ATTENDANCE POLICY - SAFEGUARDING

This policy has been approved for operation within:	Eternal Light Secondary School
Date of last review:	Sep 2025
Date of next review:	Sep 2026
Review period:	1 year
Reviewed by	HK
Approved by	FP

Contents

1. Legislation and Guidance

1.1 Legislative Framework

This policy is based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance "Working together to improve school attendance 2024" which highlights the importance of attendance including legal obligations that all parties should be aware of. This policy is also based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

1. Children Missing Education 2024

2. Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

3. Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014

4. Education and Skills Act 2008

5. Equality Act 2010

6. EYFS statutory framework for group and school based providers (DfE 2024)

7. "Is my child too ill for school?" NHS 2024

8. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

9. Part 3 of the Education Act 2002

10. Part 6 of the Education Act 1996

11. Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

12. Sponsorship Duties (UKVI, July 2023)

13. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

14. Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance 2024

15. Working together to improve school attendance 2024

16. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2024

1.2 Legal Obligations

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education that is efficient and appropriate for their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

A parent or carer who does not ensure their child's regular school attendance without a valid reason violates Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

1.3 Relationship to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

- Behaviour Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

- Exclusions Policy

- Data Protection Policy

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2. Introduction

2.1 Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to show Eternal Light School's commitment to meeting our obligations about school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (2024) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

School and college staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

The School Attendance and Punctuality Policy is in line with the school's mission statement. School leaders aim to support every pupil in attending school daily, enabling them to reach their academic and social potential.

2.2 Our Approach

To achieve this aim, the school will work closely with parents/carers, the local authority, and external agencies to offer pupils support in maintaining excellent attendance. The barriers to accessing education are varied and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often unique to individual pupils and their families. Improving attendance is a collective responsibility, requiring effective communication and collaboration.

Excellent attendance is vital for academic success. The school will ensure that parents are kept well-informed about the link between attendance and attainment and that when academic progress is at risk, this message is communicated clearly, with support provided to overcome any barriers to attendance.

School leaders will ensure a calm, safe, supportive, and stimulating learning environment that motivates pupils to attend and be eager to learn.

The school will take a supportive approach first, allowing parents to address any issues before considering legal action as a last resort. Leaders should expect high standards, monitor attendance patterns, listen to parents to understand any barriers and facilitate and formalise support where necessary. Enforcement and legal interventions should only be considered when there is evidence of a lack of parental engagement, and when it is believed this may improve attendance (except in cases of unauthorised leave during term time).

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3. Key Information for Parents

School Information	Details
School starts at	08:05
School ends at	16:35
Registers close at	08:25 (20 minutes after school starts)
After this time, unless a satisfactory reason can be evidenced, the absence will be unauthorised and could lead to legal interventions	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mr Hassan Khan
Attendance Champion / Data Protection Officer	Mr Hassan Khan
Contact email	hassan.khan@eternallightschool.co.uk
Attendance target	97% (whole school)
Individual pupil target	100%

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4. School Commitment

Everyone in the school is dedicated to fostering good attendance and punctuality. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

All staff members are made aware of how their roles influence attendance and punctuality, as well as the expectations for consistently applying the policy and correctly using absence codes. To support this commitment, mandatory training will be provided. The level and frequency of training will vary according to the role, but the core message will remain clear: every staff member plays a part in making a positive impact.

The school is committed to listening to and supporting both pupils and parents/carers to help achieve good attendance and punctuality, particularly when absence becomes a concern. The school aims for 100% attendance for all pupils, with a whole-school target of 97%. A pupil who achieves at least 97% attendance in a full school year will have missed fewer than six days of school.

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5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Governing Body

The governing body will:

- Develop and regularly review the Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Establish and assess attendance and punctuality targets as part of the school's annual operating statement, strategic plan, and target-setting process
- Ensure appropriate resources are allocated to support attendance initiatives
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy through regular reporting from the Headteacher and DSL
- Ensure the school complies with its safeguarding duties in relation to attendance

5.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Implement this policy consistently throughout the school
- Ensure all staff understand their role in promoting good attendance
- Report attendance data to the governing body
- Authorise or refuse requests for leave of absence
- Work with the DSL to ensure attendance concerns with safeguarding implications are appropriately addressed

- Ensure appropriate staff training is delivered

5.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as local authority children's social care. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

Mr Hassan Khan, as DSL and Attendance Champion, will:

- Act as the primary point of contact for all attendance-related safeguarding concerns

- Monitor attendance patterns to identify pupils who may be at risk

- Liaise with external agencies including local authority children's social care, police, and health services

- Ensure that attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils are escalated appropriately

- Work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Maintain oversight of pupils with social workers and ensure their attendance is monitored closely

- Lead on Children Missing Education (CME) procedures

5.4 The Attendance Office

The attendance office will:

- Monitor attendance on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly, and annual basis

- Contact parents/carers of pupils identified as at risk to address absences and encourage an early return to school

- Ensure attendance and punctuality data is displayed in prominent locations visible to pupils

- Where necessary, arrange home visits in accordance with the school's home visit protocol

- Issue appropriate sanctions for pupils whose attendance and punctuality are of concern

- Manage arrangements for pupils who need to attend appointments during school hours

- Coordinate a support plan for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence

- Refer concerns to the DSL where there are safeguarding implications

- Make referrals to Bradford Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Team when appropriate

5.5 All Staff

All staff should be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the child protection policy and the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

All staff will:

- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality

- Mark registers accurately and on time using the correct codes

- Report concerns about individual pupils' attendance to the attendance office and, where appropriate, the DSL

- Be vigilant to signs that poor attendance may be linked to safeguarding concerns

- Follow the school's procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns

5.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers should be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason. Only the school can decide if an absence is considered 'authorised'. It is also their responsibility to ensure their child arrives at school on time, wearing the full uniform, and is ready and equipped to learn.

Parents/carers must:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time

- Inform the school before 08:30 on each day of absence, providing the reason and expected return date

- Provide medical evidence for absences of three or more consecutive days

- Arrange appointments outside of school hours wherever possible

- Request leave of absence in advance using the school's online Absence Request Form

- Work with the school to address any barriers to attendance

- Attend meetings to discuss attendance concerns

- Not book non-refundable travel before receiving written approval for term-time leave

5.7 Pupils

Pupils should:

- Aim to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality

- Arrive at school on time every day, well-prepared and with a positive attitude

- Be punctual to all lessons and ensure they are registered for every timetabled class

- Inform staff if they are unable to be registered for any reason

- Communicate any barriers preventing regular attendance to appropriate staff

- Take pride in maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality

6. Registration

6.1 Taking Registers

The school will ensure that an attendance register is taken at the start of the morning in tutor time and the first session in the afternoon. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

Registers will be taken at:

- **Morning registration**: 08:05 - 08:25

- **Afternoon registration**: First lesson after lunch

6.2 Registration Codes

Registers will be marked using the Department for Education Attendance and Absence Codes as set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Staff must ensure they use the correct codes and understand the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence.

6.3 Late Arrival

Pupils arriving after 08:05 but before 08:25 will be marked as late (L code).

Pupils arriving after 08:25 (when registers close) will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U code) unless a valid reason is provided with supporting evidence.

Persistent lateness will be addressed through the school's behaviour policy and may trigger safeguarding concerns if it becomes a pattern.

6.4 Medical Appointments

All appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside of school hours. Parents/carers are required to provide advance notice for any medical appointments that

necessitate time off school, by providing a medical card and/or a text screenshot to ensure the absence is authorised.

Time away from school for appointments should be kept to a minimum, and pupils are encouraged to attend school before and after appointments whenever possible.

6.5 Pupils Leaving School During School Hours

Pupils are not allowed to leave school unaccompanied during school hours for any reason, including if they are suspended or feeling unwell. Pupils should only be collected from school by an authorised adult, preferably a parent or carer. Parental consent over the phone for a pupil to walk home alone during school hours will not be accepted.

