Policy and Procedure

Attendance policy

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"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." Matthew 18:5

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1. Aims and principles

"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." Matthew 18:5

At Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust, our approach to attendance is rooted in our **Catholic mission**, the belief that every child is created in the **image and likeness of God**, and the commitment to ensuring that each pupil is **known, loved, and welcomed** every day.

Attendance is not simply a statutory duty—it is a lived expression of our **Gospel values**, pastoral commitment, and shared responsibility for supporting pupils to flourish.

Our Attendance Principles are expanded in a separate document, but can be summarised thus:

1. Attendance is **everyone's responsibility** in a culture shaped by Gospel values.
2. The **Power of Welcome** ensures pupils feel seen, valued, and eager to attend.
3. Data drives **early, compassionate intervention**.
4. Strong relationships with families sit at the heart of success.
5. A **consistent, Trust-wide approach** ensures fairness and clarity.
6. High expectations are balanced with **pastoral care, dignity, and inclusion**.

2. Attendance Improvement Targets

Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust is committed to securing sustained improvement in attendance across all schools within the Trust. Attendance improvement targets are used to set clear expectations, drive accountability, and measure the impact of strategies and interventions.

Attendance targets are reviewed termly and annually at school and Trust level and are informed by:

- National attendance data
- Local authority benchmarks
- Historical school attendance patterns
- The specific context and cohort profile of each school

2.1 Whole-school targets

Each school will set annual whole-school attendance targets, including:

- Overall attendance to be in line with, or above, national average
- Persistent absence to reduce year-on-year
- Severe absence to reduce year-on-year
- Reduction in late arrivals

2.2 Group and cohort targets

Targets will also be set for SEND, Pupil Premium, Looked After Children, EHC pupils, and other vulnerable groups.

2.3 Individual pupil targets

Individual attendance targets will be agreed where attendance falls below expectations.

2.4 Monitoring and accountability

Targets monitored termly and reported to governors and Trust.

2.5 Culture and ethos

Targets are used to promote inclusion, safeguarding and improvement, not punishment.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/madeIt also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers

The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools]

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance lead to be able to do so

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance in each school can be contacted via the school office.

4.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

4.5 Class teachers

Class teachers responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office the same day.

4.6 School office staff

School office 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 headteacher where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Answer messages via Arbor and answerphone

4.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
  - Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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 1 emergency contact number for their child
  - Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
  - Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
  - Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance officer who can be contacted via the school office

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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.

The school doors open at 8.45am and school finishes at 3.15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30 (EYFS), 12.45(KS1 and KS2) and will be kept open for 20 minutes.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office, who can be contacted via the school office or by Arbor messaging.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

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

Parents should request leaves of absence using the form in the appendices of this policy

However, we encourage parents 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 pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, school will write to the parents/carers using the appended letter about

punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

- If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make take further action

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:

- Call the pupil's parent 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 take other reasonable steps:
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visit
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family [e.g. contact police, Social Services]
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with we may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents evenings amnd through written reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview

- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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.

Exceptional circumstances can be defined as one off events which are unavoidable; examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the form in the appendices of this policy or via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence eg. flight bookings.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote attendance each week by XXXXXXXX. We have a dedicated attendance officer who rings home daily and does home visits. We have a coordinated approach to attendance with our Trust schools. We use

the Local Authority letters to combat poor attendance and holiday requests. We issue the contracts recommended by the Local Authority to agree targets and strategies for improving attendance.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If pupils are absent from school due to complex barriers to attendance, we will work closely work with families, make any necessary adjustments and the provide as much support as is needed to ensure regular school attendance as we consider this to be vital. This may include working with external agencies.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

If pupils are absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND, we will work sensitively work with families, make any necessary adjustments and the provide as much support as is needed to ensure a smooth reintegration into school. This includes working with external agencies e.g. social services, SEND team, LA.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

If pupils are absent from school due to a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence we will work closely work with families, make any necessary adjustments and the provide as much support as is needed to ensure a smooth reintegration into school. This may include working with external agencies.

