ATTENDANCE POLICY
2026 - 2027

Approved by:	Ratified by Governing Body	**Date:** September 2026
Effective Date:	September 2019	
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2027	
Reviewed by:	Karen Hayward - Executive Principal	
Website:		
Yes/No	YES	

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Name: Julie Devereux
Email address or contact details: jdevereux@sandysecondaryschool.com

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils/students and parents/guardians should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Sandy Secondary School:

Absence notifications should be sent to: attendance@sandyscondaryschool.com

If your son or daughter needs any additional support with attendance, please do not hesitate to contact our Pastoral Team using the email address below, who will be happy to work with you and your child to help overcome any barriers to attending school regularly.

Email address or contact details: pastoral@sandysecondaryschool.com

Moggerhanger Primary School:

The school office: office@moggerhangerprimaryschool.co.uk

The names of our linked governors with responsibility for monitoring attendance are:
Michelle Courtney and Ceri Rose
Email address: clerk@sandysecondaryschool.com

Introduction and Background

Greensands Federation, incorporating Sandy Secondary School and Moggerhanger Primary School, recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils/students to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/guardian to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents/guardians decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. This School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil/student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils/students succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils/students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, parents/guardians, pupils/students. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil/student attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils/students feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this federation that pupils/students must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Executive Principal, not the parents/guardians, who can authorise the absence.**

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Greensands Federation, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils/students from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day-to-day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents/guardians, pupils/students, and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education and Local Authority, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families
- Give parents/guardians details on attendance in our newsletters
- Promote the benefits of high attendance
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow up absence as required by law
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance. Rewards for good attendance are given to individuals, class groups and houses. (For full information see Appendix v). Where appropriate attendance awards will be publicised on the school's website and in the newsletter
- The procedure for staff to follow in regard to recording attendance for after school extra-curricular activities and detentions – see Appendix iv
- Report to parents/guardians regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress
- Contact parents/guardians should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil/student's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's/guardian's responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/guardian), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- absences which have never been properly explained

- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents/guardians to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Executive Principal, including any arranged by other family members or friends
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil/student is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee'** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil/student's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents/guardians to resolve this. All pupils/students who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil/student who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent'**. Pupils/students within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Absence Procedures

The contact details for pupils/students and parents/guardians who need to discuss day-to-day attendance matters are:
Sandy Secondary School
Attendance Team
Email: **attendance@sandysecondaryschool.com**

Moggerhanger Primary School – School office: **office@moggerhangerprimaryschool.co.uk**

We monitor and review all pupils/students' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If your child is absent from school the parents/guardians must follow these procedures:
- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30 am, when our register closes
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.30 am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents/guardians and school staff can consider the advice contained in the following NHS website https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

If your child is absent, we will:
- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us
- If we are unable to make contact with parents/guardians by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding

- A referral may be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents/guardians by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child could be considered to be "missing from education." In certain circumstances this could result in your child being removed from our school roll and you would need to reapply for a place, were one was still available

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 96%/causing concern, and/or where punctuality is a concern
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with the appropriate staff member.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils/students who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if your child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for both Schools are:

Sandy Secondary School	**Moggerhanger Primary School**
Gates open: 8.00am Registration starts: 8.30am End of the school day: 3.00pm	Gates open: 8.40am Registration starts: 8.50am End of the school day: 3.15pm

How we manage lateness: The school day starts at the above times when children can begin to come into school:

- Registers are taken at the stated times
- Children arriving after registration starts are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by parents/guardians they must sign them into our 'Late Book' or 'Inventory system' and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded
- At ***9.30am*** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence
- The school may contact parents/guardians regarding punctuality concerns
- From time to time a member of school staff will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/guardians and the child. If a parent/guardian thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health Service, Early Help Worker/Social Worker/Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Child meeting (TAC) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils/students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils/students who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils/students; however, we will work with families and pupils/students to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils/students who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

See Annex A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils/students and parents/guardians should contact for more detailed support on attendance is shown on page 2 of this document.

