



**SOUTH WESTMORLAND
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**

Attendance and Belonging Policy

Committee:	MAT Board
Date of adoption:	02/07/2024
Date of next review:	Spring Term 2027

Review Sheet

The information in the table below details earlier versions of this document with a brief description of each review and how to distinguish amendments made since the previous version date (if any).

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Review
1	New policy based on updated guidance from government and use of the five foundations approach	02/07/2024
2	SLT review and approval	10/09/2025
3	Trustee review and approval – Performance & Evaluation Committee	24/02/2026

Contents

1. Aims	4
2. Legislation and Guidance.....	4
3. Strategic approach.....	4
4. Roles and Responsibilities	6
5. Recording Attendance	9
6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence.....	12
7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance.....	14
8. Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School	14
9. Attendance Monitoring	15
10. Monitoring Arrangements.....	17
11. Links with other Policies	17
Appendix 1 – Attendance codes.....	18
Appendix 2 – 19-day Escalation.....	21
Appendix 3 – Half Termly Report to Parents (example).....	22
Appendix 4 – Example Staged Response Letter	23
Appendix 5 – Graduated Response	24

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We will refer to this policy as our '**Belonging Policy**' as we recognise that when students and families belong to a culture and an ethos of our school, that outcomes are enhanced and a sense of belonging and pride in our school is important in ensuring that students feel valued and supported.

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

It also refers to:

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

3. Strategic approach

Dallam School adopts the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework; this is modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare. The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all children can attend school and thrive. The approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with children, and parents, prior to escalation. The staged approach we follow ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internal (in-school) and external (external agencies).

3.1 The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice

The main aim of the framework is to ensure the school promotes a culture of good attendance and celebrates success. Ultimately, the framework will ensure there is a culture of feeling safe and school being a place where children want to be.

Positive health and emotional well-being are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice model promotes, and supports, a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring SEMH support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all children.

Each Foundation is supported by 5 Key Performance Indicators, these are used to ensure the school can embed the Foundations framework and understand the strategic direction regarding attendance improvement. Each year the school will use the 5 Foundations self-assessment tool to understand what works well and identify what we need to do even better. We then follow the 5 Foundations school improvement process to implement the attendance plan and ultimately improve the lives of children and families we work with.



Foundation 1
Whole School Thinking
Culture & Climate

The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. An escalated approach ensures the school has a deeply embedded and consistent whole school approach to improving attendance.



Foundation 2
Supportive Policies,
Systems and Processes

The approach to improving attendance is built on solid policies, systems and processes; this ensures sustainable and continuous improvement drives practice. Succession planning is built around an effective systems leadership model - rather than that of an individual Attendance Leader. The Attendance Policy drives school practice, it is deeply embedded in daily practise and ensures the school sets, and maintains, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.



Foundation 3
Professional Learning
Staff Development

The school prioritises developing a fully engaged team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. Through this development the Attendance Leader will raise the status of attendance and ensure improved attendance is both sustained and continuous. CPD will support staff at all levels to fully understand their role in supporting attendance. The development of external partnerships will support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.



Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. A rigorous and effective attendance cycle ensures the Attendance Leader not only captures key information but also further understands the 'deeper roots' that creates barriers regarding attendance to school.



Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance - this is deeply embedded in an evidence-based approach. The school has effective routines in place that are followed by staff. Staff at all levels within the school understand the 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance and this is supported through a systematic approach. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The MAT Board

The Mat 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
- Monitoring will be conducted through LAC performance and evaluation and safeguarding meetings with link governors reporting to these committees.

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- 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 senior leader responsible for whole school attendance 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

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
- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rebecca Knipe and can be contacted via 01539 65165 or r.knipe@dallamschool.co.uk

4.4 The Student Services Officer

The student services 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 in the local authority to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/senior leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Send and monitor first day absence contact using Synergy
- Contact parents/carers regarding support needed to improve attendance
- Meet with families to offer support to improve attendance
- Liaise with pastoral staff to ensure support for families with declining attendance

The student services officer is Karen Mason and can be contacted via the attendance portal on the Synergy app, by calling 01539 65165 or emailing k.mason@dallamschool.co.uk

4.5 Form tutors and class teachers

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for morning sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), using the school system 'Synergy' In the afternoon class teachers are responsible for the afternoon register that is taken after lunch for period 4.

During the school day, registers are taken within the first five minutes of each lesson and recorded using the school Synergy system.

4.6 Parent/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent/carer, 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 scheduled school day on time.
- Message the school using Synergy to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contacts number for their child
- Ensure that routine appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and only exceptional appointments are made during the school day
- Keep to any attendance monitoring contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting either the student services officer, designated senior leader or the pastoral team who will be able to assist with in school support services or utilises the local Early Help offer to support the family

4.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Sixth Form students should call the school to report their absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

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 each school school period. 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:

- 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 day starts at 8.50am and ends at 3.15pm

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

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.25pm.

