

## Attendance Policy

<b>Review Date</b>	November 2023	<b>Next Review by Date</b>	November 2024
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Headteacher		
<b>Approved by Governing Body</b>	December 2023		

### Rationale

Our ethos is to provide young people, who have additional needs, with the opportunity to achieve academically, socially, emotionally and behaviourally and therefore attendance is not only crucial for a young person's development but also a protective factor for more vulnerable students. We will develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. We aim to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome and are committed to providing a therapeutic, fulfilling and efficient education to all children. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to monitor, review and establish high attendance.

### Aim

All staff at Pathways Education acknowledge and understand the importance of regular attendance and will:

- Establish a high profile for regular attendance and punctuality.

- Ensure consistent use of the systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the efforts made by students to improve or consistently achieve a high level of attendance.
- Work to build good relationships with parents/carers to encourage regular and punctual attendance.
- Work in partnership with other agencies according to student's needs to support attendance. (All information exchanged will adhere to Data Protection requirements.)
- We have high expectations for our children and aim to work towards a goal of as close to 100% attendance for all children, unless they are really not well enough to. We promote early intervention and prevention of poor attendance and therefore every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance and the link this has to achievement, wellbeing and future work. We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all students, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

## **Safeguarding**

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a student's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any student who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the student's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more information.)

## Legislation and Guidance

School attendance is subject to legislation setting out the legal powers and duties. These are:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

This school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills:

- Ofsted report: [Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence](#) (February 2022)
- [Working together to improve attendance](#) (May 2022)
- Schools Bill: [School attendance factsheet](#) (May 2022)
- [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#) (May 2020).
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) (August 2017)

The school will examine its attendance figures and review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that they are effective.

## School Procedures

### Illness or Medical Appointments

When a student is unwell, parents are expected to contact the school before 9am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. An appointment card or verification by the doctors/ dentist/hospital should be presented for medical appointments. If it is necessary for a student to be out of school for this reason, they should be returned to school directly after the appointment. If a student is absent due to vomiting and/or

diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that they are sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to others at the school. For more than three days of absence or where there is repeated absence due to illness (Covid-related will follow the Gov guidance at that time), the school will request medical evidence (this can take the form of an appointment card or a copy of a prescription).

### **Covid-related Absence**

Please follow the same guidance as illness. We expect students to return to no later than 5 days from date they tested positive or when they test negative (whichever comes first). Regular link with home would be maintained to provide pastoral support and they will be provided with opportunities to access remote learning as specified in the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy.

### **Reporting Absence (Flow chart in Appendix A)**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as 'no reason given' and a phone call made to the parents. This would trigger safeguarding response followed by a letter if a reason is still not obtained leading to a home visit. On the first day of absence parents should telephone the school to inform them why their child is unable to attend and how long they are expected to be absent. The school is then able to mark the register appropriately as either an authorised or unauthorised absence. The decision to authorise or unauthorise the absence rests with the school. Parents are expected to inform the school, each day a student is absent. If a child is absent from school, he/she should not be on the school site during the day of the absence.

### **Personalised Timetables**

During the 'settling-in' period, students will be timetabled to be in at certain times, as agreed with parents/carers. Students will be given authorised absence under 'not required to be in school' as per the timetable.

Some of our students have not attended school for a number of years or may have trauma triggers attached to elements of school life. For these students, we will adopt personalised timetables and provide opportunities for therapeutic support to build on energy and engagement levels and their time onsite over a period of time. This may extend over and beyond one term. For those on personalised timetables, and if appropriate, we will adopt best practice by using a hybrid model approach in which students will link in remotely via Teams to the lesson and the teacher will provide work to be completed at home. These students will be given an authorised absence. On days students are not in and they have not accessed a remote session then they will receive a home visit by a member of staff, and if this is not possible for some reason i.e. lack of staff onsite due to illness, then a phone call home would be made by the teacher to check in with the student directly. In these circumstances, students would be given 'other authorised circumstances', this is likely to happen when a student's trauma has been triggered, possibly due to therapeutic intervention. On these occasions we will expect to speak to parent/carers to gain a full picture of what has happened and seek to see/speak to the young person directly so to reassure them. Our intention would be to work with the parents/carers and students to re-engage them with school life. In exceptional circumstances, if it has not been possible to engage with the student then the absence would be marked as 'unauthorised'.

