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## Attendance Policy

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## Introduction

At Bridge School Malvern, our ambition is for all students to strive for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every session and every day that school is open. We consider this paramount to pupils achieving their full potential and enhancing lifelong outcomes.

Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation, attainment and positive progression of pupils, and is an integral part of our school ethos.

We understand that some children with specific medical and learning needs will find it harder than others to attend school. And so at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and relevant partner agencies to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. Promoting and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

## **Aims and ethos**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time and efficient education to which they are entitled. Bridge School Malvern acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils, and partners can work together to remove any barriers affecting attendance.

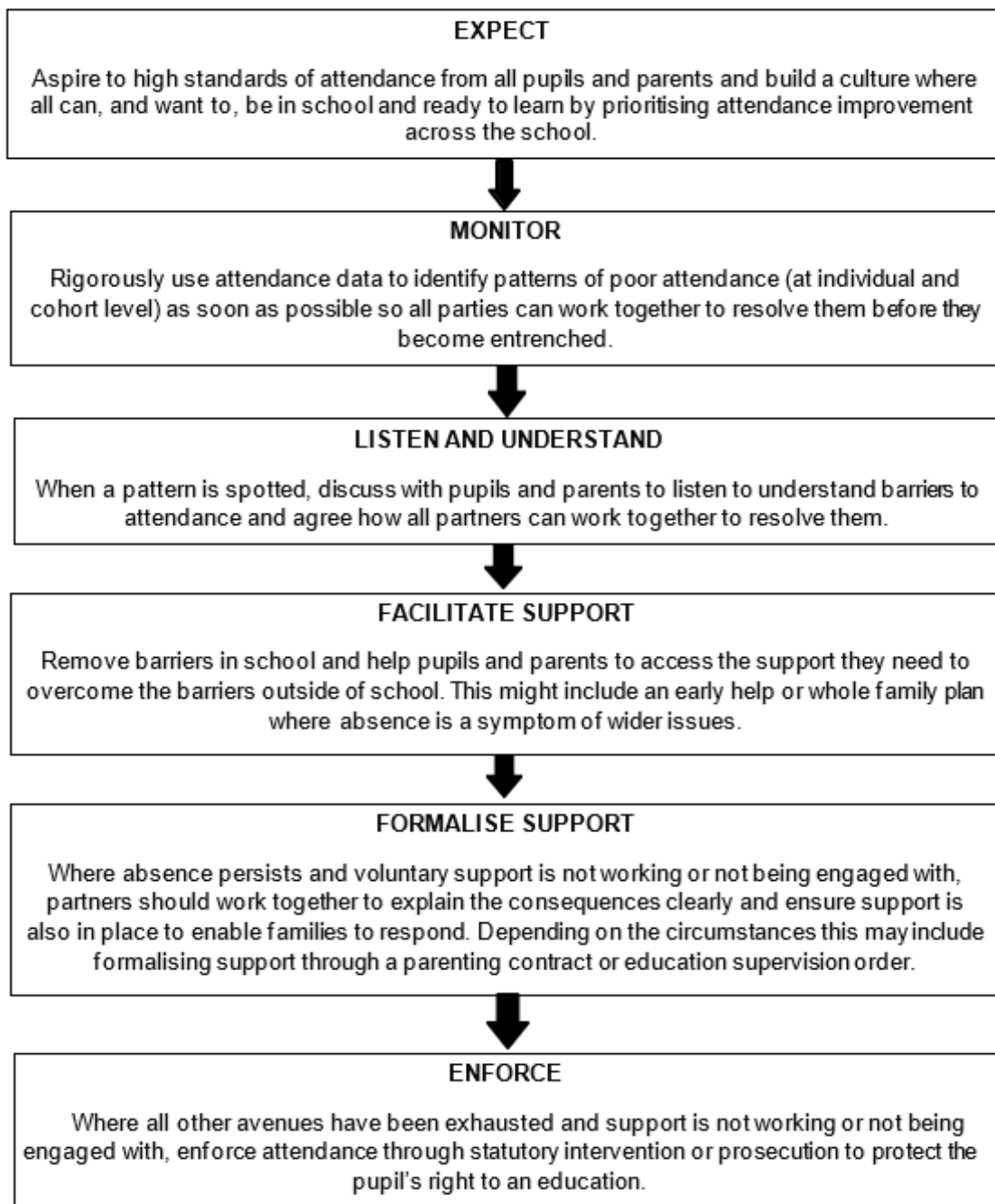
This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents<sup>1</sup> must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At Bridge School Malvern we follow the DfE Working together to Improve School Attendance Approach:

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<sup>1</sup> Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.



