Grantham Villages' CE Primary Schools Federation

Marston Thorold's Charity Church of England Primary School

Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

Approved by:	**Full Governing Board**	**Date:**	**September 2026**
Last reviewed on:	**Nov 2023, Sept 2024, Sept 2025, Aug 2026**		
Next review due by:	**Executive Headteacher September 2027**		

Contents

Primary Attendance and Absence Policy 0
1. Statement of Intent 2
1a Why is Attending School Regularly So Important? 2
2.Legal Framework 3
3. Roles and Responsibilities 3
4. Definitions 4
- 4.1 Illness 5
- 4.3 Medical/Dental Appointments 6

7. Suspensions 6
8. First Day of Absence Response 7
9. Approved Educational Activity 7
10. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance) 7
Following up Unexplained Absences 8
12. Persistently and Severely Absent pupils (PA and SA) 9
13. Attendance Expectations 9
14. Safeguarding and Attendance 11
15. Absence Procedures 11
16. Children Missing Education (CME) and Pupils not Attending Regularly (PNAR) 11
17. Attendance Register 12
19. SEND and Health-Related Absences 13
20. Children who Cannot Attend School Due to Medical Conditions 14
21. Missing Children 15
22. Attendance Intervention 15
23. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables 17
24. Effects of Late Arrival at School 17
25. Persistent Absence (PA) 17
26. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention 18
29. Monitoring and Analysing Attendance 19
30. Monitoring and Review 20
Appendices 21
Children Missing from Education/Pupil Not Attending Regularly and 21
Children at Particular Risk of Missing Education 21
Deletions of Names from the Admission Register 22
Attendance Monitoring Procedures 23
St Sebastian's CE/Marston Thorold's CE Primary School and Nursery Absence Escalation Procedure ... 23
School Attendance Poster (sent out to parents)
Request for Medical Evidence Standard Letter

1. Statement of Intent

St Sebastian's CE Primary/Marston Thorold's Charity CE Primary Schools believe 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/carers.

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/carers.
- 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/carers 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.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The Federation's attendance officer is Elaine Bedford and can be contacted via elaine.bedford@gvsf.school. Staff, parents/carers and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1a Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?

Evidence shows pupils with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Pupils who attend regularly are more likely to achieve better results than their peers that do not, both at Key Stage 2 tests in the Primary phase, and in GCSE's at Secondary.

Excellent attendance enables pupils to be part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each pupil's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

If attendance over the school year is:	…a pupil will miss this many days:	…and this many lessons:
100%	0	0
95%	10	50
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

2. 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
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures and Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the schools.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the schools' 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.
- 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 federation's Complaints Procedures and Policy.

- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The executive headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the federation.
- Undertaking the role of attendance officer.
- Ensuring all parents/carers 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/carers 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/Carers 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.

4. 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

- **The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:**

- **4.1 Illness**

- The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

- In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

- The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' 2022[1] which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

- We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

- Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

- The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised and may result in a home visit.

- Parents should notify the school of an absence either by email: amy.parnham@gvsf.school or by phoning the office on:01476 565896/01400 250583 where a voicemail can also be left.

- If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

- **4.2 Pupils taken ill during the school day**

[1] Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

- If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

- **4.3 Medical/Dental Appointments**

- Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

- If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental consent.

- Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

- advance will be marked as unauthorised.

5. Religious Observance

- Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.
- The school will only accept requests from parents/carers 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/carers 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.

6. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence

- Where a pupil's parent/carer belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent/carer 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. Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other

instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

8. First Day of Absence Response

If the school are not informed of an absence, our first action will be to contact the numbers we have on file. If we are unable to get an answer from this, we will then conduct a home visit. This will be to establish the where abouts of a child. If we are still unable to establish where a child is, the school may decide to either contact the police to conduct a welfare check or make a referral to children's services.

Parents are asked to supply details of at least two people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on a regular basis.

9. Approved Educational Activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP setting.

10. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's 'Home to school travel and transport' guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

11.Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, use of penalty notices or prosecution. **This will particularly be the case for unauthorised holiday requests. Please be advised that if school have reason to believe that an absence was because of a holiday that was taken without gaining permission, then school will still process a penalty notice through Lincolnshire County Council. An example of this would be if parents were not to inform school that they were taking their child out of school for a period but on their return the child informs the class teacher they were away on holiday. The school may conduct home visits for pupils who have not given a legitimate reason for missing school. We may also conduct visits, when pupils have been absent from school for 3+ days.**

Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 2 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts and safety.

12. Persistently and Severely Absent pupils (PA and SA)

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

A pupil is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

13. Attendance Expectations

The Federation has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents/carers 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 pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8:50am.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. 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 9:00am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1:10pm. 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.

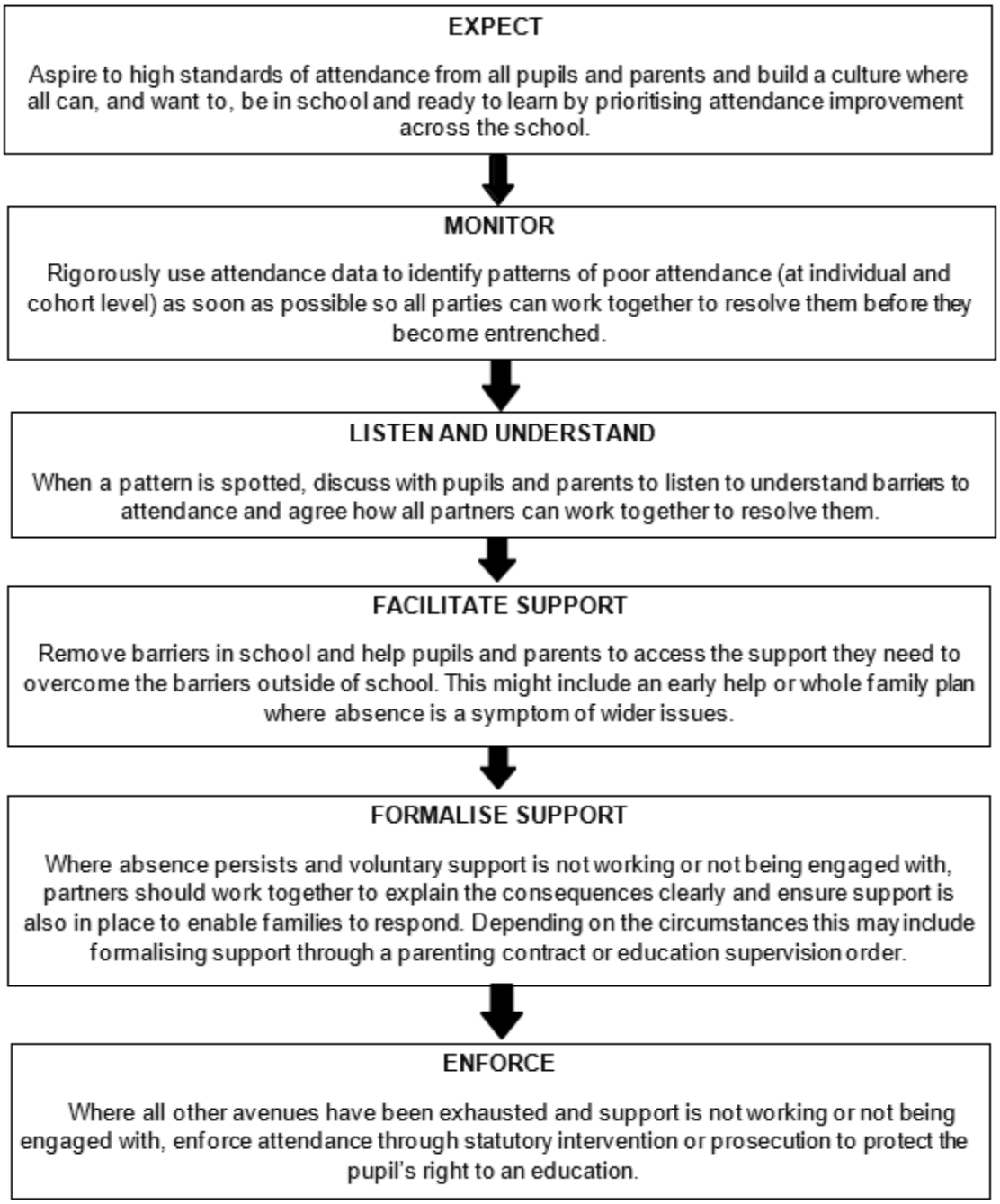
This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[2] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have

[2] Education law defines parents as: 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 day to day care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At St Sebastian's CE/Marston Thorold's CE Primary School and Nursery, we follow the DfE Working together to Improve School Attendance Approach:



Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

14. Safeguarding and Attendance

St Sebastian's CE/Marston Thorold's CE Primary School and Nursery will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school has made all reasonable enquiries and cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare and safety.

15. Absence Procedures

Parents/carers will be required to contact the school office before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence, or as soon as is practically possible by email, telephone or face-to-face with school office staff – 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/carer 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.

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.

16. Children Missing Education (CME) and Pupils not Attending Regularly (PNAR)

School follows the Local Authority procedures to report CME or PNAR.

If the family is living at the address then school follows the Local Authority Process where a pupil has 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence (the record should be amended when the pupil returns or a further entry completed every 4 weeks from the date of the original entry if the pupil remains absent). This is using the PNAR survey.

If it is established that the family is not living at the address follow the LA procedure for **Reporting a Child Missing Education** will be followed, see Appendix 2. School will report the child as missing education via the Children Missing Education notification survey. As part of this, we will complete a risk assessment identifying any concerns school has around the safety and wellbeing of the child.

The completion of the CME notification will be done after 5 days of investigation by the school or sooner if the school has evidence of a child missing education. Following this, the school should continue to make reasonable enquiries unless they have sufficient evidence that the child has left the area.

On the advice of the LA Attendance Team, school may remove the child from roll after 20 days or before if they have sufficient evidence that the child has left the area and is being educated elsewhere. We will inform the local authority that they have removed the child from roll using their Child Missing Leavers process (CML).

17. Attendance Register

The school uses Scholar Pack 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. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend

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.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

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 received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

18. Leave of Absence Requests

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

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/carers to contact the executive 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.

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 executive headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

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

19. SEND and Health-Related Absences

The federation 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/carers 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 one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.
- Consulting with LCC Attendance Team and use of the EBSA Pathway where appropriate.

20. Children who Cannot Attend School Due to Medical Conditions

If the School Makes Arrangements

- Initially, the school will aim to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. The Executive Headteacher will be responsible for making and monitoring these arrangements. This could include setting work to be completed remotely, teaching remote lessons and liaising with hospital schools. The Executive Headteacher will meet with parents/carers and the child if possible to arrange the best possible educational arrangements whilst the child is unable to attend school. Once well enough to return to school the Executive Headteacher and parents/carers will arrange a reintegration meeting to discuss a reintegration plan.

If the Local Authority Makes Arrangements

- If the school can't make suitable arrangements, Lincolnshire County Council will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.
- In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the school will:
- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents/carers to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully
- When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:
- · Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible
- · Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school)
- · Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school
- · Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

21. 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 executive 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 executive 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/carers of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents/carers 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/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The executive 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 executive 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.

22. Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the federation 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/carers.
  - Using the Early Help process to support families
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Working with parents to create an Attendance Action Plan with agreed targets
  - Issuing Notice to Improve where appropriate
  - Using fixed penalty notices.

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.

Working with Parents to Improve Attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents/carers 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/carers 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/carers 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 executive headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents/carers 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/carers 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, the attendance officer will work with the executive 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/carers to access support that they may need.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and pupils and that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter and school records will be shared with the Local Authority.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage

with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or, fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

23. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

24. Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss important events such as assembly , phonics, breakfast, teacher instructions and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

Minutes late per day…	**Equates to days of teaching lost in one year…**	**Which means this number of lessons have been missed…**
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

25. 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.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or Health Care Plan 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.

26. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information

Penalty notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

27. Penalty Notices for Holidays

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance. Where a child is absent for school for a holiday of 5 days or more within a 100 week period, it is likely that a Penalty Fine will be applied.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued per parent and per child. For example for a 2 parent family with 2 children, 2x £160 will be issued to each parent.

A second fine for the same child within a three-year period will be at the higher rate of £160, with a third and subsequent offence leading to automatic referral to court. The Local Authority is able to issue a fine where school has reason to believe that a holiday has taken place.

28. Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be help every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

29. Monitoring and Analysing Attendance

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 governing 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.

30. Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The schools' attendance target is 96 percent – full details of the schools' absence levels can be found on the school websites.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the executive headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.

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

Appendices

Children Missing from Education/Pupil Not Attending Regularly and Children at Particular Risk of Missing Education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the school will use its professional judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list, however, indicates groups of pupils who are most at risk of missing education and the procedures the school will follow in response:

Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made immediately to children's social care services (CSCS), and the police if appropriate. The LA officers responsible for CME will check whether a referral has been made, and will contact CSCS if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.

Pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families – when a pupil from a GRT family leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the LA. If necessary, the school will consult the EMTET for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the pupil's education.

Children of service personnel – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these pupils.

