



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Our mission statement:

We aim to provide a positive learning experience in a safe and respectful environment. We strive to teach an inspiring and inclusive curriculum that promotes a love of learning. As a Christian school, we endeavour to develop the spiritual and moral values of all members of the St. Matthew's family, and a meaningful, loving relationship with God. We want our children to be cheerful and independent individuals who reach their potential and are proud of their achievements. We hope to develop confident, caring citizens who are well prepared to enjoy happy and rewarding lives.

Our motto: Live, Love, Learn

Policy Reviewed	
Date	By Whom
May 2025	Governors of the Resources Committee
Date for next review: May 2026	

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive their entitlement of a full-time education in order for each pupil to achieve their true potential.

We recognise that poor attendance can result in lower attainment. The DfE has a wealth of data over time which clearly demonstrates that children with higher rates of attendance have the highest attainment at the end of primary and secondary school.

Poor attendance can also impact on the personal, social and emotional development of pupils. Further information from the DfE shows associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms, including crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

We therefore strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment in which each member of the school community feels wanted and safe. Staff will work alongside family members, and their children, to ensure that pupils at our school want to come to school every day and on time.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation to secure high levels of attendance for each child through:

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

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

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

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school;
- Leading attendance across the school;
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies;

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary;
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes;
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The School Wellbeing Mentor is responsible for:

- Inputting attendance data and reasons for absence into SIMS just after the registers close at 9:05am (all classes), 12:45pm (KS1) and 1:15pm (EYFS & KS2);
- Conducting first-day callbacks/sending a text message to ascertain the whereabouts of a child who is absent;
- Preparing, monitoring and analysing pupil level attendance data;
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher;
- Sending texts and letters to parents of children whose attendance is a cause for concern (see Appendix 2: Escalation Plan);
- Making calls and arranging meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- Working with the headteacher and LA Inclusion Officer to tackle persistent absence;
- Completing paperwork relevant to the role such as: Child Missing in Education (CME), leave of absence requests, submitting requests for Fixed Penalty Notices etc.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office. The register for the morning session opens at 8:30am and closes at 9:00am. KS1 registers for the afternoon session open at 12:30pm and close at 12:45pm. EYFS and KS2 registers open at 1:00pm and close at 1:15pm;
- Promoting good attendance through supporting whole attendance strategies;
- Reporting any patterns/absence concerns to the School Wellbeing Mentor.

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/ listen to voicemails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and pass this information to the School Wellbeing Mentor;
- Transfer calls from parents to the School Wellbeing Mentor in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance;
- Report any absence concerns to the School Wellbeing Mentor.

Parents/carers

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 to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. 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.

Parents/carers are therefore expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, and on time;
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:35am on the day of the absence, or when reasonably possible, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return;
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child;
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day;
- Keep school updated with changes to contact details.

The Inclusion Officer (Blackburn with Darwen)

The role of the inclusion officer is to work in partnership with school through termly meetings to monitor the impact of attendance strategies. When the final stage of the attendance escalation plan has been reached, it is the responsibility of the inclusion officer to utilise legal powers to enforce school attendance.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

- We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils on this register.
- We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session. See appendix 1 for DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not;
- The reason for absence;
- 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:30am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:30pm (KS1) and 1:00pm (EYFS & KS2) and will be kept open for fifteen minutes.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this.

Planned absence

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

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and parents must sign their children out of school when they leave and sign them back in on their return.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to page 7 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives after 8.30am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Pupils who arrive after 9:00am will be marked as an unauthorised late arrival. All pupils arriving late must report in at the school office before going to class. The School Wellbeing Mentor will regularly monitor punctuality and conduct phone calls and/or send letters home when appropriate. The School Wellbeing Mentor will also analyse data termly in relation to children who are persistently late and in conjunction with the Headteacher, address any ongoing issues.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call/ text the pupil's parent/carer 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 absence will be unauthorised and school will monitor this in the subsequent days;
- 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;
- Call or text the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider conducting a home visit and will post a doorstep letter asking parents to contact school. Where school have been unsuccessful in ascertaining the whereabouts of a child, the police may be contacted and a welfare check requested;
- For vulnerable pupils, home visits will be conducted by two members of staff on the first day. During the home visit, they will observe anything suspicious, or a cause for concern.

