



Attendance Policy

R. Davidson

January 2024 – Annually Reviewed

Approved by Chair _____

Review Date _____

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Work within legal guidance to offer every child of school age the opportunity to a full time education
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school.
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- raise the overall school attendance to be at least in line with national and to improve attendance to above the national average.

Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

In line with DFE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance', in this policy, a parent means.

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 (Year 6), have higher rates of attendance than those with the lowest attainment.

Contents of the admissions and attendance register

The law requires all schools to have an admission register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the admission register and have their attendance recorded in the attendance register:

- The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.
- A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

School must also take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Using guidance from Working Together to Improve School Attendance,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

pages 55 – 65, the attendance officer will code attendance accurately for both absence and presence.

Registers are legal records; school must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.

Procedures for Punctuality

- After 8:45am late pupils must enter via the main office.
- Pupils who arrive after 8:45am are late and recorded on the signing in system and continue to class and recorded as 'L'
- Children who come into school after 9:05am are recorded as 'U'.

Monitoring of lateness will be undertaken by the Attendance Officer and reported to the Attendance Lead and Head Teacher. Reoccurring problems will lead to parents being invited into school to address the concern.

Procedures for Pupil Authorising Absence

- Authorising attendance will be conducted using an escalated approach detailed in this policy in line with Section 175 Education Act 2002 which details that school has a safeguarding responsibility to investigate unexplained absence
- It is the Parents' responsibility to inform school of absence and subsequently, reasons for absence
- Parents are required to contact school before 10:00am on every day of absence to confirm the reason of absence and its likely duration.
- NOTE: Parents who routinely fail to make contact with the school will have all absences unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been supplied parents are contacted to clarify the reason for absence
- School will commence absence queries by telephone at 9.15am.

- The school will undertake a home visit in order to establish reasons for absence. This will occur on the:
 - **First** day of unreported absence if a pupil's attendance is below 90% by the Family Liaison Team or SLT
 - **Second** day of unreported absence if a pupil's attendance is below 96% by the Family Liaison Team or SLT
 - **Third** day of unreported absence if a pupil's attendance is above 96% by the Family Liaison Team or SLT
- If we are unable to make contact via home visit, we will call other contacts listed to try to establish a reason for absence and to check everything is ok.

Working together to improve attendance – Treating the root cause of absence

EXPECT

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



MONITOR

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



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to 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 parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting 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 or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

To successfully treat the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families using this guidance. Schools will address irregular attendance in the following way.

Pupils With Attendance Which Causes Concern

Parents of children who have attendance below 96% are identified as causing concern. Attendance will be monitored along with actions taken and targets for attendance will be set. Children with attendance below 90% are considered to be 'Persistently Absent' (PA).

Where pupils' attendance is **Below 96% Absence concern (A)** the following intervention pathway will be followed:

- Below 96% and is falling, parents of pupils will receive a letter stating current attendance and advising of school's concern. This letter is sent home by post
- Monitoring of attendance will be shared with parents using their registration certificate also detailing the number of days they have missed to give perspective to the absences

If attendance continues to fall over the following two weeks without justifiable reasoning, the next step in the attendance will be followed:

- Letter sent to parents advising that all absences from this point will require medical evidence to be authorised. Medical evidence can include but is not limited to.
 - i. Appointment card/letter
 - ii. Prescription – pre collection
 - iii. Photocopy of named medication from chemist – must be within the absence timeframe where short illness occurs. Ongoing conditions will be subject to discretion of the Headteacher
 - iv. Forwarded text message or email from medical service

This level support is detailed in Working Together To Improve School Attendance as the 'Voluntary Support' section.

Attendance will continue to be monitored for a further two weeks. Where continuous unauthorised absence occurs:

- Meeting with attendance lead and attendance officer to discuss reasons for absence and available in school support solutions to help improve attendance
- Improving attendance plan to be created and agreed to by parent, school and where appropriate the student.
- FLT to be advised of concerns and Early Help Assessment offered.

This plan will be reviewed fortnightly to decide on next course of action. Where unauthorised absences continue to occur:

- Parent to be invited to Trust Panel meeting pre referral to EWO for legal proceedings

This is detailed in Working Together to Improve School Attendance as the 'Formal Support' section.

