Nurturing confidence, nurturing potential, nurturing success.

Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

Reviewed September 2026

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Statement of intent

Wharncliffe Side Primary School strongly believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We have an established culture and ethos of encouraging good attendance. Our school vision is ***to create an inclusive school where every child feels valued, supported & empowered – nurturing confidence, nurturing potential, nurturing success for all.*** Good attendance is an important part of this and we work in partnership with parents to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. This policy therefore combines high expectations with a safe and supportive process that maintains and, where necessary, rebuilds strong and trusting relationships with pupils and families.

This policy has been updated to reflect the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026. The 2026 guidance clarifies day-to-day registration, young carers, health-related absence and medical evidence, remote education, data analysis, local authority strategic leadership and register coding.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact of curriculum, behaviour, bullying, SEND, pastoral support, safeguarding and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium.

We are committed to:

1. **School Culture:** Promoting, modelling and maintaining high attendance through a whole school culture that celebrates its benefits.

2. **An Attendance Policy which is Understood**: Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.

3. **Effective Day to Day Practices:** Having accurate registers and effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence.

4. **Thorough Monitoring, Analysis and Positive Action:** Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support and taking prompt and thorough action in order to resolve absence issues where appropriate

5. **Strong and Productive Relationships with Families**: Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance; listening carefully to any barriers to attendance and working with families to remove these barriers.

6. **Collaboration with Other Schools and Agencies:** Working collaboratively in an organised and regular basis with other schools (particularly those in Peak Edge MAT) and agencies including the local authority's Attendance and Inclusion Service.

Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.

7. **Equality for All Pupils:** Ensuring equality and fairness for all including tackling disadvantage

8. **Ensuring Statutory Responsibilities are Met:** Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The school's attendance officer is **Matt Gaughan.** He can be contacted via email on headteacher@wharncliffeside.sheffield.sch.uk.

Day to day enquiries can also be directed to the school office via enquiries@wharncliffeside.sheffield.sch.uk.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE (July 2026) Working together to improve school attendance
- DfE Children missing education statutory guidance
- DfE Keeping children safe in education, current edition
- DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- DfE Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- DfE Providing remote education

This policy operates alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding, Complaints, Behaviour, SEND, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Home Visits arrangements.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has the overall delegated responsibility from Peak Edge MAT trustees for:

- Monitor implementation of this policy and relevant procedures.
- Work with senior leaders to promote attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure relevant staff receive appropriate attendance training.
- Set goals or areas of focus for attendance and provide support and challenge.
- Regularly review attendance data, recent and historic trends, benchmarking and cohorts facing entrenched barriers, including young carers.
- Share effective practice across Peak Edge Multi-Academy Trust.
- Ensure the policy is implemented in accordance with equality duties and safeguarding responsibilities.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Lead the strategic approach to attendance, establish effective systems for tackling absence and ensure they are followed consistently.
- Ensure parents understand the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensure every pupil can access full-time education and act early on patterns of absence.
- Monitor attendance, evaluate the impact of interventions and analyse data to identify priorities.
- Communicate with pupils and parents and work systematically on persistent and severe absence.
- Engage with Sheffield City Council's Attendance and Inclusion Service and wider partners, including through regular targeting support activity where applicable.
- Ensure statutory attendance, sickness and register returns are made to the local authority.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school in liaison with the Headteacher (if not the same person)

- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance in liaison with the Headteacher and Governing Board.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying and implementing plans for intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance and working systematically for successful outcomes for pupils.
- Working at regular intervals with the Local Authority (LA) Attendance and Inclusion team for advice and support
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Follow this policy fairly and consistently.
- Model and promote good attendance.
- Use professional knowledge of pupils to escalate welfare or safeguarding concerns.
- Where designated, take registers at the required times and accurately use national codes.
- Use agreed systems, including CPOMS, to communicate attendance concerns.
- Follow agreed actions within individual attendance plans.

Parents are responsible for:

- **The attendance of their children at school.**
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when already in school.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed at 9:10am
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

An absence recorded using a national code classed as authorised, for example qualifying illness, an agreed medical appointment, religious observance or exceptional leave granted in advance.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed where the reason given for lateness has not been satisfactorily explained.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children, birthdays or other celebrations.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no legitimate reason during the day
- and other circumstances coded G, N, O or U as applicable.

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe absence (SA):

Severe absence: Missing 50% or more of possible sessions. Pupils at this level require particularly intensive and prioritised support, normally involving the school, local authority and other relevant services.

4. Attendance expectations

The school has very high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and rigorously ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. **Our target is for all children's attendance to be 97% or higher.** There are, of course, legitimate reasons for school absences (and why a child's attendance might fall below 97%) however all absence disrupts pupils' education and the higher the absence rate, the more damaging the absence becomes. This is why the school communicates and works with parents to try to reduce all absence where it is safe and suitable to do so. Where attendance is low, different children and families will need different types of support and challenge (where appropriate) to help improve their child's attendance. That support will be decided upon after a thorough work and communication with families (see section 12 below). We classify rates of absence as follows. This table is regularly communicated to parents including on end of year reports. **It is important to note that the descriptors below relate to each child's attendance not the effort of parents to bring children into school as regularly as possible.**

Attendance rate band	Likely impact on pupils' progress and well being in school
97% or higher **Excellent**	This gives children the best chance of success in school. They access more learning and wider school experiences. Learning is progressive so children can better make connections between different aspects of their learning. They become more settled into school routines and have more chance to play and socialise with their peers.
95% - 96.9% **Satisfactory**	Attendance at these levels doesn't give pupils the best chance of success at school but it is unlikely that it will cause significant damage to children's progress and well-being at school.
90% - 94.9% **Becoming a concern**	Significant numbers of school days are being missed at this level of attendance particularly at the lower end of this band's range. This will mean that children will not have been introduced or had chance to consolidate many aspects of their learning. Children may well miss completely certain aspects of work which could well impact upon their learning and confidence at school in the future. There will be fewer opportunities for staff to work with children to provide challenge or give support. School routines start to become fragmented which could make children less settled. Where patterns of attendance or reasons given for attendance are becoming a concern to school staff managing attendance, parents will be contacted in order to improve attendance as they would if their child's attendance was at the attendance rate band below. (See sections 12 and 15 of this policy below).
Less than 90% **Concerning**	Attendance at this level is now very likely to have significant negative impacts on pupils' progress, well-being and confidence at school. **Both the DfE and the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Service regards attendance at this level as 'persistent absenteeism'.** At Wharncliffe Side Primary School, we want all children to have the best opportunities to succeed at school and in later life. Improving pupils' attendance from rates below 90% will be given the highest priority. Normally all* parents of children with attendance below 90% will be contacted in the autumn term and again in January in order to work together to improve attendance for their child. Plans (see form) will be made for each child bespoke to their needs and reasons for their absence which will be reviewed at least termly. Different approaches will be needed for different children's and family circumstances however the school will not cease to work with families to improve a pupil's attendance until it is at least at satisfactory levels and consistently so. (See sections 12 and 15 of this policy below). **Where children have had attendance of over 95% in the previous school year and there have been clear and legitimate reasons for short periods of absence in the autumn term which significantly skew the child's overall attendance rate for the new school year, parents will not be contacted.*
50% or below **Severe absence Very concerning**	Highest-priority cohort requiring intensive, coordinated support and multi-agency working where appropriate.

Expectations for Arriving at School:

The school day starts at 8:50am It is expected that all children are seated, ready to start the first lesson of the day at that time. The bell goes at 8:45am to give children time to get into class and help them settle ready for the official start of the day.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school for the full day. Parents can bring children to school from **8:35am** or take advantage of the school's Breakfast Club which starts at **7:30am.** There is a bus stop at the bottom of the road, ample parking around school and a cycle and scooter shelter. In these ways, our school is very accessible and flexible in terms of helping parents get children to school on-time.

Expectations for Registration:

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The start of the school day is **8:50am.** Teachers should endeavour to take the school register promptly at this time. Pupils arriving at school after the register has been taken but before **9:10 a.m**. will be given an **L = Late arrival before the register has closed** mark.
- The morning register will be marked by **9:10am**. Pupils will receive an unauthorised late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time unless they have arrived **in school** and have been delayed by matters out of their control e.g. a queue at the office door. The morning register will also close at **9:10am**. Pupils will normally receive a mark of absence **U = Arrived after registration closed** mark if they arrive in class after **9:10am**. This 20-minute opening period is within the statutory maximum of 30 minutes.
- The afternoon register will be marked at **1:15pm** at the end of lunchtime. Although, theoretically, pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time, it is the responsibility of school staff to ensure children return to class from the school playground (or other parts of the school) to start afternoon school on time. If parents have taken children out of school for the morning or at lunchtime, they should have them back in school for 1:15pm at the latest.

Parents and pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance, punctuality and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff. Staff will communicate any such concerns confidentially with the senior leadership team (SLT). Any substantive or on-going issues (especially if they regard welfare or safeguarding issues) should be recorded on CPOMs as soon as possible. (See Section 16 below.)

Parents and staff should be regularly informed of the school's attendance expectations detailed above.

5. Absence procedures

Parents' Responsibility to Inform School Regarding Absences:

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 8:50am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide:

1. confirmation that their child will or will not be in school. (If this is not clear and the child is absent, parents should be contacted.)

2. an explanation for the absence
3. an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

The school has a 24hour voicemail facility so messages can be left if there is nobody available to answer the call. School staff may ring back later in the morning if the reasons for absence are not clear.

The school will regularly let parents know about this expectation and how they can inform school. Parents should either

1. email enquiries@wharncliffeside.sheffield.sch.uk
2. talk directly to a member of the office staff, class teacher or TA attached to the class
3. leave a message on the school phone number – 0114 2862379

Staff Response When Parents Have Not Followed the Agreed Process for Informing School about Absence:

We do not encourage parents to let us know about absence in other ways however sometimes parents may feel the need to do this for a variety of reasons especially if they are in a hurry. If other staff are made aware of a pupils' absence by someone they know is a parent of the child or on the named list of contacts parents have supplied – (see office contact folder or SIMs) they should let the school office or class teacher know as soon as possible that morning. If the person passing on the message is not the parent or on the contact list, office staff should be informed immediately so they can promptly contact parents to confirm the absence and reason for it.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, school administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable (normally before 10am) on the first day that they do not attend school. If parents cannot be contacted, all adults given as contacts by parents on the school's database will be contacted in the priority order given to us by parents to ascertain if the child is safe and well. If no one on the list is contactable, admin staff will contact a member of the SLT, normally the Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to make a decision on what steps to take next. Depending on the specific details known about the child's welfare, needs and previous attendance, a decision will then be made whether to contact social services, the police or any other appropriate agency e.g. Sheffield FIS. Home visits by school staff may also be made following the school's home visits policy.

Most incidents where parents have not contacted school to explain a child's absence before **9:10 a.m.** will be recorded by admin staff and passed to the school's Attendance Officer unless it can be shown that there were circumstances where it would have been very difficult to let school know about the absence in good time e.g. the parent was taking their child to hospital. See recording form attached.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than five school days in a row, or more than ten school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not, in most cases, request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is

genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. Where a child's attendance has dropped below 90% (or has attendance that is causing a concern) and an initial letter of concern form has been sent to parents, medical evidence will be sought for every absence due to illness or a medical appointment. Parents will be informed of this before medical evidence is requested. It will be made clear to parents in the initial letter of concern that the school is not asking for a medical note. Parents will also be informed that the school may need to follow the Local Authority's GP protocol.

In the case of Persistent Absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will endeavour to discuss with an Attendance and Inclusion officer from the LA (currently Janet Kozler), at least three times per school year, the details of pupils who have attendance lower than **90%,** or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation. Other pupils with attendance which is higher than 90% but who have a pattern of attendance which is concerning may also be discussed.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for longer than 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will start the process of removing the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries. The school will consult with Sheffield's Attendance and Inclusion Service, Sheffield Admissions team and other agencies working with the child. It is highly likely that the Sheffield Safeguarding team and the Police will have been contacted before this step is taken.

6. The Attendance Register

The school keeps its attendance register electronically. The register is a legal record and every entry will be preserved for 6 years from the date it was entered. Amendments will show the original entry, amended entry, reason, date and the name of the person making the amendment.

The register records the pupil's presence at the time it is taken. It should only routinely be amended where, for example, the reason for absence was not known when the register was taken and the entry subsequently needs correction. A pupil who was present when the register was taken remains recorded as present for that session even if they later leave the premises; other safeguarding/sign-out records continue to apply.

The school will use the statutory national attendance and absence codes in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE guidance.

The following codes will be used: Please note the "type" column which notes whether the code notes a present mark, authorised absence, unauthorised absence or whether the child is not expected to attend school.

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision - Face to face education provided off school site	Present Mark
C	Authorised Circumstance (see next page for breakdown)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school - Attending Alternative Provision at another school site - Chapel House / Becton Outreach / CAMHS Lodges/Hospital Ed - Education at a secure / residential site - Off-site direction / managed move - Attending Sheffield Inclusion Centre	Present Mark

E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Y1	Unable to attend because **transport normally provided is not available**	Authorised Absence
Y2	Unable to attend because of **widespread disruption to travel**	Authorised Absence
Y3	Unable to attend because **part of the school premises is unexpectedly closed**	Authorised Absence
Y4	Unable to attend because the **whole school site is unexpectedly closed**	Authorised Absence
Y5	Unable to attend because the pupil is in **criminal justice detention**	Authorised Absence
Y6	applies where a pupil is well enough to attend but public health guidance or law relating to infection or disease prevents attendance.	Authorised Absence
Y7	applies to an unavoidable cause not covered by another code; the school must record the nature of that cause.	Authorised Absence
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the **code '#'** will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved in accordance with the school's GDPR policy.

Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher by completing an exceptional leave request form prior to taking this leave at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will pay careful consideration to the reasons parents give exceptional leave requests and will be sensitive to the needs of the child and the family.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- In the first two weeks of a new school year
- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods. Statutory assessment dates will be given to parents as early as possible in the new school year.
- In most cases, when a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence. The headteacher may use discretion for a minimal number of unauthorised late codes.
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason. For requests received in the first half term of the new school year, attendance data from the previous school year will be used.
- Where the reason for exceptional leave request is clearly not exceptional and could normally be expected to happen for most children and families e.g. a milestone birthday celebration

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school will usually send a request to the local authority for a fine to be issued to parents for periods of unauthorised leave which are **5 days or longer**. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such

appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment. Where appointments are during the school day it would be expected that they attend school prior to the appointment and return to school after the appointment. Where children are present for registration medical appointments will not be not be classed as an absence.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the school which authorises the school's absence(s). It is the responsibility of the organising body of the performance or activity to provide a letter of request to the school for this absence.

Additional arrangements will be made together by the school and parents for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education.

The pupil will engage in education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by issuing the licence. The period of absence should not extend to over 5 school days (or equivalent) in any given school year.

Where a licence has been granted and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **95%*** Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

***During the Autumn term, the previous year's attendance will be used in conjunction with in-year attendance to help make a decision.*

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

7. Penalty notices – (fines for unauthorised absence)

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices (2024), the following arrangements apply to Penalty Notice Fines issued by School Name here after 19 August 2024. School Name here, like all state-funded schools, must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate

in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. School Name here, like all schools in England, does not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices. The school makes judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

Penalty notices are intended as an alternative to prosecution and should normally only be used where they are considered likely to change parental behaviour. Where support to improve attendance is appropriate, it should have been provided and either not worked or not been engaged with before a penalty notice is issued. In some circumstances, such as an unauthorised holiday in term time, attendance support may not be appropriate.

The National Threshold for Penalty Notices

The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, for example 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes, all within 10 school weeks.

These sessions can be consecutive, for example 10 sessions of holiday in one week, or not, for example 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in one week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years, for example 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term.

Reaching the national threshold does not automatically mean that a penalty notice must be issued. Each case must be considered individually, including whether support is appropriate and whether a penalty notice is the most appropriate intervention for improving attendance and changing parental behaviour.

How and when Penalty Notices are issued

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines may be issued to each parent who is liable for the offence, for each child who was absent. Penalty notices should usually be issued to the parent or parents who allowed the absence, regardless of which parent submitted any application for leave. For example, 3 siblings absent for term-time leave could result in each liable parent receiving 3 separate fines.

5 consecutive days of term-time leave

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days. We do not include INSET training days in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term-time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Reaching this threshold requires the school to consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate; it does not mean that a penalty notice will automatically be issued

Notice to Improve

Where the national threshold has been met and attendance support is appropriate, but support has not been successful or has not been engaged with, a **Notice to Improve should usually be issued before a penalty notice**. This provides the parent with a final opportunity to engage with support and secure an improvement in their child's attendance.

A Notice to Improve is not required where support would not be appropriate, for example where the absence relates to an unauthorised term-time holiday. An authorised officer may also decide not to issue a Notice to Improve where it is unlikely to have any behavioural impact.

Where a Notice to Improve is used, it must comply with the local authority's Code of Conduct. The improvement period should be between **3 and 6 weeks**, and the notice should make clear what improvement in attendance is expected during that period.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence within 3 years

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the first notice, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There is no reduced £80 rate for a second Penalty Notice.

Further Offences within 3 years

A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first Penalty Notice.

Where the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within those 3 years, alternative action must be considered instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include another appropriate attendance legal intervention.

Two Penalty Notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out-of-court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour, they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool.

Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at the higher rate.

Once 3 years have elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued, a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid, including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded guilty or was found guilty, but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years, an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil.

If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority or authorities are known, they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years. These checks can be made by the school and/or local authority.

Where the previous local authority is not known, or the information cannot be obtained, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process should start as a new case.

Payment and non-payment of a Penalty Notice

Penalty Notice payments are made directly to the local authority. There is **no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice**. If the penalty has not been paid in full by the end of the 28-day payment period, the local authority must decide whether to prosecute the parent for the original attendance offence or withdraw the notice.

8. SEND, health-related absences and remote education

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans) or Health Plans (including reduced timetable plans) that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's PSHE and SEND policies.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the local authority's Attendance and Inclusion team if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.

- Provide the Attendance and Inclusion team with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure parents know how to find out information about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil (where appropriate and with the consent of parents) to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. This may form part of a child's SEN Support Plan / EHCP or as part of a reduced timetable return to school plan. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding regular and timely meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying any unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable with a phased return to school plan.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Where health needs are complex, long-term or frequently recurring, the school may seek medical evidence to better understand the pupil's needs and identify suitable support. Evidence is for understanding needs, making reasonable adjustments and accurately recording absence, not simply testing a parent's account.

Remote education will only be considered as a last resort where attendance at school is not possible, reasonable adjustments have been considered first, and the pupil can learn remotely. It will form part of a wider, explicit reintegration plan supporting return to school. Engagement with remote education may be monitored, but the pupil remains absent for attendance-register purposes.

- Facilitate relevant pastoral support with the aim of improving attendance while supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider and regularly review reasonable adjustments.
- Consider a time-limited phased return where appropriate and in the pupil's best interests.
- Work with Sheffield City Council where health-related absence is likely to reach the statutory 15-day sickness-return threshold.

9. Young Carers

The school recognises that caring responsibilities can create barriers to regular attendance. Young carers will be identified and recorded in the school census in accordance with census requirements. Where caring responsibilities may contribute to absence, the school will work in partnership with the pupil and family to understand the barriers and put appropriate support in place.

Where needs extend beyond school, the school will work with Sheffield City Council and relevant organisations to facilitate early help and other support. Where it appears that a young carer may have support needs, or the young carer or parent requests it, the school will support access to the local authority's young carer's needs assessment under section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989.

10. Working with parents to improve attendance (AIso see section 15)

In line with the Statement of Intent at the beginning of this policy, the school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies as appropriate working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. illness (which would mean the child is too ill to learn at school or would jeopardise their well-being or future health if they were to come to school and/or which could spread infectious disease to others) or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will liaise with parents to help children with mild illness attend school if it is judged to be possible, safe and appropriate to do so. Measures the school might take appropriate to each child's case could include:

- Keeping children indoors for part or the whole of breaktimes
- Providing the child with a quiet and comfortable place to eat their lunch
- Temporary modifications to the child's learning for the day
- Letting the child know which member of staff to go to if they need help or feel worse.
- Phoning parents for an update at lunchtimes
- Liaising with the parents regarding medication and providing medication in school where parents have completed and signed the school's administering medication in school form and where this complies with school policy.

Such measures should be agreed with parents ahead of attendance wherever possible and in every case in regards to medication.

The school will inform all parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality at parents' evenings and in the annual report to parents. It will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally through school newsletters, the school's website and school social media.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets. The sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk. document provided by the NHS is a useful guide to establish whether a child can attend with the presenting illness, and if not, the length of time they should be absent for. This can be referred to by staff within school and shared with parents/carers in person, via your school website and/or via other communication channels. Sheffield Children's Hospital Health Needs in Education referral. Work with the Attendance and Inclusion team to liaise with health professionals and triggering the GP protocol arrangements for the sharing of health data if (See section 15)

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. FIS, children's social care or the LA's Attendance and Inclusion team, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- The attendance section in school reports
- A standard item at parents' evening
- Termly certificates for excellent attendance (98% and above)
- Certificates for improved attendance
- Weekly attendance trophies given to classes and reported in the newsletter
- Half-termly prize draws where children receive one entry for each week they achieved 100%

11. Monitoring, analysing and responding to absence data

Wharncliffe Side Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers or administration officers are passed immediately to the SLT. Where trends are of a concerning nature, this information should be recorded on CPOMs

Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported wherever possible by 10am. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the attendance officer daily. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents are notified that attendance is becoming a concern at parents' evenings in the Autumn & Spring terms and in the end of school report in July. Information outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance is sent to all parents at the beginning of each year.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils - including those with or at risk of Persistent Absence (PA)
- Disadvantaged pupils

- Ethnic groups where numbers of pupils would ensure the data would be statistically significant and not identify particular children.
- Pupils with SEND,

The school's attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data at least three times per year – in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.

This will include identifying, for each group: (to identify patterns and trends.)

