



# Attendance Policy

June 2024

Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow



Every School Day Counts!

Together with Christ everyone achieves more

It is our belief that good school attendance provides our pupils with the best chance of a bright and successful future. At St Mary and St Benedict Catholic School we recognise that regular attendance by pupils is an important factor in raising achievement. We also consider that the prevention of unauthorised absence forms an integral part of our policy to promote good behaviour, discipline and pupil wellbeing.

It is our aim to work closely with parents and, if necessary, support agencies, following agreed Coventry City Council Attendance Team procedures and protocols to ensure excellent attendance for all of our pupils. Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. We believe regular, punctual attendance is important, not just because the law requires it, but because it is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to them. When a child is absent from school he or she misses not only the teaching provided on the days when absent, but is also less prepared for future lessons meaning there is a consequent risk of underachievement.

We do however realise that for some pupils there are barriers to attending school. We aim to work in partnership with other agencies to promote and achieve good school attendance.

### **Why school attendance matters**

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving children the best possible start in life. The aim should be to attend 100% of the time. Research shows that pupils who attend school regularly achieve at higher levels than those who do not attend regularly, and they also have wider life chances. Attending school on a regular basis also helps to develop:

- Friendships
- Social skills
- Life skills
- Career pathways

Missed days in school can have a significant impact on all the above.

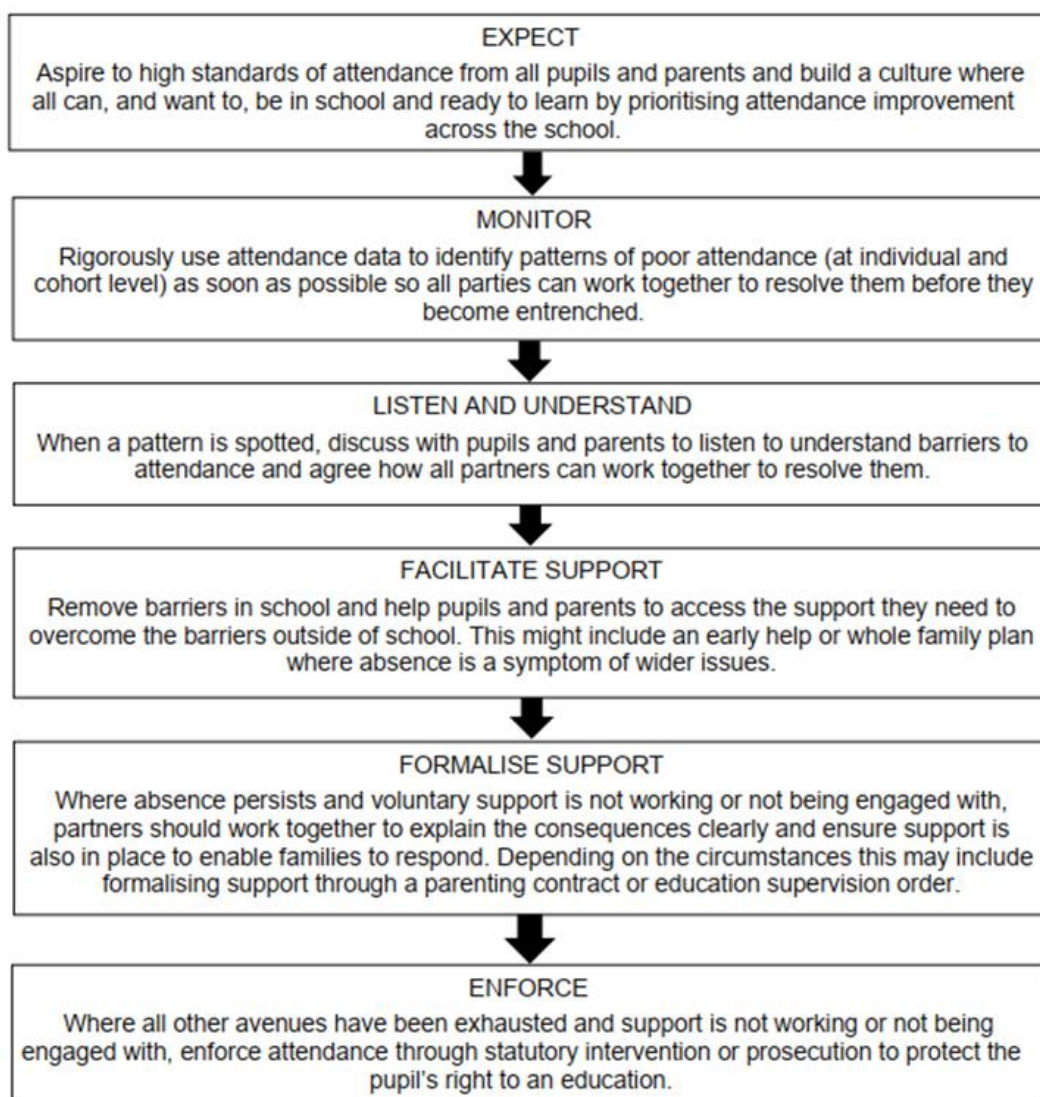
<b>Yearly attendance</b>	<b>Yearly days missed</b>	<b>Yearly learning hours missed</b>	<b>Learning hours missed during school life (YR-Y11)</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>97%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>95%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>90%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1200</b>
<b>80%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>2400</b>
<b>50%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>6000</b>