Continued unauthorised absence will result in referral to the Education Welfare Officer where legal action is a possibility. Where formal support has not improved attendance, there are two pathways of support which are statutory children's social care involvement or attendance prosecution. These referrals will be actioned at the advice of the Education Welfare Service

Where pupils' attendance is **Below 90% Persistent Absence (PA)**

- Below 90% School action is followed up by the EWO
- The school will inform the school Nurse if absences are authorised
- Letter will be sent to both Parent/Carer's by post advising of referral to EWO
- If the EHA is refused or has no response and unauthorised absences continue, legal proceedings will take place
- Regular meetings will take place involving the school and EWO to monitor attendance and discuss cases
- The Headteacher will regularly update the governors with overview of attendance and formally report to the governing body termly

Procedures for Monitoring and Promoting Attendance

School uses a tracking system to monitor weekly attendance of all pupils on roll. The tracker will update each Monday by the Trust Data Manager to enable the attendance team to see concerns as they begin. Interventions will be tracked in a way to evidence the work carried out to support pupils and their families in improving their attendance. The information gathered within this tracking system will facilitate the decisions made in managing attendance. The data collected will monitor attendance at individual student level, year group and cohort to identify trends and patterns within school.

- As advised in 'Working together to promote school attendance' data will be analysed weekly at school level and shared at all levels
- Targeted intervention for pupils and families deemed to be at risk of being persistently absent will be put in place. This will be evaluated and impact measured.
- Full trend analysis will be used to identify whole school and cohort patterns and trends. This information will then inform future actions.
- Attendance data will be benchmarked against national, regional and trust data presented through Trust documentation
- Data and intervention impact is presented to the trust board & governing body termly

Staff Responsibilities

The school register is a legal document and as such should be filled in accurately and timely as set out in Appendix 2.

All staff will be given training on attendance detailing:

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

Attendance officers and leads will be supported by trust to gain:

- The necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data
- Any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Expectations of Governing Bodies in relation to promoting school attendance

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge.

In line with the expectation set out in 'Working together to improve school attendance', our governors and Trust Board will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

Early Help Assessment

The Early Help Assessment (EHA) is a local assessment that is used by all agencies working with children and their families within the community, it aims to agree what extra help may be needed to support a child or young person at an early stage to prevent escalation of concerns.

There are many children & families who can be supported via the Early Help; however this support will only be provided once consent is sought by the adult responsible for the child.

When attendance becomes a concern, children can be supported via an Early Help plan to encourage attendance to school. The Attendance Officer or the Family Liaison Support Worker can become the named lead to deliver the Early Help, (Refer to trigger point 2) this will be introduced within the earliest stages of communication. Dependant on the personal circumstances and support required, the lead will be appropriately allocated to advocate and create an action plan that best fits the needs of the child. At this point the lead will make contact with the parent/carer to discuss what offer of support is required in order for the child and family to receive the best opportunities they deserve. The Early Help will be regularly reviewed with parents/carers including the child to evidence progress and any further support required.

Please refer to the Early Help Policy for further information.

Leave of Absence

The school follows the local authority procedures when parents apply for leave of absence. All applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis and the norm for one application may not be for another.

Application for Leave of Absence

- Parent/carer collects Local Authority Leaflet from school
- Parent/carer returns completed application form which is dated at the school office
- Attendance Officer attaches attendance information and forwards application to Headteacher
- Headteacher applies approval criteria
- Application forwarded to Attendance Officer who informs parent of outcome by appropriate letter
- Applications are processed within five working days

Leave of absence that is approved – authorised absence

Leave of absence that is not approved – unauthorised absence

The Headteacher and governing body approve leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness, and significant events such as a family wedding or cultural/religious reasons. As decided by the governors of the school, the Headteacher, apart from highly exceptional cases, can only authorise up to 5 days leave of absence in an academic year. Any further leave of absence in that academic year will not be authorised.

If any further leave of absence exceeds 5 days in succession the school will contact the Education Welfare Service who may serve a penalty notice.

Exceptional Circumstances

The government and schools realise that it is more expensive to go on holiday during the school holiday period than at other times of the year. However, it is the view of the DfE that a child should be in school for the 39 weeks of the academic year and that holidays in term time in whatever form are not considered to be 'exceptional' circumstances.

Holidays are not a good enough reason for taking a child or young person out of school and will not be approved or judged as an 'exceptional circumstance'.

Exceptional circumstances will be determined by the Head teacher once all information has been gathered. A member of the SLT will meet with all parents to discuss any Leave of Absence requests to ensure the Headteacher has all relevant information before making the decision to approve or decline the request for absence.