- Judgements on overall attendance for all pupils, cohorts and groups (see above). Judgements will be made by comparing data to:
    - Attendance bands set out in Section 4 of this policy relating to the school's ambition for all pupils
    - National published DfE data for attendance for benchmarking purposes (see school IDSR)
    - Other pupil data to those pupils in specific groups
- How current data compares to historic trends of attendance and absence in school.
- Patterns in uses of certain codes at a whole school level.
- Changes in attendance rates for individual pupils with persistent absence
- Changes in attendance rates for individual children who are becoming or may become persistent absentees. **(Those with attendance below 95%).**
- Patterns of particular days and reasons given for poor attendance for individual pupils vulnerable to persistent absence.

The school's attendance officer will record how successfully the school's work is impacting on school attendance as a whole and in relation to other groups and make professional, informed judgements on the reasons for patterns in the data.

The school's attendance officer will bring analysis on all individual persistent absentees (those with attendance below 90%) and those children whose attendance is becoming a concern (90-94.9%) **and** have concerning patterns of attendance to discuss at SLT meetings.

Process:

Once pupils are identified the support process to help increase attendance will align to the following framework.



Assess Identify the following:

- The reason preventing the child attending regularly
- What has already been implemented to improve the child's attendance?
- The needs across Education, Health and Care
- Has the child's voice been captured, what do they need to happen so they can attend?
- Have the staff working most closely with the child got any concerns or suggestions? What information does CPOMs provide?
- What support is required to improve the attendance?
- What interventions may be required to improve the child's attendance?
- What further assessments may be required?
- Has the child's health been considered? Have you received any medical evidence? What more do we need to know?
- Is the child a Young Carer, and is this having an impact on their attendance?
- The patterns on 'by-lesson or 'by-day' attendance', and if patterns are evident speak to those teachers.
- If siblings are having the same absences. Have you contacted the school the siblings attend? If unsure which schools, ask your linked Attendance & Inclusion Officer.
- Are there any SEND needs affecting attendance? If so are the child's attendance needs supported by the SEND Support Plan or EHCP? When was the last review?

Plan the following:

- What next steps need to take place to help the child attend every day, on time and have timescales been set?
- Who will support and what their actions are?
- Have family circumstances been considered and have you considered with the family what support may help them at this time? Have any referrals to other agencies been offered e.g. FIS?
- If external services are involved has a meeting taken place? e.g., TAF, Child in Need, PEP, Transition Pathway meetings
- Would the child benefit from attending breakfast club to ensure they are on school site on time each day?
- Set time scales for the plan to be implemented (See Timetable section below).
- What outcomes do we expect to see?
- Where there are health needs, if appropriate, have you consulted with the linked Attendance and Inclusion Officer to consider using the G.P. Protocol or School Attendance Planning meeting?

Ensure the plan is shared with all parties including the child. Consider whether he plan is being carried out by

- School staff responsible
- Other professionals identified
- The parent/s (and/or wider family where appropriate)
- (Depending on maturity and circumstances) the child

Additionally, are there urgent elements of the plan or quick fixes that need to be modified before the next review to give the plan the best chance of success or being manageable?

Review and evaluate to what extent the support has worked:

- Does the child and parent/s feel they have been supported? If not why not?
- Has attendance improved? Are we seeing movement towards the desired outcomes? Even small improvements can be big steps e.g. attending a session every day is a step towards no unauthorised absence, with gradual steps towards attending school every day, on time.
- What has worked well? What could be improved or amended?
- Has the child's home, health, mental well-being or welfare changed since the plan was written? Does the plan need to be amended to best meet the child's current needs?
- Has the child's voice been captured, how do they feel the last few weeks have gone, what difference has been made, what are they proud of, what could have been better?
- Has there been any party who hasn't carried out their actions?
- Is the parent/are the parents committed to making sure their child's attendance is as high as possible? Is a more punitive route required?

Timetable:

In the first half of the **Autumn Term**, all persistent absentees (and other children whose attendance is concerning) will receive an '**initial letter of concern'** (see template) from the school's Attendance Officer. The letter will invite the parent to work with the school to help improve the child's attendance It will emphasise the school's wish to have a united collaborative approach to helping improve attendance for that child. The letter will ask parents to provide medical evidence for all absences until their child's attendance improves. Parents will be told that this is standard practice.

The Attendance Officer will formally monitor attendance of children identified as having attendance causing concern on a **monthly basis** This will be provided to him/her on the first working day of every month by the administration officer. On an on-going basis, the attendance officer will monitor attendance and act accordingly in relation to information on absence passed to them by other staff including the administration staff. School admin staff will also be asked to ensure full explanations for any absences from parents and remind parents of the need to provide medical evidence for their child's absence to be authorised. They will be asked to communicate all concerning patterns or reasons for absence to the school's attendance officer as soon as possible using CPOMs for any serious or concerning information.

