



Walkwood
Church of England  Middle School

School Attendance Policy

2025 – 2026

Attendance Policy (Part A)

School Procedures (Part B)

Parts A and B of this policy have been reviewed and updated by Gemma Mckenna, Pastoral Coordinator and Simon West, Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Lead.

It will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority and/or DfE is updated. It will be reviewed annually as a minimum by Headteacher representatives.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the school's Board of Trustees.

Part B reflects the individual school procedures.

Reviewed and Ratified by the Trust Board:

Next Review Date: Spring Term 2027

Ratified by Local Governing Body: 5 March 2026



Our Vision:

In our inclusive community,
Each valued individual is taught self-belief
We are resilient and optimistic,
Caring for ourselves and our peers.
We are Children of God, with hope,
Awe and wonder in our hearts.

Our Bible verse:

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ forgave you. *Ephesians 4:32*

Respect - Believe - Succeed

Our Values

Respect – Friendship - Honesty - Kindness

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Part A – Attendance Policy

1. Aims

Walkwood Church of England Middle School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Part A of this policy sets out the school's position on attendance. Part B details the key personnel and procedures for Walkwood.

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

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE guidance: [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 including:

- 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations](#)

[2013](#) It also refers to:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Securing good levels of attendance at school is everyone's shared responsibility.

3.1 Trustees:

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Monitoring, reviewing and challenging the school attendance data
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Making requests to the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Ensuring home visits take place according to the most relevant DfE guidance

3.3 The designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The name and contact details for the designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is provided in Part 2, along with other key attendance personnel for this specific school.

3.4 Key attendance personnel: (these may be administrative staff or Senior Leaders- please see Part B)

Key attendance personnel are responsible for:

- 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with the Local Authority and other agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to request that the Local Authority issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Teaching Staff

All Teaching Staff are responsible for recording attendance accurately daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day. In addition, they will proactively promote good attendance, supporting the attendance lead in building positive relationships, and contribute to actions which will improve attendance for all pupils.

3.6 School Administrative Staff

School administrative staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the relevant member of teaching, pastoral or support staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers must:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence as soon as practicable on the day of the absence, providing details regarding the reason(s) for absence and advise when they expect that their child will return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school and lessons every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on this register. This includes all children who are on roll but attending elsewhere or attending an Alternative Provision placement.

The school will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Please see Part A: appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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.

Please see Part B for details of specific registration timings.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible. **Please see Part B for details of notification expectations and procedures.**

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised. If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

When appropriate, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or

the school may seek parental permission to contact the GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

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

4.3 Planned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must submit a leave of absence request or apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence, including absence in order to attend medical or dental appointments. **Please see Part B for detailed information regarding the notification and procedures for planned absence.**

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Arriving before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- Arriving after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U). This code would only be applied to the relevant school session affected by the late arrival, and is counted as an absence.

Please see Part B for specific information regarding procedures for responding to punctuality issues.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will follow up in a variety of ways. **(See Part B for specific information).** Children's welfare is paramount, and the school will always seek to be assured of a child's whereabouts and safety.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Example attendance letters can be found on Worcestershire County Council's website.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent 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, using the method and timeframes given in **Part B of this policy**. The Headteacher may require additional evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Physical or mental illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
 - Please note that 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 school supports pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing. Parents who have concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing should contact their GP or telephone 111 for advice. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.
 - Online mental health support and advice can be accessed: [Children's Mental Health - Every Mind Matters \(NHS\)](#)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The school reserves the right to decide what constitutes 'reasonable grounds' within the context of the individual case. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

For further information please see: [DfE Statutory Guidance "School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures.](#)

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school values, recognises and rewards good and improving attendance in a variety of ways. **Please see Part B for further information about the positive strategies that are used.**

7. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data and identifies pupils and cohorts that require support with their attendance. The school will tailor its' approach to take account of context and the needs of particular cohorts of pupils.

Please see Part B for further details regarding school level monitoring of attendance information.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not 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 local governing body.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- 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.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance information to relevant staff members, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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/carers of pupils who the school 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.