The only exceptions to this policy are:

- When a pupil is on a regularly reviewed, short-term reduced timetable (agreed with parents and documented)
- When written permission has been provided by the parents for the pupil to attend a scheduled appointment

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7. Absences

7.1 Reporting Absence

On each day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school before 08:30 by:

- Telephone: 01274 501597

Parents/carers should provide:

- The reason for absence
- The expected date of return
- Any relevant medical information

7.2 Ongoing Absence

Parents/carers should contact the school every day until the pupil returns or provide information about the expected length of the absence and the reason, such as recovering from an operation. In these cases, a 'check-in' date must be agreed for when the absence will be reviewed.

7.3 Authorised vs Unauthorised Absence

If a reasonable explanation is not provided within a day of the absence starting, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, not the parent/carer, to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. These decisions will be made in line with DfE regulations and guidance.

Examples of authorised absence include:

- Genuine illness (medical evidence will be required)

- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (with evidence)

- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Shopping trips

- Birthdays

- Looking after siblings

- Holidays not approved by the school

- Oversleeping

7.4 The Importance of Good Attendance

All pupils should aim for 100% attendance.

Persistent Absence: Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, this is classified as 'persistent absence'. This is the equivalent of missing half a year of schooling between Years 7 and 11.

Severe Absence: Where a pupil's attendance falls below 50%, this is classified as 'severe absence'.

Evidence shows that a pupil's progress and attainment is adversely affected if their attendance falls below 90%; national statistics indicate that if a pupil's attendance drops below 90% their GCSE attainment is likely to drop by an entire grade.

In the case of any pupil whose attendance falls below 90%, the school will:

1. Contact parents/carers to discuss concerns

2. Arrange a meeting to identify barriers to attendance

3. Implement clear strategies to support the pupil

4. Put an attendance contract in place if necessary

5. Make referrals to external agencies where appropriate

6. Consider SLT Intervention as a last resort

8. Term Time Leave and Holidays

8.1 General Principles

All requests for leave during term time must be submitted via the school's online Absence Request Form. The form must be completed accurately and in full and submitted at least four weeks in advance (or as soon as possible in emergency situations).

Requests for absence during term time—particularly during the final weeks of a half-term or at the end of term—are more likely to be refused due to the scheduling of assessments and examinations. Parents are therefore strongly advised **not** to book any non-refundable travel before receiving written approval, as the school will not alter its decisions where bookings have been made without prior authorisation.

Any absence taken without prior approval will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in deregistration from the school.

8.2 Exceptional Circumstances

The Headteacher may authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are rare, significant, and unavoidable events that could not reasonably be accommodated outside of term time.

Examples of what may be considered exceptional circumstances:

- Bereavement of a close family member

- Participation in significant cultural or sporting events at national or international level

- Family emergency that could not have been foreseen

Examples of what would NOT normally be considered exceptional circumstances:

- Family holidays or visits to family abroad

- Availability of cheap holidays

- Umrah travel

- Overlap with a new term at another school

- Birthdays or celebrations

- Shopping trips

- Visiting relatives who are not seriously ill

- Days out or theme park visits

8.3 How to Request Leave of Absence

- All leave requests must be made using the school's online Absence Request Form, available at:

- http://eternallightschool.co.uk/absence-request-form-2/

- The form must include:

- The pupil's name and year group

- The dates of the requested absence

- The total number of school days that will be missed

- The reason for the request (with full details)

- Any supporting evidence (e.g., letter from doctor, court summons, funeral notice)

8.4 Decision-Making Process

Each request will be considered individually by the Headteacher and SLT, taking into account:

- The reason for the request

- The pupil's attendance record (current and previous years)

- The pupil's academic progress and whether they are on track to meet their targets

- The timing of the absence (e.g., during exam periods, assessment weeks, or key learning periods)

- The length of the absence

- Whether similar requests have been made previously

- The views of relevant staff (e.g., form tutor, year head, subject teachers)

Important: Previous approval of a leave request does not guarantee that future requests will be approved. Each request is considered on its own merits.

8.5 Notification of Decision

Parents will be notified of the decision in writing (by email or letter) normally within 10 school days of submitting the request.

If the request is **approved,** the letter will confirm:

- The dates of authorised absence

- The date the pupil is expected to return to school

- Any conditions attached to the approval

- Arrangements for collecting missed work

If the request is **refused,** the letter will explain:

- The reasons for the refusal

- That any absence taken will be recorded as unauthorised

- The potential consequences of taking unauthorised absence (including penalty notices and legal action)

8.6 Consequences of Unauthorised Absence

If a pupil is absent during term time without authorisation:

- The absence will be recorded as unauthorised (code G - family holiday not agreed)

- The pupil's place at the school will be at risk - In accordance with the school's Terms and Conditions.

8.7 Extended Leave

The school will not normally authorise leave of absence for more than 5 school days in any academic year, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

Where a pupil is absent for an extended period (whether authorised or unauthorised), the school will:

- Provide work for the pupil to complete during the absence (where possible)

- Monitor the pupil's return to school

- Provide support to help the pupil catch up on missed learning

- Consider whether a reintegration plan is needed

If a pupil is absent for more than 20 school days without authorisation and the school has been unable to make contact with the family, the pupil may be removed from the school roll and referred to Bradford Children Missing Education team.

8.8 Religious Observance

As a school with an Islamic ethos, major religious days are incorporated into the termly calendar. Therefore, the need for additional absence for religious observance should not ordinarily arise.

In cases where a pupil is not of the Islamic faith, any additional days required for religious observance will be discussed and agreed with parents prior to admission.

For Muslim pupils, the recognised days of religious observance are **Eid-ul-Fitr** and **Eid-ul-Adha**. No additional religious days are authorised, as these do not constitute major religious observances within the Islamic calendar.

8.9 Circumstances Beyond Family Control

The school recognises that there may be circumstances beyond a family's control that result in absence, such as:

- Sudden serious illness or death of a close family member

- Unavoidable court appearances

- Missed flights or transport disruptions due to circumstances beyond the family's control

- Natural disasters or civil unrest affecting travel

In such cases, parents should:

- Contact the school as soon as possible to explain the situation

- Provide evidence of the circumstances (e.g., death certificate, court summons, airline documentation)

- Keep the school informed of when the pupil will return

The school will consider each case sympathetically and will normally authorise such absences where appropriate evidence is provided.

8.10 Work During Absence

Where leave of absence has been authorised, the school will, where possible, provide work for the pupil to complete during their absence.

Parents should:

- Collect work from the school office before the absence begins, or

- Access work via the school's online learning platform (Sparx Learning, Teams)

Pupils are expected to:

- Complete all work set during their absence

- Return completed work to their teachers on their return to school

- Catch up on any additional work missed

Important: The school cannot guarantee that work will be available for unauthorised absences.

9.4 Managing Absence/Lateness

9.1 Illness and Medical Absences

Eternal Light School understands that on occasion pupils may have to miss school due to ill health. Parents are asked to:

- Adopt a sensible approach to illness, keeping pupils off school only when it is necessary

- Contact school by **8:30am** on the first day of absence, indicating the reason for absence

- Contact school each subsequent day of absence, or provide information about the expected length of the absence

When to keep a child off school:

Parents should keep their child at home if they have:

- A high temperature (fever)

- Vomiting or diarrhea (child should be kept off school for 48 hours after the last episode)

- A contagious illness (e.g., chickenpox, measles, COVID-19)

- Been prescribed antibiotics and are not well enough to attend school

When a child can attend school:

Children can usually attend school with:

- A minor cold or cough (unless accompanied by fever)

- A headache (unless severe or accompanied by other symptoms)

- A sore throat (unless accompanied by fever or difficulty swallowing)

For guidance on common childhood illnesses, parents can refer to the NHS "Is my child too ill for school?" guidance at: **https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/**

9.2 Reporting Absence

On each day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school before **8:30am** by telephone: 01274 501597.