It is important to note, that where the attendance officer is concerned by on-going data patterns **for any child**, steps to resolve this may be done at an earlier stage including meetings with parents and involvement of the Attendance and Inclusion team.

The child's class teacher and any linked teaching assistants will be made aware of all children in their class identified as having concerning attendance. They will be asked to feedback on relevant information shared with them by the child or by parents to the school's attendance officer, using CPOMs for any serious or concerning information.

In January, those parents of pupils (contacted in the autumn term) whose attendance has not improved (or is causing concern) will be sent a **second letter of concern** (see template)**.** This letter will invite parents to a formal meeting to help resolve the persistent absence. The letter will still stress that the school wishes to use a collaborative approach to resolve the situation but will mention potential consequences of their child's attendance not improving. Parents will be told that if they do not attend this meeting, that it will be held in their absence. The attendance and inclusion team may be invited to meetings where it is felt their input would

be useful. The attendance officer will then communicate with other members of staff in the same way as after the Autumn term's data analysis point.

If attendance does not improve satisfactorily after this meeting and there are no unavoidable factors for this e.g. evidenced prolonged ill health, the attendance officer will follow guidance in Sections 13 and 14 of this policy (see above) in an attempt to improve attendance at a multi-agency level.

The attendance officer will provide a report to the headteacher after the Autumn and January data analysis points to enable him/her to track the attendance of pupils and help implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also share areas of success and practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools in Peak Edge MAT.

12. Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is defined as pupils with attendance below 90%. There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children with involvement from social care
- Children in families receiving early intervention and support (e.g. from FIS)
- Disadvantaged children (including looked after children, children adopted from care, and those who are (or who have been) in receipt of free school meals.
- Young carers
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These methods are used systematically and judiciously (where appropriate and feasible) within the school's monitoring and analysing absence process (see section 15). These include

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with parents and pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading systematic and regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress (See section 15)
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate or reviewing existing plans ensuring attendance is factored into to agreed support and targets.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils with the highest rates of absence, and will work with the LA's Attendance and Inclusion Service and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also judged by the school's DSL to be at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

If a child's attendance does not improve to expected levels (at least 95%) during four weeks after attendance meeting following a second letter of concern, a fixed penalty fine will be issued.

13. Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for the school's process of attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after at least two school terms and after a full 'Plan, Do, Review' process, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding formal meeting (in addition to meetings held within the support phase of the process) with parents and the school's attendance officer. The LA Attendance and Inclusion team will be invited to the meeting.
- Working with the LA's Attendance and Inclusion Team to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will always work with the LAs' Attendance and Inclusion service to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort should the percentage of unauthorised absence meet local authority thresholds.

The process is as follows:

Attendance Legal Requests

An Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker (AISW) from the local authority supports schools with the attendance legal process

All schools have a link AISW from the attendance legal team. In the absence of the school's link worker, contact sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk

Prosecution is the last resort, and we support schools to provide the child and family with help and assistance in accessing their education wherever we can. Our aim is to ensure that the school has exhausted all avenues of support before considering the legal route.

The link AISW will require the school to have undertaken certain measures **prior** to considering legal prosecution for attendance, as follows:

- School to have referred to the Ideas for challenging and improving attendance Checklist and completed the identified actions relevant to the situation
- School to ensure all parents/carers with day-to-day care have been informed of any attendance issues
- School to ensure all parent/carer details are up to date (who is in the household? Do both parents have parental responsibility? If so, on which days?)
- School to ensure they have spoken to all services involved with the child or your person

- School to explore where the family live in relation to school

When considering the legal prosecution route for attendance our school always bears in mind **statutory defences** prior to progression.

All decisions regarding legal proceedings will be made by the **Attendance & Inclusion Social Worker** linked to our school. The Statutory Defences (reasons why cases would not be progressed through the legal system) are as follows.

1. Authorised Absence - Leave granted by the Head teacher
2. Sickness - or any other unavoidable cause. Evidence presented will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
3. Religious Observance - Any day that is exclusively set aside
4. Distance from School - The school that the child is registered is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for either transport to and from school or enabling him/her to become a registered pupil at a school nearer his/her home. (Walking distance - Exceeding 2 miles for a child under 8 years old, exceeding 3 miles for a child aged 8 years and over)
5. Trade or business - The parent/carer **can prove** that their trade or business requires them to travel to such a degree that the child has attended school as regularly as the nature of the trade or business allows and the child has attended school for at least 200 sessions during the preceding 12 months.