Reference: [DfE Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance](#)

We want our pupils to attend school every day unless they are not well enough to do so. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school and grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential requirements in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the world.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who may experience any barriers preventing regular attendance.

One of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved and as part of the wider school community.
- Raise pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Work with external agencies where required, such as health, the LA and local organisations to support our pupils, parents and school.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.

### **Bridge Sixth Form**

We believe that excellent attendance and punctuality post 16 establishes and develops positive attitudes towards attendance in the workplace and thus lifelong achievements. Every child and young person enrolled at our sixth form is expected to attend every day they are required to, on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups and expect parents to inform the Bridge Sixth Form of any reasons preventing attendance on the first day of absence. We will continue to contact parents of sixth form students, as with any other, to discuss any attendance or punctuality concerns.

At Bridge School Malvern we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory<sup>2</sup> school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. The principles above apply to both the school site at Hanley, and to the Bridge Sixth Form.

### **2.1 Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?**

Evidence shows pupils with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Pupils who attend regularly are more likely to achieve better results than their peers that do not, and make more successful transitions into work, further education and into adulthood.

Excellent attendance enables pupils to be part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each pupil's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

### **3. Safeguarding and Attendance**

Bridge School Malvern 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 pupil'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 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 pupil who is absent from school when the school has made all reasonable enquiries and cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare and safety.

### **4. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#). Documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

## **5. Using data to support improvements in attendance**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

## **6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance**

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in conjunction with relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such pupils may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, to support pupils to reintegrate back into education and access full time provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and external partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## **7. Staff Training on Attendance**

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of pupil registers
- the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils experiencing attendance challenges.

## **What the law says and our school procedures**

### **Contents of the Admissions Register**

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended, applies.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

### **Contents of Attendance Register**

In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of Bromcom to record attendance information.

## **Present at School (and Lateness)**

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Pastoral Manager will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 9.00 am on each school day.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code “Late after registers close” (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly.

See DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

### **2.1 Effects of Late Arrival at School**

When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss important events such as assembly, tutor period, teacher instructions and introductions. Late arrivals disrupt others and children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

## **3. Authorised Absence**

‘Authorised absence’ means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:**

### **3.1 Illness**

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers before 9.30 am, will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) ‘2024<sup>3</sup> which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

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<sup>3</sup> Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

To notify the school of illness:

**Call... Hanley (01684 311632) and BSF (01684 778400).**

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following DfE guidance [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupil-s-attendance)

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Pastoral Care Manager (Hanley: Clare Stanton Sixth Form: Emma Thomas) or Mental Health Lead (Simon Rowe) for further information on the support available.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: [Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/childrens-mental-health/)

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

### **Pupils taken ill during the school day**

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

### **3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments.

### **3.3 Religious Observance**

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### **3.4 Traveller Absence**

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

### 3.5 Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a suspension. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any suspension **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child Looked After, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

### 4. Unexplained pupil absence

If a pupil is absent without prior planning or there has been no contact from the parent to explain the absence **by 9.30am**, the Pastoral Coordinator (Bridge School) or Key Worker (Bridge Sixth Form) will contact the parent or carer to make every effort to locate the pupil. The procedure in appendix 1 will be followed.

Ongoing absence will be investigated and may include the Pastoral Coordinator (Bridge School) or Key Worker (Bridge Sixth Form) checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders involved with the child. A record must be kept of the date, time, contacted person and response to these enquiries. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Children's social care, and the police if appropriate.

In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and /or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime;
- The child is subject of a Child Protection Plan;
- The child is subject of Section 47 enquiries;
- The child is looked after;
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;

If there is a risk of forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, radicalisation or honour based violence, then the police or children's services will be contacted immediately.

See Appendix 1 for procedure for unexplained pupil absence.

## 5. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

Pupils may be rewarded for good and improved attendance through the pupil of the month scheme. Care will be taken to ensure pupils who have poor attendance, through no fault of their own, or through illness, do not feel worried or guilty about their low attendance rate.

## 6. Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.**

In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school’s discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should email the Headteacher requesting term time leave. The request should be made as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school’s Safeguarding Policy for more information)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child’s Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

## 7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school’s decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

### **Persistently and Severely Absent pupils (PA and SA)**

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

A pupil is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

### **8. Approved Educational Activity**

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP setting.

### **9. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)**

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's '[Home to school travel and transport](#)' guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)

- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

#### **10. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)**

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Pastoral Manager (at the Hanley site) or the Assistant Head of Sixth form at the Sixth Form, to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan (see appendix 2).

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and pupils. This will be evidenced via school records which will be shared with the Local Authority.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or, fail to implement the suggested changes.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

Safe and well checks will be carried out on pupils that are not attending school (see appendix 4 for guidance).

## **11. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables**

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have. If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the relevant EHCP Caseworker, pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

## **12. Legal Sanctions**

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral will be determined by the Local Authority.

See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information.

### **13. Children Missing Education (CME)**

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with Regulation 8 Education law. The school will use the Worcestershire children's services portal to report any children leaving our school, on part time timetables, attending irregularly, or joining the school outside of usual transition phases. If we have any CME related concerns, such as unauthorised absence of 10 consecutive school days, we will notify the EHCP Caseworker and the CME team at [CME@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:CME@worcestershire.gov.uk)

Safe and well checks will be carried out on pupils that are not attending school. (see appendix 4 for guidance).

### **14. Following up Unexplained Absences**

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we will contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts and safety. See the school's Children Missing Education Policy.

### **15. Monitoring and Reporting**

Attendance will be monitored by the Headteacher, Head of Sixth form, Pastoral Manager and SENCO on a six weekly basis.

Action plans may be put in place for children with low or irregular attendance. Action plans will consider the role of the school, parent and child to increase attendance. Relevant EHCP Caseworkers will be notified of action plans.

Absence is recorded on Bromcom, along with reasons provided and by whom.

Parents are notified of attendance via termly reports, unless immediate concerns warrant conversations with parents during term time.

### **16. Action plans**

When a child's attendance falls below 89% without reasonable cause, the school will:

- Assess the levels of authorised and unauthorised absence and the particular SEN of the pupil.
- Work with the pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Make suitable adjustments on a temporary basis, or permanent if necessary, to remove barriers to school attendance.
- Sign post parents/carers and support access to any required services if out of school issues are identified.
- Make referrals to outside agencies as appropriate.

Where there is a lack of engagement in the process, the school will hold more formal conversations with parents. The school may write to inform parents about the possibility of the school place being withdrawn, or the need for legal intervention in future.

The school may also:

- Agree a joint approach with the local authority.
- Work with the schools of other siblings.

Parents will:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered, including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

The local authority will:

- Liaise with the school regarding action taken, or to be taken, to support improved attendance.
- If the attendance does not improve, work with the school to take an active part in the multi-agency effort to work to improve attendance.
- When all efforts are exhausted, and there is no sustained or significant improvement, to agree a joint approach with the school to withdraw the place or take up legal proceedings.

### **The Governing Board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. They should also support the promotion of regular attendance and provide support and challenge holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The Headteacher**

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.