Local Authority Attendance Support Services

Local Authority School Attendance Officers work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents/guardians are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents/guardians should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents/guardians may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'Parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a Parent (from which can be inferred 'biological Parent) but who has Parent's responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. (There is, however, some discretion that the school can use if appropriate). The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent/guardian (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced

to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent/guardian, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/guardian may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/guardian is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils/students to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Executive Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Executive Principal, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Executive Principal or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance by the parent/guardian with who the child normally lives with, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent/guardian who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and that all parents/guardians who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent/guardian removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Central Bedfordshire Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices, in respect of each parent/guardian believed to have allowed the absence.

At Greensands Federation 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:
... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the Executive Principal). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The Executive Principal/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents/guardians are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

<u>Deletion from Roll</u>

For any pupil/student leaving Moggerhanger Primary School, other than at the end of year 6/ leaving Sandy Secondary school other than at the end of Year 11, parents/guardians are required to provide school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils/students, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents/guardians keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for their child and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the enrolment. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil/student, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil/student's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil/student's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil/student has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils/students, or groups of pupils/students, when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil/student attendance data to the Department for Education and Local Authority on a daily basis 'Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment)

Regulations 2024.' Persistently and severely absent pupils/students are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are. Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort. Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes. Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it. Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should: • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance. Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.	Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.	Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care. (LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will: • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance. (If parents feel the school and or local authority have not not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)	The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures. The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance. Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils. Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction. Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services. Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.

Federation Attendance System Protocol

The following protocol is applied in the majority of instances; however particular care is given to check any trends or patterns along with reasons, before a final decision is made. Obviously during the first two weeks of the academic year, percentages are not always the best indicator, we will use a 12-month rolling attendance figure where possible.

TRIGGER POINT 1 – 96% and below

First Point of Contact

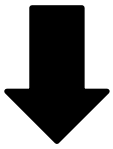
Form/Class teacher to be informed of the student's attendance rate by the Attendance Officer responsible for the weekly monitoring of attendance.

The Form Tutor/Class Teacher will evaluate the cause of absences and determine how to inform parents/guardians.

After all absences, students will have a discussion with their Form Tutor.

Data will be inputted onto an electronic spreadsheet set up by the Attendance Officer. All actions will be recorded on this by this.

If after a 4-week period there is no improvement, an official **letter must be sent**.



TRIGGER POINT 2 – 93% and below

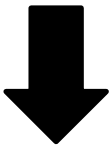
Second Point of Contact

Pastoral Team Member/ Attendance Manager to be informed of the student's attendance by the Attendance Officers

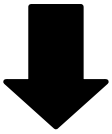
Pastoral Support Assistant/Class Teacher to evaluate the cause of absences and determine how to inform parents/guardians. This should be either through a discussion or formal letter

Request medical proof for all future absences. Where this is not available, absences to be deemed as unauthorised

Attendance Officers involvement
at this stage



If, after a four-week period, there has been no improvement in attendance, a member of the Pastoral Team will arrange a face-to-face meeting with the parent/guardian and student to discuss the concerns and agree appropriate next steps and support.



TRIGGER POINT THREE – 90% and below

Third Point of Contact

Formal letter to be sent

Parents/guardians to be made aware that a FPN is a possibility

School Attendance Officer to arrange a meeting with parents/guardians

Ongoing attendance will be monitored on a daily basis – further meetings or actions will be implemented as deemed appropriate

Appendix i.1

Tigger 1 letter

Dear

School Attendance Concern – Trigger Point 1

Student: «chosen_forename» «surname» «reg»

At Sandy Secondary School, we place a strong emphasis on the importance of excellent attendance because we know that regular attendance has a significant impact on a child's achievement, wellbeing, confidence, and future opportunities.

Students who attend school consistently are more likely to make strong academic progress, develop positive friendships, and feel fully engaged in school life. Every lesson matters, and even small amounts of missed learning can quickly add up over time.

We are writing to let you know that «chosen_forename»'s attendance has now fallen to «percentage_attendance»%. For your information, we have attached an up-to-date attendance certificate showing their attendance record so far this academic year.

We have previously written to you regarding our concerns about «chosen_forename»'s falling attendance and have offered support to help improve this. Unfortunately, attendance has not improved as we had hoped, and we now need to work together further to ensure your son/daughter is attending school regularly and accessing the education they are entitled to.

While we understand that some absences are unavoidable, we aim for all students to achieve attendance of at least 96%, with 100% attendance being the ideal wherever possible. Continued absence from school can have a serious impact on educational progress, emotional wellbeing, and future opportunities.

