Simul autem et crescere luceat
Together we grow and shine

Fountain Head House School
Pupil Attendance Policy

Review due	January 2025
Last review	February 2024
Reviewed by	Dan Turner Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approved by	Julie Smith Chair of the Board

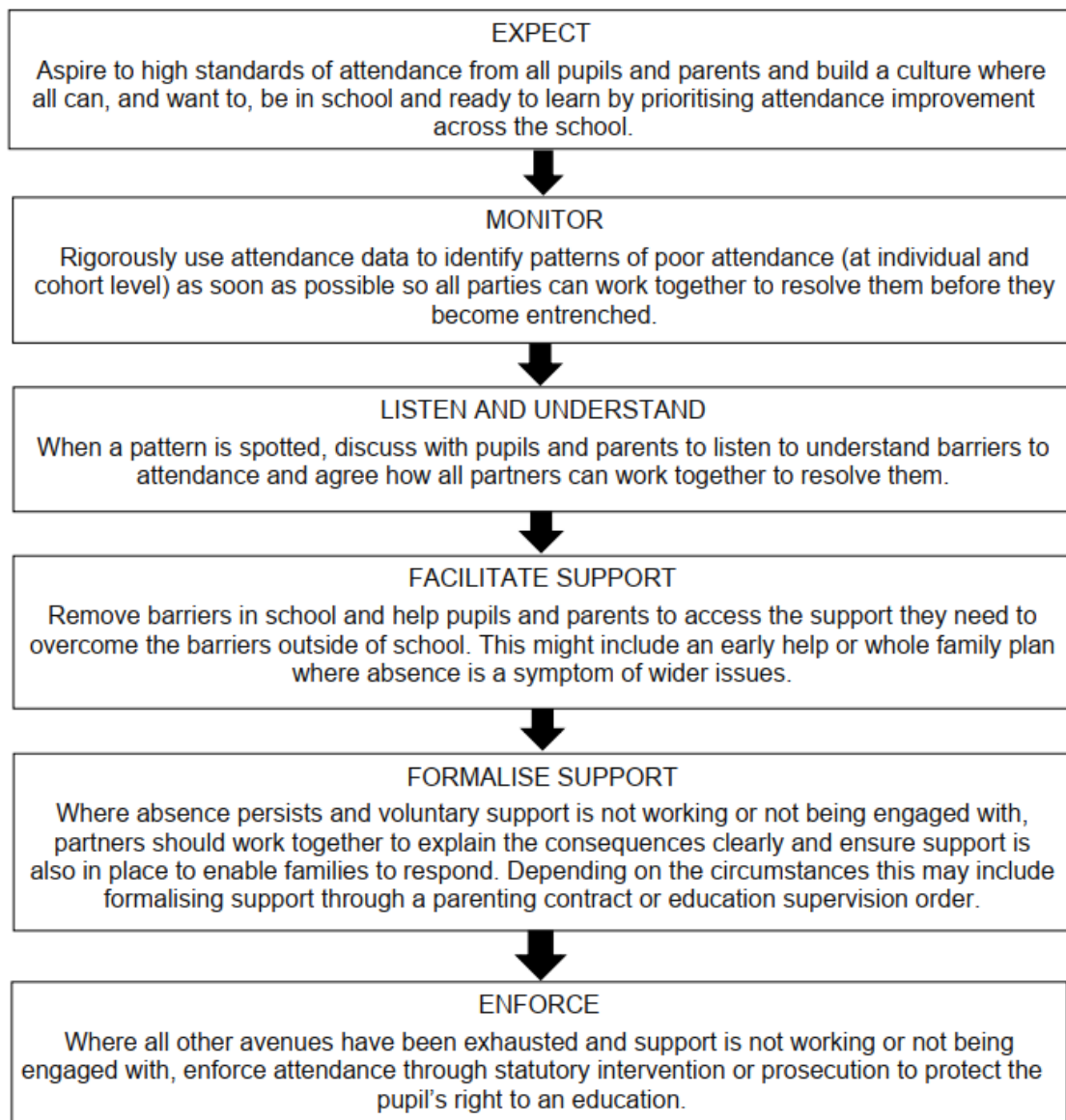| Contents	Page
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Aims

At Fountain Head House School we are committed to:
- ✓ Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- ✓ Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ✓ Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- ✓ Working collaboratively with all relevant local partners and families, particularly as concerns following best practice for "addressing the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly".
- ✓ Supporting parents to meet their legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly in a non-judgmental way.