If deemed appropriate, these concerns will be passed on to external agencies for support.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, all staff are aware that if children go missing, this can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. St Matthew's C of E Primary School recognises that early intervention is key to identifying any risk and to prevent the risk of a child going missing in the future.

School is updated annually on the procedures which are to be taken in the case of a Child Missing in Education. School is required to inform the local authority about the details of:

- All children who are believed to have moved out of the Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) geographical area after the school has undertaken reasonable enquiries (to be completed within 10 school days) and the child's whereabouts have still not been confirmed.
- Children who have been absent without the school's permission for a continued period of 10 days
- Children who have been absent for a total of 15 days over a school year due to illness
- Children who have failed to return to school for 10 days beyond the expected return date following a leave of absence period
- Children who have relocated abroad
- All Gypsy Romany Traveller children who school believes have gone travelling without securing prior agreement and/or confirming a return date
- Children who are withdrawn from school, but parents are unwilling or unable to say where or how their child will continue to be educated.

In a case of CME, the school needs to make reasonable enquires and the School Wellbeing Mentor must:

- Obtain as much information as possible from parents before relocation
- Maintain contact with parents following relocation
- Confirm admission with the receiving school
- Make a home visit with another member of staff if possible
- Make general enquiries amongst friendship groups
- Establish contact with all named contacts on the child's record.

Relevant CME forms will be completed and sent to the Inclusion and Place Planning Team. Circumstances when a CME notification is not required:

- Those children who move out of the BwD and their whereabouts has been confirmed – these children will be reported to the Local Authority using a 'Deletion from School Roll Notification' form
- In 'truancy' cases where a child's unauthorised absence has already been formally referred to the Inclusion Officer
- Children with long-term medical or mental health needs whose absence has been

verified by a health professional.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via:

- Termly attendance reports
- Texts and letters for attendance that meet threshold/ trigger points (see Escalation Plan)
- Letters/texts when attendance has improved;
- Informal and formal meetings if a child's attendance continues to drop (See Escalation Plan).

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see page 5 for more detail) although we strongly encourage that these are made outside of the school day
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If a family decides to take Discretionary Leave of Absence without authorisation and the child does not return to school by the 21st day, the child may be removed from roll.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay the statutory rate as set by the Department for Education. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Education Supervision Order

An education supervision order (ESO) is a formal legal intervention once all voluntary support has been exhausted. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

Education supervision orders initially last for one year. The local authority will notify parents in writing of the intention to proceed to an ESO, and will set up a meeting to discuss it with the parent. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

Strategies for promoting attendance

We actively encourage and promote good attendance throughout school. We treat attendance as everyone's responsibility. Some of the strategies we use for rewarding and improving attendance include:

- Celebrating class weekly attendance winners during Friday's Achievement Assembly;
- Sharing weekly attendance on the school newsletter;
- Leaders meet and greet children in the yard at the start of the day, and teachers meet and greet children at classroom doors. We do this to ensure that all children get a positive interaction at the start of the day;
- Planning engaging lessons, and ensuring there are many wider opportunities planned for the children such as a range of trips and visits and special themed days in school;
- Rewarding children with excellent attendance at the end of the year. This could be a prize draw for an Amazon voucher;
- Sending well done messages/letters when attendance improves.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly at a class and school level
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly at an individual pupil level

- Conduct daily/ weekly/ fortnightly/ or monthly checks as appropriate on a pupil who is causing concern and has been escalated.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board. The school will also make use of FFT Attendance data for comparison purposes.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data weekly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families;
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Extract regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families;
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

See the Attendance Intervention Escalation Plan for the procedures for dealing with poor attendance (Appendix 2).

