Attendance Strategy

23/24

To be reviewed: July 2024

Leadership and Management

Our vision for attendance is linked inextricably to our whole school vision:

To provide, in partnership with the school community, a safe, happy and cooperative environment in which our unique pupils live our school values and face challenges with confidence, aspiring to excel.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting exemplary attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. Good attendance and punctuality are essential if pupils are to take advantage of the opportunities our school offers and to gain the appropriate life skills. We strongly believe that full and regular attendance, alongside excellent punctuality, is vital for a child to maximise their potential and develop an enjoyment of learning alongside creating a feeling of belonging in their class, school and community.

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values, we will be helping to ensure our children benefit fully from the educational opportunities available to them. This in turn will equip them for life, impacting positively upon their future as citizens, employees and employers.

Our school aims to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality through good working relationships and engagement between staff, pupils, parents/carers,

All staff will encourage excellent attendance. Attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Our targets for attendance are:

- Ambitious whole school target of 97% attendance for the academic year.
- Close the attendance gap between those children eligible for FSM and those children not.
- Close the attendance gap for children with SEND.

- Create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child/young person aims for excellent attendance.

- Provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, children and young people and develop mutual-cooperation between home and the school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues.

We will communicate the following information about attendance to staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders as follows:

- ➢ Our attendance vision and targets.
- ➢ Absence from school affects pupils' attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- ➢ That absence from school can pose a safeguarding risk for our pupils.

We will communicate using the following:

- regular attendance bulletins;
- the school website;
- regular agenda item at staff meetings;

- information leaflets;
- targeted support;
- information shared in assemblies;
- social media accounts;
- assemblies;
- half termly reporting of attendance figures to parents;
- regular agenda item at governors meetings.

We expect good attendance and punctuality from our pupils. We use the following strategies to ensure that pupils understand this expectation:

- incentives for good attendance through class data;
- reminders and updates in assemblies;
- pastoral support for pupils with poor attendance;
- personal attendance plans for identified pupils.

We empower staff to take responsibility for attendance by:

- offering relevant training to help staff to promote good attendance;
- sharing relevant data so that they know which groups are most at risk of poor attendance;
- encouraging form class teachers to talk to their pupils about attendance;
- enabling staff to chat informally with parents/carers about attendance.

We recognise that attendance is an important area of school improvement. We demonstrate our commitment to this by making sure it is resourced appropriately, to create, build and maintain systems to promote good attendance. We do this by:

- employing a designated attendance administrative assistant;
- allocating a leadership morning every five weeks to monitoring, action planning and analysing attendance;
- accessing resources and support through Telford and Wrekin Attendance Support Team.

Our designated attendance champion on the senior leadership team is:

Becca Butler – Head Teacher

Their responsibilities include:

- developing and monitoring the school's attendance policy;
- monitoring attendance;
- supporting and managing other staff with specific responsibilities for attendance;
- devising, implementing and monitoring any interventions or escalation procedures;
- ensuring attendance objectives are included in the relevant sections of the school improvement plan.

We ensure that our staff are trained to use our attendance systems effectively and promote good attendance in school. Examples of the training offered to our staff include:

- regular agenda item at staff meetings (teacher and support staff)
- support offered through Telford and Wrekin Attendance Support Team
- keeping up to date with relevant key guidance

We ensure that our governors have an accurate view of attendance at our school so that they can offer effective support and challenge. We keep governors informed by:

- headteacher's reports;
- termly attendance updates in meetings;
- governor scrutiny of attendance data;
- link governor visits.

Relationships and Communication

As a school, we understand that developing a welcoming and positive culture is important in building trust and engagement and therefore promoting good attendance. We do this by:

- promoting an ethos of 'botheredness';
- leadership available on both gates at the beginning and end of the school day;
- offering a wide range of extracurricular activities so that pupils can build better relationships with staff;
- ensuring that strong pastoral systems are in place so that pupils and families are supported when needed;
- organising a range of events for parents to build a sense of community;
- ensuring that staff phone families with positive news, rather than only contacting them when there is a problem.