## **17. Links with other policies/procedures**

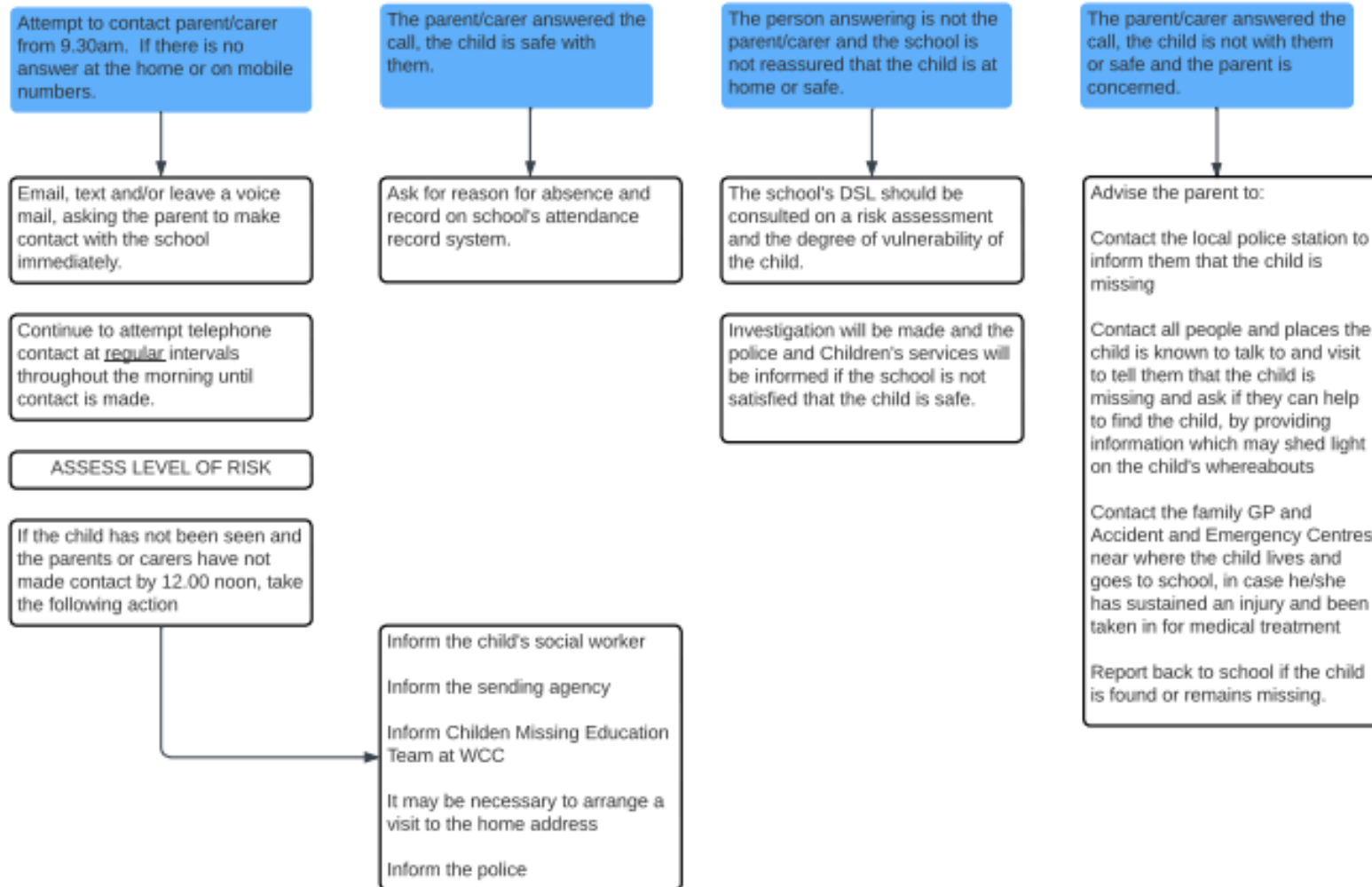
[Behaviour Policy](#)

[Children Missing Education Policy](#)

[Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy \(including safer recruitment, allegations against staff and low-level concerns\)](#)

## Appendix 1: Procedure for unexplained pupil absence

The Pastoral Coordinator (BSM) or Key Worker (Sixth Form) will telephone the child's home/parent/carer to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent or carer that the child is safe at home.



## Appendix 2

### Bridge School Malvern Absence Escalation Procedure

Attendance is monitored six weekly by the Headteacher, Pastoral Manager and SENCO, who are responsible for enacting the escalation procedure.

