

# CAREW ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY 2024-2025

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# Attendance Policy

## INTRODUCTION

Carew Academy through the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. We recognise the importance of regular attendance in maximising the benefit of any educational opportunity. Encouraging and supporting excellent attendance is a crucial part of supporting our pupils and students to learn effectively.

This policy is written with reference to DfE guidance including 'School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities', 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Children Missing Education'.

## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Carew Academy and OHCAT stakeholders including pupils/students and parents/carers understand the importance of regular attendance at school and their roles and responsibilities regarding attendance. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between school absence and overall achievement. Poor attendance also affects young people's ability to make and sustain friendships and can interrupt the routine of school life, making it hard to settle when they do attend.

Carew Academy aims to raise the achievement of all its students and to ensure that it meets the following aims:

- To encourage learners to adopt healthy lifestyles
- To ensure learners feel safe and adopt safe practices
- To ensure learners enjoy their education
- To encourage learners to make a positive contribution to the community
- To aid learners to prepare for their future economic wellbeing.

Carew Academy recognises that attendance is a critical factor in student success. It therefore aims to achieve significantly improved attendance levels and to increase the number of students with greater than 95% attendance each year, whilst recognising that the attendance of SEND students is complex and multifaceted.

This policy takes into account the following Government documents:

Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107121/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance.pdf)

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance, Sept 2022

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107121/summary-table-of-responsibilities-for-school-attendance.pdf)

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To improve the overall attendance of students at Carew Academy
- To create an environment in which students look forward to attending school and lessons
- To make attendance a priority for students, parents, staff and governors
- To create a framework which defines roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To create a rigorous system for monitoring and analysing attendance across Carew Academy
- To provide support and advice to parents
- To recognise the needs of individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

To ensure that attendance data is accurate and regularly generated so that:

- Students can be praised/rewarded for their attendance
- Parents/carers can be quickly informed of any attendance and punctuality issues
- Individual students and groups can be monitored
- Targets for individual students, groups of students and Carew Academy can be set and regularly reviewed

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Carew Academy's Attendance Officer is Mrs Abigail Mitchell.

The Academy Family support worker is Mrs Abbe Alete.

The Phase Lead is responsible for the Attendance & Punctuality of their year groups.

### **The Governing Body will:**

- Meet regularly and review attendance figures and monitor progress against national SEND targets
- Ensure implementation of this policy

**The Principal takes overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy by:**

- Developing and monitoring policies that create an environment in which all students feel valued and safe and in which they are encouraged and able to achieve success
- Meeting with the governing body and reporting on attendance figures
- Giving attendance a high profile with students, staff and parents/carers
- Identifying clear roles and responsibilities and ensuring that staff have the time and resources to fulfil them
- Ensuring that there is sufficient funding to support reward systems

**The Assistant Principals, as Phase leads will:**

- Ensure that attendance has a high profile within their year groups.
- Ensure that attendance and punctuality procedures are followed across their year groups
- Monitor for internal truancy. Look for patterns of absence and consider the impact of the curriculum upon attendance alongside other causes
- Ensure that students on long term absence/exclusion access the curriculum and are supported on their return
- Liaise fortnightly with the Attendance Officer, Family Support worker, tutors and Student Support to ensure procedures are being followed for students with continued low attendance
- Assist the attendance officer in meeting with parents and students within their year whose attendance is low and/or below 80%.
- Ensure that attendance is regularly discussed in Year Group Assemblies and that students with high levels of and/or improved attendance are praised and rewarded regularly
- Analyse the attendance data to ensure that students with low attendance are detected early and appropriate action is taken.
- Be aware of Academy priorities with regard to attendance, persistent absence and punctuality, and plan interventions to secure improvements for targeted groups
- Ensure that tutors make contact with families and record and pass on information to relevant staff.
- Direct tutors to make subsequent contact for students with repeated absences.
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance

**The Attendance Officer will:**

- Monitor registers daily
- Organise office staff to ensure 1st day contact with parent/carers of students with unexplained absence
- Mark the student register with the appropriate code and forward information as necessary
- Inform the DSL of any vulnerable student absence by 9.30am
- Liaise with Phase Leads on a fortnightly basis
- Send appropriate letters to parent/carers of students to update them on the child's attendance
- Liaise with the Family Support Worker and Phase Leads with regard to making home visits
- Refer the Penalty Notices process to the EWO who will consult with the London Borough of Sutton
- Monitor the attendance register, alerting the relevant staff when concerns arise.
- Provide fortnightly attendance data to Phase Leads and tutors
- Provide data to the governing body and external agencies, as required for the census etc.

**Form Tutors will:**

- Support Carew Academy in giving attendance a high profile
- Ensure that the register is taken daily at the correct time, using the correct codes
- Liaise closely with their Phase Leads and the Attendance Officer with regards to attendance issues
- Ensure that students who have been absent from Carew are made to feel welcome on their return.
- Ensure that students who have been absent for a length of time for whatever reason have support to catch up with missed work
- Use data provided to comment weekly on attendance levels both as a group and on an individual basis, ensuring that students with high levels of attendance and improved attendance are appropriately praised
- Contact parents with concerns regarding attendance and the impact on attainment, as directed by their Phase Lead
- Ensure that issues of bullying, difficulties with work/peers/travel etc. are dealt with effectively and that relevant staff are informed
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance

**Teachers will:**

- Give attendance a high profile by praising students with high attendance and relating this to attainment
- Ensure that the register is taken each lesson at the correct time, using the correct codes
- Set work for students who are absent for a long period
- Ensure that systems are in place so that work missed can be easily made up
- Ensure that the classroom continues to be a safe environment where plans are made to meet individual student needs and lessons continue to be as relevant and stimulating as possible
- Refer concerns and action taken to relevant staff
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance

**PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 18 year olds) with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan attend an establishment authorised by their Local Authority (LA). This includes a legal obligation to ensure children attend regularly and on time. Ensuring regular attendance is essential; permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by law and may result in prosecution.

Carew Academy and OHCAT will always seek to work collaboratively with families in order to support regular attendance.

## **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

An absence is classed as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification or a request from a parent/carer, e.g. if a child has been unwell. Evidence may be required in order to authorise an absence, e.g. hospital appointment letter. There may be other occasions where the school will authorise an absence e.g. family wedding/funeral; any requests of this type must be made in writing to the Principal.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential and for which no authorisation has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority becoming involved. Support will be offered initially but if unauthorised absences continue, the LA has the right to apply a fine or legal proceedings.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school to go shopping, to care for a sibling, for a family birthday.
- Refusal by the student to attend an allocated session.
- Absences that have never been explained.
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark.
- Illness without medical evidence.
- Holidays in term-time.

If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents/carers must communicate this as soon as possible to their school's Senior Leadership Team in order that support strategies can be put in place.

- Parents/carers can support their child's attendance by:
- Ensuring regular and early bed times, appropriate to the age of the child.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly.
- Retaining open and honest communication with the school.
- Having a positive attitude towards school attendance.

## **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

When a pupil/student is unwell, parents/carers should contact the school before morning registration on the first day of absence. A call must be made for each day of absence. When a pupil/student is absent due to illness or a medical appointment, evidence may be requested e.g. appointment card, letter, prescription, prescribed medication packs or boxes with the pupil's/student's name printed on them.

Should school staff become concerned about the amount of school missed due to illness, information may be shared with external agencies such as social services (see 'Safeguarding' below).

Parents/carers should ensure that every effort is made to make or arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

Carew Academy recognises that pupils'/students' additional needs may include significant health concerns and involve regular or unexpected medical support e.g. admission to hospital or attendance at specialist clinics. We will always seek to work with our pupils/students and their families to support good attendance and, where this is not possible, to support continued learning through initiatives such as home learning programmes.

## **HOLIDAYS**

Absence during term time can seriously disrupt pupils'/students' continuity of learning. Parents/carers should avoid booking family holidays in term time. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils/students from school for a holiday and must apply in writing for permission in advance. Holidays in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and this must be started with a request in writing to the Principal Mr J Kearns.

## **ABSENCE AND EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE POLICY**

At Carew Academy we believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.
2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available from the school office) Requests cannot be made orally.
3. This must include the reason why parents/carers feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. An emailed letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to the applying parent/carer within 7 days.



## **PUNCTUALITY**

Carew Academy expects all pupils and students to arrive on time for their scheduled provision. Late arrival is disruptive and can lead to pupils/students missing out on important work and information.

At Carew Academy, the students' day start with Tutor time between 8:45-9am and students are expected to be in school in preparation for this start time. Afternoon register takes place during our end of day tutor time between 3 and 3:10pm. Before students leave at 3:10pm.

Persistent lateness may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

Carew Academy has a duty to effectively safeguard all pupils and students attending its academies. Supporting regular attendance is part of this safeguarding duty. Poor attendance and unexplained absence can indicate a possible safeguarding concern including (but not limited to) physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, substance misuse or peer on peer abuse.

Carew Academy staff will always seek to work with families to minimise absence and ensure clear communication regarding any absence that might occur. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, these will be managed in accordance with Carew and OHCAT's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

## **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION**

Safeguards in place to prevent children missing education at OHCAT Academies include:

- Carew Academy must hold a minimum of three emergency contact numbers for each pupil/student, unless there is a genuine reason why this is not possible e.g. parent fleeing domestic violence.
- Any child going missing from education will always get immediate attention from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff are trained to be alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- When a pupil/student is absent without notification, the attendance administrator will record the absence in the register and the school will endeavour to contact the parents/carers and other emergency contacts in order to determine the reason for the absence. This will happen for every day of non-attendance where no call has been received informing the school of absence and reasons why.
- Any unexplained absence of a pupil/student with a Child Protection Plan will be reported to the pupil/student's social worker within one day.

- Where a pupil/student does not present for school as expected, the school will endeavour to ascertain that pupil/student's whereabouts and wellbeing without delay, using all available parent/carer and secondary/emergency contact details. Where no contact can be made with either the pupil/student or any named emergency contacts, a member of school staff should generally attend the pupil/student's home. If the pupil/student or a named contact still cannot be contacted, the school must report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where deemed necessary, the police. However, it is acknowledged that in some exceptional, local circumstances, such action may be counter-productive and it is for the school to risk assess such a scenario on the first day. Regardless of this, if a pupil/student is absent for a second consecutive day without notification from a named contact, the school must report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where necessary, the police.
- Staff at school will attempt to get eyes on any student missing for over 10 school days where no professionals have had contact and parents have not supplied medical evidence for their absence but have been in contact with school
- Staff will always report to the Local Authority the name of any child who has been newly registered to attend the school but does not arrive on the expected day.
- Staff will always report to the Education Welfare Service the continued absence of a child known or thought to have been taken overseas if the child does not return to school on the expected return date.
- Carew Academy maintains accurate attendance and admissions registers (all pupils/students are on both), in line with statutory requirements. This includes paying careful attention to off-rolling pupils/students in association with the Local Authority and knowing, and recording, pupil/student destinations consistently on the admissions register. Where a pupil/student destination is unknown, and unable to be established after significant follow-up, the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service and/or Social Care Services will be informed.
- Pupils/students will not be deleted from the admissions register. Staff will alert the child's Local Authority immediately if:
  - o the pupil/student has been taken out of school by their parents/carers and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
  - o the pupil/student has ceased to attend school
  - o the pupil/student has been certified as medically unfit to attend school or is in custody.

Keeping Local Authorities up to date is crucial so that they can check if children of compulsory school age are missing education, and might therefore be in danger of not receiving an education and be at risk of abuse or neglect.

When students are designated as *Children Missing Education* and have exceeded 10 days with no contact, Carew Academy follows Sutton LA's Good Practice Guidance for Identifying and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education (CME). In line with these processes and following the statutory guidance set out in DFE 2016 we are in

regular contact with the LA and provide them with information on changes to the roll as required. No child is removed from the school roll without first notifying the local authority and receiving their approval. Information on transferring files is contained within the Safeguarding and CP policy. In line with practices agreed with the LA and the guidance first set out in DFE-00261-2016 'Children Missing Education' (September 2016), the Attendance Officer will inform the Attendance Service at Sutton LSCP of any student who has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days to report the student as missing from education. In addition, the attendance officer will inform the Academy's Designated Safeguard Lead. The DSL will then make an assessment of the child's vulnerability and, where appropriate, a CFCS referral to social care for that child. A Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting will be arranged by the DSL, if appropriate, in case of continued non-attendance. Appropriate staff will be informed of the outcome of the meeting by email from the Attendance Officer.