Staff will complete home visit forms (Appendix B) as appropriate.

### **Lateness**

Registration and tutor time begins at 10am and ends at 10.30am. We take into consideration the fact that our students may have siblings who require drop-off in neighbouring boroughs and that some come from different boroughs via local authority transport. In order for our students not to feel penalised for things beyond their control and to understand punctuality we have a bigger window for arrival. We want our young people to get into the habit of arriving on time and achieve positive punctuality, a skill needed for them moving forward into adulthood. Any child arriving after 10.30am will be marked as late. Afternoon registration will be at 13:30.

## Ten Days Absence

For any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 days including, the SEN lead within the young person's Local Authority will be notified. We will submit a referral to the Education Welfare Officer. The school will include details of the action that they have taken. It is important to highlight that young people with medical conditions, who are absent for any extended period of time due to their condition, will not be penalised and will be supported in line with DfE guidance on 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school'. The IHCP will be updated and reviewed as needed.

## Persistent and Frequent Absence

Registers are monitored regularly by the Headteacher to identify any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem, depending on severity:

- Talking to the parent and student.
- An email or letter from the Headteacher.
- A meeting with the Headteacher.
- A referral to the SEN lead for the student's borough.

Due to the additional needs our students have, we will try to work hand in hand with them and their families to deal with any concerns or issues they may have that stops them from attending school. We understand that certain circumstances may stop a young person from wanting to come to school and we will pursue where possible and support regarding social issues relating to the young person and their family. We work in a trauma informed way and are aware that children who have experienced trauma require a lot of additional support. We will render the services of external therapeutic professionals to work with students who are persistently absent on a 1:1 basis.

Where attendance falls below 80%, the school may request additional evidence (and provide parents with guidance on acceptable examples of medical evidence) for all future illness absences. The school may also refer the child to the School Nurse or the Specialist nurse in the Education Welfare Service if there is a high level of absence for medical reasons. If medical evidence as requested is not

provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. A high level of unauthorised absence will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer who will issue a Penalty Notice warning. A monitoring period will then follow, and if attendance does not improve within the monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued. For children with appropriately evidenced illness, the school will follow appropriate protocols to offer support.

### **A Welcome back**

It is important that, where appropriate, on return from an absence all children are made to feel welcome. This should include a discussion about the best way for the child to catch up on missed work where appropriate and be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other children.

### **Absence notes**

The school will retain notes of evidence for absence from parents and/or record them in our School Management System explaining absence as per current protocol/legislation.

### **Moving Schools**

If a family are moving out of the area there are a number of things we require them to do:

- Notify us in writing at least 4 weeks in advance, including contact details for where they are moving to and if possible the details of the school their child will be attending
- Notify us in writing when the child has started their new school

We will also request an email from the new school to confirm when the young person started regardless of the country the new school is in. If we do not hear from the family about their young person's new school, we will contact the local authority where they have moved to

find out whether the young person is in school. If they are on the waiting list or have started school, we will request a confirmation email and off roll them after one week following this confirmation.

## **Policy Monitoring Arrangements**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher must also support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students.