Percentage	Action
93% - 90%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audit reasons for absence               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss health related reasons for absence with the parent. Recommend seeing GP or making a CAMHS referral.</li> <li>b. Discuss unauthorised absence with the parent. Try to identify possible barriers to attending school.</li> <li>c. Is absence proportionate in relation to their SEN?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Take steps to remove barriers to attendance that have been identified.</li> <li>3. Make referrals as necessary.</li> </ol>
89% - 50%	<p>Pupil is classed as having persistent absence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audit reasons for absence.</li> <li>2. Meet with parents and agree an attendance reintegration plan (Appendix 3).</li> <li>3. Consider external support, eg               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Early Help</li> <li>b. CAMHS</li> <li>c. STEPS</li> <li>d. Women's Aid</li> <li>e. <a href="#">Melo: Onside, Worcestershire &amp; Herefordshire</a></li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Refer to: <a href="#">Early Help guidance for professionals</a></p>
50% or below	<p>Pupil is classed as having severe absence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct wellbeing checks by visiting the home (Refer to the Home Visits Policy <a href="#">Home Visits Policy</a> )</li> <li>2. Review the reintegration plan with parents</li> <li>3. Explain to parents, and put into writing, the next steps, ie:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Holding an interim review of the the EHCP</li> <li>● Considering whether to withdraw the child's place at the school</li> <li>● Possible legal action</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Work with the local authority and follow through with plans agreed at the interim review of the EHCP.</li> </ol>

Schools will notify the Local Authority of children who are absent for 10 consecutive days without authorisation by emailing [CME@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:CME@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## Appendix 3

### Attendance - Reintegration plan

Take the following into account:

- Reasons for absence (ie levels of authorised and unauthorised)
- SEN and medical needs of the child/young person
- Available data about the pupil
- Information from colleagues
- Invite the parents/carers into school to talk
- Hear directly from the pupil

Create a plan for reintegration. Refer to the worked example below. Make a copy to populate and save as a live document.

When writing the plan:

- Explain what measures you will take to tackle each barrier to attendance
- Assign each action to a member of staff
- Give each action a review date, so that you can monitor the plan effectively

### Appendix 3 - Attendance - Reintegration plan

Barriers to attendance	Strategies	Responsibilities	Review
<p>For example: Social anxiety, especially when in large groups, talking in front of the class, or during busy changeover times</p>	<p>For example: The pupil will come to school after the morning rush, and finish at a time that avoids big crowds.</p> <p>Teachers will not call on the pupil to speak in front of the class, without warning. Where talking publicly is an essential part of the task (e.g. a presentation), they will have a conversation with the pupil to decide what the best approach is (e.g. doing the presentation as a 1-2-1, or in front of a small group).</p> <p>When the pupil feels overwhelmed they will be allowed to withdraw to their designated safe space: the library. The pupil will be given a safe space pass to show staff, if necessary. A note will be put in the register to remind staff.</p> <p>The pupil will be taught mindfulness techniques twice a week for 6 weeks, and use an <u>anxiety thermometer</u> to track their anxiety throughout the day.</p> <p>The pupil will be referred to external mental health support via the GP.</p>	<p>For example: Form tutor</p> <p>Subject teachers</p> <p>The form tutor will inform all relevant staff</p> <p>Mental health lead</p> <p>Parents/carers</p>	<p>For example: 6 weeks</p> <p>Indefinitely</p> <p>N/A</p>

Barriers to attendance	Strategies	Responsibilities	Review
For example: <i>Feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work that has been missed</i>	For example: <i>The pupil will be offered 1-2-1 catch-up support in maths and English.</i>  <i>Remote learning for the pupil on days when they can't make it in.</i>	For example: <i>Class teacher</i>  <i>Class teacher</i>	For example: <i>4 weeks</i>  <i>When necessary</i>
For example: <i>The pupil has been bullied</i>	For example: <i>Restorative justice conversations with the involved pupils.</i>  <i>PSHE lessons targeted at anti-bullying for the whole year group.</i>	For example: <i>The pastoral lead</i>  <i>Form tutor</i>	For example: <i>4 weeks</i>  <i>End of term</i>

## Appendix 4: How to conduct a safe and well check

### Follow your local safeguarding partners' guidance

Get in touch with your local safeguarding partners so that you know things like:

- Whether you need to pre-arrange the visit with the parent/carer
- How many members of staff should be present
- Any specific questions you should ask, or not ask

Your LA will be able to put you in touch with local safeguarding partners.