On the rare occasions that Carew Academy pupils/students are excluded for a fixed term, the school will confirm this in writing to both the family (and the placing Local Authority where this exclusion exceeds five days). While the school will provide the pupil/student with work to complete during their external exclusion (and mark it), OHCAT is not responsible for the pupil/student's safety and welfare during their time at home.

## **PENALTY NOTICES**

Continuous absences will affect a student's overall attendance. When attendance falls below 85% (with 50% or more of the absences being recorded as unauthorised for any 6-week period, our procedures for persistent absence (see below) will be followed. This could result in parent(s)/carer(s) being issued with a Penalty Notice and further legal action.

## **UNEXPLAINED CONTINUOUS ABSENCE**

### **1st Day of Absence**

All students not seen at registration should be marked as an unexplained (N) absence, unless tutors have prior knowledge and proof of the reason for the absence – which should be advised to the Attendance Officer immediately.

The administration team guided by the Attendance Officer will phone home on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received.

An absence letter will be sent via Arbor parent portal on each day of absence if reason for absence is not provided and there is no contact from the family.

### **3rd Day of Continuous Absence**

The attendance officer will phone home to follow up on the absence and a communication will be sent via Arbor's parent portal, requesting explanation for the absence. If **no contact** with family is made to obtain a reason for absence on the third day of absence, the school will call all contacts listed on child's profile to raise concern and obtain information of student whereabouts. The Family Support Worker and/or EWO or a nominated member of staff will make a home visit.

A re-integration plan will be made. The parent/carer will be offered additional support as appropriate and/or requested. The seriousness of the situation will be stressed including notification of the possibility of a penalty notice. Should there be no-one at home or no response, a letter will be hand delivered noting the visit outlining the possible next steps as above and requesting urgent contact with Carew Academy.

### **5th Day of Continuous Absence**

If no contact with the family has been made for 5 consecutive days and no information was obtained following home visit(s) the school will refer to the student to Sutton Children's Services.

### **10th Day of Continuous Absence**

If the student has been absent for 10 consecutive days and no update provided to school in all the steps above the child will be referred to 'Children Missing in Education' to Sutton Local Authority. No child is removed from the school roll without first notifying the local authority and receiving their approval. For children where there are concerns regarding wellbeing or welfare, or for children who are subject to any safeguarding plan, we may conduct a home visit at any time to ensure that the child remains safe.

### **INTERMITTENT ABSENCE**

It is also recognised by Carew Academy that students will on occasions be ill but expects students to achieve 95% attendance for the year. We understand some of our students may be undergoing periods of medical ill health due to aspects of their SEND. When there are periods of sustained illness it is expected that these will be supported through submission of medical evidence. For example, Operations and recovery plans through GOSH etc.

For this reason, a number of measures are taken to minimise intermittent, short-term absences.

- Phone calls are made daily to inform parents of their child's absence and request information to support it
- The Arbor parent portal will show current levels of attendance of their child at all times
- End of term reports to contain attendance percentage to update parents and carers on their child's attendance record
- Rewards for students with 100% attendance and tutor groups with the best attendance
- Bespoke programmes led by the Phase Leads, Student Support and our Family Support worker to tackle persistent issues with individuals and groups

Letters will be sent out to the parents of all students where attendance has been identified as below Carew Academy's target. In occasional circumstances it may be deemed appropriate to not send out the letters outlined above although we expect the instances in which this to be the case to be minimal. Throughout this process it is possible that a student may be identified as being persistently absent in which case the process below will be followed.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.' (Education Act 1996). From September 2015, Persistent absence has been defined by the Department for Education as all attendance falling below 90%.