7.4 Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Some pupils experience significant emotional barriers that make attending school difficult. This may include anxiety, trauma, mental health difficulties, unmet special educational needs, or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). EBSA is not a choice or a disciplinary issue; it is a complex response to underlying need.

Where EBSA is suspected or identified, the school will adopt a compassionate, trauma-informed and graduated approach, recognising that absence is often a symptom rather than the root cause.

The school will:

- Respond early to emerging patterns of distress or anxiety linked to attendance
- Work in partnership with pupils and families to understand underlying causes
- Avoid punitive or purely sanction-based responses where attendance difficulties are linked to emotional wellbeing or SEND
- Develop an individualised attendance or reintegration plan, which may include:
    - Pastoral or mental health support
    - Adjustments to routines, expectations or learning environments
    - Phased or flexible reintegration, where appropriate
    - Short-term, achievable attendance targets
- Involve external agencies where required, such as Early Help, SEND services, Educational Psychology, or CAMHS
- Review progress regularly and adapt support as needs change

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), attendance concerns linked to EBSA will be addressed through review of provision and liaison with the local authority.

If attendance does not improve despite appropriate support, the school will continue to work with families and the local authority to ensure the pupil receives suitable education in line with statutory guidance.

Throughout all interventions, the school will act in accordance with its Catholic ethos, upholding the dignity, wellbeing and best interests of the child.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9 Pupil Walk-Out Procedure

9.1 Secondary Schools walk out procedure

1. Stay calm and try to de-escalate
Staff should use a low-key, non-confrontational approach to encourage the pupil to remain on site. The priority is to keep the situation steady, not to win an argument.
2. Do not physically block or chase
Staff must not restrain or pursue a pupil off site unless there's an immediate safeguarding risk that justifies intervention. Safety comes first.
3. Notify the on-call lead immediately
The member of staff alerts the on-call or senior duty lead with the pupil's name, location, and any known context. This creates rapid coordination without drama.
4. Senior lead initiates the walk-out protocol
This includes:

- Checking CCTV / last known location.
- Alerting reception and site staff.
- Ensuring the gates and exits are monitored safely (not blocked).
- Reviewing any intelligence suggesting risk (e.g., previous incidents, vulnerabilities).

5. Attempt contact with the pupil
Where appropriate, a calm phone call or message is made to the pupil to encourage a safe return. The focus is relational and supportive, not punitive.

6. Inform parents/carers
Parents are contacted promptly with factual information: what happened, what we know, and what steps we're taking. If safeguarding concerns are heightened, DSL involvement is immediate.
7. DSL risk assessment
The safeguarding lead assesses risk based on the pupil's history, vulnerabilities, mental health, or any external factors. If the risk is high, the school escalates to police or external agencies as required.
8. Record everything
The incident is logged on the school's safeguarding and behaviour systems, including timelines, decisions, and rationale. This provides clarity for any follow-up.
9. Return-to-school conversation
On the pupil's return, they meet with a senior leader or pastoral lead for a supportive, restorative conversation. The aim is to understand the trigger, reduce repeat incidents, and put the right support in place.
10. Follow-up actions
This might include:

- Pastoral support or early help referral
- Curriculum or timetable adjustments
- Behaviour plan review
- SEN/SEMHL involvement
- Contact with external agencies if patterns persist

9.2 Primary Schools Wal out procedure

1. Prioritise safety and stay calm
Staff use a gentle, reassuring approach to encourage the child to remain in a safe space. The focus is containment, not confrontation.
2. Do not chase or physically block
Adults must not run after a child or physically prevent them from leaving unless there's an immediate safeguarding risk. Sudden movements or raised voices can escalate things quickly at this age.
3. Alert the on-call or senior leader immediately
Give the child's name, class, and last known location. This allows a coordinated response rather than a scramble.
4. Senior leader activates the walk-out protocol
This includes:

- Checking the child's last location and nearby exits.
- Quietly positioning adults at key points to maintain supervision (not to block).
- Ensuring the office and site staff are aware.
- Reviewing any known vulnerabilities, triggers, or risks for this child.