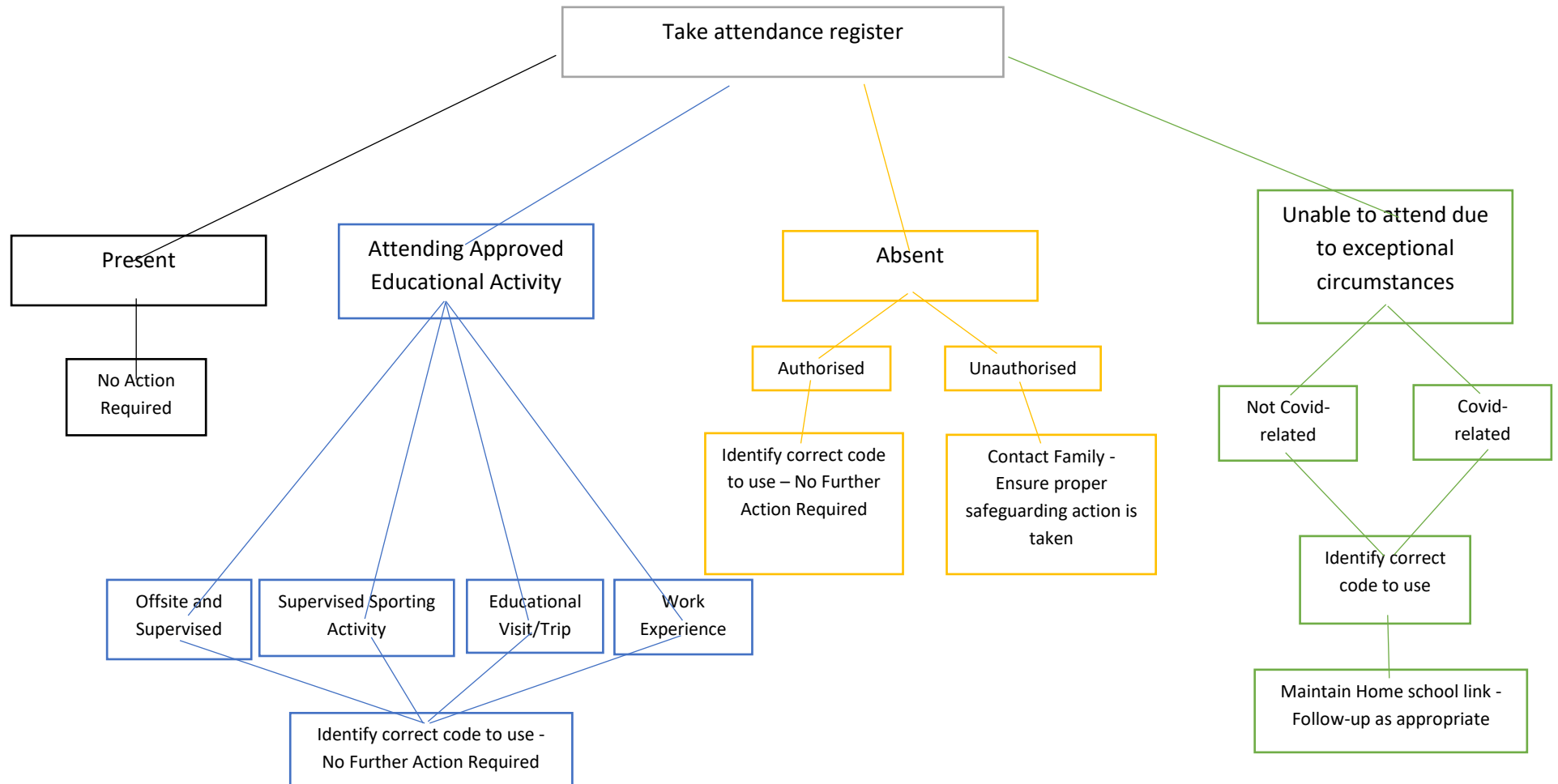
This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

## **Related Policies**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour & Relationship Policy
- Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy



**Appendix A: Flow chart for Student Absence**



## Appendix Home Visit Form

Person/s visiting:			
On (Date):		Time:	
Visited Home Address:			
Young Person's Name:			
Reason for calling:			
Comments/Observations:			
Signed (Staff):			
Signed (Parent/Guardian): (Add comments if needed)			
Visit signed off by Safeguarding Lead:		Date:	
Actions to be taken			Completed: