Beech Green Primary School



Respect Achieve Belong

School Attendance Policy

(Adapted from the GCC Skeleton Attendance Policy)

Aims and objectives

At Beech Green Primary School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that 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, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers. pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence, we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time

- ➤ Call the school Careline or send a message via ParentMail to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return;
 - Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child;
 - Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day;
 - Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help their child overcome any barriers to attendance.

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time

The Governing Body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies;
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most;
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance;
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy;
- Helen Parkinson is the Governor responsible for attendance and will raise this as a standing item in Full Governing Body meetings.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school;
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies;
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary;

The Senior Attendance Champion (Hayley Earl – Deputy Headteacher hayleyearl@beechgreen.gloucs.sch.uk) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school;
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff;
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school;
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents;
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families;
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding Attendance Improvement Meetings with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school attendance officer (Emma Price admin @beechgreen.gloucs.sch.uk)

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (or other member of staff authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the
 information to the school office, ensuring that registers are closed by 9.15 and passing on
 any messages to the school office when they are unsure which register code to use;
- Where appropriate, contacting parents to identify possible barriers to attendance, under advisement from the Senior Attendance Champion.

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system;
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance;
- Promoting the need for high attendance when contacted by parents;
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents via CPOMS, and categorising these records as "attendance" to enable accurate monitoring;
- Scheduling Attendance Improvement Meetings when requested by the Senior Attendance Champions.

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

 Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:05am but no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 8:45am *or as soon as* practically possible by calling the school.

Preferred methods are to leave a message on the Beech Green Careline by calling 01452 722967 or by sending a message via ParentMail.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

If a child is persistently late, we will aim to work with parents to help to remove the barriers to punctuality. However, when necessary, parents will be asked to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting. Following two review cycles (of 4 school weeks each), failure to improve punctuality will result in Gloucestershire County Council issuing a Notice to Improve (NtI) on behalf of the school, and subsequently issuing a Penalty Notice.

Planned absence

 Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should email the school office <u>admin@beechgreen.gloucs.sch</u> and their child's class teacher (email addresses are available at https://www.beechgreenprimary.co.uk/staff) to advise them of the date, time and nature of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they
consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the

headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for:

 Holidays during term time are not a right, and as such, will be treated as unauthorised absences. Unless there are exceptional circumstances (see below), requests for holidays during term time will incur Penalty Notices and therefore parents will be subject to fines (see Legal Action below)

Exceptional Circumstances

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

Guiding principles

Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. The head teacher will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.

If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event, for example:

- holidays or other travel, including as a result of parental work commitments, are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances';
- leave which is taken because of the availability of cheaper fares or other costs are not regarded as exceptional circumstances;
- claims of illness as a reason for a delayed return, particularly after normal school holidays
 will not be considered unless accompanied by travel tickets dated before the school opens
 or other agreed dates. Medical documentation from abroad will not normally be accepted
 unless accompanied by travel documents indicating travel dates prior to school reopening.

Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but for the funeral service and travelling time only, not for extended leave. Absence will only be authorised if the head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.

Absences to attend parents' own wedding may be exceptional if the head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations, the head teacher may use discretion in granting leave, and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the child's overall welfare.

Absences for important religious observances are often considered, but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.

The needs of service personnel families will be considered if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.

Reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities will be made and may result in a leave being granted as an exceptional circumstance.

Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis, including where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

When making absence-related decisions, the head teacher will consider:

- a pupil's record of attendance for the current and previous academic years;
- time of absence being taken in the school year. If the request is made to extend the beginning or end of a school holiday period, it is unlikely to be considered exceptional.

The head teacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised.

The following factors may also help the head teacher to reach a decision:

- number of school days being missed;
- any exceptional term-time leave requested and/or taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose;
- whether alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent to limit the time away from school;
- impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family, for example, family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN;
- the potential impact that the absence will have on the child;
- whether the absence falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

How to tell us about exceptional circumstances:

A parent should complete an application form for term-time leave in good time. The parent with whom the pupil normally resides must make the application.

Leave may only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and permission given.

Tickets and/or other travel arrangements should not be booked prior to discussion with and agreement of the school.

Parents should not confuse telling the school with having permission.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement, and the child is then absent from school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences are an offence and can be liable to legal action or a fixed penalty fine.

Extended absences may put your child's school place at risk.

In the event of an emergency when you must take leave urgently, taking children, then you should inform the school or have the school informed immediately. Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively and evidence other than your word may be asked for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible here. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include: (You can add in the school's procedures in relation to notifying the school in line with guidance)

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (see definition above) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- Religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

Procedures following unexplained absence – see Appendix 1

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit or contact the police or Social Care;
- If the child has siblings in other schools, we will contact the school to find out if the sibling is absent and whether any contact has been made by the parent/carer;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session;
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to
 ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the
 school will again carry out home visits or engage other agencies, such as Social Care or
 Early Help.

Strategies for promoting attendance

At Beech Green Primary School, we recognise that good attendance stems from children wanting to be in school. All staff will celebrate good attendance with the children, greeting all children positively and recognising how good it is to see them in school. Attendance will be celebrated at a whole school level through assemblies, an attendance display in the main entrance and a standing item in the newsletter. We also recognise that public celebration of high attendance at an individual level can be demoralising for some who have been unwell, or whose parents do not support their attendance, and so this will be avoided.

An holistic view of our children is essential in encouraging good attendance, so Unique Pupil Information Records will support transition, so staff can build relationships quickly with their new classes. These will also help us to devise our extra-curricular club offer, so that we can appeal to as many children as possible.

Where attendance (or punctuality) does become a concern, the school will work closely with the parents to help to overcome barriers. This could be through making adaptations for a child coming in to school, engaging other agencies or internal support or signposting families towards childcare arrangements (for example, WildWoods Breakfast Club).

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Identify before the start of each academic year those children whose attendance has
 previously been a concern, and contact them before the start of the new academic year to
 ask what support they feel they might need;
- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels by sending a letter home at the end of terms 1-6 (Appendix 2);
- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, during SLT meetings, across the school and at an individual pupil level;
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern:

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families;
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns;
- Provide regular attendance reports to the SLT about all pupils and, as appropriate, to class teachers, the SENCo, Therapeutic Mentor and Learning Mentor to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. This information will also form part of the termly Pupil Review Meetings;
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence – Appendix 3

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

• Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority)
 considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance
 and engagement at school;
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance;
- Liaise with others working with the family, such as the Therapeutic Mentor, Learning Mentor and SENCO to ensure that emotional and/or learning needs are not preventing the child from coming in to school;
- Carry out Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs) at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6 with those families who have failed to improve attendance, setting realistic targets which need to be met over a period of 4 weeks.
- Review AIMs with parents/carers and set new targets where appropriate, or move to Ntls.
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County
 Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services,
 Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the
 Magistrates Court

Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct Attendance - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

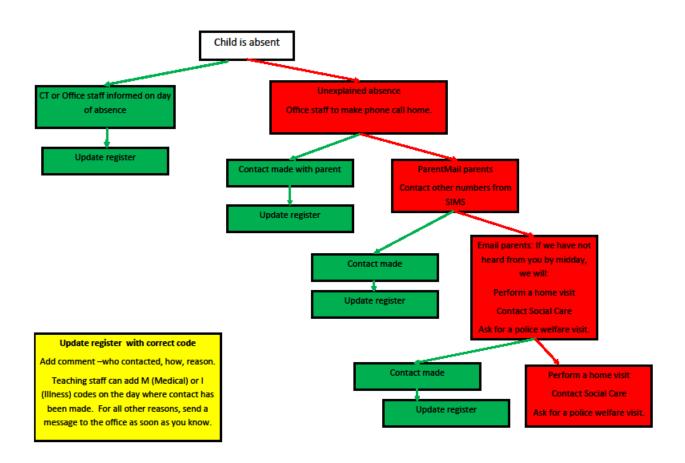
- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

All other relevant policies can be accessed here.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, reviewed annually by Hayley Earl, Senior Attendance Champion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Appendix 1 - Procedures for unexplained absence





Beech Green

Beech Green Primary School

Respect Achieve Belong

St. James', Quedgeley, Gloucester. GL2 4WD

Tel: 01452 722363

E-mail: admin@beechgreen.gloucs.sch.uk Website: www.beechgreenprimary.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Poulson

Dear families,

At Beech Green we believe good attendance and punctuality is vital to ensure our pupils are able to access all the opportunities available to them. To make it easier for us and you to keep a check on your child's attendance, we are introducing a new attendance monitoring system. The data will be split into three easy to read bands:

97% and above = GREEN BAND 90.1 - 96.9% = AMBER BAND 90% and below = RED BAND

Attendance is monitored weekly. If we have any concerns, you will receive a phone call from a member of staff to see if we can offer any support. At the end of each term, you will receive a letter telling you which band your child's attendance falls into. The letter will also tell you if we need to arrange to see you for an Attendance Improvement Meeting, where we will work with you to attempt to remove any barriers which are preventing good attendance.

It is also important to ensure your child is arriving on time to school each day. Arriving late can be stressful for your child, means that vital learning is missed, causes disruption to the whole class, and could result in a penalty notice request for unauthorised absence to the local Authority.

Pupils must arrive in school and be ready to learn by 8.45m on each school day. Morning registration is at 8:50am and remains open for 15 minutes. A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (before 9.05am) will be marked as late, using code L. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (after 9.05am) will be marked as absent, using code U.

If your child is late to school regularly, it may seem like it is only 5 or 10 minutes, but over the course of the school year it can really add up to a lot of school time missed. At the same time as we send home the attendance monitoring letters, we will also be looking at your child's punctuality and contacting you if we have concerns, with the aim to support you and work out together how your child's attendance and punctuality could be improved.

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Beech Green

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Respect Achieve Belong

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Tel: 01452 722363

Careline Answerphone: 01452 722697

E-mail: <u>admin@beechgreen.gloucs.sch.uk</u> Website: <u>www.beechgreenprimary.co.uk</u>

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Poulson

Dear families,

CONGRATULATIONS!

It is widely recognised that the educational outcomes and future life chance of children can be significantly impacted upon by periods of absence. Therefore at Beech Green we believe that achieving outstanding levels of attendance is the key to each and every pupil fulfilling their potential.

To enable us to monitor attendance across the school, we use a banding system:

97% and above = GREEN BAND

90.1 - 96.9% = AMBER BAND

90% and below = RED BAND

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that your child is currently in our GREEN BAND.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to yourself and your child for this outstanding achievement.

Yours sincerely

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Julie Poulson

Headteacher



Beech Green Primary School

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90.1 - 96.9% = AMBER BAND

90% and below = RED BAND

Your child is currently in our AMBER BAND.

We are monitoring your child's attendance closely and hope that a significant improvement is made by the end of next term, to prevent further action by us or the local authority.

We appreciate that there may be occasions when a pupil's attendance is affected due to illness or exceptional circumstances; support and advice will always be available from the school.

Thank you for your support in improving your child's attendance. This will help ensure that they have the greatest opportunity to achieve their personal best.

Yours sincerely

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Julie Poulson Headteacher

Aprimary school

Beech Green Primary School

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97% and above = GREEN BAND

90.1 - 96.9% = AMBER BAND

90% and below = RED BAND

Your child is currently in our RED BAND.

We are monitoring your child's attendance closely and if a significant improvement is not made in the coming term, you could be at risk of a penalty notice from the local authority. We appreciate that there may be occasions when a pupil's attendance is affected due to illness or exceptional circumstances, support and advice will always be available from the school.

Thank you for your support in improving your child's attendance. This will help ensure that they have the greatest opportunity to achieve their personal best.

Yours sincerely

Julie Poulson

Headteacher

Beech Green

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97% and above = GREEN BAND

90.1 - 96.9% = AMBER BAND

90% and below = RED BAND

Your child is currently in our RED BAND.

This means we will need to arrange for you to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) in school as soon as possible. The school office will be in touch shortly to arrange a convenient time. The objective of this meeting is to explore possible reasons for persistent absence and to work together to break down any barriers preventing good attendance, so your presence is imperative.

Thank you in anticipation of your support in improving your child's attendance. This will help ensure that they have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely

Julie Poulson

Headteacher

Appendix 3 – procedures for reducing persistent or severe absence

Attendance Monitoring

Whole School

Summer 2024 – parents to be informed of penalty notice for holidays during term time.

Parents to be informed of attendance procedures on INSET day in September 2024

INSET in September to raise the profile of attendance – it is everyone's responsibility "Attendance Matters" display in entrance hall

Classroom ethos – "it's nice to see you, I'm so pleased you're here, we missed you, what can I do to help you to want to come to school?"

Standing feature in newsletter – attendance for the fortnight

Teaching staff to make reference to attendance regularly and the importance of being in school all the time (illness permitting)

Class attendance (this week/last week) in class to promote discussion

Increased use of social media to promote the school and raise parental engagement (consent needs to be gained for photos) – teaching staff to notify Kelly Mulrain of events so that she can come and take photos to share.

Weekly

Emma download attendance data for all children

Emma and SLT – monitor attendance data in SLT meeting and discuss individuals whose attendance is a concern

Concern children – Dawn/Claire/CTs (as appropriate) to contact parents to discuss barriers to attending/punctuality and what we can do to help – offer of support – WildWoods, referrals to other agencies - discuss in pupil review meetings

Continue to monitor (weekly) and contact as appropriate

Terms 1-6

All children to receive a letter to inform of their attendance band

Green – celebrate

Amber – need to see an improvement, we will continue to work with you to support you and family

Red - need to see an improvement, we will continue to work with you to support you and family

Terms 2, 4 and 6

Attendance Improvement Meetings for Amber/Red with no sign of improvement with Hayley/Julie to formalise support

Voice of the Child to be completed by year group staff before the meeting takes place.

AIM review 1 after 4 weeks:

Target met - close and monitor

Target not met – set new targets and arrange AIM review 2 for 4 weeks

AIM review 2 after 4 weeks:

Target met – continue target, continue to support, arrange AIM review 3 for 4 weeks.

Target not met - refer to Education Inclusion Service, continue to monitor and support, GCC issue Notice to Improve. Arrange AIM review 3 for 4 weeks (or sooner if deemed appropriate)

AIM review 3 after 4 weeks:

Target met – close and continue to monitor (arrange informal meetings where appropriate)

Target not met - Penalty Notices issued