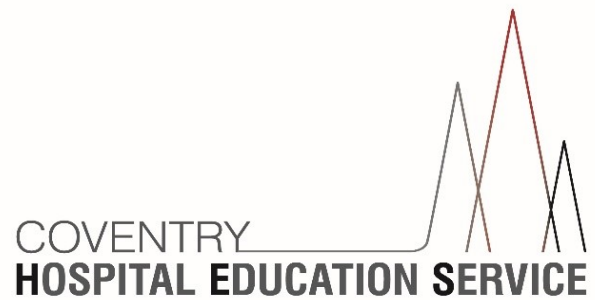


Hospital Education Service Attendance Policy

Coventry City Council has produced this document as guidance for schools and academies when writing their own attendance policy. This guidance has been written in accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance (2022) Schools and Academies must ensure that when using this guidance to inform their own policy that it reflects their own specific requirements.



'BUILDING BRIDGES TO BRIGHTER FUTURES'

Policy Consultation and Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. All parents are informed about the policy when their children join the school and on a regular basis through the newsletter and letters home where relevant.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on at least an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 1st September 2023. It is due for review on 31st August 2024

Signature ***Sharon Cutler*** Headteacher Date: 25th July 2023

Signature ***James Gillum*** Chair of Governors Date: 18th October 2023

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1. Introduction/Aim

The Hospital Education Service is committed to 'Building Bridges to Brighter Futures' for Coventry's primary and secondary pupils whose education has been temporarily interrupted by poor physical or mental health. Our service offers children a personalised learning experience to prepare them for their return to a familiar setting or transition to a new setting.

We recognise that improving attendance is everyone's business. Barriers to accessing education, especially in an alternative provision such as ours, are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates. They are often specific to individual pupils and families.

When reading this policy, it is important to note that we are sensitive to the many reasons children are referred to the Hospital Education Service. We are mindful that prior to our involvement with these children and their families, they have already experienced a difficult journey. For this reason, we remain passionate and compassionate about supporting children whose education has been disrupted and whose confidence and stamina have been negatively impacted by ill-health. Through listening and understanding, we support children to first re-engage with learning and then attend a school setting. Supporting children to be able to manage their health alongside their learning is at the heart of improving attendance and improving outcomes for this very vulnerable cohort of learners.

At the Hospital Education Service, we value the attendance of all our pupils. There is a strong relationship between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children. It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. It is important that as a school we offer a safe environment, positive relationships, high quality teaching and learning opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

Supporting children to attend school every day will help achieve this ambition by maximising their education and social achievements as well as developing self-discipline, organisation and preparedness for the work environment. Improving attendance and reducing absence, especially persistent absence is a priority for our school and Coventry City Council.

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupils' achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences.
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