Parents should provide:

- The pupil's name and year group

- The reason for absence

- The expected date of return

- Any relevant medical information

9.3 Evidence for Absence

The school may request evidence for absences in the following circumstances:

- Absences of **3 or more consecutive days**

- Frequent short-term absences

- Patterns of absence (e.g., always on Mondays or Fridays, before or after holidays)

- Where attendance falls below **90%**

- Where there are concerns about the authenticity of reported illness

Acceptable evidence includes:

- Medical appointment card

- Prescription or medication packaging

- Letter from GP or hospital

- Text message or email confirmation of appointment

- Discharge letter from hospital

Note: The school cannot request a GP letter for every absence, but may do so where there are concerns about patterns of absence or where attendance is very poor.

9.4 Unexplained Absence and First Day Contact

If a pupil is absent during morning registration and no communication has been received from home, the school will make efforts to determine the reason for the absence. As part of its duty of care, the school will take reasonable steps to follow up on any unexplained absences.

If there is no response from the parents or carers, the school will contact other emergency contacts to establish the pupil's whereabouts and reason for absence. If necessary, the school may conduct home visits and collaborate with external agencies such as Bradford Children's Social Care to ensure the pupil's safety and well-being.

For any pupil with a Child Protection Plan, Children's Social Care will be notified on the first day of an unexplained absence.

Ongoing or severe absence may be considered educational neglect, and any concerns will be reported to Children's Social Care. The school will adhere to statutory guidance regarding children missing in education (CME) and report the case to the appropriate authorities as required.

9.5 First Day Contact

If a pupil is absent and the school has not been notified of the reason, the school will:

- Contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence by **9:30am**

- Send a text message if telephone contact is unsuccessful

- Email parents/carers

- Contact emergency contacts if parents/carers cannot be reached

If contact cannot be made by the end of the first day of absence, the school will escalate the matter (see Section 9.6 below).

9.6 Escalation Procedures for Unexplained Absence

Day 1 (First day of absence):

- First day contact procedures followed (as above)

- If no contact made, designated staff member informed

Day 2 (Second day of absence):

- Further attempts to contact parents/carers and emergency contacts

- DSL informed if pupil has safeguarding concerns or is vulnerable

- Consider home visit (see Section 9.7)

Day 3 (Third day of absence):

- Home visit conducted (if not already done)

- DSL informed

- Consider referral to Bradford Children's Social Care if safeguarding concerns

- Consider referral to Bradford Attendance Improvement Team

Day 10 (Tenth day of absence):

- If pupil remains absent with no contact, refer to Bradford Children Missing Education (CME) team

- Notify Children's Social Care if pupil has a social worker or Child Protection Plan

Day 20 (Twentieth day of absence):

- If no contact has been made and the pupil's whereabouts are unknown, the pupil will be referred to Bradford CME team as a child missing education

- The school will continue to attempt to locate the pupil

9.7 Home Visits

The school may conduct home visits in the following circumstances:

- Unexplained absence of more than 2 days

- Patterns of absence that cause concern

- When the school has been unable to make contact with parents/carers

- When there are safeguarding concerns

- When a pupil has not returned to school after a period of absence

Home Visit Procedures:

All home visits will be conducted in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and staff safety protocols:

1. **Risk Assessment** - A risk assessment will be completed before any home visit

2. **Staff Safety** - Home visits will normally be conducted by two members of staff

3. **Notification** - Where possible, parents will be notified in advance of a home visit

4. **Recording** - A written record will be kept of all home visits, including:

   o   Date and time of visit

- o Staff members who attended

- o Who was present at the home

- o What was discussed

- o Any concerns identified

- o Actions agreed

- o Follow-up required

5. **Safeguarding** - If safeguarding concerns are identified during a home visit, these will be reported immediately to the DSL

6. **Unsuccessful Visits** - If no one is at home, a card will be left asking parents to contact the school urgently

9.8 Medical Appointments and Absences

Medical Appointments:

Parents/carers should arrange medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible:

- Parents must provide evidence of the appointment (appointment card, text message, letter)

- Pupils should attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible

- The absence will be recorded using the appropriate code (M - medical appointment)

Medical Evidence:

The school may request medical evidence for absences in the following circumstances:

- Absences of 3 or more consecutive days

- Frequent short-term absences

- Patterns of absence (e.g., always on Mondays or Fridays)

- Where attendance falls below 90%

- Where there are concerns about the authenticity of reported illness

Medical evidence may include:

- Appointment cards

- Prescription details

- Letter from GP or hospital

- Text message confirmation of appointment

9.9 Religious Observance

The school recognises that pupils may need to be absent for religious observance. Parents should request such absence in advance using the school's Absence Request Form.

The school will authorise absence for religious observance where:

- The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong

- Advance notice has been given

- The request is reasonable

The school may limit the number of days granted for religious observance to ensure pupils do not miss excessive amounts of education.

9.10 Exceptional Circumstances

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances that require a pupil to be absent from school. These might include:

- Bereavement (close family member)

- Serious illness of a close family member

- Family emergency

- Court appearances

- Unavoidable medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours

Parents should contact the school as soon as possible to discuss such circumstances. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

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10. Safeguarding and Attendance

10.1 Attendance as a Safeguarding Issue

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in Keeping Children Safe in Education

The school recognises that poor attendance can be both a safeguarding issue in itself and an indicator of other safeguarding concerns.

10.2 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing,

or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college. Keeping Children Safe in Education

Mr Hassan Khan, as DSL and Attendance Champion, will:

- Monitor attendance patterns to identify pupils who may be at risk

- Work with the attendance team to identify safeguarding concerns

- Ensure that attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils are escalated appropriately

- Liaise with external agencies including local authority children's social care, police, and health services

- Maintain oversight of pupils with social workers and ensure their attendance is monitored closely

- Lead on Children Missing Education (CME) procedures

10.3 Vulnerable Pupils

The school will pay particular attention to the attendance of pupils who are considered vulnerable, including:

Pupils with Social Workers:

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health. Keeping Children Safe in Education

Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. Keeping Children Safe in Education

For pupils with social workers, the school will:

- Monitor attendance daily

- Notify the social worker on the first day of any unexplained absence

- Work with the social worker to address any barriers to attendance

- Attend multi-agency meetings regarding the pupil

- Share attendance data with the social worker regularly

Pupils with Child Protection Plans:

For pupils with Child Protection Plans, the school will:

- Notify Children's Social Care immediately on the first day of any unexplained absence

- Monitor attendance daily and report any concerns to the social worker

- Attend all Child Protection meetings and reviews

- Follow the Child Protection Plan in relation to attendance

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children:

For looked after children, the school will:

- Monitor attendance daily

- Notify the social worker and Virtual School Head of any concerns

- Work with the social worker and carer to address barriers to attendance

- Consider attendance as part of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may face additional barriers to attendance. The school will:

- Work with the SENCO to identify and address barriers

- Make reasonable adjustments to support attendance

- Consider whether absence may be related to unmet SEND needs

- Work with parents and external agencies to provide appropriate support

Pupils at Risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) or Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):

The school recognises that poor attendance can be an indicator of exploitation. The school will:

- Monitor attendance patterns carefully

- Look for other indicators of exploitation

- Make referrals to children's social care and/or police where appropriate

- Work with external agencies to safeguard the pupil

Young Carers:

The school recognises that young carers may face barriers to attendance due to their caring responsibilities. The school will:

- Identify young carers and record this information

- Work with families to ensure appropriate support is in place

- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate

- Signpost families to support services

10.4 Attendance and Mental Health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Keeping Children Safe in Education

The school recognises that mental health issues can affect attendance. Where the school identifies that a pupil's poor attendance may be linked to mental health concerns, the school will:

- Refer to the school's mental health lead

- Work with parents to identify appropriate support

- Make referrals to external mental health services where appropriate

- Consider whether a reduced timetable may be appropriate as a short-term measure (with regular review)

- Ensure the DSL is informed if there are safeguarding concerns

10.5 Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

The school recognises that some pupils may experience anxiety about attending school. Where this is identified, the school will:

- Work with parents and the pupil to understand the underlying causes

- Develop a graduated return-to-school plan

- Make reasonable adjustments to support the pupil

- Refer to external services (e.g., educational psychology, CAMHS) where appropriate

- Monitor progress and review the plan regularly

Important: EBSA is not an acceptable reason for long-term absence. The school will work with families to ensure pupils return to full-time education as quickly as possible.