Arrangements for monitoring this policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually by the Headteacher and Governing Board.

Policy Adopted

Date	By Whom
March 2024	Achievement Committee
Date for next review: March 2025	

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Authorised absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence

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

Other codes

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

Appendix 2: St Matthew's Attendance Escalation Plan

Stage One: Universal Support		
Thresholds/triggers	Strategies to be used (Please note that these strategies will continue to be in place for all pupils, irrespective of where they are on the escalation plan.)	Monitoring procedures
0 – 2.5 days absent (0- 5 sessions)	<p>Communicating expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reminders of the importance of good attendance, through the school newsletter, website, assemblies etc. <p>Rewards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly attendance announcements in Achievement Assembly Termly attendance award End of year attendance award and prize draw <p>Direct contact with parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First day of absence phone calls/texts Half-termly attendance letters sent out to all parents giving attendance percentages Requests for term-time holidays to be declined, unless there are exceptional circumstances <p>Curriculum/ teaching and learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting and greeting the children daily for a positive interaction Planning engaging and exciting lessons Taking children on trips/visits linked to learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance tracked through SIMS monitored weekly at individual, class and school level. Attendance tracked half-termly and annually at an individual and group level to identify patterns/ concerns Class teachers/office staff/ support staff to be on alert for any absence patterns



Stage Two: Initial support

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
<p>Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 days absent (6 sessions) • Continued late arrivals despite initial text 	<p>Continue to give the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One.</p> <p>In addition to this:</p> <p>Direct contact with parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text message issued. Parents/carers invited to discuss any concerns if they wish to do so. • Late letter issued <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify if there is anything needed to be put in place for the child e.g. friendship groups, breakfast club etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance tracked through SIMS weekly at individual, class and school level. • Class teachers to closely monitor pupil.



Stage Three: Targeted support

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
<p>Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met:</p> <p>6 days absent (12 sessions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued late arrivals despite initial text Continued unexplained or unauthorised absences 	<p>Continue to give the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One.</p> <p>In addition to this:</p> <p>Direct contact with parents/carers/child/teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second late warning letter issued Parents requested to attend a meeting in school to discuss attendance with HT and School Wellbeing Mentor HT/School Wellbeing Mentor to liaise with class teacher to explore barriers to attendance/ concerns. School Wellbeing Mentor to inform Inclusion officer at Termly meeting <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Individual attendance plan</u> initiated - support will be offered in line with this plan Consider the external agencies that can address the individual needs of the pupil/family and make referrals as required. Possibilities include: school nurse, FSW, WISH, Food bank, Breakfast club etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance tracked through SIMS weekly at individual, class and school level. Class teachers to closely monitor pupil. Review plan as and when needed.



Stage Four: Enhanced Targeted Support for those at risk of becoming persistently absent

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
<p>Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days absent (20 sessions) • Strategies introduced at stage three have failed to improve attendance • Continued late arrivals despite support offered at previous tiers • Continued unexplained or unauthorised absences despite support offered at previous tiers 	<p>Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One and beyond.</p> <p>Direct contact with parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third warning letter issued and further meeting will be held with HT and School Wellbeing Mentor to discuss the need for a parenting contract. <p>Parenting Contract: A parenting contract will be put into place which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a statement by parents/carers that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract; • a statement by the school/local authority/agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract. <p>Support</p> <p>During the review, those involved will identify whether any additional support could be offered by the school or partner agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School to liaise with the local authority regularly to support any measures that are being taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance tracked through MIS • School Wellbeing Mentor to complete daily checks on the pupil's data • Class teachers to offer more direct support as needed • Review monthly (period of 3months)



Stage Five: Use of Parental Responsibility Measures

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
<p>Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 days absent (30 sessions) • Parenting contract has been breached and attendance has not improved. • Any of the thresholds for legal action have been met 	<p>Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One and beyond</p> <p>Enforcement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School will refer the case to the local authority. • Local authority to utilise appropriate legal powers to enforce attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance tracked through MIS • SWM to do daily checks on the pupil's data • Class teachers to maintain regular individual support as required

Appendix 3: Communication with parents

Text message – to be sent when a child has missed three days of school (six sessions, 15 hours of learning).