Where a student has intermittent attendance and the Phase Lead deems it necessary, the Continuous Absence process will be followed for each day the student is absent. The parent/carer will be sent a Warning Letter stating the reason for the warning being issued. The student's attendance will be monitored for a six-week period (minimum of 60 school sessions)

If no sustained improvement has been made the details will be forwarded to the Attendance Service at Sutton Local Authority (LA) who will make arrangements for a Penalty Notice to be issued. If there has been an improvement, the parent/carer will be informed. Penalty Notices issued by London Borough of Sutton will be sent to each parent/carer of student/s at Carew Academy where pupils' attendance meets the criteria for the issuing of a Penalty Notice warning.

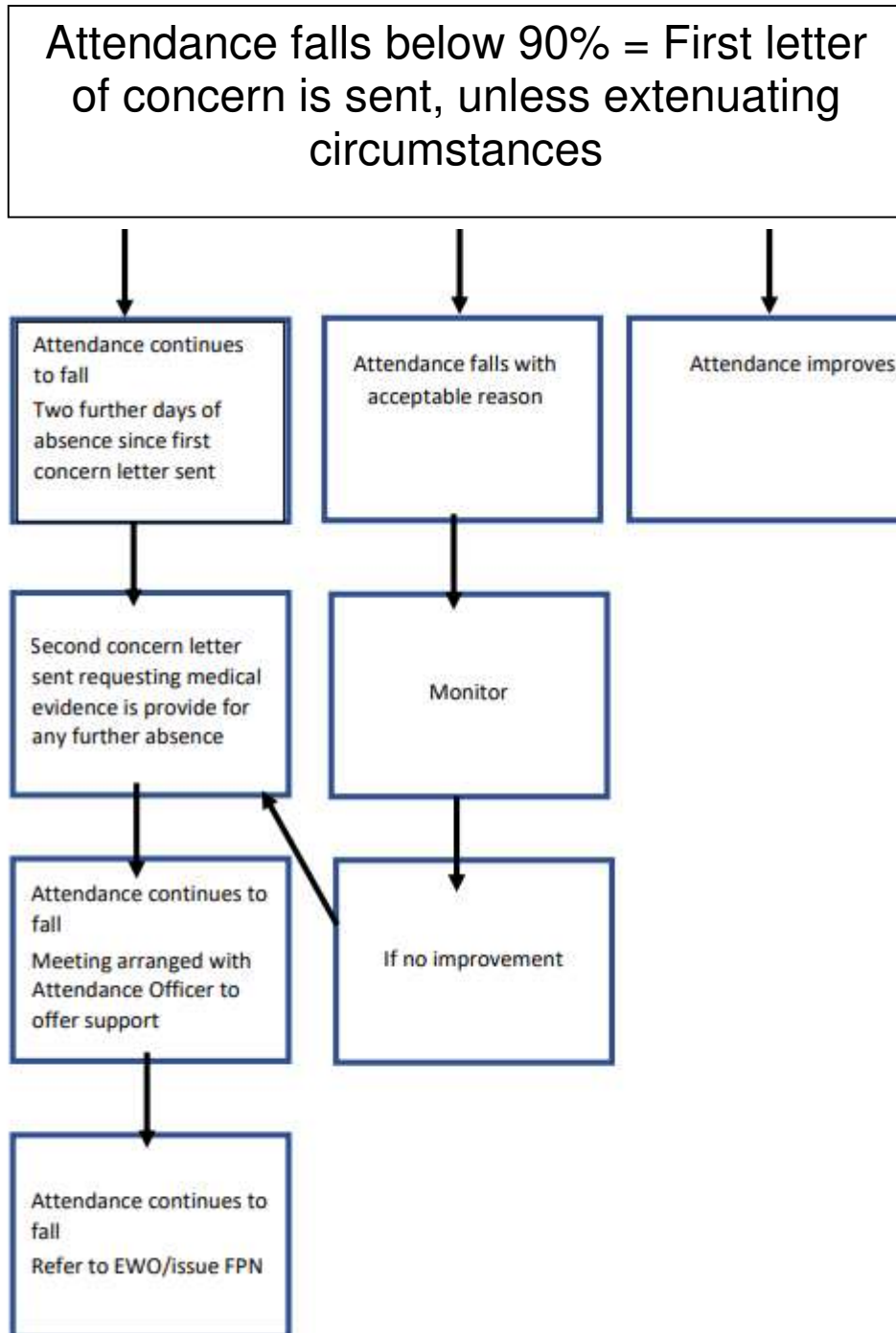
The parent/carer will be sent a Warning Letter stating the reason for the warning being issued. The student's attendance and punctuality will be monitored for a period of between six and twelve weeks. If insufficient improvement has been made the details will be forwarded to the Senior Education Welfare Officer at Sutton Local Authority (LA) who will make arrangements for the Penalty Notice to be issued.