Our approach to improving attendance reflects the philosophy and expectations laid out in **Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.**
Published: May 2022 Applies from: September 2022 and can be summarised as:

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

⬇

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.

⬇

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND
When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents 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 parents 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.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is designed to meet the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- ✓ Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- ✓ Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- ✓ Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- ✓ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- ✓ The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- ✓ This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.
- ✓ Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities - Published: May 2022.
- ✓ Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools – Published February 2023.

The following are links to useful tools and best practice advice for improving attendance:
- ✓ Emotionally Based School Avoidance - Guidance and Return to School Planning Tool https://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Page/10483
- ✓ 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle - https://schools.local-offer.org/send-toolkit/send/assess-plan-do-review/assess-plan-do-review-overview/

Roles and responsibilities

Fountain Head House School (FHHS) Board
FHHS Board oversees the monitoring attendance figures for the whole school as part of regular Headteacher's reports. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher
The Headteacher is responsible for:
- ✓ Implementation of this policy at the school.
- ✓ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to FHHS Board.
- ✓ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- ✓ Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Class Teachers
- ✓ Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via the electronic registration system.
- ✓ Following up on any absence and making notes.

Attendance Officer – Dan Turner

- ✓ The above staff have the responsibility to ensure all registers are completed twice a day by 09:30 and 13:30. This includes where staff are absent.
- ✓ Report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- ✓ The Welfare lead will carry out first day calls by 10:30.
- ✓ To check for any missing marks and to account for any 'N' marks
- ✓ Attendance monitoring - Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- ✓ If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

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School Office staff
School Office staff are expected to:
- ✓ Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

Parents/Carers
- ✓ A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school as soon as possible in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

Recording attendance

Attendance register
We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will record whether each pupil is:
- ✓ Present.
- ✓ Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- ✓ Absent.
- ✓ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Pupils must arrive in school by 09:00 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:10 and will be kept open until 09:30.

The register for the second session will be taken at 13:15 and will be kept open until 13:30.
We use Behaviour Watch, our Data Management System, to record and collect attendance data.

Absence and Lateness

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by telephone or email on the first day of an unplanned absence by 10:30 or as soon as practically possible.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school by e-mail or telephone in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:
- ✓ Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- ✓ After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:
- ✓ Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.
- ✓ Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- ✓ Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- ✓ Identify the correct attendance code to use.

Defining authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- ✓ Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- ✓ Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious. observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- ✓ Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with FHHS but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

*It may occasionally be necessary to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised for a particular pupil unless medical evidence is provided. This decision can only be made by the Safeguarding Team including the Headteacher, DSL and SENDCo.

Monitor and Analyse attendance

The DSL and Deputy Headteacher will check that the registers have been completed twice per day and where they are not will ensure they are completed by the relevant member of staff.

The DSL and Deputy Headteacher will monitor all absence daily and take any necessary streps. Looking for any patterns of absence or concerns.

The monitoring of attendance will in turn inform analysis of attendance, looking at trends for individual pupils and groups of pupils. This will be done through Behaviour Watch, the Data Management System we use to record attendance.

The DSL will carry out First Day Calling by 10:30 each day to ascertain the reason for absences.

Unexplained absences will be followed up on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and the school will identify whether the absence is approved or not. The school will identify the correct code to use and will input it as soon as the reason for absence in ascertained. **This will take no longer than 5 working days after the session.**

Any pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than one week will be referred to Safeguarding Team.

In the case where the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the school and no reason has been issued for the pupil's absence, the school will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the pupil, following procedures for children missing in education as outlined in the document from the Department of Education.