### For any safe and well check you should:

- Meet the pupil face-to-face
- Make sure they look well and are happy
- Speak with the pupil and their parents/carers, discussing any concerns and worries
- Offer to help families to access sources of help, if appropriate

### Use risk assessments and model policies

Use your LA's home visit procedures, risk assessments and model policies when drawing up your own. Our [article](#) includes an example of a home visit risk assessment from a LA.

## Understand your school's safeguarding responsibilities

### If you have concerns about a pupil

If a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to LA children's social care (and, if appropriate the police) should be made immediately.

You should also inform your school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

This is set out in paragraph 57 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE).

### If a pupil misses education

On the first day that a pupil misses school without explanation or authorisation, a trained member of staff should contact that pupil's parents/carers to make sure they're safe at home.

If you have safeguarding concerns:

- Talk to your DSL – they'll decide what steps to take next
- Consider whether it's appropriate to involve the police – check you and your DSL are familiar with the [National Police Chief's Council \(NPCC\) guidance for schools on when to call the police](#)

- If you can't resolve the situation, contact your local education welfare service (EWS). Check your local procedures to see if they specify when to contact the EWS

Your LA will be able to put you in touch with your local EWS.

## **You and your LA must make 'reasonable enquiries' before removing pupils from your roll**

This should be a last resort and is for situations where a pupil:

- Hasn't returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, **or**
- Has been absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive days

It's up to your school and your LA to decide what enquiries are 'reasonable' in any individual circumstance. But, as a guide, complete and record **at least 1** of the actions listed as 'reasonable to expect' on page 15 of the [DfE's guidance on children missing education](#).

When making enquiries, you'll need to:

- Follow your set procedures that outline roles and responsibilities for completing a joint enquiry with your LA
- Record that you've completed these procedures
- Use your judgement to determine whether you need to go beyond these procedures, depending on the given circumstance

This is explained in pages 13 to 16 of the DfE's [guidance](#).

Read our article on [children missing education](#) for more details about what's required.

## **Decide on the purpose of your visit**

Think carefully about:

- **Why you are planning to visit**
  - Is it to build relationships?
  - Is it about a safeguarding concern or pupil welfare?
  - Is the school best placed to visit or would another agency be more appropriate?
- **Whether a visit is needed**
  - Would a phone call, message or meeting be better? If there's a safeguarding concern or it's important to meet a parent or child in their own familiar setting, a visit may be more appropriate
  - Would written communication be more effective in the long-term? For example, for future evidencing
- **Who is the best person to visit**
  - Should this be a class teacher, a member of support staff, a senior leader?
  - Do certain staff already have a good relationship, or need to build one with the family?
- **When the visit should take place**
  - Are there times when parents/carers are more likely to be available?

- Are there any family circumstances that you need to be aware of (e.g. younger siblings, elderly relatives, shift workers)?

## Carry out a risk assessment

Do this whether it's a routine visit or a specific visit (such as a ['safe and well' check](#)).

Your risk assessment will need to be specific to the individual situation. Use our [risk assessment guidance and template](#) for help with writing it. It's also worth seeing if your local authority (LA) or trust has a home visit risk assessment that you can refer to when drawing up your own.

Consider hazards such as:

- An aggressive or violent parent, pupil or family member
- Driving and car parking
- Movement through public areas (such as to or from car parks)
- No adults being present
- Use of illegal substances
- Illness or injury/accident
- Theft of devices or belongings
- Elongated visits
- Attack by a dog or other animal

## Tips for keeping staff safe on home visits

Your LA or trust may have home visit procedures you should follow. If not, as good practice make sure you:

### Brief staff ahead of time

Tell them:

- About the area they are visiting
- If there are any aggressive pets (if known)
- To carry a mobile phone, and have it switched on and charged ahead of the visit
- To let someone know they are undertaking a visit and when they have returned safely
- Not to give lifts to pupils or other family members

Consider whether you need to consult any other agencies too. For example, for safeguarding-related visits you could reach out to your local safeguarding partners. They may have useful contextual information about the family or the area.

