

The Rydal Academy

Attendance Policy

Accepted by: Local Governing Body May 2016

Approving Body : Local Governing Body

Committee : Local Governing Body

Review Cycle: 1 year

Last reviewed: December 2023

Date for next review: December 2024

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities May 2022

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with families. Therefore, at The Rydal Academy we will endeavor to:

MONITOR

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

EXPECT

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

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parent/carers to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parent/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

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

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil’s right to an education.

The Rydal Academy expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We aim to support pupils and their families so that excellent attendance can be attained.

- Our current school target for attendance is 96%.
- At the Rydal Academy, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

At The Rydal Academy the Assistant Headteacher Mrs Galey takes overall responsibility for attendance. The Administration Assistant to contact regarding attendance is Miss Keogh on 01325 380784

Overall Aims:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents/carers, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- Support pupils and parent/carers by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Procedures for attendance/punctuality:

Daily

- Class Teachers to complete morning and afternoon session registers on SIMS and submit at end of registration period.
- Administration Assistant to conduct 'First Call' and record reasons for absence on SIMS system (Must be specific)
- Administration Assistant to follow up any missed marks with Class Teachers.
- Administration Assistant to send a message through school text service to any parent/carers unable to contact through First Call.
- Administration Assistant to refer any pupils with no reason for absence provided after 5 days to Children's Access Point
- Attendance officer may make home visits to follow up absence to offer advice, challenge and support regarding getting the pupil into school.

Weekly

- Attendance team to monitor attendance and inform Class Teachers of any significant changes.
- Administration Assistant to produce School Prospectus report from SIMs for Headteacher to identify whole school and class attendance to be used in assemblies.
- Class Attendance certificate and trophy presented in assembly.
- Assistant Head in charge of attendance meets with Traveller Education Advisory Service to analyse and follow up any absence of traveler pupils.
- ASTAR attendance system checked. Children with less than 93 % and I,O,L,U codes to be monitored and first letter of concern and offering support to be sent if appropriate.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.

Half termly

- Attendance Analysis meeting (Assistant Head, Administration Assistant) to meet during the penultimate week of each half term. Review Whole School Overview; Cohort Overview; Class Overview; Class lists of individual percentage attendance.
- Update attendance officer's target pupils list.
- Administration Assistant to send out Low Attendance letter; reminder or meeting letters if not already sent through the ASTAR system.

- Attendance Support meetings (Parent or Carer / Assistant Headteacher / Administration Assistant) to discuss actions to improve attendance.

Termly

- 100% Attendance Awards in assembly.
- Attendance sent out to all children on their termly report (High, Good, Average, Low, Persistent Absentee)
- Late letters sent out. (More than 5 lates per term)
- Analysis of cohort, class and individual attendance as part of data analysis meetings with Senior Leadership Team and teaching staff. Robust school systems provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as: children who have a social worker including looked-after children, children who are eligible for free school meals, children who speak English as an Additional Language and children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- Analysis of attainment and progress of low attendees against school tracking system.
- Assistant Head to complete governors/directors report information on attendance and mobility for previous term.

Annual

- Attendance Assembly (Awards for 100% attendance; 96%+ attendance; improved attendance on previous year)
- Mid-year Attendance Review and action planning with Senior Leadership Team.
- Annual Attendance Review meeting and action planning
- Pastoral lead to report to Governors on attendance for academic year

Intervention

- Where appropriate action plans will be set up in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families, for example, children's social care and early help services.
- The Rydal Academy will coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions.
- Work in partnership with Local Authority Attendance Team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- Individual interventions set up with key children to reinforce the importance of attendance/punctuality.

Parents/carers

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents/carers should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomachaches etc. parents/carers should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parent/carers straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, doctors or hospital appointment, parents/carers should let the school know and if possible provide evidence of the appointment. It is expected that appointments will be made out of school time wherever possible. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

Therefore, parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring children attend school in the correct uniform.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone/use the Reach More Parents App to inform the school on each day of absence for their child.
- Provide an explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school if no previous discussion has been noted.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life which may affect the child's learning.
- Inform the school if the child is going on holiday.

Information regarding the NHS page *Is my child too ill for school* is pinned as a notice on the Reach More Parents App as a support for parents - [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-conditions/child-illness/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/)

Pupils moving to a new address and/or school

Where the parent/carer of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address. Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

Home educated children

See Elective Home Education policy.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 96%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 96%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held every week. Classes with the highest attendance receive attendance award.

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club is free every day. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 7:30 am, ensuring they are on time for school.

Youth club

Daily Youth Club open until 6pm to support parents in case of late pick up.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated. Weekly 'Behaviour and Attendance' briefing to staff.

End of Term Attendance Rewards

At the end of each term there is a reward for children who have achieved attendance at over 96% and 100%. Rewards come in the form of sticker, Marvellous Me badges and £100 gift certificate for the winner of the 'pound a percent' raffle, as a reward for both children and parent/carers.

Sharing attendance data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of class attendance. The classes achieving the highest attendance figures are shared in termly assemblies. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 9:30am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and close down SIMS. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 9.15 am (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 9.30am the register must be correct and submitted.

From 9.00 am the school playground gates are closed. The main office deal with children arriving late. The children's names and classes are recorded in SIMS. This is to ensure that no children are missed on the register due to arriving in school late. Teachers are asked to check their registers again after morning assembly to ensure they are up to date. The School Administrator officer then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked '/' (present) in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The administrator then begins first day absence calls.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. To challenge poor attendance and offer support to overcome any barriers preventing children attending school.

Monitoring Absence

Any children with attendance of less than 93% will be monitored by the Attendance team.

Requests for absence during term time and term time holidays

Under current regulations, Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances', deemed exceptional by only the Headteacher. Permission from the Headteacher must be sought for all absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence' form must be completed in advance of the absence (available from the school reception or to download from the school's website). Only the Headteacher can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

For absences that are due to sporting or other educational activities which have not been organised by school, evidence of the event must accompany the 'request for leave of absence' form.

Holidays taken in term time can have a very negative impact on a pupil's education, as well as school's attendance statistics and children's learning. School will require evidence of exceptional circumstances, which should be attached to the 'request for leave of absence form' and the decision about what is exceptional will be made by the Headteacher. If the Headteacher decides not to authorise the holiday and intends to refer to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice should the holiday go ahead, the school will issue a letter to the parent/carer warning of their intention.

It is important that Parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. There are 190 statutory school days in one year. There are 175 days (week-ends and school holidays) available to use for holidays which would not have a negative effect on your child's education.

Attendance Meetings

The Attendance Lead and the Attendance Administrator communicate regularly to track children's attendance and ensure the systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 93% and parents are invited to work in partnership with the school to overcome barriers to attending school.

Persistent Absenteeism

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and Local Authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, schools should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Particular focus will be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore given across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners will work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan.

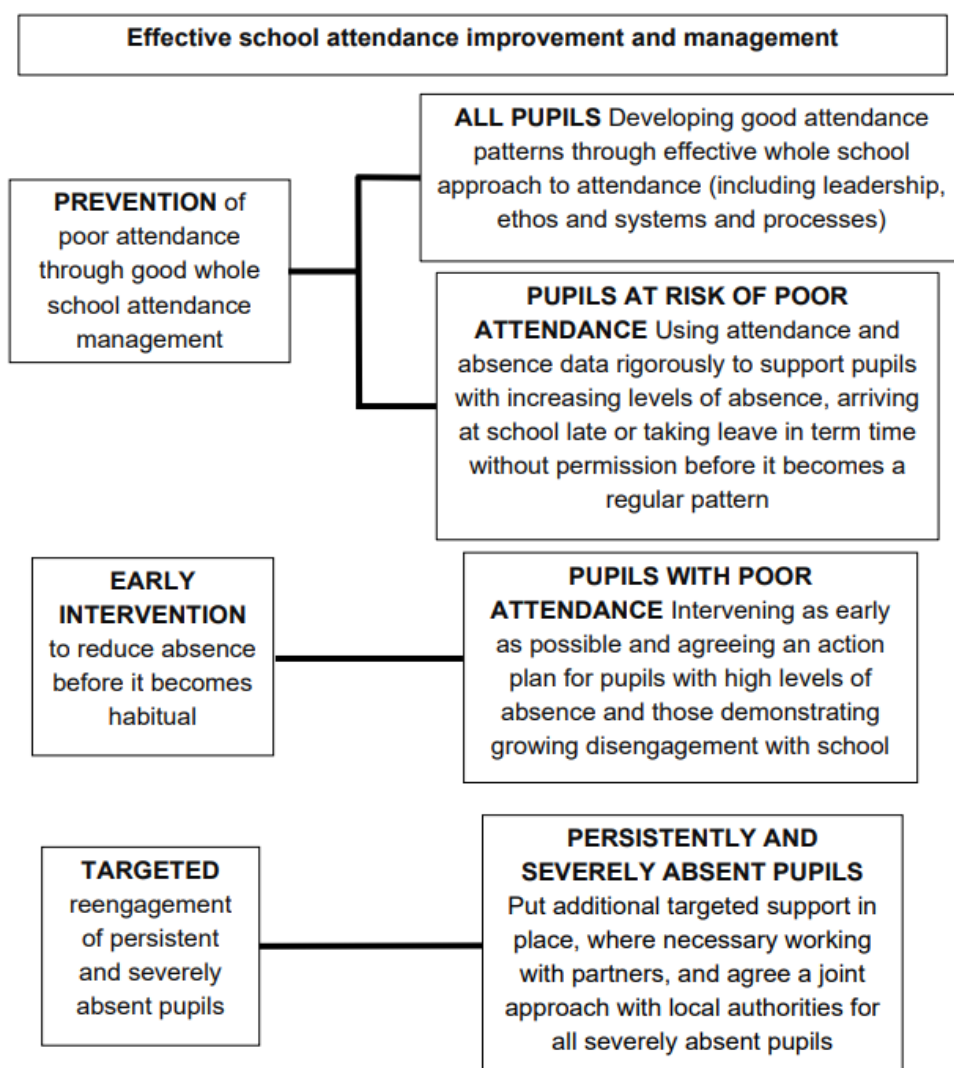
In all cases, schools and Local Authorities are expected to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Therefore, both persistent and severe absence will be central to school, Trust, and Local Authority level strategies for improving attendance.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life. Local authorities should have robust procedures and policies in place to enable them to meet their duty in relation to these children, including appointing a named person that schools and other agencies can make referrals. Local authorities should undertake regular reviews and evaluate their processes to ensure that these continue to be fit for purpose in identifying and dealing with CMEs in their area. As a school we will inform the Local Authority if a child has not been in school for 5 consecutive days unless the child is under child protection, when the school will contact children’s services if a child has not attended for 5 days without providing a valid reason for absence.

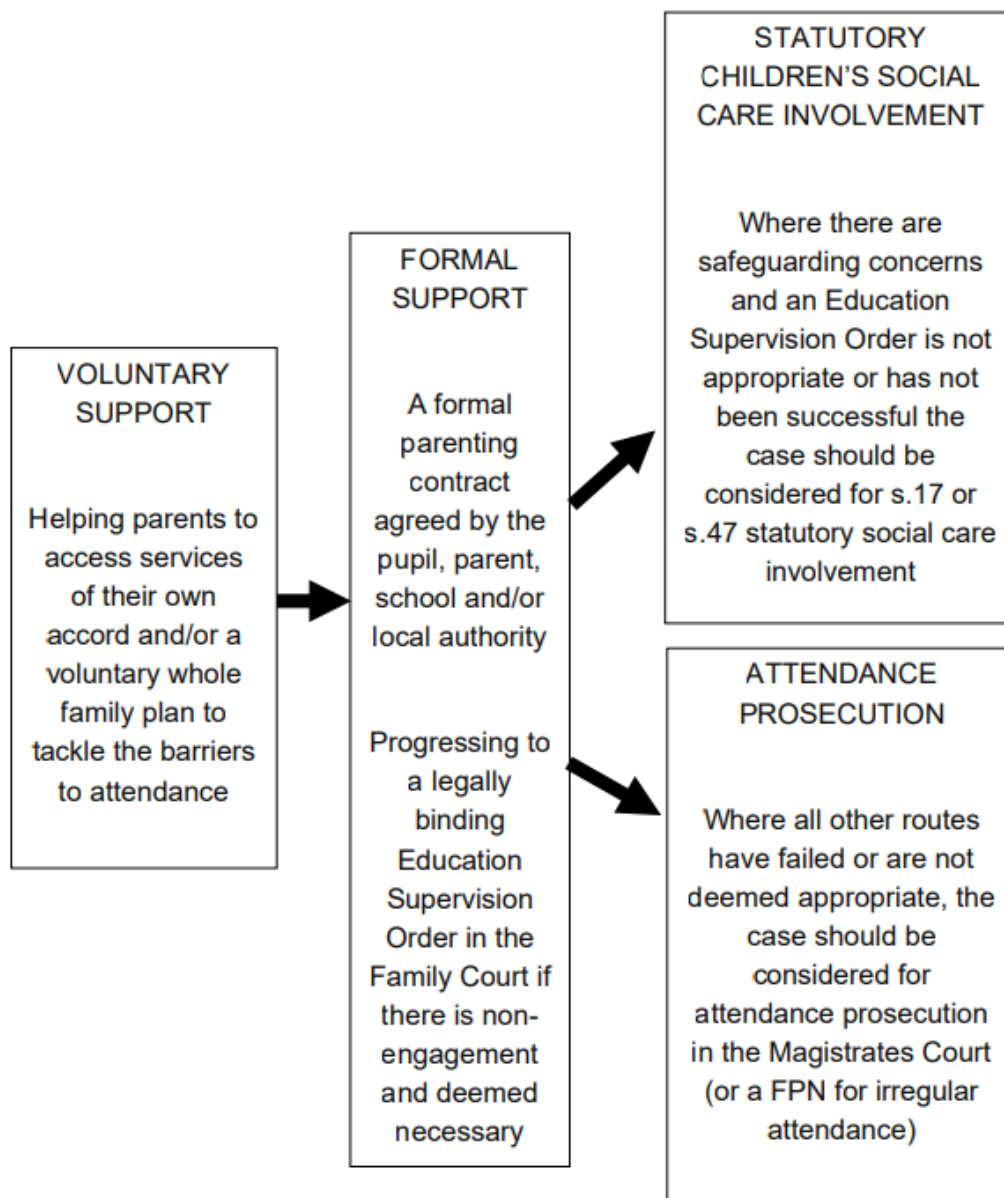
Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

One of the most successful approaches to improving attendance is the sharing of effective practice between schools. As part of Swift Academies we meet regularly to learn from each other’s attendance expertise and share effective interventions.



Attendance legal intervention

As a school we will always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, it may be enforced through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions are made on an individual case by case basis.



Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken. Please note that: penalties and prosecutions may be in respect of each parent for each child. In order to improve attendance and tackle lateness, the school uses the Local Authority Penalty Notices procedures. If a pupil has 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent of 5 school days) in any 6 week period, including unauthorised sessions caused by holidays and punctuality, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of the Penalty Notice Process.

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>