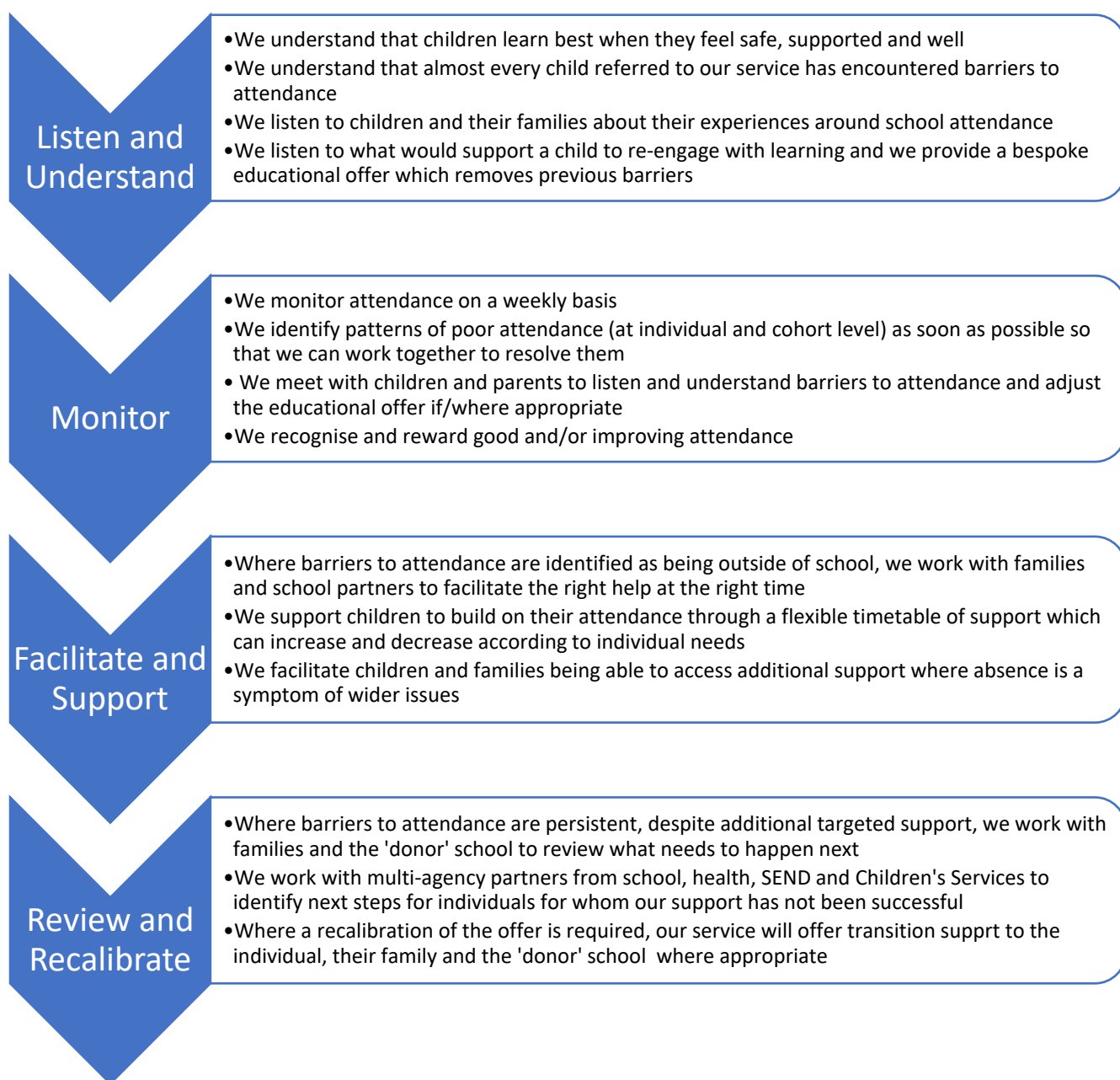
A "Parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

3. Attendance Objectives

Our school attendance policy:

- Is easy to understand by pupils, parents and staff
- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch
- Is reviewed by staff regularly and involves pupils and parents because school attendance matters to everyone
- Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below



4. Roles and Responsibilities

At the Hospital Education Service, we believe that school attendance matters to everyone. School attendance is a shared responsibility by governors, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

The table below shows staff with responsibility for the management of attendance at the Hospital Education Service:

- Senior Attendance Lead is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school
- Attendance Officer who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis and
- Attendance Lead who pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	Sharon Cutler Headteacher/DSL	02476 337734 Sharon.cutler@coventry.gov.uk
Attendance Lead	Asif Takolia Assistant Headteacher	02476 337734 Asif.takolia@coventry.gov.uk
Attendance Officer	Lisa Pitt Senior Administrator	02476 337734 Hesadmin@coventry.gov.uk
Named Governor for Attendance	James Gillum Chair of Governors	James.gillum@coventry.gov.uk

The Local Governing Board of the Hospital Education Service recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting the school to prioritise attendance, and working together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and helping school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

The Hospital Education Service will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers where absence becomes persistent.
- Intensify support through statutory children's services where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils with SEND and/or medical conditions and their parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure a joined-up approach with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals for children with SEND and medical conditions.
- Regularly monitor data for children with SEND and medical conditions, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Inform the pupil's social worker, where there is one, if there are any unexplained absences and if the child's name is to be deleted from the register.