The school will use the CME portal to report any children leaving our school, on part time timetables, attending irregularly, or joining the school outside of usual transition phases.

Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the school prior to custody, the school will keep the place open for their return.

Children who cease to attend school – where the reason for a pupil who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.

Children of migrant families – the school will remain vigilant to the increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware.

The school recognises that CME can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Where there are concerns that a pupil missing from education is linked to a safeguarding issue, action will be taken in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the DSL conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

For the purpose of this policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to CS or the police.

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the school, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following actions:

Make contact with the parent/carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details

Check local databases

Check data transfer systems

Follow local information sharing arrangements, and make enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible

Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force

Check with agencies known to be involved with the family

Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally

Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located

Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of service personnel

Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and make enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

Deletions of Names from the Admission Register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Grantham Villages' CE Primary Schools Federation 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 daily Fire List is sent to the SLT and attendance officer detailing attendance.
2. Contact is made with parents/carers 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.
3. Contact is made to the parents/carers of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent at the end of a half term, this is monitored on the termly spreadsheet by the attendance officer. The attendance officer will issue a 'notice of concern letter to parents, setting targets to improve attendance in the coming term, we will speak to the pupil in school or to parents/carers to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance where this is not already established. Attendance will be monitored during the following term to ensure improvement.
5. If an pupil's attendance falls to between 91% and 95%, a further letter will be sent to parents inviting them to a meeting to discuss concerns. We will consider what support school can offer to improve attendance. Parents will be informed that should attendance continue to fall, a penalty fine is possible.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a further letter is sent is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard after a full term and that their child is now classed as 'persistently absent'. They will be invited to a meeting.Support is offered in the form of an Early Help Assessment or access to other support services to ensure attendance improves. School will use Attendance Contracts and/or Notice to Improve where progress is not evident.
7. Fixed Penalty Notices are used in line with the LCC Code of Conduct where attendance continues to be a concern.

St Sebastian's CE/Marston Thorold's CE Primary School and Nursery Absence Escalation Procedure

Percentage	Responsibility	Action
94% - 96%	School Action: Attendance Lead	A notice of concern letter will be sent to parents informing you that your child's attendance has fallen below the 96% threshold. At this point parents will be set targets which will aim to get children's attendance back on track. Attendance will be monitored to check that it is going up, back towards the 96% figure. If falling- see next step.

91% - 94%	School Action Attendance Lead	A letter will be sent to parents due to falling attendance. At this point a meeting will be arranged to discuss any support that can be put in place to support with attendance and to discuss the targets initially set. Parents will be informed that should attendance continue to fall then a potential fine will follow. Attendance will be monitored to check that it is going up, back towards the 96% figure. If continuing to fall, follow the next stage.
90% or below	School Action as above +	At this stage a pupil is now classed as having persistent absence. A letter will be sent and a meeting requested. We will try to establish if there is a need for any additional support such as early help. At this point, we will monitor and if no improvement the case will be referred to Lincolnshire County Council for prosecution. Attendance Contracts/Notice to Improve may be used to support attendance improvement.



Request for Medical Evidence Template Letter

Dear …

Current Attendance: ..% Days missed: …

Request for Medical Evidence – Attendance Concern

We are writing to you because your child's attendance has fallen below the level we expect and is becoming a concern. I have previously emailed you with concerns over …'s attendance on ….

We understand that there may be genuine reasons for this and our aim is to work with you to make sure your child gets the best possible education and support.

Moving forward, we now require medical evidence for any future absences you report as being due to illness. This will help us to understand your child's needs more fully and ensure we are supporting them in the right way. We may conduct a home visit even if you have given us a reason.

Imogen is a great asset to our school community and my concern will be that this will have a big impact on her academic progress and her social development. The LA requires that with no evidence of medical intervention we should take further action.

Why we ask for medical evidence:

- To ensure that we are recording absences correctly in line with the Department for Education guidance.
- Identify any ongoing or recurring health issues in order to offer appropriate support in school.
- Work together with you and, if needed, health professionals to help your child attend regularly.

Evidence could include:

- Appointment confirmation (text message, email or letter).
- Copy of prescription or medical label with child's name on.
- Hospital/medical letters
- Screenshot/print out of your child's patient summary from NHS health record.

Please be aware that we are not asking for medical evidence requiring that you pay a fee to your GP practice. The examples above should not incur any cost.

Please send medical evidence to the office email address.

Without appropriate medical evidence we will no longer be able to authorise absences. If this is the case, absences will be recorded as unauthorised and could therefore incur a fine.