



**Elms** Bank  
School & College

Excellence for All

# Secondary Attendance and Truancy Policy



Part of the

**Oak**



Learning Partnership

## Elms Bank Document:

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## Contents:

### Statement of intent

1. Definitions
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Training of staff
4. Pupil expectations
5. Absence procedures
6. Contact information
7. Attendance register
8. Attendance officer
9. Lateness
10. Truancy
11. Missing children
12. Term-time leave
13. Religious observances
14. Appointments
15. Young carers
16. Exceptional circumstances
17. Rewarding good attendance
18. Monitoring and review

### **Appendices**

- a) Attendance Monitoring Procedures
- b) Attendance Reporting Structure
- c) Attendance Agreement Forms



## Statement of intent

Elms Bank School believes that in order to achieve excellence for all, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety and wellbeing of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Supporting parents to follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

Our approach is in line with the Department of Education’s guidance (May 22) ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ which applies from September 22.



## 1. Definitions

- 1.1. The school defines "absence" as either:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Not attending school for any reason.
- 1.2. The school defines an "authorised absence" as:
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
  - An absence due to a family emergency.
- 1.3. The school defines an "unauthorised absence" as:
  - Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Truancy before or during the school day.
  - Absences which have not been properly explained.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- 1.4. The school defines "persistent absenteeism (PA)" as:
  - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The Quality Education Board has overall responsibility for:
  - Monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school.
  - Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national

origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's **Complaints Procedures Policy**.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

2.2. The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents.

2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:

- Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Following the first day absence protocol to ensure any welfare or Safeguarding concerns are raised and responded to.

2.4. Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.

2.5. The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

2.6. The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

### 3. Expectations of parents

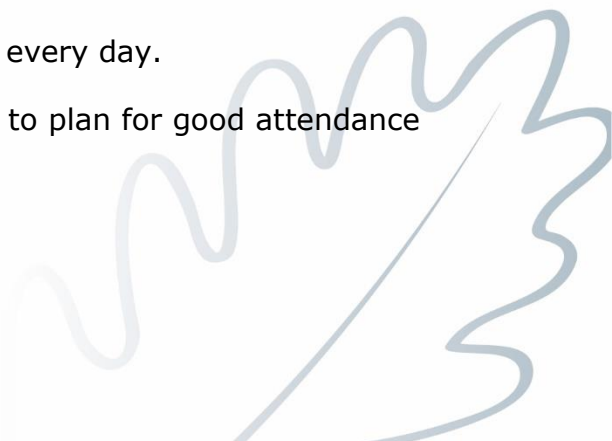
- 3.1. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their children during term-time.
- 3.2. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure their children attend school every day.
- 3.3. Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- 3.4. Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
- 3.5. Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/dental appointments should take place outside of school hours. Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
- 3.6. Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
- 3.7. Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

### 4. Training of staff

- 4.1. Early intervention is essential to promoting good attendance. The Pastoral Team work with form teachers to identify and support pupils who are at risk of reduced attendance
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding or wellbeing concern, and know how such concerns should be responded to.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

### 5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day.
- 5.2. Independent travellers understand how to plan for good attendance and punctuality.



- 5.3. College vocational students understand that good attendance and punctuality are essential requirements for work.
- 5.4. The school expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.
- 5.5. Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance

## 6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. Parents are expected to inform school on the first day of their child's absence. This can be by telephone to their child's class team or a member of the pastoral team.
- 6.2. If school have not been informed of the reason for a pupil's absence by 10:30am the First Day Absence Protocol will be triggered **(Appendix A)**
- 6.3. The pastoral team will always follow up any absences in order to:
  - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
  - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
  - Support the pupil's wellbeing.
  - Identify any support needed to overcome barriers to attendance.
  - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
  - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- 6.4. In the case of persistent absence, where a pupil's attendance is 90% or less, an action plan will be put in place to support improved attendance. Attendance will be tracked and supported until 90% is achieved.
- 6.5. A full range of interventions are outlined in the attendance Matrix. **(Appendix B)**
- 6.6. School will inform parents in writing of their child's attendance every term. **(Appendix C)**
- 6.7. School will work in partnership with parents to overcome barriers to attendance. Where significant issues arise a contract of support between school and parents may be agreed.
- 6.8. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.



- 6.9. Where a pupil has adjusted hours due to their EHCP then this will be logged and reviewed by the SENCo. Refer to Interventions Policy.
- 6.10. Where there is a significant medical or health condition that prevents a pupil from attending full time or requires them to have periods of time off then alternative provision such as remote learning will be offered as appropriate. Refer to Medical Conditions Policy.
- 6.11. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.
- 6.12. Where persistent absenteeism continues despite the implementation of an action plan, parental contract and further intervention a referral may be made to the local attendance officer who has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

## 7. Children Educated Off Site

- Children may be educated off site due to:
- Having a period of significant health needs that prevents them from accessing school
- Accessing alternative provision for a fixed period of time
- As part of a transition plan aiming to reintroduce them to school attendance
- Students who are educated off site will have this logged as part of their EHCP. A multi-agency team working with parents will plan and track provision, including engagement with remote or home based learning.

