



Linden Lodge School

Provider of specialist education since 1903

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| Title: | Attendance Policy |
| Type: | POLICY |

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LINKED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS:

Child Protection
Equalities Policy
Home School Agreement

LINKED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS:

[The Education Act 1996, 2002, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2016](#)
[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, Sept 2024\)](#)
[Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE, August 2024\)](#)
[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(DfE, August 2024\)](#)

Equalities Statement:

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of these policies on equality and the possible implications for people with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Requests for Paper Copies:

If you require this policy in a different format e.g. print or braille please contact co-headteachers@lindenlodge.org.uk

Wellbeing statement of commitment

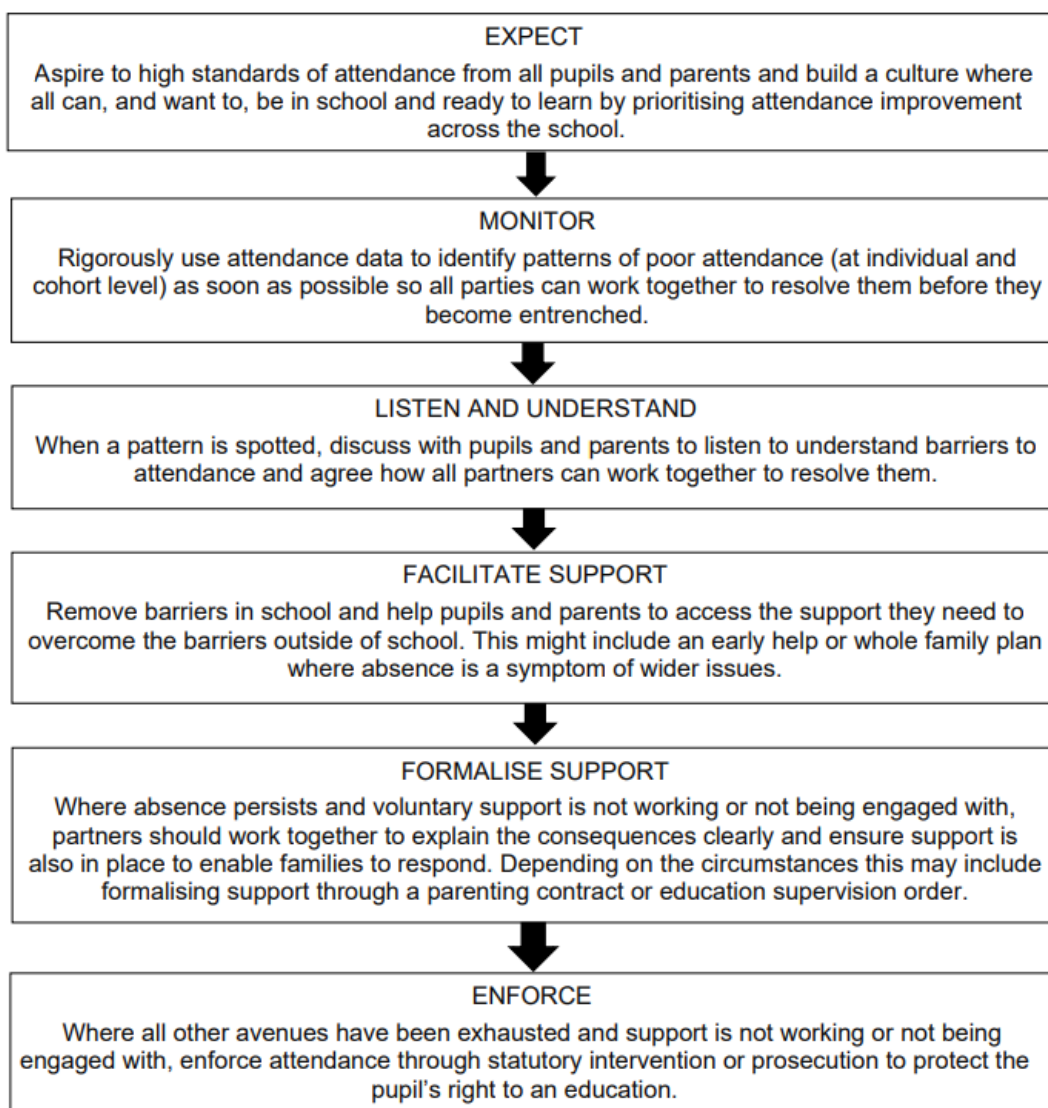
We are committed to providing a healthy working environment and improving the quality of working lives for all staff and students. The wellbeing strategy aims to support our mission, core values and freedom of thought and expression, freedom from discrimination and the recognition that our community is our greatest asset. For further information on our school's commitment to wellbeing, please see the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy document, or visit our school website.

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Introduction:

Linden Lodge School recognises that effective learning is dependent upon regular and punctual attendance. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually, aiming for 100% attendance, with the school fully supporting them in this role. If there are problems that affect pupils' attendance, school values highly its partnership with parents and carers and will work with them to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.



Regular and punctual attendance will enable pupils to fully benefit from the educational experiences and opportunities provided by the school, supporting their academic success and the development of their talents. Each pupil is a valued and unique member of the community who will be encouraged to achieve the highest attendance possible.

