/ 14 sessions absence per year) - Your child's class teacher will inform you when absence drops below 96% and will discuss supporting measures around this.
- Below 94% (11 days/ 22 sessions absence per year) – The school attendance lead, Miss Sheady, will invite you to a meeting to discuss reasons for your child's absence and discuss further support the school can offer. You may be issued with a target letter for a minimum of 6 weeks, where attendance will be expected to be 100%.
- Below 92% (15 days/ 30 sessions absence per year) – You will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher and/or deputy headteacher to identify reasons for your child's absence and whether any further support is needed.
- Below 90% (19 days/ 38 sessions absence per year) – You will be invited to a meeting with the local authority educational welfare officer and will be issued with an enforcement target letter with an agreed expectation of attendance over a period of time. If attendance continues to decline, you will be issued with a fine, or invited to

attend an APM meeting with the attendance lead and local authority. Further declines in attendance may result in additional fines or prosecution.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our school office or website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carers(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent/carers(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for

occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency or because the school premises are closed

6.2 Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. **A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.**

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent/carers the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parent/carers to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In

some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

- Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

- If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

- In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

6.3 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

6.4 Penalty Notices

The local authority can fine parent/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a Penalty Notice.

Before issuing a Notice to Improve, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a Penalty Notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution such as attendance planning meetings
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a Penalty Notice inappropriate

A Penalty Notice may also be issued where parent/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parent/carers that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent/carers who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/carers who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** Penalty Notice, the parent/carers must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same pupil, the parent/carers must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first Penalty Notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

6.5 Notices to improve

If the national threshold for a Penalty Notice has been met and support is appropriate, but parent/carers do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parent/carers a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parent/carers under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a Penalty Notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Our school will

- Promote a positive ethos and culture towards attendance where all staff, pupils and parents understand the importance of good attendance.
- Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion or behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school.
- Implement a range of rewards for pupils with high levels of attendance and those improving attendance such as 'Made it in Monday's' for children with 100% attendance from the previous week and 'Popcorn Friday' for classes with attendance over 97%.
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parents' evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements.
- Make reasonable adjustments for any pupils with disabilities or children facing barriers when coming to school.
- Follow our escalation model to promote and good attendance with supportive conversations (see appendix 5).

- Provide a full and diverse curriculum to engage and motivate pupils whilst still ensuring all pupils are able to access this regardless of academic ability.
- Make parents aware of the impact on attainment linked to attendance. This can be through visual posters, discussions, letters and events held at school.
- Enrich our breaktimes through O.P.A.L to ensure that every part of the school day is enriching for our children.

8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance such as Young Carers

For any children with complex barriers, school would always work with families to ensure that every effort is made to accommodate any needs that arise and support families in removing these barriers. This may include working with Early Help and Educational Welfare to put a plan of support in place.

8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHCP) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

8.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Following a lengthy period of absence, we would meet with families to discuss any issues that may arise before the child were to come back to school. This would be agreed with class teachers, SLT and families.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

It is a legal requirement that all schools grant the DfE access to its management information system so the attendance data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis and use the escalation model (appendix 5) to address these concerns.
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator and designated safeguarding lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parent/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary and follow escalation model (see section 6.3, above)
- Use target letters to parents to closely monitor attendance over a shorter period of time.
- Discuss individual cases with Educational Welfare and decide on the best course of action following this.

9.5 Targeting Support Meetings

As patterns of attendance are habitual, early identification and support is essential for individual pupils in need of help. Where barriers go beyond the classroom, this requires schools, local authorities, and other partners to work together to put joint support in place as quickly as possible. To enable this to happen, all local authorities are expected to organise regularly Targeting Support Meetings with each school in their area so the school's attendance leads and their point of contact in the local authority's Education Welfare Service can:

- Build strong relationships and work collaboratively.
- Identify, discuss, and agree action plans and joint approaches for severely absent pupils (where they do not already have a plan in place).
- Discuss and agree approaches for persistently absent pupils where they have barriers to attendance that require a multi-agency response to overcome.
- Agree which agency will act as lead practitioner, which will be the school in most cases, but can be a local authority or partner team where there are multiple needs are the most appropriate service.
- Where schools seek it, conduct data analysis, including comparisons to other schools in the geographical area or identify areas to focus attendance efforts on.