X has missed 3 days of school so far this year. This means they have lost 15 hours of learning. Please do everything you can to improve their attendance.

Letters

Warning Letter 1: Trigger 4 days or 8 sessions missed

FOR RECEPTION CHILDREN ONLY

To the parent/carer of x,

We monitor school attendance and punctuality daily, as your child's learning and wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that working together with parents/carers is the best way to result in positive attendance outcomes for our children and ask that you support us with ensuring your child regularly attends and is on time.

In cases of persistently low attendance, or if children are regularly late to school, schools have a duty to act. Attendance in school is a high priority.

Since September, we have noticed that your child has missed 4 days (8 sessions) of school. This is the same as 20 hours of lost learning time.

Excellent attendance is especially crucial for children in their first year of 'big school' as they are learning vital knowledge such as phonics (letters and sounds, the building blocks of reading), numbers and counting. They are also developing vital social skills such as building relationships and managing their emotions.

When a child is not in school they start to develop holes in their learning and development. A Reception child missing days of school here and there means they are missing learning certain phonics and numbers. This can have a lasting impact on a child's learning in years to come as teachers try to build on a foundation that either isn't there or is not secure. It can take some children years to catch up this lost learning. Some children never do.

We recognise that in their first year of school, young children are likely to catch coughs and colds from the other children in their class as they build up their immune systems. **Even when your child is slightly unwell you should still bring them to school.** We will always call you and ask you to collect your child if we think they are not well enough to be in school.

We will therefore be monitoring your child's attendance closely. Should your child's attendance continue to drop, we will write to you again and invite you in for a meeting to see what support we can offer you.

We appreciate your support with improving your child's attendance and if we can help in any way by offering you any support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes

Warning Letter 1: Trigger 4 days or 8 sessions missed

FOR CHILDREN IN YEARS 1-6 ONLY

To the parent/carer of x,

We monitor school attendance and punctuality daily, as your child's learning and wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that working together with parents/carers is the best way to result in positive attendance outcomes for our children and ask that you support us with ensuring your child regularly attends and is on time.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their potential. Each child's attendance is monitored daily and the school seeks to work actively with parents to ensure that a regular pattern is maintained.

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 96% (no more than 8 days or 16 sessions missed) throughout a pupil's schooling.

In cases of persistently low attendance, or if children are regularly late to school, schools have a duty to act. Attendance in school is a high priority.

Since September, we have noticed that your child has missed 4 days (8 sessions) of school. This is the same as 20 hours of lost learning time.

When a child is not in school or they are late, they develop holes in their learning. This can have a lasting impact on a child's learning in future years as teachers try to build on a foundation that either isn't there or is not secure. It can take some children years to catch up this lost learning. Some children never do.

If X continues to miss this much learning time, they will find it extremely difficult to keep up with the rest of the class. I am concerned that this could ultimately switch them off school altogether.

We will therefore be monitoring your child's attendance closely. Should your child's attendance continue to drop, we will write to you again and invite you in for a meeting to see what support we can offer you.

We appreciate your support with improving your child's attendance and if we can help in any way by offering you any support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes

Warning Letter 2: Trigger 6 days/ 12 sessions missed

To the parent/carer of x,

We wrote to you recently informing you that your child's attendance was being monitored as it was a concern.

As mentioned in the previous letter, regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their potential. Each child's attendance is monitored weekly and the school seeks to work actively with parents to ensure that a regular pattern is maintained.

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 96% (no more than 8 days or 16 sessions missed) throughout a pupil's schooling.

This letter serves as a reminder of your legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school is a potential safeguarding issue as this means that your child's educational needs are not being met. This could be classed as a form of neglect.