## **Have them conduct visits in pairs**

This is best practice to help make sure your staff are safe at all times and can look out for one another.

Staff should discuss and agree:

- What they would like to achieve from the visit
- What will be discussed
- How to deliver key messages
- How they will record any outcomes

## **Have a post-visit procedure**

This will vary depending on the visit, but could include:

- Notifying a member of staff that they have completed the visit
- Reviewing and annotating the risk assessment with any relevant additional information
- Recording the outcome of the visit. Records should be stored in a secure location
- Passing on information to any other relevant members of staff. This could include logging any safeguarding concerns
- Drawing up an action plan with meaningful steps to support both the family and pupil
- Recording anything that can be learnt for future visits (for example, you might want to record notes about access or parking)

# Bridge School Malvern



<b>Review period</b>	Following government guidance updates
<b>Document Owner</b>	Sue Hornby
<b>Last reviewed</b>	June 2025

## Attendance Policy (abridged)

### Key Contacts

	Hanley site	Sixth Form
Reception	Sally Helder: 01684 311632 <a href="mailto:enquiries@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">enquiries@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a>	Melissa Smith: 01684 778400 <a href="mailto:enquiries@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">enquiries@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a>
Pastoral support lead	Clare Stanton <a href="mailto:clarestanton@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">clarestanton@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a> 01684 311632	Emma Thomas <a href="mailto:emmathomas@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">emmathomas@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a> 01684 778400
SENCO	Sarah Whitelaw <a href="mailto:sarahwhitelaw@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">sarahwhitelaw@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a> 01684 311632	To be appointed
Attendance lead officer	Sue Hornby Headteacher <a href="mailto:suehornby@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">suehornby@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a> 01684 311632	Vicky Gundersen Head of Sixth Form <a href="mailto:vickygundersen@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">vickygundersen@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a> 01684 778400
Governor for attendance	Julie Taylor <a href="mailto:julietaylor@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">julietaylor@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a>	Julie Taylor <a href="mailto:julietaylor@bridgeschoolmalvern.org">julietaylor@bridgeschoolmalvern.org</a>

At Bridge School Malvern, we want all students to aim for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every day that school is open unless they are too unwell to attend. This is really important so we can give your children the best education we can, and the education that they are entitled to.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and any relevant partners to remove any barriers getting in the way of pupils attending regularly. Pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance will be fully supported by our school, in partnership, where necessary, with any health or external professionals. Promoting and supporting excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school where all pupils want to be is important to us. We will work together with you as parents to explore and support any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly.

### **Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?**

Excellent attendance is important for pupils to feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This supports each pupil's all-round development, mental health, and well-being.

### **Child unable to attend school**

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers before 9.30 am, will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

### **Unexplained pupil absence**

If a pupil is absent without prior planning or there has been no contact from the parent to explain the absence **by 9.30am**, the Pastoral Coordinator (Bridge School) or Key Worker (Bridge Sixth Form) will contact the parent or carer to make every effort to locate the pupil. This may include visiting the home and/or contacting the police.

### **Absence Requests**

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, including a holiday.**

Parents should email the Headteacher requesting term time leave. The request should be made as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request.

### **Child refusing to attend school**

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible.

**Speak to Clare Stanton: 01684 311632 (Hanley) or Emma Thomas: 01684 778400 (Sixth Form)**

For pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance we will fully support each pupil to be able to attend as much as possible. We will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support this.

**Keep the school's pastoral team updated with health and medical conditions. Contact Clare Stanton: 01684 311632 (Hanley) or Emma Thomas: 01684 778400 (Sixth Form).**

If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents, we may refer to the Local Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed. We hope as parents you will work with us to best support your child so this does not need to happen.

If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure a child's safety and well-being.