As parents/carers, there is a legal responsibility under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education through regular school attendance. Where attendance continues to decline and support measures are unsuccessful, schools and local authorities may need to consider further action in line with Department for Education guidance and the local authority attendance procedures.

However, our priority remains to work positively in partnership with you to identify any barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.

If there are any concerns or circumstances affecting «chosen_forename»'s attendance — either at home or in school — please let us know. We are keen to listen and work together to find solutions that support improved attendance and wellbeing.

If you would like to discuss attendance further, or if there is any support that may help improve «chosen_forename»'s attendance, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or your child's Pastoral Team member.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation in helping «chosen_forename» achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix i.2

Dear «salutation»

School Attendance Concern – Trigger Point 2 – «forename» «surname» «reg»

As you are aware, we are committed to supporting all students to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance, as regular school attendance is essential to educational progress, wellbeing, and future life opportunities.

Unfortunately, «forename»'s attendance has now fallen to «percentage_attendance»%. In line with the Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance (2024) and the school's Attendance Policy, we are now placing «forename» on Trigger Point 2 monitoring.

As part of this process, we are requesting that medical evidence is provided for any future absences due to illness. Acceptable evidence may include prescribed medication labels, prescriptions, GP appointment confirmations, hospital letters, or appointment cards. Without appropriate evidence, the school may be unable to authorise future absences.

We recognise that there can be a wide range of reasons why attendance may become a concern, and our priority is to work in partnership with families to understand any barriers to regular attendance and provide support wherever possible. If there are circumstances affecting «forename»'s attendance, we strongly encourage you to contact us so that we can discuss appropriate support strategies.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education and attend school regularly. Where attendance does not improve, and support and intervention have not been successful, the school may need to consider further action in line with Local Authority procedures. This could include referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team and consideration of legal intervention.

We are keen to work together positively to improve «forename»'s attendance and avoid the need for any escalation. If you would like to discuss this matter further or require support, please contact either myself or your child's Pastoral Team Member.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Appendix i.3

Dear «salutation»

School Attendance – Notification Letter - *Name*

I am writing to inform you that due to *Name*'s irregular school attendance I have requested that the Local Authority issues you with a Penalty Notice

http://www.centrabedfordshire.gov.uk/school/pupil-support/non-school-attendance/about-penalty-notices.aspx

Should you have further information that would support *Name*'s level of absence then I would ask that this is shared with the School Attendance Officer.

Yours sincerely

Unauthorised Absence after holiday

Dear ,

Re: Unauthorised Absence for [Name]

I am writing regarding your decision to take [Name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].
After carefully reviewing the circumstances and the information provided, we must record this period as an unauthorised absence because [insert explanation/evidence].
At [School Name], we strongly believe that regular attendance is essential for children's educational progress, wellbeing, and overall success in school. We fully appreciate the importance of family time and recognise that families may occasionally wish to spend time together outside of school. However, we are committed to ensuring that every child benefits from uninterrupted learning wherever possible.

Our Approach to Leave of Absence Requests

Schools are only permitted to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Unfortunately, family holidays during term time do not usually meet this threshold.
We ask all families to speak with the school before making arrangements that would require a child to miss school. Even short periods of absence can affect a child's learning, confidence, friendships, and routine.

Use the following section if a penalty notice will be issued:

[Name] has now reached 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This is equivalent to 5 school days.
In line with our school attendance policy and the local authority code of practice, a penalty notice will now be issued.
When you receive the notice, payment must be made as follows:

- £80 if paid within 21 days
- £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may consider further legal action.

Use the following section if a penalty notice is not being issued:

Please be aware that unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice where a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks (equivalent to 5 school days).
Further information can be found in our school attendance policy, available on our website: [insert website address], or from the school office.