11. Children Missing Education (CME)

11.1 Definition

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. Keeping Children Safe in Education

A child missing education is a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school (e.g., at home, privately, or in alternative provision).

11.2 When to Make a CME Referral

The school will make a referral to Bradford Children Missing Education team when:

- A pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive school days without contact from parents/carers

- A pupil's whereabouts are unknown

- A pupil has been removed from the school roll and the school has concerns that they are not receiving suitable education elsewhere

- Parents have indicated they are moving abroad and the school has concerns about the arrangements

- Parents have indicated they intend to home educate and the school has concerns

11.3 CME Referral Process

When making a CME referral, the school will:

1. Complete the Bradford CME referral form

2. Provide all known information about the pupil and family, including:

   o Full name, date of birth, address

   o Parents' names and contact details

   o Emergency contact details

   o Any known information about where the family may have moved to

   o Details of any siblings and their schools

   o Any safeguarding concerns

   o Details of any agencies involved with the family (e.g., social worker, health visitor)

3. Send the referral to: **Bradford Children Missing Education Team**
   Telephone: 01274 438877
   Email: CME@bradford.gov.uk

4. Keep a copy of the referral on the pupil's file

5. Continue to attempt to locate the pupil and family

11.4 Removing Pupils from Roll

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register. Keeping Children Safe in Education

The school will only remove a pupil from the admission register in the following circumstances:

- The pupil has been registered at another school

- The pupil has moved to a different area and the school has been unable to identify a new school

- The pupil has been permanently excluded

- The pupil has died

- The pupil has been granted leave to be educated outside the school (e.g., at an alternative provision)

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age

- The pupil has been continuously absent for at least 20 school days and the school has been unable to locate the pupil after making reasonable enquiries

Before removing a pupil from roll (except where they have registered at another school or have completed their education), the school will:

- Make reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil

- Notify Bradford Local Authority

- Make a CME referral if appropriate

- Notify the pupil's social worker (if applicable)

11.5 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we recommend that local authorities, schools, and other key professionals work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Keeping Children Safe in Education

Where a parent indicates they wish to home educate, the school will:

1. **Arrange a meeting** with the parents to discuss:

   o The reasons for the decision

   o What home education involves

   o The parents' plans for educating their child

   o Any concerns the school may have

   o Alternative options that might address the parents' concerns

2. **Involve relevant professionals** where the pupil:

   o Has special educational needs or a disability

- o Has a social worker

- o Is otherwise vulnerable

- o Has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

3. **Notify the local authority** of the parents' intention to home educate

4. **Remove the pupil from roll** only when:

- o The parent has confirmed in writing their intention to home educate

- o The school is satisfied that the parent understands their responsibilities

- o All relevant professionals have been consulted

5. **Make a referral** to Bradford Local Authority's Elective Home Education team

Important: The school will not seek to persuade parents against home education, but will ensure they are making an informed decision in the best interests of their child.

---

12. Information Sharing

12.1 Legal Basis for Information Sharing

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. Schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. Keeping Children Safe in Education

The school will share attendance information where it is necessary to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils

- Support pupils' educational outcomes

- Comply with legal obligations

- Prevent or detect crime

12.2 Who We Share Information With

The school will share attendance information with the following parties:

Parents and Carers:

- Regular attendance reports

- Notifications of absence and lateness

- Attendance concerns

- Attendance improvement plans

Bradford Local Authority:

- Statutory attendance returns

- CME referrals

- Notifications when pupils are removed from roll

- Information about pupils with persistent or severe absence

- Information about pupils with safeguarding concerns

Children's Social Care:

- Attendance information for pupils with social workers

- Attendance information for pupils with Child Protection Plans

- Notifications of unexplained absences for vulnerable pupils

- Attendance concerns that may indicate safeguarding issues

Social Workers:

- Daily attendance information for pupils with social workers

- Immediate notification of unexplained absences

- Regular attendance reports

- Attendance data for PEP meetings and reviews

Virtual School Head:

- Attendance information for looked after children

- Attendance data for PEP meetings

- Notifications of attendance concerns

Police:

- Information about pupils who may be at risk of exploitation

- Information about pupils involved in criminal activity

- Information where required by law

Health Services:

- Attendance information where relevant to health needs

- Information to support multi-agency working

Other Schools:

- Attendance records when a pupil transfers schools

- Information to support transition and continuity

Attendance Improvement Team:

- Referrals for pupils with persistent absence

- Information to support attendance improvement work

Court/Legal Representatives:

- Attendance information for court proceedings

- Evidence for prosecution of parents for non-attendance

12.3 Confidentiality and Data Protection

All attendance information will be:

- Stored securely in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy

- Shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know

- Processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

- Retained in accordance with the school's retention schedule

Parents have the right to:

- Access their child's attendance records (subject access request)

- Request correction of inaccurate attendance data

- Understand how their child's attendance data is being used

For more information, see the school's Data Protection Policy or contact Data Protection Officer HK.

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13. Attendance Improvement Strategies

13.1 Early Intervention

The school believes in early intervention to address attendance concerns before they become entrenched. When a pupil's attendance begins to decline, the school will:

At 95% attendance (equivalent to 10 days absence per year):

- Monitor attendance closely

- Speak to parents informally about the importance of good attendance

- Offer support if needed

At 93% attendance (equivalent to 13 days absence per year):

- Send a letter to parents expressing concern

- Invite parents to a meeting to discuss barriers to attendance

- Develop an informal action plan

At 90% attendance (persistent absence threshold):

- Formal meeting with parents

- Attendance contract or improvement plan

- Referral to Attendance Improvement Team (if appropriate)

- Consider referral to external agencies

Below 90% attendance:

- Continued monitoring and support

- Regular review meetings

- Possible legal action (as a last resort)

13.2 Attendance Contracts

Where a pupil's attendance is a concern, the school may ask parents to sign an attendance contract. The contract will:

- Set out the school's expectations for attendance

- Identify any barriers to attendance

- Set out actions the school will take to support improvement

- Set out actions parents will take to improve attendance

- Set attendance targets

- Include review dates

The contract will be signed by:

- The parent/carer

- The pupil (where age-appropriate)

- The school representative

Progress will be reviewed regularly (normally every 4-6 weeks).

13.3 Reduced Timetables

In exceptional circumstances, the school may agree to a reduced timetable for a pupil. This might be appropriate where:

- A pupil is returning to school after a prolonged absence

- A pupil has significant mental health needs

- A pupil has medical needs that prevent full-time attendance

- A reduced timetable is part of a reintegration plan

Important: Reduced timetables should only be used as a short-term measure and must be:

- Agreed with parents

- Time-limited with regular review (at least every 4 weeks)

- Part of a plan to return to full-time education

- Documented with clear targets and review dates

- Monitored by the DSL if there are safeguarding concerns

The school will ensure that pupils on reduced timetables:

- Continue to receive appropriate education

- Are safe during the time they are not in school

- Make progress towards returning to full-time education

13.4 Alternative Provision

In some cases, the school may arrange for a pupil to attend alternative provision to support their attendance and engagement. This might include:

- Part-time placement at an alternative provider

- Vocational courses

- Mentoring programmes

- Therapeutic support

Where a pupil attends alternative provision, the school will:

- Remain responsible for the pupil's safeguarding

- Monitor the pupil's attendance at the alternative provision

- Obtain written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on staff

- Review the placement regularly

- Ensure the provision is suitable for the pupil's needs

13.5 Multi-Agency Working

The school will work with other agencies to support pupils with attendance difficulties. This may include:

- Attendance Improvement Team

- Educational Psychology Service

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

- School Nursing Service

- Children's Social Care

- Youth Offending Team

- Housing services

- Benefits advice services

- Family support services

The school will participate in:

- Early Help Assessments

- Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings

- Child in Need meetings

- Child Protection conferences

- Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC)

14. Interventions

14.1 Parental Responsibility

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a legal duty on parents and carers to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education that is efficient, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and appropriate to any special educational needs they may have.