Good attendance is not something to be viewed in isolation and it is the role of all involved to work with and support pupils and their families as a collective.

Our key partners are:

- Pupils and their families
- School Attendance Team
- SEND support services
- Early Help
- Virtual School
- Social Care
- Health

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, not against families. All partners should work together to:



### **How attendance support is delivered**

Our staged intervention model works to support schools, pupils and families to secure the right help at the right time.

We have a school attendance officer who is the main point of contact for the named Local Authority School Attendance Officers (LAAO) and named Early Help Coordinators (EHAC).

We support from Social Care if the child is known to be under a Child Protection plan or Child in Need plan. School attendance should inform part of the plan and social workers would be expected to be involved in any concerns raised around school attendance where they are already involved.

### **Stage 1: Prevention**

**Criteria:** Attendance is between 91% and 100%

**Lead practitioner:** School

Pupils who have attendance between 91% and 100% will receive support from school and other universal services they may be accessing i.e. GP.

- First day absence contact (text then phone calls, home visit if no response)
- Letter sent if absence falls below schools' attendance target
- If attendance does not improve request a meeting with parent/carer

### **Stage 2: Early Intervention**

**Criteria:** Attendance is between 81% and 90%

**Lead practitioner:** 1<sup>st</sup> school – 2<sup>nd</sup> EHAC if criteria is met

Pupils who have attendance between 81% and 90% may require support from other services outside of school and universal services at stage 1.

LAAO will attend termly meetings at school and the EHAC to discuss pupils of concern and signpost the school to other services. *(See Appendix 1 for details of the Targeted Support Meetings)*. If the pupil is looked after the Virtual School and Social Worker will be invited to attend the Targeted Support Meeting if the pupil is due to be discussed.

Possible actions:

- Letters home
- Meeting with parent/carer in school
- Home visits
- Pastoral support
- Mentoring/counselling
- Reduced timetable
- SEMH&L
- SEND
- Extended School Non-Attendance Advisory Panel (ESNAAP)
- Social Care/Supporting Families teams (Children's Service)

We will initiate an Early Help Assessment and, if required, access support from an EHAC, who will be able to support to undertake the Early Help assessment and deliver the Early Help plan. The support may include joint home visits, attendance at Team Around the Family meetings, making necessary referrals, signposting and navigating to available services and advice and guidance relating to Right Help Right Time (RHRT) thresholds.

At this point schools may also request a monitoring letter be sent out via the LA. Should the pupil's attendance not improve then a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued following the monitoring period. *(See Appendix 2 for details on Fixed Penalty Notices)*

### **Stage 3: Targeted Support**

**Criteria:** Attendance is below 80%

**Lead practitioner:** LAAO

Pupils who have attendance below 80% may require multi-agency support in addition to that provided at stage 2.

When all attempts to engage with the pupil and family at stages 1 and 2 have failed school can discuss legal intervention with their LAAO. The Attendance Intervention form will be completed and evidence attached that everything has been done to support the pupil in improving their attendance at school.

If the LAAO is satisfied that the criteria have been met for legal intervention, they will support the school to complete one of the following.

- Parenting Contract
- Attendance Prosecution
  - School Attendance Order (only used where a pupil is not on a school roll)
  - Section 444(1) or 444(1A)

*(See Appendix 3 for details on Legal Framework and Court Preparation)*

## **APPENDIX 1 – Targeted Support Meetings**

### ***Pre-meeting***

Information to be provided to LAAO 1 week before meeting.