Working Together — Next Steps

We are keen to work in partnership with you to support [Name] in maintaining positive attendance and ensuring they feel happy, confident, and successful in school.
We would like to invite you to attend a meeting to discuss this absence and explore how we can work together to avoid any further disruption to [Name]'s education. Please contact the school office on [phone number] as soon as possible to arrange a convenient appointment.
If there are any circumstances or difficulties affecting [Name]'s attendance, we encourage you to share these with us so we can offer the appropriate support.
Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.
Yours sincerely,

Appendix i.4

Date Received:

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Important information for parents/guardians

- Term time holiday requests can only be authorised in extenuating circumstances. * There is no automatic right to absence for a family holiday and holiday which has not been agreed will be coded as unauthorised.
- Request for leave should be submitted no less than 6 weeks prior to the start of the holiday.
- Authorisation during SAT's, GCSE's (including mock exams) and in the first term of any new school placement is unlikely to be granted.
- Any requests for extended leave, i.e., more than 10 school days in any academic year, will result in an interview with the Attendance Officer.
- School attendance regulations are determined by the Department for Education and Central Bedfordshire.

I wish to apply for leave of absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Student: …… Form: ……

Date of proposed absence: From: …… To: …… (Inclusive)

Reason for proposed Absence: ……

*(Please give exceptional circumstances as to why the request is for **Term Time)***

Total days requested in this application:…… Total days taken previously this academic year: ……

Signature of Parent/Guardian:……

Print Name: ……

NB: Requests may only be made by the parent/guardian with whom the child normally resides.

FOR SCHOOL USE – to be completed by Attendance Officer:

Date Received: …… Previous Holiday Checked? **Y/N** Current Attendance: ……%

Telephone call to Parent/Guardian? **Y/N** Date: …… Authorised: **Y/N**

Signature: …… Date: …… Form Tutor Advised? **Y/N**

Coded: …… Letter Sent: ……

Please do not book any holiday until the school has been consulted.

* Term time holidays can only be authorised in extenuating circumstances e.g.: service personnel and others who are prevented from taking holidays during school closures or should a family need time together due to crisis.

** The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) regulations 2006 expect schools not to authorise holidays because:

- availability of cheaper holidays or accommodation
- weather was poor during the school holiday
- overlap with end or beginning of term

Appendix ii.1

Punctuality (Lateness) Protocol

All lates to be recorded as 'L' beyond 8.40am/8.55am. Arrival after 20 minutes, unless for an authorised medical appointment, is automatically coded as 'U'.

Up to 1 lates	Text to be sent home by Attendance Officer
2 – 3 lates	The Attendance Officer to inform form tutor/class teacher. Student to discuss punctuality with form tutor/class teacher Attendance Officer to either contact parents/guardians, or send punctuality letter
4 – 5 lates	The Attendance Officer to inform class teacher/Pastoral Team Member Student to discuss punctuality with HAL/ Attendance Manager to action 1st punctuality letter Letter to be recorded on SIMS. If there are other attendance issues, a signed copy of the letter will be put in student's attendance file.
8 - 9 lates	The Attendance Officer to inform HAL/ Attendance Manager or SLT HAL/SLT to send letter to arrange face to face meeting with the student's Parents/guardians and Attendance Officer
10 + lates	The Attendance Officer to inform the Attendance Manager Letter and meeting to be recorded on SIMS. If there are other attendance issues, letters, meeting notes and other subsequent actions to be put in student's attendance file.

Appendix ii.2

LATENESS LETTER 1

Dear Parent/Carer of [Student Name],

We have noticed that [Student Name] has recently been missing time from school in the mornings due to lateness.
We understand that mornings can sometimes be challenging for children and families, and we are keen to work together with you to improve [Student Name]'s attendance and punctuality.
Arriving at school on time is important because it helps children settle positively into the school day, maintain routines, access learning from the start of lessons, and feel connected to their peers and teachers.
We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about any support that may help [Student Name] attend school more regularly and on time. If there are any barriers or difficulties affecting attendance, we would like to work together to find appropriate support and solutions.
Please contact [staff member name and contact details] to arrange a meeting or telephone conversation at a convenient time.
Thank you for your continued support and partnership.
Kind regards,

Appendix ii.3

LATENESS LETTER 2

Dear

Re: Concerns About [Pupil Name]'s Punctuality
We are writing to share our concerns regarding [Pupil Name]'s recent punctuality. Over the past [timeframe], [he/she/they] has/have arrived late to school on [number] occasions.
We understand that mornings can sometimes be difficult, and our intention is to work together with you to support [Pupil Name] in arriving at school on time each day.
Details of Lateness
Arrived after the register closed:
• [date]
• [date]
• [date]
Arrived late before the register closed:
• [date]
• [date]
• [date]
Our school day begins promptly at [time], and the morning register closes at [time].
Why Punctuality Matters
Arriving at school on time each day is important because it:

- Ensures children do not miss valuable learning opportunities
- Minimises disruption to lessons and classmates
- Helps children settle positively into the school day and routine
- Supports wellbeing, confidence, and readiness to learn

We appreciate that there may be circumstances at home or school that are affecting punctuality. We are committed to working in partnership with you to identify any barriers and offer support where possible. However, it is important to note that persistent lateness — particularly when a child arrives after the register has closed — may lead to further action. Current guidance states that a penalty notice may be considered where a child arrives after the register closes on 10 occasions within a 10-week period.
Next Steps
We would like to invite you to meet with us to discuss how we can best support [Pupil Name]. During this meeting, we hope to explore:

- Whether there is anything happening in school that is making punctuality difficult
- Whether there are any challenges at home we should be aware of or may be able to help with
- Any strategies or support that could help [Pupil Name] arrive on time more consistently

Please contact the school office on [telephone number] to arrange a convenient time for this meeting.
If you feel you may need support with transport, morning routines, or any other issue affecting punctuality, please let us know so we can ensure the appropriate support is available.
Thank you for your continued support in helping [Pupil Name] make the most of their education. If you have any questions before the meeting, please do not hesitate to contact us.
Yours sincerely,

Medical evidence letter

Dear

Student Name: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»
Current Attendance: [insert attendance percentage]

At Sandy Secondary School, we are committed to working closely with families to support strong attendance and ensure every student has the best possible opportunity to succeed both academically and personally.
We are becoming increasingly concerned about [Student Name]'s attendance. Regular attendance is extremely important, as missing school can impact learning, confidence, friendships, wellbeing, and future opportunities. Our aim is to work in partnership with you to identify any barriers to attendance and provide support wherever possible.
Following our discussion, and in line with school policy, we are now requesting medical evidence for any future absences. This may include:

- Prescribed medication labels
- Prescriptions
- Medical appointment cards
- Hospital letters
- GP or healthcare professional notes

Without appropriate medical evidence, we may be unable to authorise future absences.
We understand that there can sometimes be challenges affecting attendance, and we want to reassure you that our priority is to support your child and family. We are keen to work together to improve attendance and help [Student Name] feel confident, supported, and successful in school.
As parents/carers, there is a legal responsibility to ensure children attend school regularly and punctually. Where attendance does not improve, schools and local authorities may need to consider further action. However, our main focus is always on early support, positive partnership working, and helping families find sustainable solutions before matters escalate.
If there are any difficulties affecting attendance — either at home or in school — please let us know. Support is available, and we would encourage you to contact your son/daughter's Pastoral support Assistant or Tutor in the first instance:
We are here to listen, discuss concerns, and work together on strategies that may help improve attendance moving forward.
Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this further or arrange another meeting.
Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.
Yours faithfully,

Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time

Dear

Thank you for your request for [Name] to be absent from school between [date] and [date].
After careful consideration, I regret to inform you that we are unable to authorise this absence.
At [School Name], we are committed to ensuring that all students attend school regularly, as consistent attendance plays a vital role in children's learning, development, wellbeing, and overall success.
We understand this decision may be disappointing, and we would like to reassure you that it has been considered carefully and fairly.

How We Consider Requests for Leave of Absence

All requests for leave during term time are reviewed individually and in line with Department for Education guidance, which states that headteachers may only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
When making our decision, we consider:

- The reasons provided for the request
- The potential impact on your child's education and progress
- Previous attendance and absence patterns
- The wider implications for learning, routines, and wellbeing

Please note that each request is considered on its own merits. Decisions made regarding previous requests, or requests from other families, do not set a precedent for future applications.
Our priority is always to act in the best interests of every child and to support excellent attendance for all pupils.
If you would like to discuss this decision further, or if you feel there are additional circumstances we should be aware of, please do not hesitate to contact the school.
Thank you for your understanding and continued support in helping us provide the best possible education for [Name].
Yours sincerely,

Concerns About Unauthorised Absence

Dear

Re: Concerns Regarding [Student Name]'s Attendance

We are writing because we have noticed that [Student Name] has recently had unauthorised absences from school.

Details of Absence

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] days on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

This means [he/she/they] has/have missed [insert percentage]% of learning time this [term/year].