## 8. Pupils Accessing Alternative Provision

8.1. Pupils will remain on roll at Elms Bank. Attendance will be tracked as outline in the attendance policy. The provider will update school within the session to confirm student attendance and punctuality. 1<sup>st</sup> day absence protocols will be followed. Pupils will have an Elms Bank link key worker who will support and track engagement and carry out safeguarding contact.

### Children Accessing Alternative Provision

8.2 Children Missing Education are defined as:

Children 'missing from education' are children and young people of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are being

educated otherwise (at home, privately or in an alternative provision). They have usually not attended school for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more).

Elms Bank implements the Bury Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol. Key responsibilities include:

- If school are aware of the existence of a child in Bury not in school, then this will be reported within five days
- Correctly enter pupils who transition into school and follow up any failure to attend including informing the CME Officer.
- Make all reasonable enquiries to make contact and establish reason for any absence and report any absence that is more than 20 days. This includes all safeguarding procedures.
- All pupils at Elms Bank have an EHCP. A pupil will not be taken off roll until a new provision is named on a pupil's EHCP or the LA has ceased an EHCP with an alternative package in place.

- **Contact information**

- Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.
- Parents must provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.

- **Attendance register**

- The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:
  - Present.
  - Absent.
  - Attending an approved educational visit.
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
  - \ = Present in the afternoon
  - L = Late arrival before the register has closed
  - C = Authorised absence
  - E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
  - H = Authorised holiday
  - I = Illness
  - M = Medical or dental appointments
  - R = Religious observance
  - B = Off-site educational activity
  - G = Unauthorised holiday
  - O = Unauthorised absence
  - U = Arrived after registration closed
  - N = Reason not yet provided
  - X = Not required to be in school
  - S = Study leave
  - T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
  - W = Work experience
  - V = Educational visit or trip
  - P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
  - J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
  - D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
  - Y = Exceptional circumstances
  - Z = Pupil not on admission register
  - # = Planned whole or partial school closure
- When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code `#` will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example, induction days.
  - All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment,

the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

- Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

- **Lateness**

- Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.
- The school day starts at 8:50am; pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- The register closes at 9:30am; pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

- **Truancy**

- Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:50am and 1:10pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must be signed out at reception and signed back in again on their return.
- Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting.
- If truancy is suspected, the Deputy Headteacher or Pastoral Lead will be notified and they will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- All pupils who truant will be supported to reengage with school.

- **Missing children**

- Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they are supervised by staff.

- The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:
  - The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Pastoral Lead or SLT immediately.
  - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
  - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by SLT.
  - The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - Communal areas
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
  - Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
  - If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
  - The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
  - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
  - If the missing pupil is identified as vulnerable then staff will attempt to keep eyes on until the police can take over.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and appropriate intervention will be implemented.

- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- A full de-brief of the incident will be carried with actions implemented immediately.
- **Term-time leave**
  - Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
  - Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.
  - Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
  - Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
    - During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school, unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
    - Immediately before and during assessment periods
    - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
    - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
  - Request for leave during term time must be submitted in writing to the Head teacher. If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions such as a penalty notice.
- **Religious observances**
  - The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
  - Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
  - The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

- **Appointments**

- As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Where this is not possible, parents should inform school in advance via phone call, school may ask to see an appointment card.
- If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

- **Sickness**

14.1 Parents must inform school of their child's absence by 9:30am on the day of absence.

14.2 Parents will be asked to collect any pupil who becomes unwell during the school day.

14.3 SLT and in their absence the Pastoral Lead for Engagement should be informed of the intention to send any pupil home due to illness.

14.4 All pupils who have sickness and diarrhoea must remain at home for 48 hours after the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea.

14.5 Parents are asked to seek medical guidance for common childhood diseases and infections such as Chicken Pox, Conjunctivitis and ear infections.

- **Young carers**

- The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.
- The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

- **Exceptional circumstances**

- When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.
- Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
  - There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
  - The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.
- The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.
  - **Rewarding good attendance**
  - The school acknowledges outstanding attendance in the following ways:
    - End of year attendance award.
    - Termly 100% attendance reward, for example pizza and film afternoon.
    - College excellent attendance supports gold standard, which may be rewarded with half a day out, use of fob, gold tuck shop pass, these are bespoke to each pathway.