- Pupils with under 90% attendance to have annotated note with the reason for absence and what school have put in place so far.
- School to provide a report identifying pupils with more than 10 sessions coded C.
- School to provide a report identifying pupils with more than 20 sessions coded I.
- School to provide report identifying any pupil coded B.
- School to identify specific pupils with below 80% attendance to be discussed 1 week before the meeting.
- School to complete and send Attendance Intervention form for any pupils where all support has been exhausted.

LAAO will analyse data and seek clarification from school prior to meeting if required.  
LAAO will check Attendance Intervention forms to ensure all avenues have been exhausted prior to advising on legal intervention.

### ***Meeting (1 day per secondary school / ½ day per primary school initially but subject to change)***

#### Attendees

- School named attendance officer
  - LAAO
  - EHAC or Lead practitioners for an early help plan
  - Social Worker – where required
  - Virtual School – where required
  - Head of house/year head – where required
  - Pastoral lead – where required
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- LAAO to chair meeting
  - Each professional in attendance will be responsible for recording their own actions from the meeting.
  - LAAO will record any advice given on specific students within their own database.
  - Identify and discuss pupils who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so.
  - LAAO to provide advice and guidance on recording in register, strategies for support, legal intervention, and signposting to wider services.
  - Agree targeted actions for pupils discussed.
  - Agree who is best placed to lead on each pupil as per the stages above.

### ***Follow up – legal intervention***

If legal interventions have been discussed and agreed the LAAO agrees a time frame of support with schools around these interventions.

**N.B. A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued by a head teacher, or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police.**

## APPENDIX 2 – Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

To underpin the principle of support first and to improve the consistency of approach for pupils and parents across the country, subject to Parliament, the Secretary of State intends to introduce a national framework ahead of the 2023-24 academic year.

Until such a time Coventry City Council will continue to adhere to its Code of Conduct and guidance below.

### Leave of Absence (LOA)

Unauthorised absence for holiday goes direct to **Stage 3** under Attendance Prosecution 444(1A).

Evidence required is detailed below and would not require the interventions as detailed above.

- Schools' complete on-line application form for 5 consecutive days unauthorised absence.
- Schools **MUST** provide
  - full name and address of parents to be issued an FPN. **It is a school decision as to whom should be issued with a FPN** (consideration of circumstances around the LOA should be taken into account).
  - copy of Parent Leave of Absence Application Form (if requested in advance)
  - copy of school letter informing parent that LOA has been declined\*.
  - School letter informing parent that the LOA will evoke a FPN.
    - *School letter should make it clear that a Penalty Notice will be requested for unauthorised absence to the LA and that exceptional circumstances has been considered.*
  - Registration Certificate (on child returning to school) displaying the G code (unauthorised absence).
- If the criteria are not met, the LA will **not issue** a FPN.
  - Please note that contact with the school will not be made for further information if not provided at the initial referral stage.
- Enquiries regarding FPN's are to be made through [Attendance@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Attendance@coventry.gov.uk).

\*Schools need to ensure their letters are updated stating Attendance and Children Missing Education Team not Children and Family First Service, Education Entitlement Service, Targeted and Specialist Services or any other descriptor for the LA department.

### Irregular Attendance (IA)

10 sessions (5 days unauthorised absence) in a 5-week period.

#### Stage 2 – Attendance 81% - 90%

- School may apply for a monitoring period as a first indicator that school attendance is becoming a cause for concern.
- Parent(s) will receive a formal warning of the possibility of an FPN being issued and a maximum of 20 school days to affect an improvement.
- An attendance target will be issued with the formal warning.

### Stage 3 – Attendance 80% and below

- Schools must evidence that attendance has not improved following the monitoring period and has now dropped below 80%.
- Schools must complete an 'Attendance Intervention' form evidencing that an Early Help Assessment has been offered/taken and other interventions have taken place before any legal action or a 1A prosecution can begin.

### **APPENDIX 3 – Legal framework and court preparation**

When evidence indicates that all avenues of support have been offered to effect a change to school attendance, the named Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) will:-

- Book a room (at the nearest family hub) to the family home address
- Complete an Advisory Letter for hand delivery to the home address
- Complete the PACE Interview documents
- PACE Interview (under Caution) will be undertaken by Senior Education Officer
- Court File will be prepared by LAAO for submission to Legal.