Each week attendance will be a standing item on the Safeguarding Team Agenda. At this meeting the team will review action taken and discuss next steps.

The team will focus on:

Pupils with 90% or less attendance are classified as Persistent Absence (PA). PA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

Pupils with 50% or less attendance are classified as Severe Absence (SA). SA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

All PA pupils will have bespoke action plans to try to improve their attendance to above 97%. This will be monitored by the DSL and Deputy Headteacher.

We recognise that there are particular groups who nationally, and within our local setting, are more vulnerable and susceptible to lower attendance patterns such as children who are defined as Pupil Premium, and pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. We work with families to overcome any specific barriers that children may be facing regardless of these needs to ensure that pupils access all their education.

Children Absent from Education

We have due regard to our statutory duty to safeguard pupils who are absent from education. We follow the Local Authority's processes for reporting pupils absent from education.

If a pupil fails to return following a period of absence, investigations will be made by staff to their whereabouts. If our investigations fail to contact the parents/pupil the case will be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Team within 20 days.

Data collection and retention

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

FHHS collects and stores attendance data to:
- ✓ Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- ✓ Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- ✓ Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Reporting to parents
- ✓ FHHS reports to parents on their child's attendance record termly unless a pupil's absence is causing concern.

Strategies for promoting attendance and reducing poor attendance and/or persistent absence

The school promotes good attendance for all pupils and works proactively to address attendance that is causing concern. Active monitoring of each pupil's attendance will ensure that we have a good understanding of the levels of each pupil's attendance and be able to identify and act quickly where concerns arise.

Key Triggers

- o **Extended absence:** If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- o **Persistent Absence:** The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee and action taken to try to resolve this situation.

Step 1: Listen and Understand

Where a pupil's absence is causing concern, we will fist contact their parents and discuss the issue and attempt to resolve any issues.

Step 2: Facilitate Support

If there is no improvement in attendance following this initial approach, we ask parents to attend a meeting to discuss the issue formally. From this, there may be one of three Early Help outcomes:

- • Initiate simple reasonable adjustments.
- • Develop a school focused plan with the pupil and their parent as appropriate*
- • Initiate a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA).

If the conversation with the pupil indicates a serious safeguarding concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures as set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

* Step Up Plan: School focused plan (or Individual Attendance Improvement Plan) is formulated which outline the actions the school will put in place to support the pupil's return to school, what the parent will do and clear timescales by which the pupil will be expected to engage fully. We will keep this process under close review and may meet again with parents to adjust the process.

Step 3: Formal Support

Again where this process does not bring about a change in attendance the school will seek to work in a multi-disciplinary manner with the relevant Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Statutory SEND, Social Services (where appropriate), CAHMS and look at how barriers can be tackled. This meeting and planning may form part of the EHCP review process.

In working to promote attendance and to reduce poor attendance and/or persistent absence the school will follow the guidance and principals as laid out in **Working together to improve school attendance Guidance or maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. (Published: May 2022 Applies from: September 2022).**

Step 4: Enforce: Legal sanctions – Formal Support

Where all voluntary support options above are unsuccessful or are not appropriate, the school will seek advice from the local authority's school Attendance Support Team and liaise with the relevant early help lead practitioner or social worker to take forward attendance legal intervention in line with Section 5 of **Working together to improve school attendance Guidance or maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.**

Note: It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send children to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their pupil, where the pupil is of compulsory school age. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher (in discussion with the Governors), in line with the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- Singular incidences of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is seen in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Issuing Penalty Notices