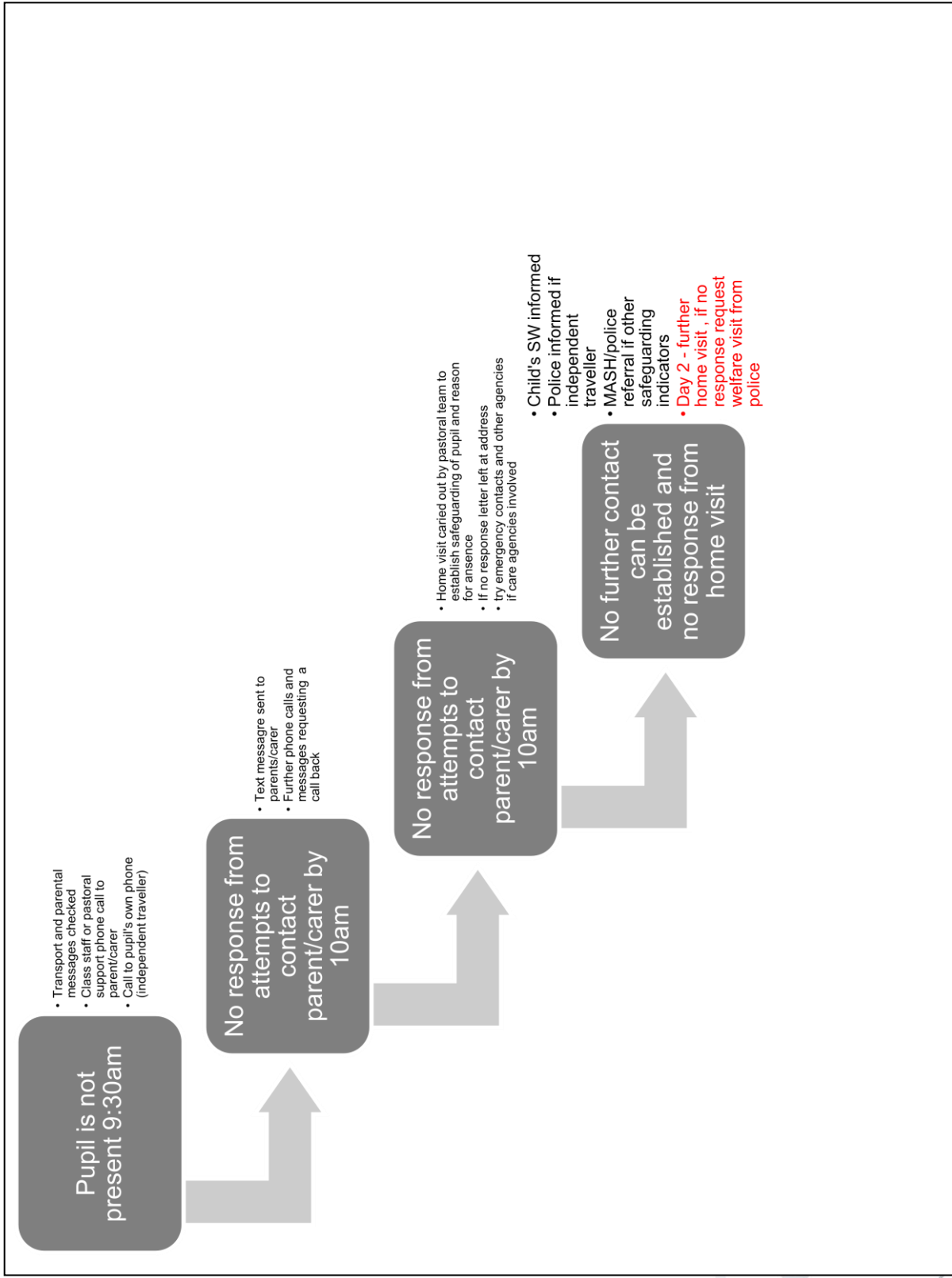
Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded in the following ways:

    - Letter home each term
    - Merit rewards
    - Celebration certificate and reward
  - School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away.
  - **Monitoring and review**
  - Elms Bank monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
  - The school's attendance target is 2.5% above the national average for special school's percent each year.
  - Attendance levels are tracked and reported through weekly, half termly and yearly data
  - Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.
  - This policy will be reviewed annually by the head teacher



- Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

## Appendix A Attendance response – 1<sup>st</sup> day absence





# Appendix B Attendance Intervention Matrix

Elms Bank School		Half Termly Attendance Intervention Matrix		90% and below	Significant Medical Issues
		93% - 95%	90% - 93%	90% and below	Significant Medical Issues
<b>Interventions</b>					
<p><b>Immediate action where there is non-attendance:</b>  <b>Parental Responsibility:</b>                      Parent or Carer phones school with reason for absence before 9:30am on first day – reason logged on SIMS</p> <p><b>Pastoral Support:</b>                      If no contact has been made with school a pastoral support will phone parents or carers to confirm reason for absence – reason will be logged on SIMS                      If contact can't be made with home then send text asking parent to contact the pastoral team at school urgently</p> <p><b>Pastoral Lead:</b>                      Where contact can't be made with home by 10:30am then a home visit will take place to confirm that the pupil is safe                      All staff attending a home visit should take with them a home visit letter to leave at the address or with a parent/carer</p> <p><b>Independent Travellers:</b>                      Independent Travellers should have their own mobile phone contact details logged with the pastoral team and on SIMS                      Parents should contact school on each day the pupil is absent from school</p> <p><b>Pastoral Support:</b>                      If no contact has been made with school a pastoral support will phone parents or carers to confirm reason for absence – reason will be logged on SIMS                      If contact cannot be made with parents/carers then a pastoral support will attempt to contact the pupil concerned to confirm they are safe                      If contact can't be made with home then send text asking parent to contact the pastoral team at school urgently</p> <p><b>Pastoral Lead:</b>                      Where contact can't be made with home by 10:30am then a home visit will take place to confirm that the pupil is safe                      All staff attending a home visit should take with them a home visit letter to leave at the address or with a parent/carer</p> <p><b>Safe Guarding:</b>                      Pupils with safe guarding concerns who are at CP or CIN will be prioritised for attendance phone calls and home visits; when contact cannot be made then their Social Worker will be informed immediately                      Vulnerable pupils will be identified for followed up phone calls to check in with parents each day of absence</p>					
<p><b>Pastoral Admin:</b>                      A letter will be sent home acknowledging a pupil's excellent attendance at the end of each half term.</p> <p><b>Pastoral Lead</b>                      Names in this list to be celebrated in half termly assemblies with certificates for excellent and improved attendance and special rewards for 100% attendance</p> <p><b>DHT</b>                      100% attendance rewarded at annual Awards Ceremony</p> <p><b>Form Teacher/Team</b>                      In class rewards and motivators for excellent/improved attendance. Positive messages about maintaining good attendance.</p>	<p><b>Pastoral Admin:</b>                      A letter will be sent home acknowledging a pupil's good attendance at the end of each half term.</p> <p><b>Pastoral Lead</b>                      Phone call home by pastoral support where appropriate. Speak to parent about concerns with attendance - log in parental contact</p> <p><b>Form Teacher/Team</b>                      In class rewards and motivators for good/improved attendance. Positive messages about maintaining good attendance.                      Follow up phone calls when pupils are ill.</p>	<p><b>Pastoral Admin:</b>                      A letter will be sent home informing parents of a pupil's attendance at the end of each half term.</p> <p><b>Pastoral Lead</b>                      Focused phone call home by pastoral support/lead where appropriate. Speak to parent about concerns with attendance</p> <p><b>Form Teacher/Team</b>                      Track intervention and impact in PA tracker.                      Pupils with SEMH may have a wellbeing action plan.</p> <p><b>Form Teacher/Team</b>                      In class rewards and motivators for improved attendance. Positive messages about improving attendance.                      Follow up phone calls when pupils are ill.</p> <p><b>DHT</b>                      Individual cases to be discussed with pastoral team and tracked actions.</p>	<p><b>Pastoral Admin:</b>                      A letter will be sent home informing parents of a pupil's attendance at the end of each term.</p> <p><b>Pastoral Lead</b>                      Focused phone call home by pastoral support/lead where appropriate. Speak to parent about concerns with attendance</p> <p><b>Form Teacher/Team</b>                      Track intervention and impact in PA tracker.                      Pupils with SEMH may have a wellbeing action plan.                      Bespoke timetables and blended learning options offered.</p> <p><b>Form Teacher/Team</b>                      In class rewards and motivators for improved attendance. Positive messages about improving attendance.                      Follow up phone calls when pupils are ill.</p> <p><b>DHT</b>                      Individual cases to be discussed with pastoral team. Where appropriate – parents invited to pre-referral meeting at school to meet with PL or DHT to agree an attendance contract.                      Medical evidence should be sought where possible                      Extended and unauthorised absence – Admin to prepare papers for Penalty Notice with SAO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students in this band will receive full support from school as appropriate</li> <li>Work will be sent home where appropriate</li> <li>Form teacher or pastoral lead, in liaison with DHT, to keep in contact with home during an absence – conversation to be logged on attendance tracker.</li> </ul> <p><b>SENCO</b>                      Where pupils have an adjusted start and/or finish time or are part time then this is recorded as an altered timetable by the SENCO. The SENCO monitors this.</p>	

**Appendix c**  
**Attendance letters**

**Attendance below 92% - March 2022**  
**Attendance above 92% - March 2022**  
**Home Visit - March 2022**