The meeting is not an exhaustive discussion of attendance of all pupils on roll or an audit of the attendance register. Meetings should be short virtual or in person conversations and are likely to be different lengths of time for different schools depending on the levels of need and number of pupils or pupil cohorts to be discussed. They should be focussed, with the allocated time prioritised in a way that benefits both the school and local authority. Meetings should not usually cover cases where joint action is not needed because support is already in place. The time together should be prioritised to discuss:

- Cases where there are out of school barriers to attendance, no existing plan in place and joint action from school, local authority and partners is needed.
- (Where time allows and the school would value the local authority's advice), cases where there are not out of school barriers and schools are expected to put an action plan in place.
- Cases that are already being discussed at other multi-agency meetings but where additional action is deemed necessary.

Halton has agreed a Targeted Support Meeting structure with headteachers and these will be attended by the Education Welfare Service, Headteachers and attendance leads. The Targeted Support Meetings will be chaired by the Council's School Improvement Team.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated and reviewed yearly. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy;
- Behaviour policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent/carers travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent/carers(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the

Code	Definition	Scenario
		local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: ● In police detention ● Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or ● Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2

Target letter

Date

Mr/Mrs ……

Address

Dear ……,

Registers for the whole school were reviewed recently and we would like to inform you that ……’s attendance is currently …….% which is well below the national average for primary attendance.

As a result of this, a target of 96% over 4 weeks has been set for …….. by the Educational Welfare Officer starting on …… until …….

We will be reviewing this target after the four-week period and should the target not be met you may be invited to a meeting in school.

Also, due to this below average attendance, we now require you to provide medical evidence for all absences from school. If medical evidence is not provided, all absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

The Education Welfare Officer checks the registers regularly and always investigates repeated patterns of absence whether authorised or unauthorised.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Mrs H Melarangi

Headteacher

Appendix 3

First Day Contact Letter

Dear Parents /Carers

FIRST DAY CONTACT

It is part of our school policy that we ask all parents/carers to let us know the reasons for a child's absence. In Castle View School we use a system called First Day Contact.

The school office is open from 8.30am for you to telephone when your child is absent. We would appreciate these calls before 9.30am. This ensures that we know children are safe and also reduces administration time.

If your child is absent and you have not telephoned us, we will follow the procedure below:

1. We will attempt to phone you directly and/or send an absence text.
2. We will attempt to phone alternative contacts that you have provided. (Please provide the school with at least 2 alternative contacts).
3. If we still do not have a reason for your child's absence, we **may** make a home visit.
4. If a home visit is made and there is no response, we **may**, **if there are reasons for concern**, make the decision to inform the police.

Please let us know if there are any reasons why we may have difficulty contacting you.

If you change address or telephone number, can you please let school know so that we can keep our records up to date and can get in touch with you should an emergency arise.

Yours sincerely

Mrs H Melarangi

Headteacher

Appendix 4

Absence Request Form

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM

A request for absence should be made in advance -before the proposed leave of absence

PUPIL DETAILS			
NAME:		Date of Birth:	
Class/Teacher:			

Dates of requested absence: **Date of return to school:**
Reason for leave of absence request:

I understand that keeping my child off school if my request is not granted, will result in the absence being recorded as Unauthorised. This may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to me by the Local Authority for the non-attendance of my child at school.

All information supporting your application for a leave of absence must be submitted along with your application to school. This includes any evidence supporting 'exceptional circumstances' for consideration by the head teacher. Any evidence submitted from an employer must be on letter headed paper **and signed by your employer**. Any supporting information submitted may be used as evidence should the case later proceed to court.

Parent/Carer Name:

Relationship to child:

Signature: ……

Date of Request: ……

Office Use

Seen by …….Agreement ……

Date……..

Absence Request Response

Dear

I regret to inform you that I am unable to agree to your request for ……. to be absent from school for the purpose of ……..

I do not feel that the reasons given by you for requesting a term time holiday indicate special or exceptional circumstances. Please refer to the school's attendance policy adopted by the school on the recommendation of Halton Borough Council.

I am sure that you will agree that it is in the children's best interest to attend school regularly in order to ensure that they achieve their full potential.

Whilst I understand that you may be disappointed by my decision, I trust that you understand that it has been taken with the children's best interest in mind.

I would remind you that I am required to inform the Education Welfare Service of any periods of unauthorised absence from school. The Education Welfare Service will then consider if any legal action or the issue of a Penalty Notice is appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Mrs H Melarangi

Headteacher

Appendix 5 – Escalation Model