Each parent receives a penalty notice for each pupil who has unauthorised absence. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.
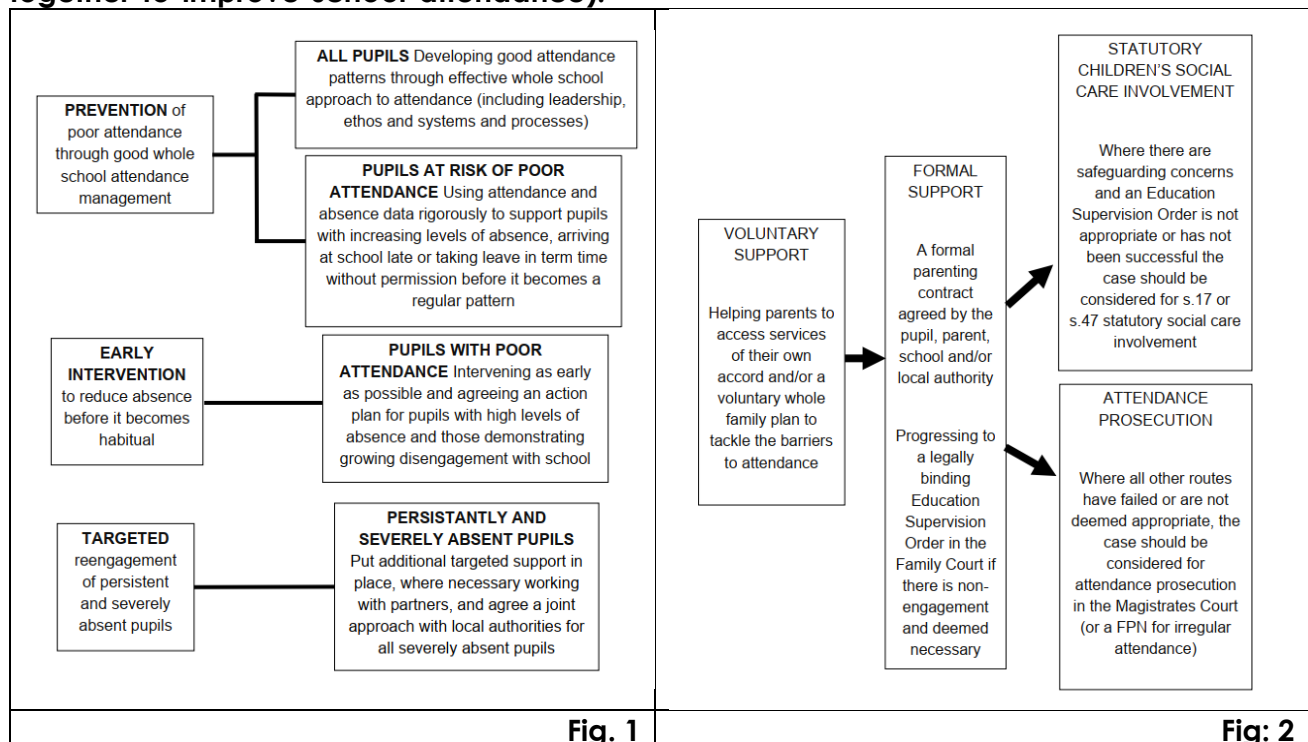
Taking Parents to Court for unauthorised absence

The Education Act (1996) Section 444 (1) states that courts can fine each parent up to £1000 per pupil, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Taking Parents to Court for Persistent Unauthorised Absence

The Education Act (1996) – Section 444 (1A) states that courts can fine each parent up to £2500 per pupil, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to three months.

This approach can be summerised as per Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 below. (The full document attached can be found here: **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance).**

Fig. 1

Fig: 2

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Chair of FHHS Board and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full FHHS Board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:
- ✓ Safeguarding and Child protection Policy.
- ✓ Positive Behaviour Policy.

Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Fountain Head House School

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

SECTION A

Child's Name ……………………………………….
Class………………………………………………

Proposed first day of absence…
…………………………………………………………………………..

Proposed last day of absence………………………………………………..………………..

Total number of days absent…………………………………………………………………

SECTION B

Reason for request of absence…………………………………………………………………….

SECTION C

I declare the information given on this form is correct.

Signature of Paretn/Carer…………………………………………..
Date……………………

SECTION D   FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Request approved / not approved

Reasons:

Headteacher's Signature………………………………………….   Date…………………

Appendix 3

Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance

The following tables summarises the attendance responsibilities for parents, schools, and governing bodies, and local authorities which are outlined in the *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance.

