Bentley Heath C E Primary School

Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

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Statement of intent

Bentley Heath C E Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents 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 them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Matthew Edwards, supported by Roxanne Riding, both of whom can be contacted via office@bentleyheath.bdmat.org.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Academy Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- 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.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- 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

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never 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

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe absence (SA):

- Attendance below 50%

3. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8:50am, and doors will be open for 10 minutes prior to this to allow parents time to drop children off in different places.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked at 8:50am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:15am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1:05pm in EYFS, KS1 and KS2.
- The afternoon register will close at 1:05pm in EYFS, KS1 and KS2. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Attendance	
Excellent Accessing all learning opportunities	98%- 100% attendance
Good Very few learning opportunities missed	96%- 97% attendance
Risk of Under Achievement Up to 50 missed lessons or up to 10 days absent in the school year	92% - 95% attendance
Severe Risk of Under Achievement Up to 75 missed lessons. Up to 15 school days absent in a school year	92-90% attendance
Extreme Risk of Under Achievement Averages as 1 day a week missed, significantly impacting learning and progress	89% attendance classed as persistently absent by the DFE
Extreme Risk of under Achievement Averages as 2 ½ days a week missed, significantly impacting learning and progress	Less than 50% attendance classed as severely absent by the DFE

4. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. If no contact is made, it may be decided that a safe and well check is required. This will be undertaken by two members of staff.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or where a pupil is persistently absent.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. 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 sessions or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

5. Attendance register

The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. 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 ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.

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, e.g. 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.

Quick Guide

Attendance Codes

The table below shows all attendance and absence codes available to schools as of September 2024. All schools are required to mark every child's register twice a day using the appropriate code.

New codes have been introduced for September 2024, most notably the updated C1 and C2 codes, codes Y1 to Y7 and the K code.

✓ = Yes ✗ = No – = Not applicable (codes that do not count towards a child's attendance)

Code	Definition	Present	Authorised
/	Present (morning session)	✓	✓
\	Present (afternoon session)	✓	✓
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	✓	✓
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	✗	✓
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	✗	✓
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	✗	✓
D	Dual registered at another school	–	–
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	✗	✓
G	Holiday not granted by the school	✗	✗
I	Illness	✗	✓
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	✗	✓
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	✓	✓
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	✓	✓
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	✗	✓
N	Reason for absence not yet established	✗	✗
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	✗	✗
P	Participating in a sporting activity	✓	✓
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	–	–
R	Religious Observance	✗	✓
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	✗	✓

Code	Definition	Present	Authorised
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	✗	✓
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	✗	✗
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	✓	✓
W	Attending work experience	✓	✓
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	–	–
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	–	–
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	–	–
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	–	–
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	–	–
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	–	–
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	–	–
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	–	–
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	–	–
#	Planned whole school closure (e.g. school holidays, INSET days)	–	–

Deleted Codes

From September 2024 the following codes are no longer available and must not be used:

- H code – all authorised term-time must now be coded with the C code
- J code – replaced by J1
- Y code – replaced by Y1 to Y7

Use of the B Code

The Department for Education has clarified that the B code can only be used when a pupil is taking part in an approved educational activity and that they are physically supervised by an adult considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training and knowledge. It cannot be used for remote learning, even if supervised by a parent.

Use of the Q Code

The Q code can only be used when a child is unable to attend because the local authority is responsible for arranging school transport and this has not yet been set up. Where local authority transport has been set up but fails (e.g. a taxi does not arrive or the bus breaks down), the Y1 code must be used.

6. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. The 'Leave of Absence' Form available on the school website should be used for this.

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. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school does not grant leave of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory 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

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. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Penalty Notices

- Threshold = **10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10-school-week period**
- First penalty = £160 per parent per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days)
- Second penalty within 3 years = £160
- Third occurrence within 3 years usually progresses to prosecution

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as

is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

7. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

8. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents

will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

9. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or 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 actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.
All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:50am and 1:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign 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 headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.
The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher 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 the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms; All toilets; Changing rooms; The library; 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 contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

11. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters to parents
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Creating attendance clinics.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance

where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

12. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

13. Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need

- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

National penalty notice framework

- Threshold = **10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10-school-week period**
- First penalty = £160 per parent per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days)
- Second penalty within 3 years = £160
- Third occurrence within 3 years usually progresses to prosecution

14. Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

School uses Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS) to support the school with the processes associated with children's attendance at school. School employ CSAWS to provide the legal monitoring services and support that will help reduce the number of persistent absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.

15. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Local Academy Board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

16. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The Local Academy Board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The Local Academy Board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

17. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is at least 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the headteacher. The next scheduled full review date for this policy is July 2029.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

18 Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Bentley Heath C E Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A list of pupils who are absent and the reasons is given to the Headteacher on a daily basis
2. A list of pupils whose attendance is below 93% is given to the Headteacher and the Attendance Officer by the admin team on a weekly basis.
3. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
4. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
5. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established by 10.00am will be recorded as unauthorised. If we cannot make contact with an adult with parental responsibility, a safe and well check will be carried out by 2 members of staff.
6. In the Spring and Summer terms, letters will be sent out to the parents of any pupil whose attendance falls below 96 percent, which outlines how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
7. Letters will be sent out on a half termly basis to parents of any pupil whose attendance falls below 90 percent, which explains the pupil's attendance is now being monitored. The attendance of these pupils will be monitored for two weeks. If attendance does not improve after this time, parents are invited to attend a meeting in school with the attendance officer or a member of SLT to discuss support school can offer and set targets. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer from CSAWS, who will then conduct a home visit. the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
8. If there are no improvements to the pupils' attendance following support from CSAWS, a fixed-penalty notice may be issued

19 Appendix

Children Missing Education

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school should make an immediate referral to Warwickshire County Council's Children Missing Education (CME) Service.

The Children Missing Education Service can be contacted on 01926 742036 *Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits where safe to do so
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the pupil/family
- All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on CPOMS.

Upon receipt of a referral from the school, the CME Service will then continue to attempt to track the child, for at least a further 10 school days, using access to additional contacts/services, e.g. housing. If this also fails to establish the pupil's whereabouts, the school will be informed by email and may then, but not before, remove the pupil from roll and report to the LA. This will place the pupil on the list of Children Missing from Education.

Deletions from roll agreed with the CME Service will normally be backdated to the first day of absence.

If the CME Service is able to contact the pupil and her/his parents, arrangements will be made with the school and family for a return to education, including a re-integration programme where necessary. Where pupils continue to be absent the non-school attendance procedures detailed in the school policy will be followed.

If the pupil has registered at another school, the school will delete the child's name from our roll and transfer the child's educational records to the new school in the normal way. Any child protection records will be transferred separately and securely for the attention of the DSL in the new school and a receipt secured.

Pupils leaving the school for known destinations outside the maintained sector in England and Wales will be updated to the School to School database. This includes private/independent schools, schools in other countries (including Scotland and Northern Ireland) and pupils moving into home education. The latter will be formally notified to the ESWS Home Education Officer by the school as soon as written confirmation is received from the parent(s). If no confirmation is received the above Missing Children procedures will apply.