5. Maintain visual contact where safe
Where possible, an adult keeps the child in sight from an appropriate distance, avoiding escalation—especially where the child is distressed or dysregulated.
6. Immediate DSL involvement
A safeguarding lead assesses risk based on the child's needs, SEND profile, home situation, and any previous incidents. If the child leaves site or significant risk is identified, the school escalates to the police and contacts parents straight away.
7. Parent/carer notification
Parents are informed promptly and factually. If the child has left site, they are asked to come in or help establish the child's location while the school continues its safeguarding actions.
8. Detailed recording
All actions, decisions, and observations are recorded on the school's safeguarding system, including times and the rationale for each step.
9. Supportive return and regulation
When the child returns, a trusted adult helps them regulate first. Only once they are calm do they explore what happened. The emphasis is on understanding what triggered the walk-out and helping the child feel safe.
10. Follow-up and planning
Depending on the incident, follow-up may include:

- Updated risk assessments
- Pastoral or SEND support
- Early help referral

- Behaviour plan adjustments
- Multi-agency involvement if concerns persist
- A clear plan shared with staff so responses remain consistent

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board of each school.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are:

		• In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Reporting Attendance to Governors

Example report to Governing Bodies/Local Academy Councils

Attendance data

Attendance this term compared to this term last year

	OVERALL ABSENCE		AUTHORISED ABSENCE		PERSISTENT ABSENCE (10% OF SESSIONS)		SEVERE ABSENCE (50% OF SESSIONS)	
	This term: e.g. spring 1, 2023	Last year: e.g. spring 1, 2022	This term	Last year	This term	Last year	This term	Last year
England								
Local authority (LA)								
Trust (if relevant)								
School								

Headteacher's comment

[Set out your commentary on the figures here. Use this space to build a narrative to explain what the data means to your governors.]

Attendance by pupil group

	OVERALL ABSENCE		AUTHORISED ABSENCE		PERSISTENT ABSENCE (10% OF SESSIONS)		SEVERE ABSENCE (50% OF SESSIONS)	
	This term	Last year	This term	Last year	This term	Last year	This term	Last year
Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)								

	OVERALL ABSENCE		AUTHORISED ABSENCE		PERSISTENT ABSENCE (10% OF SESSIONS)		SEVERE ABSENCE (50% OF SESSIONS)	
Pupils with an education health and care (EHC) plan								
Pupil premium								
Looked after children (LAC)								
Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL)								
Girls								
Boys								
Include any other groups relevant to your school's context								

Headteacher's comment

Attendance by session

CLASS/YEAR GROUP	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
	am	pm	am	pm	am	pm	am	pm	am	pm
Year 1										
Year 2										
Year 3										

CLASS/YEAR GROUP	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Year 4										
Year 5										
Year 6										

Headteacher's comment

Policies and procedures on attendance

	DATE OF LAST REVIEW	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	DETAILS OF POLICY UPDATES
Attendance policy			
e.g. Children missing education policy			
Any other relevant school policies and procedures			

Known barriers to attendance

Strategies in place to mitigate low attendance

	ACTION	IMPACT
Providing transport for pupils who have transport issues	Add rows as appropriate	

	ACTION	IMPACT
Discouraging parents from taking pupils on term-time holidays		
Identifying and supporting pupils with mental health issues that could develop into a barrier to attendance		
In secondary schools, meeting with pupils to discuss their attendance and understand any barriers to attendance from their perspective		
Inviting parents/carers in for meetings to discuss pupil's poor attendance		

Headteacher's comment

Case study to demonstrate impact

- Show governors the impact of your strategies with an anonymous case study
- Provide a short summary of the pupil and their background. Explain:
    - What their attendance was like before any interventions
    - What strategies you put in place to improve their attendance
    - The outcomes of the strategy on their attendance
    - Any reflections on the case
- Remember, this case study should be anonymous. Be careful not to include information that may identify the pupil

Working in partnerships

- Include information about how you work with other schools to share best practice on improving attendance Eg Keighley Community Together, Attendance networks within the Trust

If you have worked with other partners, such as the LA or your trust central team, include details here.

Evaluation and improvement plan

STRENGTHS

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT	PROPOSED ACTIONS	RESOURCES REQUIRED