If there has been sufficient improvement, the parent/carer will be informed. All Academy staff must enter each contact made with the parent/carer of the student as a record on Arbor communications log. This record will then be used as part of the evidence provided to Sutton LA in the event of a Penalty Notice being issued. Staff must continue to follow the Continuous Absence and Requests for Leave of Absence procedures in the event of a Warning Letter being sent to a parent/carer.

## **SEVERE ABSENCE**

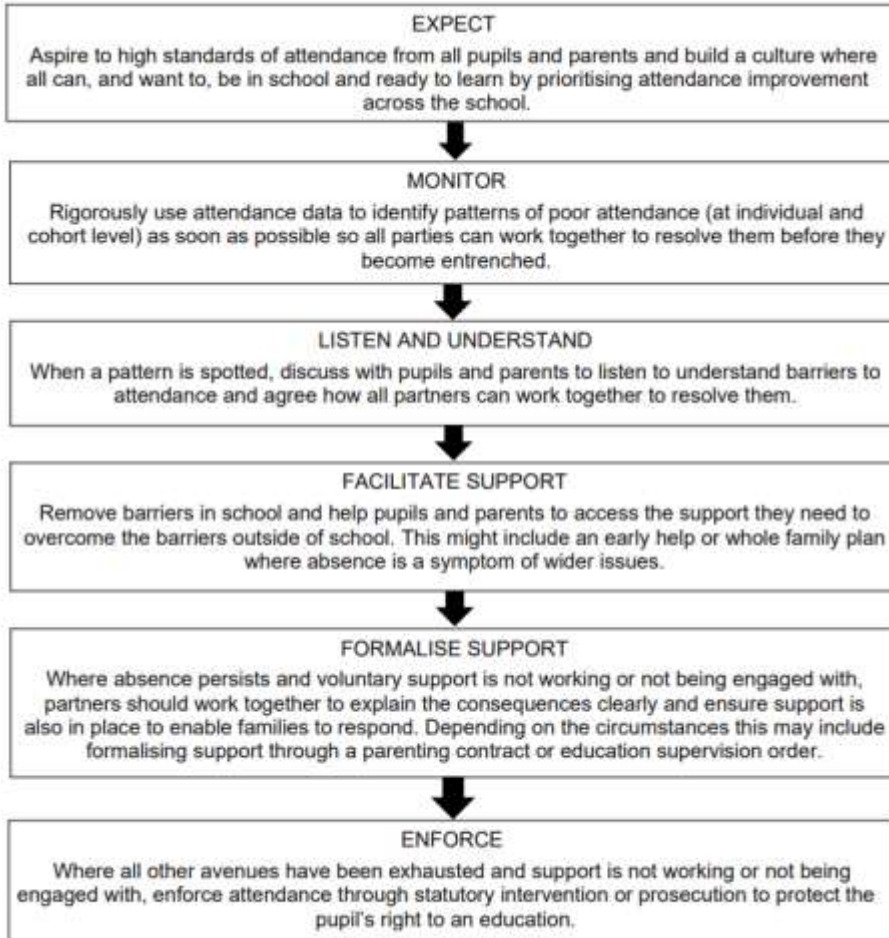
Severe absence is classified as those students missing 50% or more of school (Working together to improve attendance, 2022). A concerted effort will be made by all partners to prioritise support for these students in order to improve their attendance. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities and other appropriate education support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reason continues, it is likely to constitute neglect and be referred to Sutton's social care.

## RESPONSE TO ATTENDANCE CONCERN



## WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

In order to improve attendance, we aim to work with external partners and families in order to treat the root cause of poor attendance. We will analyse attendance data and implement the following:



## RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Anti-Radicalisation Policy

Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Exclusions Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy (Academies)

Remote Education Policy

Supporting Pupils in School with Medical Conditions Policy

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		



<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day