The Hospital Education Service requests that parents:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
-

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher/tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

5. Recording Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department of Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

5.1 Leave of absence

The headteacher can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. All absences associated with a family holiday (without exceptional circumstances) during term time will be marked as unauthorised on the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority by the headteacher and be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

An application for leave of absence must be put in writing by the child's 'resident' parent/carer for the attention of the headteacher. Each application must be submitted by hand to the school's reception or by email to hesadmin@coventry.gov.uk. The application must state the reason for leave of absence and the length of leave being requested.

Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Failure to make an application for leave in advance can also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

A penalty notice request may be submitted to the Local Authority by the headteacher should:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not authorised by the headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the head teacher, the parent will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in a possible 'children missing from education' procedure being instigated.

5.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, the parent/carer must notify the Attendance Officer or Reception giving their permission for their child to leave the school site at the allocated time. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

5.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

The Hospital Education Service acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

5.4 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday,
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- Shopping trips
- Haircuts
- Special treats
- Looking after family members
- Holidays in term time

6. Our Procedures

6.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, require schools to take an attendance register at the beginning of the morning session and once during each afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

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

6.2 Late Arrival at School

At the Hospital Education Service all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 9.00am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at 9.00am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office to provide a reason for their late arrival. If their arrival is before 9.30am, it will be recorded as late - L code (late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.30am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (late after the

close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session. The afternoon session starts at 12.45pm (the afternoon register closes at 1.15pm)

6.3 Expected absence procedure for parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school, parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9.30am and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents/carers, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out.
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvements.
- Discuss the pupil at weekly SLT meeting and consider additional support strategies.
- Refer to Early Help and/or other external agencies to offer support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures.

6.4 Rewards and Interventions

At the Hospital Education Service there is a staged approach to supporting regular attendance. The three stages range from 'Prevention', at Stage 1, to 'Targeted Support' for pupils whose attendance falls to 80% or below:

Stage 1: Prevention

Criteria: Attendance is between 91% and 100%

Pupils who have attendance between 91% and 100% will receive support from school and other universal services they may be accessing i.e., GP

Pupils will receive a raffle ticket for each week where attendance is >90% (an additional ticket is added to the draw for pupils who achieve 100%) and this is added to the Termly Attendance Prize Draw.

Stage 2: Early Intervention

Criteria: Attendance is between 81% and 90%

Pupils who have attendance between 81% and 90% in any one week will be discussed at SLT level to identify barriers and consider whether child/family may benefit from support from other services outside of school and universal services at stage 1. Where ill-health is the primary barrier to attendance, supportive conversations will be held to offer support and reassurance to the pupil and their family.

Stage 3: Targeted Support

Criteria: Attendance is below 80%

Pupils who have attendance below 80% may require multi-agency support in addition to that provided at stage 2. A referral to Early Help may be suggested where additional support in the home would be beneficial. Where ill-health is the primary barrier to attendance, supportive conversations will be held with the pupil and their family to establish whether or not a modified timetable or a hybrid model of delivery may support them to access 'some' learning as opposed to no learning. This may take the form of a Phased Integration Plan where absence has been prolonged e.g. where a child has spent a period of time in hospital or a Tier 4 setting.

See **Appendix 1** for a more detailed breakdown of the Hospital Education Service's staged approach to supporting good attendance.

7. Tailored Support

At the Hospital Education Service, we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- regular communication with parents and carers when attendance becomes an issue – using the method best suited to individual parents/carers, be it text, email, phone, face to face meeting
- home visits
- weekly conversations with lead tutors/attendance lead
- assemblies to celebrate improvements
- weekly attendance rewards, postcards home and certificates
- referral to the service's Wellbeing Lead/SEMH Coach/SENCo
- consideration of a Phased Integration Plan (PIP) following an extended period of absence

- sign posting to other services, e.g. Early Help, Positive Directions, CASS, Dimensions

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. This may include a referral to Early Help or a Phased Integration Plan.

8. Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 40 sessions (20 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified, and there is not a significant medical reason for this absence, we will initiate appropriate, timely and supportive conversations with families as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

9. Phased Integration Plans (PIPs)/ Reduced timetables

All children of compulsory school age are legally entitled to receive a suitable full-time education and the school and local authority have a statutory duty to ensure that all children in the area receive such an education. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. For children who have experienced an extended period of non-attendance, a Phased Integration Plan (PIP) may be considered as a structured and supported plan for re-engagement to rebuild confidence and stamina for learning. A PIP will be agreed and implemented in partnership with the parent/carer, pupil, the school and other relevant professionals. It will be reviewed regularly with the aim of building towards a full timetable as quickly as possible.

We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision where applicable. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

For pupils who are single-registered with our service, we will work with the Attendance and Children Missing Education Team at the Local Authority to co-produce a reduced timetable for a pupil who is not yet able to access a full-time offer. This offer may consist of one or more Alternative Providers being commissioned to deliver targeted support for the child's individual needs.

10. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- special educational needs
- online safety
- behaviour and rewards

11. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, \(September 2022\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2023\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2018\)](#)

12. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 – PIP Initial Paperwork

Phased Integration Plan

This form is to be fully completed for any student placed on a Phased Integration Plan. Once completed, the form must be uploaded onto SharePoint in 'School Files>Attendance'.

Student Details:

Name		Year Group	
FSM		LAC	
SEN		CIN	
PP		CP	
YOS		Other Agencies	

Risk Assessments:

Medical Needs	
Safeguarding Concerns	
Home Environment Risks	
Onsite Working Risks	
Overall Recommendations	

Context

Has the student been on a PIP before?	Yes / No
If No, please support the Student and Parent/Carer through this process	
Overall Attendance	

Interventions

Yes / No to interventions currently in place and/or date of completion:

Home visits	
Lead Tutor Calls	
1-1 Mentoring	
Attendance Interventions	
Barriers to Learning Interventions	
Outdoor Learning	
<i>School specific interventions listed here</i>	
ACT Sessions	
GBO Sessions	
Wellbeing Check-Ins	
Other	

Why is the student being placed on Phased Integration Plan? (Please tick)

A pupil who needs focused interventions to support their access to learning	To support a risk assessment where the student is identified to be at risk to themselves or others	A medical reason, with sufficient medical evidence, to state that they are unfit for <u>25</u> hours of education	A pupil who has experienced a period of extended non-attendance
Further information:			

Student Targets

1	
2	
3	

Timetable (insert individual timetable in below *)

Staff Name:

Date Completed:

**include time, location and curriculum accessed*

Responsibilities of HES:	The Hospital Education Service will follow HES policy processes and procedures to ensure that all phased integration plans are reviewed regularly, communicated with parents/carers and key staff. We will maintain support for students on a phased integration plan and provide appropriate work to be completed for independent study where appropriate.
Responsibilities of Parent / Carers and Students:	Parents/Carers, please note that you are signing to confirm that you understand that you have a duty to ensure that your child is not present in a public place unaccompanied by you (or a family member/allocated professional) during school hours whilst on a Phased Integration Plan without reasonable justification. It is the parent's/carer's responsibility for the safeguarding of a student during the times that they are not timetabled at an educational provision.

We agree to the plan that has been made and understand our responsibilities:

Hospital Education Service Signed: Date:

Parent/Carer Signed: Date:

Student Signed: Date:
 |.....

Communication

Has this timetable been communicated to parent/carer?	Yes / No
Method of contact (e.g. face-to-face, phone, email, etc.)	
Date:	
Staff Name:	