Attendance Legal Documentation

If requesting the process to move towards the **Penalty Notice Warning Letter stage** a discussion with the Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker must take place prior to any letters being sent to parents/carers. The following documentation should be available during the discussion:

- The attendance certificate for this academic year and the previous academic year.
- The level of unauthorised absence, as the legal process can only be pursued where absence is unauthorised by the Headteacher.
- The level of absence overall. This should be 92% or below.
- Evidence to show the School Attendance Officer/s have been involved for a minimum of 6 school weeks.
- Process of Assess, Plan, Do, Review is evidenced in line with the attendance response.
- Copies of the letters sent to parents making them aware of their child's attendance concern. These letters should be ones provided by the LA, or ratified by the LA.
- Evidence of any contact or plan that has been made with parents and the young person to ensure they are aware of the attendance concerns
- Evidence, if you are aware of siblings in other schools, that you have liaised with them to coordinate your support, as the Local Authority will work with the whole family.
- Evidence that identified actions have been completed by the school, and parents/pupils have been supported to complete their actions, with regular reviews where appropriately

Penalty Notice Warning Letter (PNWL)

The Local Authority, in consultation with schools (and other agencies where appropriate), will be responsible for the decision to issue Penalty Notice Warning Letters. This will ensure consistent practice across **all** schools in Sheffield, assist in avoiding school / home conflicts and ensure that Penalty Notice

Warning Letters are not being issued where it is inappropriate to do so, or where the Local Authority would be unable to support progression to court.

The AISW will check whether any current involvement by Social Care or any other service would prevent the case being progressed to Court.

Where penalty notice warning letters are initially agreed in principle by the AISW, these will be subject to final checks to ensure that the legal process is appropriate.

When the checks are complete and there is no change to the initial agreement the AISW will notify the school that a penalty notice warning letter can be sent out.

Monitoring of the PNWL period should be carried out by the school's Attendance Officer. If there is absence during the monitoring period, then a period of complaint will be provided to the school if the decision to proceed with a penalty notice is made by the Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker. **Final paperwork should be submitted by school within 21 days**.

Penalty notice paperwork required from school includes (as a minimum).

- Head teacher's Certificate
- Case Summary covering the period of complaint
- Evidence of the Attendance Response being followed including the APDR
- An up-to-date attendance certificate

All proformas will be supplied by the AISW.

This information would prove that during the period of complaint, the parents/carers were aware of the child's poor attendance.

If a pupil achieves full attendance during the Penalty Notice warning period, the School's Attendance Officer should continue to monitor the attendance and send a continue to monitor letter to the parents/carer. If deterioration occurs in later weeks, then they should consult with the AISW regarding further involvement in the legal process.

School Based Attendance Officers should monitor a pupil's attendance following a Court hearing and re consult if attendance is not acceptable.

Attendance and Inclusion social workers where appropriate will assess cases on a case-by-case basis, to make decisions as to whether it is appropriate to pursue other legal interventions available to us such as basic or aggravated offences. These will be discussed during attendance reviews and assessed based on the evidence provided, as to how the parent/carer is failing in their duty to ensure a full-time suitable education for their child.

14. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance and how school's ethos and practices help engender good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's policy, strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it. Including the Attendance and Inclusion team

The governing board will support and challenge the headteacher to provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

15. Leave during lunch times

At Wharncliffe Side Primary School, we value the pastoral, social and wider educational opportunities school lunch time provide. We endeavour through sports and play leadership activities and the monitoring of pupils' informal play to engender positive social, physical and emotional development of pupils. For these reasons, we normally discourage pupils' leave at lunchtimes.

Parental requests for absence of leave at lunchtimes **are very rare** at Wharncliffe Side Primary School. However, parents may have specific reasons relating to their child's or family circumstances for requesting lunchtime leave. Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents must submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will normally inform the parent in writing of their decision within two school weeks of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the headteacher will ensure a lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises at least 5 minutes after the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis. Parents must submit a new letter to request lunch time absence and this will be considered by the headteacher in the same way as the first request.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. It does not simply refer to pupils not attending school without their parent/s' knowledge.

All staff are actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:50am** where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must 'check out' at the school office and 'check in' in again on their return. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school premises during the school day without a known adult collecting them.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

16. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

1. The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
2. The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
3. A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
4. The following areas will be systematically searched:
    a. All classrooms
    b. All toilets
    c. Cloak rooms
    d. The library
    e. Any outbuildings
    f. The school grounds
5. Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

6. If the pupil has not been found after 15 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
7. The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
8. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted. The process of phoning people on the child's contact list should be done swiftly and by more than one member of staff using both of the school phone lines.
9. The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident report, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
10. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
11. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
12. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, if the process went beyond step 4, and policies, procedures and staff responses will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

17. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 97 percent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2027.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Matt Gaughan

September 2026