The guidance should be read alongside the statutory guidance documents on parental responsibility measures, children missing education, supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and safeguarding.

All pupils

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

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:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. 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.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	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. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. 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.

Persistently absent pupils

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

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: 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. 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.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

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:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. 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. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	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. 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.

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:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area. Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children. 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.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.	Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.

Department
for Education

Appendix 4

Emotional Based School Avoidance

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and links to tools and resources to support attendance improvement where EBSA is an issue.

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Support for pupils where mental health is affecting attendance: effective practice examples:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63dcfbffd3bf7f070ffc1e8d/Support_for_pupils_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance_effective_practice_examples.pdf

The role of school staff is to ensure that the school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, which is the foundation of securing good attendance.

Generally, schools will achieve this by promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing through a whole-school approach to pupil mental health, and by developing a trusted relationship with parents/carers and families that involves them in the conversation about the school's ethos, and emphasises the importance of supporting mental health and regular attendance.

As part of any plan to support the child to attend well, schools should facilitate relevant pastoral support. This should be done with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying mental health issue.

This will involve having sensitive conversations with pupils and with parents/carers as swiftly as possible after having been made aware of the issue, and making reasonable adjustments in order to overcome specific barriers to attendance.

For example, a trusted adult periodically checking how the pupil is feeling or enabling the pupil to access a quiet space at break times can be effective ways of helping a child to feel less anxious about attending school. Or, if a pupil is anxious about returning to school because they are worried about being behind academically, they might be supported by providing access to additional educational support and tutoring. Full guidance on the programmes and activities that the Department is funding to support education recovery and children and young people's wellbeing, including the Recovery Premium and National Tutoring Programme, is available at Education recovery support. More examples of common, effective reasonable adjustments can be found in the effective practice examples.

Any plan to help the child to attend well may also involve making referrals to in-school or external professional support, and schools should be supportive where parents/carers feel the child needs to visit a health professional in relation to a mental health concern. Schools should consider additional pastoral care inputs for pupils, including any support that can be offered by the pupil's most trusted adults in school, and where appropriate making referrals to other services.

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
-   **February 2023**

Summary of responsibilities

The table pulls out from the Working together to improve school attendance expectations relating to social, emotional and mental health issues and attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to:	School staff are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Make sure their child attends school. Work with the school and other partner organisations such as the LA to establish a shared understanding of perceived barriers to attendance, with a view to supporting their child to maintain full-time attendance at school. Proactively engage with any support offered. Keep in touch with the school and be open in communicating information that will help improve the quality and nature of support being provided. Take action as best they can to support their child(ren) to recognise and manage their social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Support is available at Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters.	Set and maintain high expectations for attendance for children with mental health concerns and work with pupils and parents/carers to maximise their attendance. Facilitate support for pupils experiencing mental health problems as well as for those experiencing normal but difficult emotions through sensitive conversations with pupils and parents/carers. Consider additional pastoral care inputs, where appropriate making referrals. Engage with parents at an early stage in conversations to support their child experiencing anxiety to ensure robust support for the child. Support parents if they feel the child needs to visit a specialist in relation to a mental health concern. There is no need to routinely ask for medical evidence to support recording an absence as authorised. Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours where possible. Only request medical evidence of a mental health-related absence where there is a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, whether the illness should constitute an absence or to inform any agreed actions to support attendance.	Regularly monitor and consider the approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing within the school to understand how it is working. Satisfy themselves that the building of emotional resilience is sufficiently delivered through school curriculum and pastoral support, promoting a strong ethos and culture. Support the school to take a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing.	Work in conjunction with relevant services and partners such as local mental health services, and provide access to voluntary sector support and council services where necessary. Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of the school-age population. Work with partner organisations to signpost schools to support available in the local community and prioritise targeting support for children and young people most in need. Where support is provided but not engaged with voluntarily, consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under their existing powers. Determine whether alternative provision should be provided under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 as outlined in statutory guidance where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days. Review EHC plans where required.