Under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, a parent or carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school without a valid reason may be committing an offence.

14.2 When an SLT Meeting May Be Considered

The school may consider convening a meeting with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where:

- All reasonable efforts to support attendance have been exhausted

- There is clear evidence of persistent absence without a valid reason

- Parents or carers have failed to engage with the school's attendance support strategies

- There is no sustained improvement in attendance despite interventions and support

14.3 School Action in Response to Unauthorised Absence

In cases where a pupil has taken unauthorised absence, the school will take the following actions:

- Provide documented evidence of the pupil's attendance record
- Provide evidence of the school's efforts to improve attendance
- Provide records of communication and contact with parents or carers
- Where necessary, proceed with deregistration in line with statutory guidance

---

15. Celebrating Good Attendance

15.1 Rewards and Recognition

The school believes in celebrating and rewarding good attendance. The school will:

Individual Rewards:

- Certificates for 100% attendance each term
- Certificates for 100% attendance for the full academic year
- Prizes for pupils who achieve excellent attendance
- Recognition in assemblies
- Merits or other school reward systems

Whole School:

- Display attendance data prominently around the school
- Celebrate improvements in whole-school attendance
- Share attendance success stories in newsletters and on the school website

---

16. Roles and Responsibilities

16.1 The Governing Body/Proprietors

The Governing Body/Proprietors will:

- Ensure the school complies with all statutory requirements regarding attendance
- Monitor the school's attendance data
- Review this policy annually
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensure resources are allocated to support attendance improvement

16.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Implement this policy

- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities regarding attendance

- Monitor attendance data and identify trends

- Report attendance data to the Governing Body/Proprietors

- Lead on attendance improvement strategies

- Make decisions about authorising absences

- Work with the DSL on safeguarding concerns related to attendance

- Liaise with external agencies

- Oversee legal interventions

16.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Attendance Champion

Mr Hassan Khan, as DSL and Attendance Champion, will:

- Monitor attendance patterns to identify safeguarding concerns

- Ensure vulnerable pupils' attendance is monitored closely

- Make referrals to external agencies where appropriate

- Work with the attendance team to address concerns

- Lead on CME procedures

- Provide training and support to staff on attendance and safeguarding

- Report to the Headteacher and Governing Body on attendance and safeguarding

16.4 The Attendance Office

The Attendance Office will:

- Maintain accurate attendance records

- Monitor daily attendance

- Make first day contact for unexplained absences

- Send letters to parents regarding attendance concerns

- Arrange meetings with parents

- Coordinate home visits

- Liaise with external agencies

- Produce attendance reports

- Support the implementation of attendance improvement plans

16.5 Form Tutors/Class Teachers

Form Tutors/Class Teachers will:

- Take registers accurately and on time

- Monitor the attendance of pupils in their class/form

- Speak to pupils about attendance concerns

- Communicate with parents about attendance

- Refer concerns to the Attendance Office or DSL

- Support pupils returning to school after absence

- Celebrate good attendance

16.6 All Staff

All staff will:

- Promote the importance of good attendance

- Model punctuality and regular attendance

- Report concerns about attendance to appropriate staff

- Support pupils with attendance difficulties

- Follow safeguarding procedures if attendance concerns arise

16.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and on time

- Contact the school on the first day of absence

- Provide evidence for absences where required

- Avoid taking holidays during term time

- Arrange appointments outside school hours where possible

- Work with the school to address any barriers to attendance

- Attend meetings to discuss attendance concerns

- Support their child to achieve excellent attendance

16.8 Pupils

Pupils will:

- Attend school every day and on time

- Arrive at school ready to learn

- Speak to staff if they are experiencing difficulties

- Catch up on work missed due to absence

- Take pride in achieving good attendance

---

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

17.1 Monitoring Attendance Data

The school will monitor attendance data:

- **Daily** - to identify unexplained absences and take first day action

- **Weekly** - to identify patterns and trends

- **Half-termly** - to review individual pupil attendance and identify those requiring intervention

- **Termly** - to analyse whole-school data and report to Governors/Proprietors

- **Annually** - to review the effectiveness of this policy and identify areas for improvement

17.2 Data Analysis

The school will analyse attendance data by:

- Individual pupil

- Class/form group

- Year group

- Vulnerable groups (e.g., pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with social workers)

- Protected characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, gender)

- Reason for absence

- Day of the week

- Time of year

This analysis will help the school to:

- Identify pupils who need support

- Identify patterns and trends

- Target interventions effectively

- Evaluate the impact of interventions

- Identify any equality issues

17.3 Reporting

To Governors/Proprietors:

The Headteacher will provide a termly report including:

- Whole-school attendance data

- Comparison with previous terms/years

- Comparison with national averages

- Data for vulnerable groups

- Number of persistent absentees

- Number of severe absentees

- Interventions in place

- Impact of interventions

- Attendance improvement strategies

- Any concerns or issues

To Parents:

Parents will receive:

- Regular updates on their child's attendance (at least termly)

- Letters if attendance falls below expected levels

- Annual attendance report

To Local Authority:

The school will provide:

- Statutory attendance returns as required

- CME referrals

- Information about pupils removed from roll

- Information as requested by the Attendance Improvement Team

17.4 Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated by:

- Monitoring trends in attendance data

- Reviewing the number of persistent and severe absentees

- Evaluating the impact of interventions

- Gathering feedback from parents, pupils, and staff

- Reviewing complaints related to attendance

- Considering feedback from external agencies

- Benchmarking against similar schools

---

18. Staff Training

18.1 Staff Training

All staff will receive training on:

- The importance of attendance

- How to take registers accurately

- How to identify attendance concerns

- Safeguarding and attendance

- The school's attendance procedures

- Their role in promoting good attendance

This training will be provided:

- At induction for new staff

- As part of annual safeguarding training

- Through staff briefings and meetings

- As needed when procedures change

18.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead Training

The DSL will receive specific training on:

- The link between attendance and safeguarding

- Identifying safeguarding concerns through attendance patterns

- CME procedures

- Working with external agencies

- Supporting vulnerable pupils' attendance

This training will be updated at least every two years.

18.3 Attendance Office Training

Staff in the Attendance Office will receive training on:

- Taking and monitoring registers

- First day contact procedures

- Home visit procedures

- Working with external agencies

- Data protection and confidentiality

- Using the school's management information system

- Producing attendance reports

---

19. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** - sets out the school's safeguarding procedures

- **Behaviour Policy** - sets out expectations for behaviour, including attendance and punctuality

- **Anti-Bullying Policy** - addresses bullying, which may affect attendance

- **SEND Policy** - sets out support for pupils with SEND, including attendance support

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy** - addresses mental health issues that may affect attendance

- **Exclusions Policy** - sets out procedures for exclusions, which affect attendance

- **Data Protection Policy** - sets out how pupil data, including attendance data, is managed

- **Home-School Agreement** - sets out expectations for parents and pupils, including attendance

---

20. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Body/Proprietors, or sooner if:

- There are changes to legislation or statutory guidance

- The school's monitoring identifies issues with attendance

- There are significant changes to the school's circumstances

- External agencies recommend changes

The next review date is: **See cover page**

Appendix A: Attendance Codes

The school uses the following national attendance codes as set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024:

Present at School

Code Meaning

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
L	Late arrival before the register closes
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
J	Interview
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience

Authorised Absence

Code Meaning

C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence

Code Meaning

G   Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement)

N   Reason for absence not yet provided

O   Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)

U   Late arrival after the register closes

Administrative Codes

Code Meaning

X   Non-compulsory school age absence

Y   Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Z   Pupil not on roll

\#   School closed to all pupils

Note: Code N should be changed to another code when the reason for absence is known.

Appendix B: Attendance Letter Templates

Template 1: First Attendance Concern Letter (95% attendance)

Date: [Insert date]

Dear [Parent/Carer name],

Re: [Pupil name] - Attendance Concern

I am writing to inform you that [pupil name]'s attendance has fallen to **[percentage]%**, which is below our school target of 97%.

This means that [pupil name] has missed **[number]** days of school so far this academic year. While we understand that some absences are unavoidable, we are concerned that [pupil name] may be missing important learning.

Why is good attendance important?

Research shows that pupils with attendance below 95% are significantly less likely to achieve their full potential. Every day of school missed is a day of learning lost.

What happens next?

We will continue to monitor [pupil name]'s attendance closely. If attendance does not improve, we may need to arrange a meeting with you to discuss how we can support [pupil name] to attend school regularly.

How you can help:

- Ensure [pupil name] attends school every day unless they are genuinely too ill

- Avoid taking holidays during term time

- Arrange medical appointments outside school hours where possible

- Contact us if there are any problems affecting [pupil name]'s attendance

If you would like to discuss [pupil name]'s attendance, or if there are any issues we should be aware of, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]
[Contact details]

Template 2: Persistent Absence Letter (Below 90% attendance)

Date: [Insert date]

Dear [Parent/Carer name],

Re: [Pupil name] - Persistent Absence

I am writing to inform you that [pupil name]'s attendance has fallen to **[percentage]%**, which means [he/she] is now classified as a **persistent absentee**.

This means that [pupil name] has missed **[number]** days of school so far this academic year, which is equivalent to **[number]** weeks of education.

Why is this a concern?

National statistics show that pupils with attendance below 90% are significantly less likely to achieve good GCSE results. [Pupil name] is missing vital learning time that cannot easily be made up.

Meeting Required

Due to the level of absence, I would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss [pupil name]'s attendance and how we can work together to improve it.

Meeting details:

Date: [Insert date]
Time: [Insert time]
Location: [Insert location]

At this meeting, we will:

- Discuss the reasons for [pupil name]'s absences

- Identify any barriers to attendance

- Agree actions to improve attendance

- Set attendance targets

- Agree a review date

Please confirm your attendance by contacting [name] on [telephone] or [email] by [date].

Legal Warning

I must inform you that, as a parent/carer, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends school regularly. Failure to do so may result in legal action, including:

- Penalty notices (fines)

- Prosecution

- Education Supervision Orders

We hope that by working together, we can avoid the need for legal action and support [pupil name] to achieve excellent attendance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]
[Contact details]

Template 3: Unauthorised Absence Warning Letter

Date: [Insert date]

Dear [Parent/Carer name],

Re: [Pupil name] - Unauthorised Absence

I am writing to inform you that [pupil name] was absent from school on [date(s)] and we have not received a satisfactory explanation for this absence.

As a result, this absence has been recorded as **unauthorised**.

Your legal duty

As a parent/carer, you have a legal duty under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure your child attends school regularly. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

What you need to do

If there was a valid reason for [pupil name]'s absence, please provide evidence (e.g., medical appointment card, letter from doctor) by [date]. If we receive satisfactory evidence, we will change the absence code to authorised.

If we do not receive evidence, or if the absence continues to be unauthorised, we may:

- Refer the matter to Bradford Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Team

- Request a penalty notice (fine)

- Take legal action

Penalty Notices

If a penalty notice is issued, you will be required to pay:

- £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days

- £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days

- If the penalty notice is not paid, you may be prosecuted

How to avoid further action

To avoid further action, please ensure that:

- [Pupil name] attends school every day

- You contact the school on the first day of any absence

- You provide evidence for absences where required

- You do not take [pupil name] out of school during term time without authorisation

If you have any questions or would like to discuss [pupil name]'s attendance, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]
[Contact details]

Template 4: Improved Attendance Celebration Letter

Date: [Insert date]

Dear [Parent/Carer name],

Re: [Pupil name] - Excellent Attendance Improvement

I am delighted to write to you to congratulate [pupil name] on the significant improvement in [his/her] attendance.

When we last wrote to you on [date], [pupil name]'s attendance was [percentage]%. I am pleased to report that [his/her] attendance has now improved to [percentage]%.

This improvement shows that [pupil name] is committed to [his/her] education and that you are supporting [him/her] to attend school regularly. This will have a positive impact on [pupil name]'s learning and achievement.

Well done!

Please pass on our congratulations to [pupil name]. We look forward to seeing [him/her] continue to achieve excellent attendance.

If we can support you in any way to maintain this improvement, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]
[Contact details]

Appendix C: Home Visit Risk Assessment Template

ETERNAL LIGHT SECONDARY BOYS SCHOOL
HOME VISIT RISK ASSESSMENT

Pupil name: _____

Address of visit: _____

Date of visit: _____ **Time of visit:** _____

Staff conducting visit:

1. ——————————————————————————————
2. ——————————————————————————————

Known Risks:

☐ Previous incidents of aggression or violence
☐ Mental health concerns
☐ Substance misuse
☐ Domestic violence
☐ Dangerous animals at property
☐ Safeguarding concerns
☐ Other (specify): _____

Details of known risks:

Risk Assessment:

Risk Likelihood (Low/Medium/High) Impact (Low/Medium/High) Control Measures

Control Measures:

☐ Two members of staff to conduct visit
☐ Visit to be conducted during daylight hours
☐ Mobile phone to be carried
☐ School office to be informed of visit and expected return time
☐ Staff to call school office on arrival and departure
☐ Visit to be conducted at front door only (not inside property)

☐ Staff to maintain safe distance

☐ Staff to leave immediately if they feel unsafe

☐ Police to be called if necessary (999)

☐ Other: _____

Overall Risk Level:

☐ Low - visit can proceed as planned

☐ Medium - visit can proceed with additional control measures

☐ High - visit should not proceed / alternative arrangements needed

---

Authorised by:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Post-Visit Review:

Were any incidents or concerns identified during the visit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide details:

Does the risk assessment need to be updated?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Completed by:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Attendance Improvement Plan Template

ETERNAL LIGHT SECONDARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Pupil name: _____

Year group: _____ **Form:** _____

Current attendance: _____% **Target attendance:** _____%

Date plan created: _____ **Review date:** _____

Barriers to Attendance Identified:

☐ Illness/medical issues
☐ Anxiety/mental health
☐ Bullying
☐ Family circumstances
☐ Transport issues
☐ Lack of routine
☐ Disengagement from learning
☐ Other: _____

Details:

_____

_____

_____

Actions:

Action Who is responsible? By when? Progress

_____

Support from School:

_____

_____

_____

Support from Parents/Carers:

_____

_____

Support from Pupil:

_____

_____

_____

Targets:

- Short-term target (4 weeks): _____% attendance

- Medium-term target (half term): _____% attendance

- Long-term target (end of year): _____% attendance

Signatures:

Parent/Carer:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Pupil:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Representative:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Review Notes:

Date of review: _____

Attendance since last review: _____%

Progress towards targets:

Actions completed:

Ongoing concerns:

Next steps:

Next review date: _____

END OF POLICY

Appendix E: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary explains key terms used in the Attendance Policy to help parents, staff, and pupils understand important concepts.

A

Absence When a pupil is not present at school during a session when the register is taken. Absences can be either authorised or unauthorised.

Alternative Provision Education arranged by the school for pupils who cannot attend mainstream lessons. This might include vocational courses, mentoring programmes, or placements at specialist providers.

Attendance Champion A senior member of staff (at Eternal Light School, this is Mr Hassan Khan) who leads on attendance matters and works to improve attendance across the school.

Attendance Contract A formal agreement between the school, parents, and pupil that sets out actions everyone will take to improve a pupil's attendance. It includes specific targets and review dates.

Authorised Absence An absence that the school has accepted as valid and has approved. Examples include genuine illness with evidence, unavoidable medical appointments, or religious observance. Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence.

C

CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) NHS services that support children and young people with mental health difficulties.

CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation) A form of abuse where children are manipulated or forced into criminal activity, such as county lines drug dealing.

Child Protection Plan A plan put in place by Children's Social Care when a child is at risk of significant harm. The plan sets out how agencies will work together to keep the child safe.

Children Missing Education (CME) A child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education elsewhere (e.g., at home or in alternative provision).

CME Referral A formal notification to Bradford Local Authority that a child may be missing from education, triggering an investigation to locate the child and ensure they are safe.

Compulsory School Age The period during which a child must receive full-time education. This begins the term after a child turns 5 and continues until the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16.

CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) A form of sexual abuse where children are manipulated or forced into sexual activity in exchange for something (e.g., attention, gifts, money).

D

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) A senior member of staff (at Eternal Light School, this is Mr Hassan Khan) who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school. The DSL coordinates safeguarding matters and liaises with external agencies.

DfE (Department for Education) The government department responsible for education and children's services in England.

E

EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) When a pupil experiences severe anxiety about attending school, making it difficult for them to attend. This is different from truancy, as the pupil wants to attend but finds it overwhelming.

Education Supervision Order A court order that places a child under the supervision of a local authority officer to ensure they receive proper education.

EHE (Elective Home Education) When parents choose to educate their child at home rather than sending them to school. Parents must ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education.

EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) A legal document that describes a child's special educational needs and the support they should receive.

Exceptional Circumstances Rare, significant, and unavoidable events that could not reasonably be scheduled outside of term time. These are the only circumstances in which the Headteacher may authorise leave during term time.

F

First Day Contact The school's procedure for contacting parents/carers on the first day of a pupil's unexplained absence to establish the reason and ensure the pupil is safe.

G

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) UK law that protects personal information and sets out how organisations must handle and store data, including pupil attendance records.

L

Late Arrival When a pupil arrives at school after registration has started (08:05) but before registers close (08:25). This is marked with an 'L' code.

Legal Intervention Action taken by Bradford Local Authority to enforce school attendance, including penalty notices, prosecution, or court orders.

Looked After Child (LAC) A child who is in the care of the local authority. This might include children living with foster carers or in children's homes.

P

Parenting Order A court order that requires parents to attend parenting classes or comply with specific requirements to support their child's education and behaviour.

Penalty Notice A fine issued by Bradford Local Authority for unauthorised absence. The current penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.

PEP (Personal Education Plan) A plan for looked after children that sets out their educational needs and how these will be met. Attendance is an important part of the PEP.

Persistent Absence When a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. This means they have missed at least 10% of their possible sessions. Persistent absence significantly affects educational outcomes.

Prosecution Legal action taken by Bradford Local Authority in the magistrates' court against parents who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly. This can result in fines, community orders, or (in serious cases) imprisonment.

R

Reduced Timetable A temporary arrangement where a pupil attends school for fewer hours or days than usual. This should only be used as a short-term measure with a clear plan to return to full-time education.

Register The official record of pupil attendance taken twice daily (morning and afternoon). Schools are legally required to maintain accurate registers.

Registration Codes Standard codes used by all schools to record different types of attendance and absence (e.g., 'I' for illness, 'M' for medical appointment, 'G' for unauthorised holiday).

Religious Observance A day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a pupil's family belongs. Schools may authorise absence for religious observance.

S

Safeguarding Action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes ensuring children attend school regularly.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 The law that makes it an offence for parents to fail to ensure their child attends school regularly without a valid reason.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) When a child has learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age.

SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) A member of staff responsible for coordinating support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Severe Absence When a pupil's attendance falls below 50%. This is an extreme level of absence that requires urgent intervention.

Social Worker A professional who works with children and families to keep children safe and support their welfare. Some children have social workers due to safeguarding concerns or family difficulties.

T

Term-Time Leave Any absence from school during term time, including holidays. This requires advance approval from the Headteacher and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

U

Unauthorised Absence An absence that the school has not approved. This might be because no explanation was provided, the explanation was not accepted, or leave was taken without permission. Unauthorised absence can lead to legal action.

Unauthorised Late Arrival When a pupil arrives after registers close (08:25) without a valid reason. This is marked as an unauthorised absence (U code).

V

Virtual School Head A local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked after children.

Vulnerable Pupils Pupils who may be at greater risk of harm or who face additional barriers to attendance. This includes pupils with social workers, Child Protection Plans, SEND, or those at risk of exploitation.

Y

Young Carer A child or young person who provides care for a family member who has a physical or mental illness, disability, or substance misuse problem.

END OF GLOSSARY

ATTENDANCE POLICY: PARENT SUMMARY

Eternal Light Secondary School

Why Attendance Matters

Every day at school counts. Pupils with good attendance:

- Achieve better exam results
- Make better progress
- Develop stronger friendships
- Are better prepared for the future

Did you know?

- 97% attendance = missing 6 days per year ✅ **Our target**
- 90% attendance = missing 19 days per year ⚠️ **Persistent absence**
- Attendance below 90% can reduce GCSE results by a whole grade

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Quick Reference Information

What	Details
School starts	08:05
School ends	19:00
Registers close	08:25 (20 minutes after school starts)
Report absence by	08:30 on each day of absence
Telephone	01274 501597
Absence Request Form	http://eternallightschool.co.uk/absence-request-form-2/
Attendance Champion	Mr Hassan Khan
Email	hassan.khan@eternallightschool.co.uk

Your Responsibilities as a Parent

As a parent/carer, you have a **legal duty** to ensure your child attends school regularly. You must:

✅ Ensure your child attends school every day and arrives on time ✅ Contact school by 08:30 on each day of absence ✅ Provide medical evidence for medical appointments ✅ Arrange appointments outside school hours where possible ✅ Request term-time leave in advance (and only in exceptional circumstances) ✅ **Do NOT book holidays before receiving written approval**

Reporting Your Child's Absence

If your child is ill:

1. **Call school by 08:30** on the first day of absence: **01274 501597**

2. Tell us:

   o Your child's name and year group

   o The reason for absence

   o When you expect them to return

3. **Call every day** until your child returns

When to keep your child at home:

✅ High temperature (fever) ✅ Vomiting or diarrhoea (keep off for 48 hours after last episode) ✅ Contagious illness (chickenpox, measles, COVID-19)

When your child can attend:

✅ Minor cold or cough (without fever) ✅ Headache (unless severe) ✅ Sore throat (unless with fever)

Not sure? Check the NHS guide: www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

Medical Appointments

- **Arrange appointments outside school hours** where possible

- If your child must miss school, provide evidence:

  o Appointment card

  o Text message screenshot

  o Letter from doctor/hospital

- Your child should attend school **before and after** the appointment

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Term-Time Leave and Holidays

The Rules:

❌ Holidays during term time will **NOT** normally be approved ❌ **Do NOT book travel** before receiving written approval ❌ Unauthorised absence may result in **deregistration.**

Exceptional Circumstances (rare situations that may be approved):

✅ Bereavement of a close family member ✅ Unavoidable family emergency

NOT Exceptional Circumstances:

❌ Cheaper travel/holidays ❌ Availability of parental leave ❌ Visiting family abroad ❌ Birthdays or celebrations ❌ Shopping trips or days out

How to Request Leave:

1. Complete the online form **at least 3 school weeks in advance**: http://eternallightschool.co.uk/absence-request-form-2/

2. Provide full details and any evidence

3. **Wait for written approval** before booking anything

4. Requests during assessment weeks or end of term are more likely to be refused

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What Happens If Attendance Becomes a Concern?

We want to support you, but we also have a legal duty to ensure your child attends school.

At 95% attendance (10 days missed):

- We'll monitor attendance closely

- Informal discussion with you about attendance

At 93% attendance (13 days missed):

- Letter sent home

- Meeting to discuss barriers to attendance

- Informal action plan

At 90% attendance (19 days missed) - PERSISTENT ABSENCE:

- **Formal meeting** with Attendance Champion

- **Attendance contract** with targets and review dates

- Possible referral to external agencies

Below 90% attendance:

- Continued monitoring and support

- Regular review meetings

- **Possible deregistration/repeat of certain classes (esp for post 16)**

Penalties

If your child has unauthorised absences and you don't engage with school support, your child will be deregistered from the school.

When We'll Contact You

We'll contact you if:

📞 Your child is absent and we haven't heard from you (by 9:30am on day 1) 📞 Your child's attendance falls below 95% 📞 Your child's attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence) 📞 We notice patterns of absence (e.g., always Mondays or Fridays) 📞 Your child is frequently late

We may conduct a home visit if:

🏠 Your child is absent for more than 2 days without contact 🏠 We have safeguarding concerns 🏠 Your child has not returned after a period of absence

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Celebrating Good Attendance

We believe in rewarding excellent attendance! Your child can earn:

🏆 Certificates for 100% attendance each term 🏆 Certificates for 100% attendance for the full year 🏆 Prizes and recognition in assemblies 🏆 Positive messages in planner 🏆 Positive messages emailed/WA

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I take my child on Umrah or a family holiday during term time?

A: At Eternal Light, we respect the importance of Deen and family commitments. However, in line with our school attendance policy, leave during term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Both family holidays and Umrah are not normally authorised during term time. Umrah, while highly virtuous, is considered a voluntary act of worship and can usually be undertaken outside of term time. Family holidays are also expected to be planned during school holidays wherever possible.

That said, in *exceptional circumstances*, the school may authorise **up to a maximum of five school days only**. Any absence beyond this period would be recorded as unauthorised.

Each request will be considered individually by the Headteacher and SLT, taking into account:

- The reason for the request

- The pupil's attendance record (current and previous years)

- The pupil's academic progress and whether they are on track to meet their targets

- The timing of the absence (e.g., during exam periods, assessment weeks, or key learning periods)

- The length of the absence

- Whether similar requests have been made previously

- The views of relevant staff (e.g., form tutor, year head, subject teachers)

Important: Previous approval of a leave request does not guarantee that future requests will be approved. Each request is considered on its own merits.

Where these conditions are not met, or where the absence exceeds five school days, the absence would be recorded as unauthorised and may result in deregistration.

We strongly encourage families to plan Umrah and family trips during school holidays wherever possible and to discuss any requests with the school well in advance.

Q: What if my child has a medical appointment?

A: Arrange it outside school hours if possible. If not, provide evidence (appointment card, text screenshot) and ensure your child attends school before/after the appointment.

Q: How much absence is too much?

A: Our target is 97% (6 days missed per year). Below 90% is classified as "persistent absence" and significantly affects learning.

Q: How many occasions will absences be authorised?

A: If a pupil's absence request is authorised, this does not set a precedent for future requests. Authorisation is considered on a one-off basis only, and any subsequent absence requests will normally be declined.

A: If a pupil's absence request has been authorised, this does not mean that it would be authorised a second time, rather, any future absences will be turned down.

Q: What if my child is being bullied?

A: Contact school immediately. We will investigate and take action. Absence is not the solution and will make things worse for your child's education.

Q: What if my child has anxiety about school?

A: Contact Mr Hassan Khan (Attendance Champion) or your child's form tutor. We can provide support and develop a plan to help your child return to school.

Q: Can my child leave school during the day for an appointment?

A: Only with advance notice and evidence. Your child must be collected by an authorised adult. We will not allow your child to leave alone, even with phone permission.

Q: What evidence do I need for medical absence?

A: Appointment card, Letter from GP/hospital, screenshot of Text confirmation of appointment

Q: What if I disagree with the school's decision about absence?

A: Contact Mr Hassan Khan to discuss your concerns. The Headteacher makes the final decision about authorising absence, but we're happy to explain our reasoning.

How We Use Your Child's Attendance Data

We collect and use attendance information to:

✅ Monitor your child's attendance and identify any concerns early ✅ Provide support where needed ✅ Report to the government (legal requirement) ✅ Share with relevant agencies if there are safeguarding concerns ✅ Ensure your child is safe and receiving their education

We share attendance information with:

- **You** (regular reports and updates)

- **Children's Social Care** (if there are safeguarding concerns)

- **Other schools** (when your child transfers)

- **Courts** (if legal action is taken)

Your rights:

- You can request to see your child's attendance records

- You can ask us to correct any inaccurate information

- You can ask how we use your child's data

For more information, see our Data Protection Policy or contact the school office.

Support Available

If your child is struggling with attendance, we're here to help. We can provide:

🤝 **One-to-one support** from the Attendance Champion 🤝 **Attendance contracts** with clear targets and regular reviews 🤝 **Referrals to external agencies** (e.g., school nurse, mental health services, family support) 🤝 **Flexible return-to-school plans** for pupils who have been absent 🤝 **Support for mental health and anxiety** 🤝 **Help identifying and removing barriers to attendance**

Don't wait until it becomes a serious problem - contact us early if you need help.

Top Tips for Good Attendance

Establish a routine:

- Set a regular bedtime and wake-up time

- Prepare uniform and bags the night before

- Have a healthy breakfast every morning

- Leave home with plenty of time to get to school

Plan ahead:

- Book medical appointments during school holidays or after school

- Don't book holidays during term time

- Check the school calendar for important dates

Communicate with school:

- Let us know immediately if there are problems

- Attend meetings when we ask

- Work with us to find solutions

- Keep us updated about any changes at home

Support your child:

- Talk positively about school

- Show interest in their learning

- Encourage them to talk about any worries

- Praise them for good attendance

Be a role model:

- Show that education is important

- Be punctual yourself

- Follow through on commitments

- Work with the school as a partner

What Your Child Misses When They're Absent

1 day missed = 10 lessons missed

Your child will miss learning in English, Maths, Science, Aalim/Hifz class and other subjects. They'll need to catch up on homework and classwork.

1 week missed = 50 lessons missed

Your child will fall behind in all subjects. It will take significant effort to catch up, and they may miss important assessments.

10% absence (19 days) = PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Your child will have missed nearly 190 lessons. They'll be significantly behind their peers and may struggle to achieve their target grades.

Below 90% over 5 years = Half a year of education lost

This is equivalent to missing Years 7-11. Your child's GCSE results will likely be affected, limiting their future opportunities.

Religious Observance

As an Islamic school, **Eid-ul-Fitr** and **Eid-ul-Adha** are already incorporated into our school calendar.

No additional religious days will be authorised, as these are the only major religious observances in the Islamic calendar.

Home Education

If you're considering educating your child at home, please speak to us first. We can:

- Discuss your concerns and explore alternatives

- Explain what home education involves

- Help you make an informed decision

- Provide information about your legal responsibilities

Important: Once your child is removed from our roll for home education, there is no automatic right to a school place if you change your mind. You'll need to apply through the normal admissions process.

Useful Contacts

Eternal Light Secondary School:

- **Main office:** 01274 501597

- **Attendance Champion (Mr Hassan Khan):** hassan.khan@eternallightschool.co.uk

- **Absence Request Form:** http://eternallightschool.co.uk/absence-request-form-2/

External Support:

- **NHS "Is my child too ill for school?":** www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

Key Messages

✅ **Every day counts** - aim for 100% attendance ✅ **97% is our target** - that's only 6 days missed per year ✅ **Below 90% is persistent absence** - this seriously affects learning ✅ **Report absence by 08:30** every day ✅ **Don't book holidays** during term time ✅ **Contact us early** if there are problems ✅ **Work with us** - we're here to help

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Remember:

Good attendance = Better results = More opportunities

Your child's education is too important to miss. Let's work together to ensure they achieve their full potential.

For the full Attendance Policy, please visit our website or request a copy from the school office.

Last updated: September 2025 Next review: September 2026

END OF PARENT SUMMARY