Absence from school under exceptional circumstances is slightly different from taking a holiday in term time. In deciding whether or not to grant a leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances,' the following is considered:

- What is the normal pattern of attendance for the child(ren) whose parent is asking for a leave of absence?
- What is 'exceptional' for one family might be the norm for another family

If the request for a leave of absence is not approved by the Headteacher but the parent takes their child away, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, and the Headteacher may refer the matter on to the education welfare service. The parent is then at risk of receiving a £60.00 fixed penalty notice per child per week per parent. If this is not paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice the cost rises to £120 which must be paid between 21 and 28 days of receipt of the notice. All penalty notices will be delivered by hand or first-class post. If the notice has not been paid in full by 28 days of receipt, the council must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice. Once issued a penalty notice may only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Proof has been established that the penalty notice has been issued to the wrong person
- The notice ought not to have been issued e.g., where it has been issued outside the terms of the code of conduct or no offence has been committed

This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school not for non-payment of the fine.

Prosecutions are brought under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

Parents/carers need to be mindful that a conviction for this offence can result in a criminal record.

Non-Return from Leave of Absence

It may occur that a child does not return within the stated period of leave of absence. Initially normal school absence procedures are followed. Where a child has not returned within the ten days immediately after the agreed period, children will be subject to Children Missing in Education procedures.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day:

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time
- Parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site
- All pupils leaving with permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school in case of being stopped by Truancy Patrol
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person*

Truancy Patrol

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers.

Education Welfare can also commence legal proceeding against parents under section 444 Education Act 1996 or apply to family proceeding court for an ESO to secure regular attendance.

Modified Timetable - MTT

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. Where a child is considered to need a shorter day for a brief period of time, and a modified timetable can be considered, the authorisation of the modified timetable lies with the Headteacher.

- All MTT's are at the agreement of the parent and their consent can be withdrawn at any time
- Once agreed verbally, School must inform Family Liaison Lead and Data Manager by email.
- A MTT is not a long-term solution but rather a short term 'relief' to find a better solution to the situations presented. Once begun, they should be reviewed with parents weekly by telephone with paperwork signed to acknowledge the agreement and after four weeks in a formal minuted meeting.
- FLT to complete home visits to assure work is completed whilst at home
- MTT contract and Risk Assessment must be signed by parent/carers and school and uploaded to CPOMs
- If a child is present for part of the session agreed, they will be marked as '/' - present' however, where the MTT makes the child absent for a whole session, they will be marked as 'C - other authorised circumstances'
- At the end of the MTT agreement, reintegration paperwork will be completed by the Family Liaison Officer at the reintegration meeting. This will be uploaded to CPOMs and the Family Liaison Lead will be notified.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the school as soon as possible.

Pupils are expected to continue attending the school until the agreed start date at their new school. If pupils do not attend during this period, the EWO will be notified. On their agreed start date at their new school, and when attendance there has been verified by the new school, we will delete the pupil's name from the admission register and transfer the appropriate information via the S2S System in line with DFE guidance.

In the event of a new student accepting a place in school, an agreed start date should be formalised with parents in writing. School will enter the pupil's name on the admission register on the first day that it is agreed that the pupil will attend and record attendance and absences as appropriate. If the pupil fails to attend on the first day, school absence procedures should be followed and a reason for absence should be sought. Transfer processes through S2S system should be followed.

If any pupil who is going to be removed from the school roll for any of the 15 reasons given under Section 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the school will inform the Local Authority.

When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority must include:

- (a) the full name of the pupil,
- (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides,
- (c) at least one telephone number of the parent,

(d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and

(e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register

This should be done by completing the local authority off registration form. The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion.

In respect of Reception children who do not take up their allocated place schools should contact the parents to see if they still want the school place. If parents confirm they do not want the place, schools should not put the pupil on roll and notify school admissions.

Children Missing in Education

Children are considered to be 'Children Missing in Education' (CME) as listed in Working Together to Improve School Attendance in the following circumstances

Where a pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of 20 school days or more and:

- at no point has the absence been authorised by the school (under regulation 6(2))
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause.
- the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location, but they have not succeeded.

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:

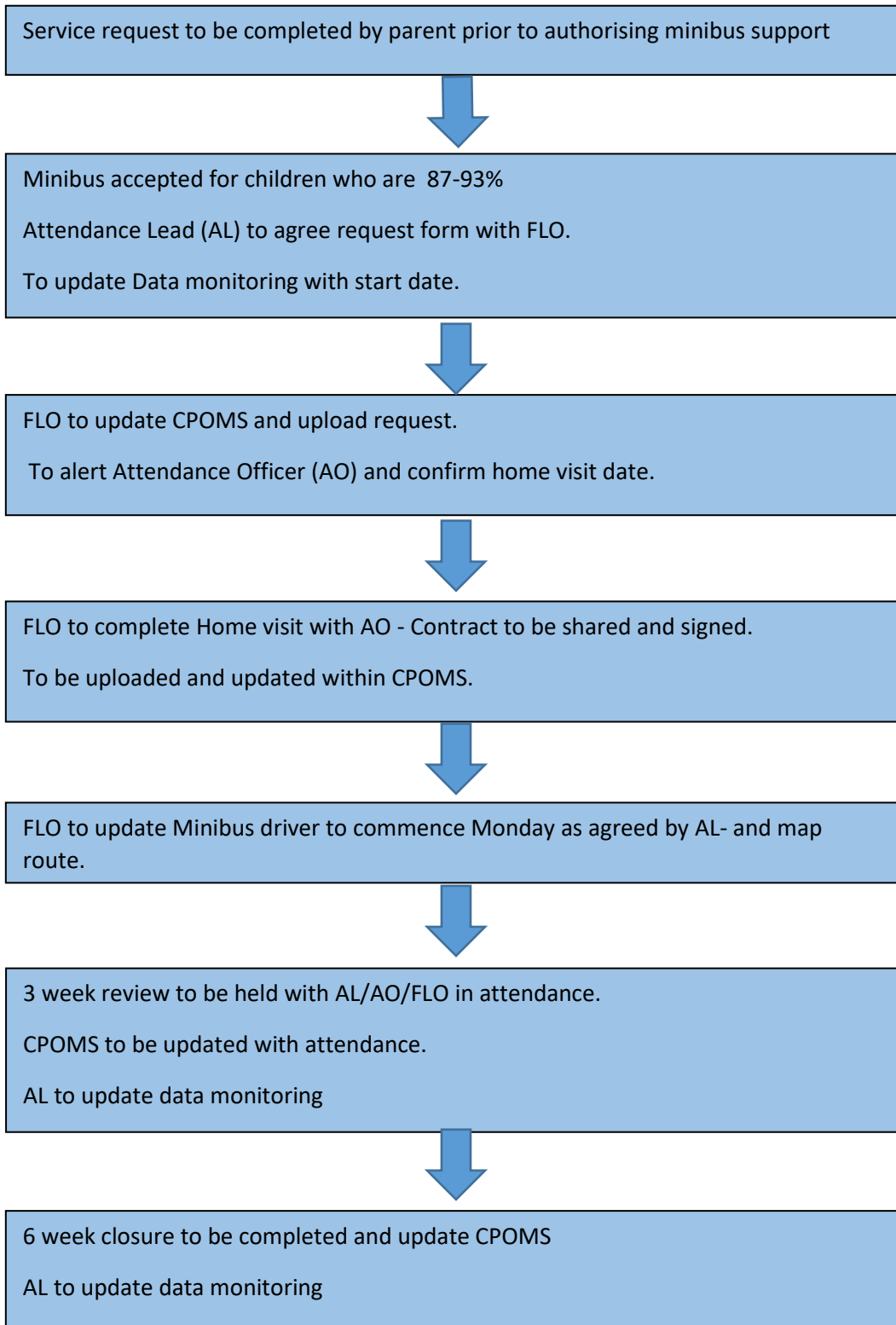
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause
- the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location, but they have not succeeded.

Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school, and the pupil is not a boarder at the school and where parents are withdrawing their child but are unable to say how their child will continue with their education, for example, the family are relocating but have not been able to secure a place at a new school in advance. Once the pupil has completed their final day at school the school would then work alongside multi-agencies (including the LA) to ensure the child's safety until alternative arrangements have been agreed and that meet the needs of the child's education.

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

Schools will use the Child Missing Education Enquiry Form to support this, and it should be sent it to Education Welfare Officer following Local Authority guidance.

Accessing the Minibus Service



Appendix 2

Procedures for Attendance

- School gates open for pupils at 8:30am
- School gates shuts for pupils at 8:45 am
- Register taken by the class teacher with pupils sitting down and following class procedures by 9:05 am
- Pupils are either marked present, or absences should be marked as 'N' to be investigated by the Attendance Officer
- Any children who come into school after 8:45am go through the main office.
- After 9:05am children are marked as 'U'.
- Children attending appointments during the school day will be signed out at the school office and signed back in on return.
- Calls will be made by the Attendance Officer to ascertain reasons for absence from 9:15am
- Home visits will be undertaken as set out on page 4.

Appendix 3

School Support & Rewards

There are a number of in school support mechanisms available to promote attendance and prevent persistent absenteeism. These include, but are not limited to:

- School Minibus – see Appendix 1
- Family Liaison Officer support
- Early Help Assessment
- Improving Attendance Plan
- Whole class rewards eg 'Milkshake Monday'