Part B of this policy details the specific procedures and approaches used to address persistent or severe absence.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance (2023-24)

Code	Definition	Scenario
Present Codes		
/or\	Present (am) or Present (pm)	Pupil is present during 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
K	Education provision provided by LA	Pupil is receiving education arranged by the local authority
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
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence for a regulated performance
C2	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to being on a part-time timetable.
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness, including Covid-19 illness if not distinguished.
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

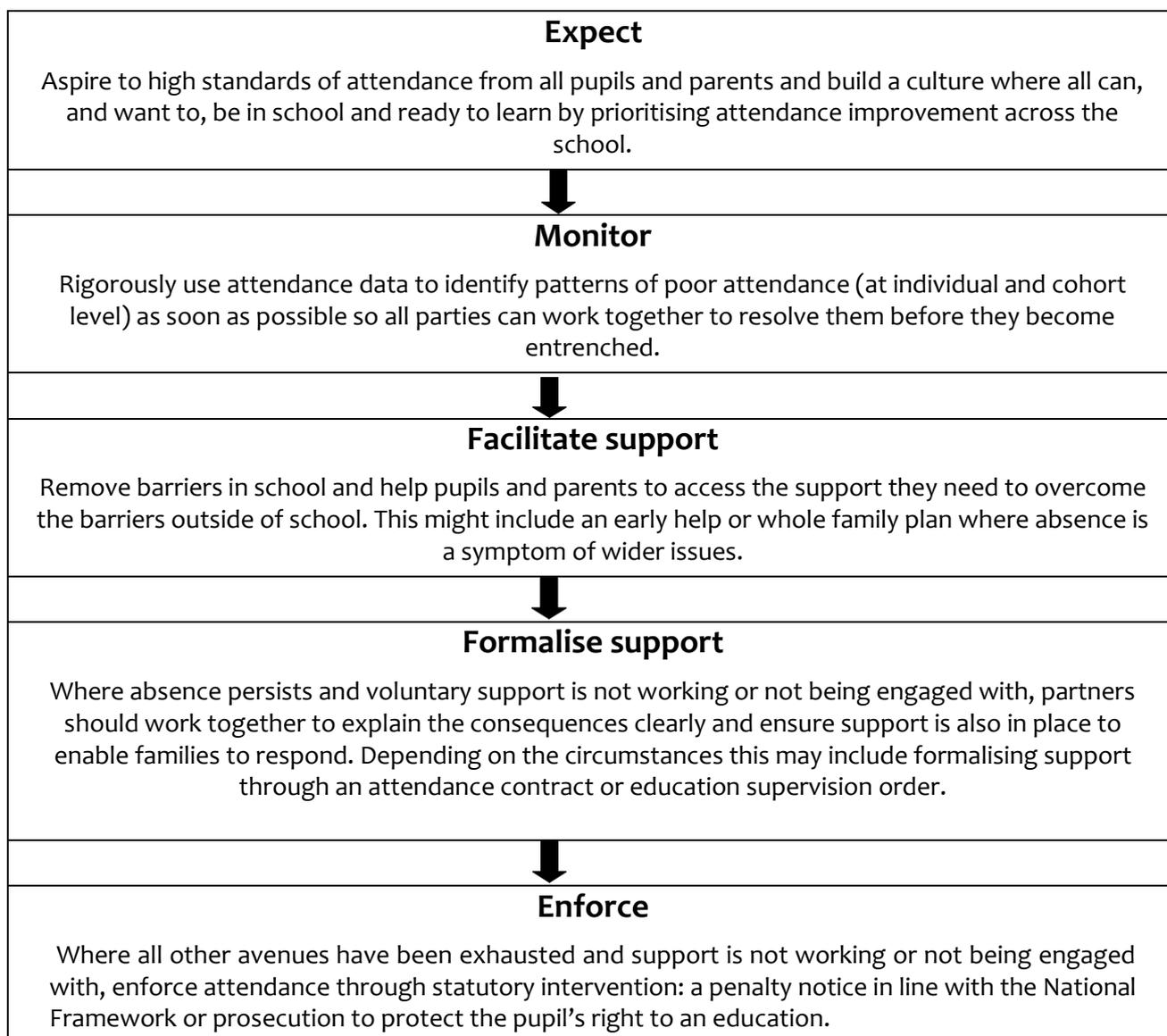
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school or exceeding the period determined by the headteacher
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Codes that are not counted and do not affect attendance figures		
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to unavailable transport
Y2	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to part of the school being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures)
Y5	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to pupils in the criminal justice system
Y6	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to any other unavoidable cause
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: DfE “Working Together to Improve School Attendance”.

This approach is adopted by Walkwood:



Part B: School Procedures Contents

Strategies used to improve attendance and punctuality.

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Part B Appendix 1: Flowchart of attendance intervention actions

Part B: School Specific Information

1. Key attendance personnel		
Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Caroline Lowe	clowe@walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk
School Attendance Lead (Senior Leader)	Simon West	swest@walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk
Safeguarding (Designated Safeguarding Lead)	Gemma Mckenna	gmckenna@walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk
Pastoral Coordinator	Gemma Mckenna	gmckenna@walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk
Attendance Administrator	Carina Maunder	cmaunder@walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	TBC	
SENDCO	Louise Thurston	lthurston@walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk
Governor for attendance	Bryan Allbut	ballbut@walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk

2. Timings of the school day, timings of registration periods.

Morning session

Starts at 8:50am	Register taken 8:50am Arriving after this time, will be marked 'L' (late)	Register closes at 9:30am. Arriving after this time, will be marked 'U' (unauthorised late) unless a medical appointment.
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Afternoon session

Starts at 13:35	Register taken at 13:35	Register closes at 13:40
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Timings of the school day:

Timings	Y5 and 7	Y6 and 8		
8:50-9:15	AM registration			
9:15-10:15	Lesson 1 (1 hr)			
10:15-10:30	Break time			
10:30-11:30	Lesson 2 (1 hr)			
11:30-12:30	Lesson 3 (1 hr)			
12:30-12:50	Eat lunch	Lesson 4-Y6 and 8 Tutor based	Yr 5 and 7 tutors lunch	
12:50-13:15	Playground	Eat lunch		Yr 6 and 8 tutors lunch
13:15-13:35	Lesson 5 Y5 and 7-Tutor based	Playground		
13:35-14:35	Lesson 6 (1 hr)			
14:35-15:30	Lesson 7 (55 mins)			

3. Punctuality (lates) procedures

- We operate a late gate from 8:50-9:00am.
- Pupil's arriving after this will sign in at reception.
- Pupils who arrive late without good reason will receive a demerit.
- Heads of Year, in conjunction with the attendance officer, will monitor pupils who are repeatedly late, and sanctions will be put into place to make up the time.
- Good attendance is rewarded by EPRAISE points boosters and entry into the end of term prize draw.

<p>4. First day absence procedures</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A parent must contact the school by phone, email or 'in app' message to report a pupil's absence. - If a pupil is absent, an absence text will be sent by reception by 9:30am. - For any pupil who has N codes after 10:30 will be flagged with pastoral managers who will call home to chase reasons for absence and update reception. - For vulnerable pupils who are flagged to reception by the safeguarding team, DSL's will be notified of their absence by 9:30am.
<p>5. Medical / dental appointments procedures</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medical appointments with evidence will be marked as M. - Reception will seek clarification or request evidence of medical appointments from parents when required.
<p>6. Request for leave of absence procedures</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents will email into the office to request a leave of absence for their child(ren). - This will be screened by the admin team and a decision made regarding the request. - Reception will send a letter of confirmation following the decision. - Requests that have been declined will be coded as unauthorised. - Requests may be granted for exceptional circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion. - Register codes are given in appendix 1 of Part A of the policy.
<p>7. Following up unexplained absence</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For any pupil who has N codes after 10:30, will be flagged with pastoral managers who will call home to chase reasons for absence and update the admin team. - A pupil not at school for 10 days will be reported to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. - If there is a concern regarding a child's absence and staff have made reasonable attempts to contact the family without success, a referral to the local authority may be made. - Contact with external agencies (Family Front Door/Police) may be made when there is a concern for the child.
<p>8. Strategies for promoting attendance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance to be discussed during tutor time. - Points boosters and prize draws for 100% attendance. - Excellent and improving attendance to be celebrated through prize draws for fortnightly prizes. - Supportive conversations to be had with form tutors around attendance where necessary. - Supportive conversations to be had with HOY around attendance where necessary. - Visual reminders of the benefits of good attendance for parents and carers. - Walkwood adopts a Graduated response to attendance, full support plans are recorded on Edu-Key. - Fortnightly pupil attendance data sent to all parents/carers.
<p>9. Reducing persistent and severe absence</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We encourage parents to be open and honest with us about reasons for absence. This is so we can work together effectively to find solutions and provide suggestions which may improve things for your child. - We will seek to understand and remove barriers to attendance through conversations with you as a family. These meetings may take place with your child's teacher, their Head of Year, the pastoral team or Safeguarding Lead; the SENDCO or a member of the leadership team (whoever is most appropriate for the circumstances.) - We also have a legal obligation to write to you as soon as there are any early concerns regarding your child's attendance. Initially, the letters serve as information and a prompt for further conversations as above.

- If concerns continue and attendance declines still further, you will be expected to attend a more formal meeting to agree an attendance plan for your child.
- If attendance declines still further, without full engagement, and commitment to the agreed plan, then we will write to you again and refer to legal sanctions that may be imminent or appropriate.
- We adopt the approach set out in Part 1: Appendix 2 – the DfE approach to attendance:
- Expect (good attendance) – Monitor (use data) – Facilitate Support (identify and remove barriers)
– Formalise Support (contracts or orders) – Enforce – Legal sanctions.

10. Reporting to parents

- Parents will be communicated with at every level by the relevant school staff. This may be telephone calls, emails, or formal letters. We will make a record of parental communications for pupils around attendance.



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At any point in the process, non engagement or a sustained lack of improvement may lead to progression of the process or issuing of sanctions such as a Penalty notice or involvement of the Magistrates court.