Since September, we have noticed that your child has missed 6 days (12 sessions) of school. This is the same as 30 hours of lost learning time.

As a result of this, we would like to invite you for a meeting to discuss this concern further and offer you some support. We will work together to create an individual attendance plan.

Meeting Date & Time:

We hope to see you at the meeting. If this date and time is not convenient, please get in touch and we will rearrange it to a time that better suits you. Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes

Warning Letter 3: Trigger 10 days/ 20 sessions (Parental Contract)

To the parent/carer of x,

We wrote to you recently informing you that your child's attendance was being monitored as it was a cause for concern. We have since met with you and offered some support to encourage better attendance, and have created an individual attendance plan.

This letter serves as a reminder of your legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. According to school records, **your child's attendance has continued to drop.**

Since September, your child has missed 10 days of school (20 sessions). This is the same as 50 hours of lost learning time.

We have a duty of care to meet with you further to discuss setting some targets and drawing up a parental contract in order to improve attendance.

As discussed in our previous meeting, regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their full potential. Each child's attendance is monitored weekly and the school seeks to work actively with parents to ensure that a regular pattern is maintained.

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 96% throughout a pupil's schooling.

This letter serves as a reminder of your legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school is a potential safeguarding issue as this means that your child's educational needs are not being met. This could be classed as a form of neglect.

Due to your child's attendance being a significant concern, the following meeting has been arranged:

Meeting Date & Time:

If this date and time is not convenient, please get in touch and we will rearrange it to a time that better suits you. Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes

Warning Letter 4: Trigger 15 days/ 30 sessions (Inclusion Officer referral)

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – Referral to the Inclusion Officer

To the parent/carer of x,

We wrote to you recently to inform you that your child's attendance was being monitored as it was a cause for concern.

In addition, we invited you to a meeting on _____ to offer support and guidance on this issue, and to put an Individual Attendance Plan in place. As your child's attendance continued to drop, a follow up meeting was held on _____ to implement a parental contract and small targets were set to improve attendance.

You failed to attend/attended these meetings.

As a school, we have continued to monitor your child's attendance and are very concerned that their attendance has not improved and has continued to drop. **So far this school year (since September)**, your child has missed xxx sessions. This is the same as xxx hours of lost learning time.

Due to this, the case will be referred to the Local Authority's Inclusion Officer.

This letter serves as a reminder of your legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. School will no longer authorise your child's absences and will require you to supply medical evidence.

Unauthorised absences can result in legal intervention which may consist of Education Supervision Orders, Educational Prosecution, Parenting Orders and Fixed Penalty Notices.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at school, or please contact the LA's Inclusion Team as follows:

Inclusion Team
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
5th Floor | 10 Duke Street | Blackburn | BB2 1DH
Tel: 01254 666852

Best wishes

Letter: Failure to attend meetings

To the parent/carer of x,

You were invited to attend two attendance meetings on [date] and [date] to discuss your child's attendance.

Unfortunately, you failed to attend the meeting and to inform school that you would not be attending. You must contact school to arrange another meeting. Failure to do so may result in a referral into the Inclusion Team at Blackburn with Darwen, and potential legal action.

Please contact school and confirm a meeting date within seven days of receiving this letter.

Best wishes

Letter: Late letter

To the parent/carer of x,

As part of our commitment to making sure all children achieve their potential, we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During this monitoring we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are therefore writing to you due to your child's current number of late sessions:

Attendance	<current attendance> %
Number of late sessions	<current AA> %
Number of "unauthorised" lates	<current UA> %

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being late to school::

5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school a year = 15 hours of learning time
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school a year = 33 hours of learning time
15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school a year = 50 hours of learning
20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year = 65 hours of learning
30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school a year = 95 hours of learning

We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. If your child arrives 30 minutes after the register has been taken, they will have an "unauthorised" late mark – this is the same as an "unauthorised absence".

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance and the support school can offer, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Best wishes