In order to maintain good attendance for all pupils in school, Dallam School will follow the 5 foundations guidance on maintaining good attendance and use the 19 day approach. This means that attendance will be explained using number of days absent rather than a percentage.

This approach will provide a framework for school, parents and pupils to assess attendance and provide timely and appropriate support and intervention when pupils are absent from school. (Appendix 2)

5.2 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 8.45am, or as soon as practically possible, by school Synergy message, choosing the attendance option. Alternatively, parents may call school reception and speak to the student services officer if this is not possible.

- If no notification is received, the student services officer will send email and text reminders via school Synergy to ask for the reasons for unplanned absence from school.
- If no reason is given by the afternoon session, the pastoral team will ring parents to enquire.
- If no contact can be made, an unauthorised code will be recorded on the school registers for that day.
- If a student has an absence longer than three days without a reasonable explanation, the student services officer may conduct a home visit for safeguarding purposes.

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 extended 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.

5.3 Planned absence

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

Planned absences should be notified to the student services officer via school Synergy at least 24 hours beforehand

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.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Pupils are given a short grace period between lessons to arrive on time before registers close.
- Pupils who arrive after that time will be recorded as late using the appropriate cod, teaching staff will record the minutes late on the register.
- Pupils who are regularly late to registration will be warned by staff that they will incur a lateness sanction using the whole school behaviour system.
- Persistent lateness will be monitored and analysed as part of the attendance process and will form part of plans to support families of pupils who have persistent lateness to school sessions as we know that this has an impact on progress and attainment and a sense of belonging to the school.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact 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 will continue to contact throughout the school day.
- Use of the school graduated response processes (Appendix 5)
- If the student is identified as a vulnerable young person, the school may conduct a home visit as necessary or contact the police if the safety of the pupil could be compromised through not attending school
- 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
- Contact 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: Issue a notice to improve, penalty notice(see section 5.2 below)

5.6 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 via half termly attendance reports and through regular progress reviews during each academic year.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

6.1 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 (usually as part of a medical or mental health need in conjunction with medical evidence)
- 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.

We define ‘exceptional circumstances’ as an unexpected and unavoidable circumstance that prevents a pupil from attending school, In such cases, consideration will be given to the cultural needs and the family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases, granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the leave needs to be taken during term time

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 four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible on the school website <https://www.dallamschool.co.uk/school/attendance-and-behaviour/>. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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, barges

(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

6.2 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

7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

At Dallam School we want students to feel part of a positive school culture, we recognise good school attendance as part of our wider rewards policy that includes;

- Recognising students who have attended school in line with our expectations of 95% with letters and certificates and reward points for good attendance
- Recognising those students who have improved attendance via letters and reward points
- Invitations to school celebration events and rewards trips will include attendance as a marker of success
- Regular praise in form time and via form teacher input
- Display in school

8. Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Dallam School recognises that pupils may have complex barriers to attending school regularly.

- We will work with families to identify possible barriers to attending school
- We will create plans for phased returns to school where necessary using our time limited 'Woodlands' provision to support pupils
- We will liaise with local authority partners that support school attendance to support families
- We will engage where necessary with Home and Hospital tuition providers to support pupils with complex barriers
- We will work with alternative providers in exceptional circumstances to provide access to education
- We will use Early Help processes to identify and support the wider needs of the pupil or family

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

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.

Pupils who are absent due to mental or physical ill health will be supported using the same processes identified in 7.1

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

Pupils who are returning to school after lengthy absences will be supported using the woodlands area of school to support a phased return to classes. This will be a time limited offer designed to support a return to classes and will be personalised for each pupil and family. Regular reviews of the provision will be scheduled so that pupils are successful

9. Attendance Monitoring

Dallam School uses school Synergy to monitor and track attendance patterns and issues for pupils. Using the Attend module the student services officer and designated senior leader will identify interventions, whole school patterns and trends and ensure that whole school attendance is high.

9.1 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.

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.

9.2 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

9.3 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 severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- 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

9.4 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)
- Send timely reminders as part of the 19-day response to parents to ensure good attendance

10. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the LAC.

11. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- SEND policy
- Rewards policy
- Equality objectives

Appendix 1 – Attendance codes

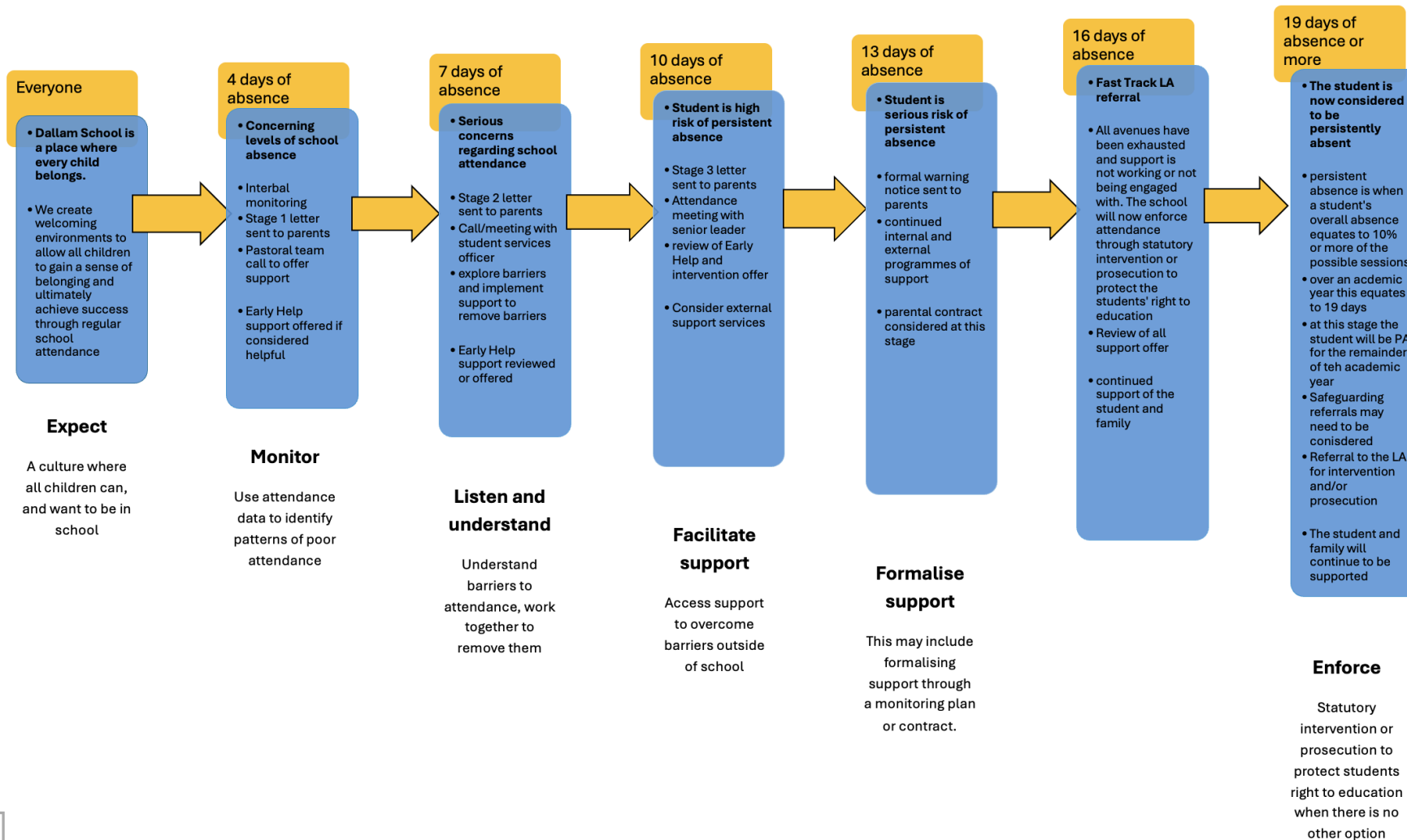
The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 – 19-day Escalation



Appendix 3 – Half Termly Report to Parents (example)

Attendance and Punctuality report – September 2025 to March 2026

Dear parent/carer,

The DFE: Working Together to Improve School Attendance document has now replaced all guidance on school attendance. Under the new guidance educational settings are encouraged to share attendance information with parents. The aim of this letter is to share the attendance of your child from September 2024 to March 2025, the letter also refers to bespoke terminology used within the DFE paper that parents should be aware of.

Persistent Absence - attendance of 90% or below is recognised as Persistent Absence (PA) and equates to 19 days missed over a school year. Once a child has been absent for 19 days, or more, they will remain Persistently Absent for the remainder of the academic year.

Risk of Persistent Absence – a child will be identified as Risk of Persistent Absence if their attendance falls between 10 to 18 days missed education during any period of the school year.

Severe Absence – any child who has an attendance of 50% or below will be classified as Severe Absence.

Percentage Attendance September to March.	
Days lost to education – September to March.	
Number of Late Marks accumulated – September to March.	