We strive to communicate effectively with staff, pupils and families so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. Our strategies for doing this include:

- written communications, such as letters home and information leaflets;
- online communications, such as the school website, emails and the use of social media;
- telephone contact, including welfare calls;
- face-to-face interactions, such as parents' evenings, information sessions and parenting workshops.

When required, we work with partners to promote good attendance. Examples include:

- Attendance Support Team.
- Strengthening Families Team.
- Family Connect.
- Behaviour Support Services.

We strive to model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.

All staff members should:
- treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries;
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively;
- understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity;
- communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and wellbeing.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- treat staff with respect;
- actively support the work of the school;
- ask staff for support when this is needed;
- let us know as soon as possible when there are issues which may affect absence;
- Keep their contact details up to date.

We communicate this expectation by:

- using home-school agreements;
- making it easy to contact school when there is an issue;
- providing a designated contact for families that need extra support.

Systems and Data

We use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve and incentivise attendance and to address absences. Our systems include:

- weekly class attendance shared and celebrated in assembly;
- weekly class attendance displayed on classroom doors;
- half-termly attendance report for pupils and parents;
- regular attendance monitoring by SLT with clear protocol for actions (see intervention escalation process);
- personalised targets for individual pupils, depending on their needs and circumstances.

We use robust school systems to provide useful data at cohort, group and individual levels to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups. These groups include:

- children who are eligible for free school meals;
- children who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- children who have a social worker, including looked-after children;
- children who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

We analyse attendance data regularly to identify issues and facilitate early intervention. This includes raising concerns with partner agencies that work with families.

- Completing an Early Help Assessment
- Referral to School Nurse Service

Our school attendance policy clearly outlines:

- the key principles for good attendance;
- expectations pupils need to follow;
- routines;
- consequence systems.

We make sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and that their impact is reviewed regularly. The escalation procedures to address absence are:

- understood by pupils, parents and carers;
- implemented consistently;
- reviewed regularly.

We ensure this by:
- providing information about escalation procedures and attendance interventions on the school website, information leaflets, open evenings and via any other relevant means;
- explaining the systems in place during targeted attendance meetings with families;
- monitoring the use and effectiveness of interventions to ensure that these are implemented consistently;
- providing training and support for staff who are directly responsible for improving attendance;
- gathering data on the escalation procedures to address absence;
- using this data to analyse whether the current systems are working and to identify areas for further development;
- ensuring that a member of the senior leadership team has responsibility for reviewing escalation procedures regularly.

Intervention

We will use the following data to identify where attendance interventions need to be targeted:

- register inspections;
- analysis of data from school registers (including analysis of absence codes);
- analysis of punctuality data;
- benchmarking across classes and groups;
- analysis of trends in attendance (on an individual, group and whole-school level);
- analysis of information recorded on the school safeguarding systems;
- records of home visits and their outcomes;
- records of interventions offered to individuals and groups and their outcomes;
- information provided by pastoral and other staff.

We will monitor and analyse this data regularly to ensure that interventions are delivered quickly to address absence.

We use specialist staff to support pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance. Specific roles and responsibilities include:

- Learning Mentor – can offer pastoral support to pupils and their families;
- SENDO – can support families through addressing any learning/behaviour concerns;
- Head and Deputy – on the gate at the beginning and end of each day to develop positive relationships with families and be available to talk through concerns/offer early help from school.

We will create action plans in partnership with families and also include agencies that may be supporting families.

- Personalised attendance action plans created in discussion with families

- Clear, measurable targets;
- Specific actions/responsibilities for school, parents, pupils and external partners identified;
- Review date agreed;

We will monitor the impact of any interventions, making adjustments if necessary, and use the findings to inform future strategy.

The following people are responsible for monitoring our attendance interventions:

Becca Butler – Head teacher
Nikki Harvey – Deputy head teacher

Where interventions fail to address attendance issues, we will identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention.

The findings of monitoring will inform future action plans.

We will follow local authority codes of conduct, policies and procedures and make referrals for statutory intervention when school-based interventions have not resulted in improved attendance and relevant triggers/thresholds are met. The person responsible for this is:

Becca Butler – Head teacher

This strategy will be reviewed annually.

By: Senior leadership team

Date of last review: new strategy doc
Date of next review: July 2024