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance is vital to a child's education, wellbeing, and development. We want to work together with you to ensure that [Name] is able to:

- Fully engage in learning and achieve their potential
- Build positive friendships and feel part of the school community
- Develop confidence, routines, and resilience that support future success

How We Can Support You

We understand that every family's circumstances are different, and there may be challenges affecting attendance. We are committed to working in partnership with you to identify and remove any barriers wherever possible.

Please contact us if:

- There is anything at home or school affecting [Name]'s attendance
- You would like support in helping [Name] attend regularly
- There are gaps in learning or wellbeing concerns we can help address

Next Steps

Please contact the school office on [telephone number] as soon as possible so we can arrange a meeting to discuss these absences and agree on appropriate support.

Together, we will aim to:

- Understand any difficulties affecting attendance
- Identify strategies and support to improve attendance
- Help [Name] catch up on any missed learning

Important Information About Unauthorised Absence

We also want to ensure you are aware of the national threshold for penalty notices.

Under current guidance, a penalty notice may be considered where a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Ten sessions are equivalent to 5 school days.

Further information can be found in our school attendance policy, available on our website: [insert school website URL], or from the school office.

We are committed to working positively with you and [Name] to improve attendance and ensure they feel happy, supported, and successful in school.

Yours sincerely,

Improved attendance

Congratulations on Improved Attendance!

Dear

We are delighted to celebrate [Name]'s fantastic improvement in school attendance.
Since [date], [Name]'s attendance has increased from [percentage]% to [percentage]%, which means [he/she/they] have gained an additional [number] days of valuable learning and experiences in school. This is a wonderful achievement and reflects both [Name]'s commitment and the support you provide at home.

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance has a significant impact on a child's progress, confidence, wellbeing, and friendships. By attending school more consistently, [Name] is giving themselves the very best opportunity to succeed and enjoy all aspects of school life.
We would like to thank you for your continued encouragement and support — working together makes a real difference.

Celebrating Success

To recognise [Name]'s hard work and positive improvement, [he/she/they] will be:
[Insert details of reward or recognition, e.g. receiving a certificate in assembly, being entered into a prize draw, or another school reward.]

Looking Ahead

We encourage [Name] to continue this excellent progress. If you require any further support or would like to discuss attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us using the details below:
[School office contact details]
Once again, congratulations to [Name] and your family on this excellent achievement.
Yours sincerely,

Appendix iii
(Moggerhanger Primary School only)

PUPIL – LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY LEAVERS LOG

DATE	TIME IN	TIME OUT	CHILD'S NAME	REASON	PARENTS/GUARDIANS SIGNITURE

THIS SHEET IS INSPECTED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ON A REGULAR BASIS. PLEASE STATE REASON **CLEARLY** TO AVOID ANY FURTHER ACTION FROM THE LA

Appendix iv.

Procedure for registering students at afterschool clubs and detentions

Clubs/Intervention after school

Staff running a club or intervention session are required to take a register of students by 3.10pm and then email it to Afterschoolclubs@sandysecondaryschool.com or send a student with it to main reception. Staff are required to update the office by emailing Afterschoolclubs@sandysecondaryschool.com or sending a student to main reception if any student arrives after this time.

Detentions

Staff will receive an email from detentionsafterschool@sandysecondaryschool.com with a daily list of after school detentions as shown below:

Student Name	Form Group	Year group	Detention Room	Member of staff taking the detention	Length of detention	When detention is taking place	Attended Yes/No

Staff are required to state in the last column yes or no as to whether the student is with them for their detention by 3.10pm. They should reply to this email using detentionsafterschool@sandysecondaryschool.com. Staff must update the office by emailing detentionsafterschool@sandysecondaryschool.com or sending a student to main reception if any student arrives after this time.

The main office will then phone parent/guardian to inform them that their child has not arrived for their detention after school.

If we have not received a register by 3.10pm on the day, a member of the SLT will go to the room to check why this has not happened and it could lead to

further sanctions being taken against the member of staff as they have a duty to safeguard.

Any student who arrives for detention that is not on the list is **not to be kept** but sent home and an email sent for the detention to be re-arranged to student services.

Students are to be sent to reception at the end of the detention or after school club to sign out with the person on reception and leave by the front entrance.