Attendance is recorded in school in a morning and afternoon. Pupils not attending are given an absence mark which is either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. (See also section 5)

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as illness.

Unauthorised absences are those absences which are not reasonable or acceptable: for example, birthdays, family days out, shopping and non-medical appointments.

Parents and carers should explain absence but it can only be authorised by the Co-Headteachers using the national regulations and guidance. **In exceptional circumstances**, the Co-Headteachers can authorise an absence using their discretion. In doing so, they will take into consideration the individual pupil's circumstances.

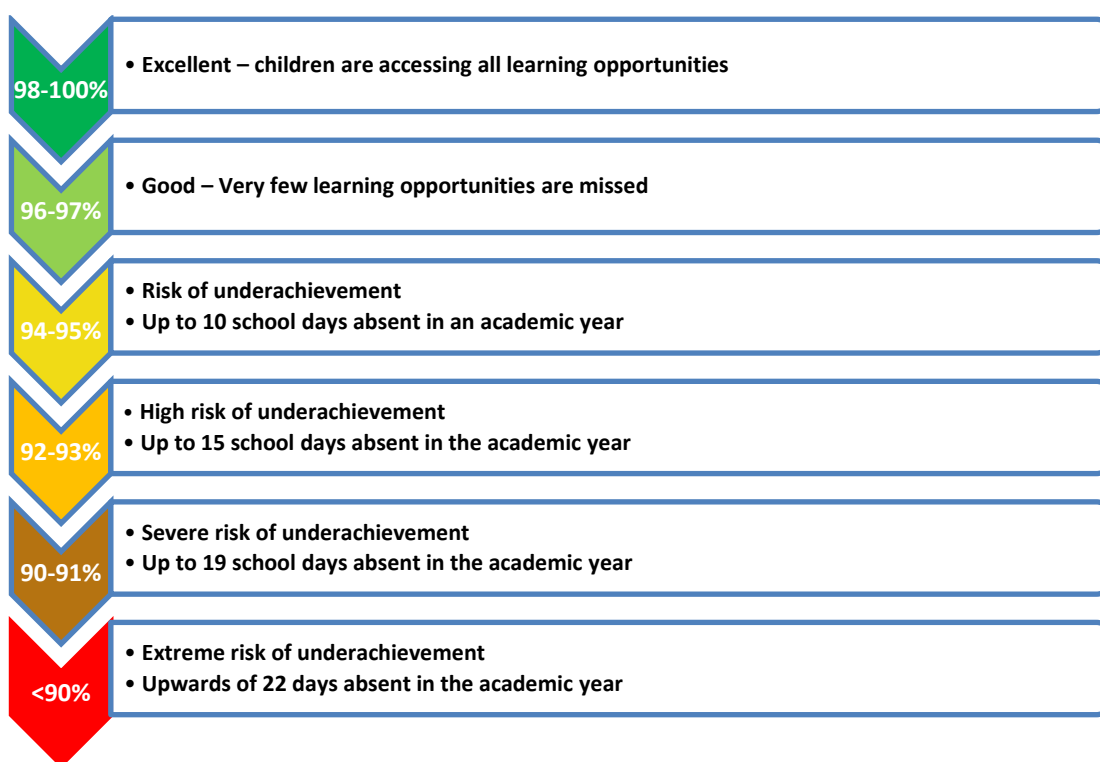
Staff and governors will promote the importance of attendance and punctuality with parents, carers and children; regularly review and evaluate attendance data in order to ensure that attendance is in line with, or above, national averages; and monitor the implementation of this policy and its contribution to the fulfilment of the school's vision and aims

1. Aim

The aim of Linden Lodge School's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as rigorously as is possible.

Linden Lodge School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We shall endeavour to build stronger relationships with families so we can work with them to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

What we mean by 'good' attendance:



This policy is supported by our policies on *safeguarding, anti-bullying, and behaviour.*

2. Legal framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) *to their age, ability and aptitude, and*
- b) *to any special education needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

A person begins to be of compulsory school age –

- a) *when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and*
- b) *otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.*

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year –

- a) *if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,*
- b) *if they attain that age on that day, or*
- c) *(unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.*

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Linden Lodge School is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Co-Headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy

The Co-Headteachers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the Co-Headteachers are responsible for:

- 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Advising the Co-Headteachers when to issue fixed-penalty notices

School Leadership Team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
- Report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

The nominated attendance champion

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school attendance champion is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 5)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing weekly attendance reports to the school safeguarding team and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Co-Headteachers
- Providing training in use of the School Management Information System (SMIS) and advising on any updates to statutory requirements
- Ensuring that attendance records are recorded accurately, in electronic format, using the SMIS
- Ensuring that the registers for each session are completed using the attendance and absence codes as prescribed by the DfE statutory guidance (*Working together to improve school attendance 2024* paragraphs 283 to 407)
- Ensuring that daily attendance data sharing with the DfE is enabled (*Working together to improve school attendance 2024* paragraph 51).
- Representing the school at termly attendance analysis meetings with the Wandsworth Borough Council Single Point of Contact Education Welfare Officer.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Ensure that they are following the correct systems and codes for recording attendance and that attendance is recorded daily into the SMIS at the designated time;
- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Make sure their child/children attend(s) every school day on time.
- Call the school absence line to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return (see section 5.2);
- Attend pupil annual review / EHCP review meeting once a year;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours or at the beginning or end of the day so that the child can attend part of the day;
- Do not take their children out of school during term time. If parents/carers would like to make a special request for this, they may do so by applying, in writing, to the Co-Headteachers;
- Sign a home-school agreement;
- Do everything they can to have the pupil ready at their designated pick up time (LA transport).
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school

attendance at home;

- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance;

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents/carers, and the school timetable;
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark 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
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 09:50 (Monday) and 08:50 (Tuesday-Friday) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 10:00 (Monday) and 09:00 (Tuesday-Friday) and will be kept open for 30 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:30.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school absence line (see also sections 3 and 5.2).

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

The school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

4.3 Planned absence

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

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible (see also section 3). Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 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

4.5 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/carer 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 send a school representative to call at the family home and/or consider involving an education welfare officer
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels

5. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

5.1 Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school in writing and evidence is provided. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

5.2 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day/each day of absence. The reason for absence will be recorded in the register and form part of school records. We work closely with families regarding planned absence due to illness or operations. With the support of therapists and families we aim to get the pupil back in to school as soon as possible.

5.2a

Linden Lodge pupils who are unable to attend school daily due to exceptional circumstances e.g. ill health, recovery period, or an agreement for 'Long Distance Learning'

These pupils may require therapy outreach visits to set up, establish and/or support the pupil and their parent(s)/carer(s) with regards to their therapy input. This support will include the offer of face to face contact, with ongoing virtual input when and where appropriate.

5.3 Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible. Therefore, appointments should be made first thing in the morning or last thing in the day.

5.4 Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement. Other valid authorised absences include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 Age 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.

5.5 Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The class teacher will arrange for work to be sent home.

5.6 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and special leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents/carers do not have the automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for this reason. Requests for leave from school must be made in writing to the Co-Headteachers three weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

The Co-Headteachers will consider all applications for special leave. When deciding whether to authorise absence, the Co-Headteachers will take the special circumstances into account.

Examples of these might be:

- Medical care, including treatment abroad
- Overseas respite

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will, if appropriate, outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school.

Parents/carers should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

5.7 Religious observance

Linden Lodge School recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

6. School action: following up absences

Class registers are completed via SIMS and followed up by the reception team and the attendance champion. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents/carers.

If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Head of Department or class teacher will contact the parent/carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

6.6 Penalty notices and the local authority Code of Conduct

The point at which Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (eg. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

Legal action will always be a last resort and the school and other professionals working with families should explore all avenues to engage parents and maximise the opportunities for support available to meet a family's needs first.

Information about the Council's Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices can be found online.

7. Attendance monitoring

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, Linden Lodge Staff and governors will regularly review and evaluate attendance data in order to ensure that attendance is in line with, or above, national averages. In monitoring the implementation of this policy and its contribution to the fulfilment of the school's vision and aims, consideration will be given to the unique needs of Linden Lodge pupils and each application for special leave or period of absence will be assessed individually.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts

that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

| Code | Definition | Counted as present or at an approved activity |
|--------|------------------------------------|--|
| / or \ | Present am or pm | Present in school during registration. |
| L | Late | Late arrival before the register has closed |
| B | Educated off Site | The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school. |
| K | Education provision provided by LA | Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school |
| P | Sporting Activity (Approved) | Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. |
| V | Educational trip | A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation. |
| W | Work Experience | A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience. |

| Code | Definition | Counted as absent, authorised |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|
| C | Other Authorised Absence | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance |
| C1 | Other Authorised Absence | Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad |
| C2 | Other Authorised Absence | Pupils on part-time timetables |
| J1 | Interview | Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution |
| E | Excluded | If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion. |
| M | Medical/Dental Appointments | The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours. |
| R | Religious Observance | The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body. |
| S | Study Leave | Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise. |
| T | Traveller Absence | Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school. |
| I | Illness | This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness. |

| Code | Definition | Counted as absent, unauthorised |
|-------------|------------------------------|---|
| G | Family Holiday (Not Agreed) | The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher. |
| N | No Reason | The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O. |
| O | Unauthorised Absence | If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised. |
| U | Late (After Register Closes) | Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U. |

| Code | Definition | Codes that are not counted, so will not affect attendance figures |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---|
| D | Dual Registration | The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school. |
| X | Non-statutory school age absence | Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday. |
| Y1 | Unable to attend | Absence due to transport normally provided not being available. |
| Y2 | Unable to attend | Widespread disruption to travel |
| Y3 | Unable to attend | Part of school closed. |
| Y4 | Unable to attend | Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures). |
| Y5 | Unable to attend | Pupils in the criminal justice system. |
| Y6 | Unable to attend | Absence due to public health guidance or law. |
| Y7 | Unable to attend | Any other unavoidable cause. |
| Z | Pupil Not On Roll | This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school. |
| # | School Closed To Pupils | This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station. |