Going to school regularly is important for your child's future. Parents are responsible for making sure their children receive full-time education. At Dallam School we strive to achieve the national expectations for attendance and to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

The school is the first place to discuss any attendance problems, the school can agree an attendance plan with you to improve your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Miss R Knipe

Appendix 4 – Example Staged Response Letter

EG below 94% or 4 days

«Parental_addressee»

«AddressBlock»

Date

Important Information Regarding Your Child’s Attendance: 4 days absent Concern Letter «Forename» «Legal_Surname» («Reg»)

Dear «Parental_Salutation»,

I am writing to you as I am concerned about «Forename»’s attendance at school. I can see that «Forename»’s has missed 4 days of school and is now at 94% and therefore requires improvement.

Whilst we appreciate that in exceptional circumstances there are times when absence is unavoidable, we would ask that «Forename» does not take days off for the following reasons:

- minor ailments such as a: cough; cold; runny nose; sore throat; headache; stomach ache; aching muscles; or slight temperatures
- holidays in school term time
- medical appointments other than emergencies during school term time (dentist and doctor)

Poor attendance could result in the following issues for «Forename»:

- inability to learn and achieve their potential because of missed lesson time
- missing out on opportunities through our personal development curriculum
- difficulty with maintaining friendships

As a school, we seek to work with parents in getting their children into school regularly. You play a vital role in achieving that success as we do. Therefore, please work with us by ensuring that «Forename»’s attendance increases back to an acceptable level.

Although «Forename» may have had valid reasons for their previous absences this academic year, I will contact you to arrange a teams meeting to discuss ways to prevent any potential future absences and support «Forename» in improving their attendance for the remainder of the academic year.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 5 – Graduated Response

Graduated approach to monitoring absence including vulnerable pupils at Dallam School

At Dallam School we are committed to supporting our children to attend school regularly so they can aspire and flourish. Please see below our graduated approach to monitoring and maintaining regular attendance at Dallam School:

Wave of Intervention	What?	By Whom?
Wave 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First day Synergy message to parent carers of all absent pupils if no notification of absence has been received by 9.20am. • If first day Synergy message is not answered, calls are made asking parent carer about their child's absence. • On day 2 of absence, this process is repeated. However, if parents do not answer or respond to messages left, phone calls to other contacts on the school system will be attempted. If this proves to be unsuccessful, the matter will be escalated to wave 2. • Any absence calls received by school are logged and recorded on Synergy registers • Attendance data is tracked and logged weekly for all pupils below 19 days or 90% (persistently absent). • Attendance reviewed weekly for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent using the 19-day escalation process 4, 7, 10, 13, 16-day monitoring • During the weekly review process, individual attendance certificates of persistently absent pupils, or pupils whose attendance has unexpectedly become a concern are reviewed. Action plans for these children are updated and shared with Assistant Headteacher and Safeguarding Leads. • Action plans highlight children who are vulnerable. • Actions are carried out escalating from initial phone call of concern to letter of concern and informal meeting request. • Exercise completed with children whose attendance is of concern to identify any unmet safeguarding needs (Pastoral staff) • If parents attend an informal meeting, they will be asked whether they require early help. If they respond that they do require early help, this information is passed to HoY to arrange for pastoral interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Services Officer • Pastoral staff • Assistant Head Teacher • Woodlands Staff
Wave 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a child has been absent without contact for a period of 2/3 days a home visit may be conducted for vulnerable and at-risk children, this home visit may be conducted sooner. • Home visits are also carried out in the event of a reported absence which has extended beyond a reasonable period expected for that illness and it has not been possible to contact the parent to ascertain why the child has not returned to school or obtain any further update. • If home visits are unsuccessful, a letter-headed note is left at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student services officer • Assistant Head Teacher • Safeguarding lead • Headteacher

	<p>the home address. The procedure for non-response to notes left is indicated in wave 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes of home visits are logged on CPOMS and shared with safeguarding leads. • If attendance remains a concern (following either non-attendance at informal meeting offered, early help declined, or early help interventions have been in place for a minimum of 6 weeks) Fast Track processes can start as outlined in wave 3. 	
<p>Wave 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If all attempts to contact the parent carer fail (no response to phone calls or notes left at home visits) the matter is escalated to the /Assistant Head Teacher and DSL. They will alert/seek advice from Children's Services/The Police or the Family Support Worker/Social Worker if already known to these services. • If attempts to improve attendance have not been successful, FAST Track stage 2 will be triggered. • Parent/carers will be invited to a formal attendance meeting • If there is no improvement following the Formal Meeting a Formal Warning Letter will be sent and ultimately a referral to the Education Legal Intervention Team will be made. • This process currently includes earlier intervention from the Education Legal Intervention Team who may contact the parent at the point of referral to discuss any issues affecting attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student services officer • Assistant Head Teacher • Safeguarding lead • Headteacher