

This policy is extracted from our Behaviour Policy Suite

CHAPTER 3: MANAGING ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential for pupils' safety, wellbeing, learning and long-term outcomes. This policy reflects the statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, and Herefordshire Council attendance procedures. It sets out how Oak Meadow Federation will promote good attendance, identify concerns early, work supportively with families and use legal intervention only where support is not successful, not engaged with, or not appropriate.

3.1 Expectations and responsibilities

Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. Pupils are expected to attend every day unless they are too unwell to do so or there is another authorised reason. The school will maintain a welcoming culture, communicate attendance expectations clearly, listen to families, identify barriers and put timely support in place. Governors will monitor attendance, challenge patterns and ensure leaders meet their statutory duties.

3.2 Registration, absence recording and punctuality

Attendance and admission registers will be completed accurately using the national attendance and absence codes. Registers are taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session and any amendment will show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the change, the date of amendment, and the name and position of the person making it. Registers open at 8.40am at Brampton Abbots and 8.45am at Bridstow. Pupils should arrive by 8.50am at Brampton Abbots and 8.55am at Bridstow. Arrival after these times is recorded as late (L). Registers close at 9.30am; arrival after this is recorded as late after registration (U), which counts as an unauthorised absence. The school day ends at 3.05pm at Brampton Abbots and 3.15pm at Bridstow. Attendance register entries are retained for six years.

3.3 First-day absence procedures

If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence by 9.30am, giving the reason and expected return date. If no reason has been received, the office will follow first-day calling procedures, as summarised in Appendix 2. If contact cannot be made, or there are safeguarding concerns, staff may contact emergency contacts, undertake a welfare check or home visit, and follow the Children Missing Education and safeguarding procedures where appropriate. Once the reason for absence is known, the correct attendance code will be entered as soon as possible and no later than five school days after the relevant session.

3.4 Authorising absence and term-time leave

The school may authorise absence only where the reason is valid and evidenced where this is reasonable and necessary, for example illness, medical appointments that cannot reasonably be arranged outside school time, religious observance, unavoidable family circumstances or other exceptional circumstances. Medical evidence will not be

requested unnecessarily. Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right and may be authorised only by the Headteacher in the specific circumstances permitted by the 2024 regulations, including exceptional circumstances. Requests should be made in advance using the school form and will not be authorised retrospectively.

If leave is taken without authorisation, or if a pupil is absent without an acceptable reason, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period. Before any referral, the school will consider the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate, whether the threshold has been met, and whether any duties under the Equality Act 2010 make enforcement inappropriate. Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child. A first notice is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days; a second notice within three years is £160 with no reduction; a third or further offence within three years may lead to prosecution rather than another penalty notice.

The headteacher is only permitted to authorise leave during term-time in exceptional circumstances and leave may only be granted if:

- a Leave of Absence Request Form (available from the school office – please ask the school office if you would like any assistance with completing the form) has been fully completed, explaining clearly why any absence during term-time is necessary;
- the application for planned absence has been made at least six weeks before the date requested.

Leave will not be granted retrospectively.

If leave is taken after the school has refused authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (code G). After 5 days (10 unauthorised sessions), Herefordshire Local Authority will be notified, and a Penalty Notice will be issued per person per child.

For greater clarity on this process, please read the Herefordshire Local code of conduct:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory-record/5514/penalty-notice-education-local-code-of-conduct-2024>

3.5 Monitoring and tiered attendance support

Attendance is monitored at least weekly by school leaders and the office team, with patterns reviewed by leaders and governors so that support can be targeted to pupils or cohorts who need it most. We use a graduated, supportive response which reflects the Attendance Support Plan flow chart in Appendix 1: Stage 1 when attendance falls below 93%, Letter 1 and monitoring; Stage 2 if improvement is not seen, Letter 2 and a meeting with the Head of School; Stage 3 if concerns continue, Letter 3, Headteacher meeting and an attendance support plan; Stage 4 if parents do not engage or attendance does not improve, referral for Local Authority action. Improvement will be recognised positively, including through individual encouragement or congratulatory messages where appropriate.

3.6 Support before enforcement

Where attendance concerns arise, the school will first seek to understand the barriers affecting the child and family. Support may include regular check-ins, class teacher or

senior leader meetings, Early Help, health advice, SEND support, pastoral support, breakfast club, transport discussion, reasonable adjustments, or a written attendance support plan with clear actions and review dates. We will be particularly mindful of pupils with SEND, medical needs, mental health difficulties, pupils with a social worker, pupils supported by youth justice services, young carers and pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

Where a pupil is persistently absent, severely absent, missing education, or informal support does not lead to improvement, the school will work with the Local Authority and other agencies. Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions; severe absence means missing 50% or more. Legal intervention, including attendance contracts, notices to improve, penalty notices, education supervision orders, parenting orders or prosecution, may be considered where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with, or not appropriate.

3.7 Children absent due to illness or additional needs

Where absence is linked to illness, medical treatment, anxiety, mental health or SEND, the school will work sensitively with parents, professionals and the Local Authority to support attendance while safeguarding the child's right to education. Medical evidence may be requested where absence is frequent or prolonged, but only where it is reasonable and necessary. Part-time timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest time necessary, with parental agreement, regular review and a clear plan for return to full-time education.

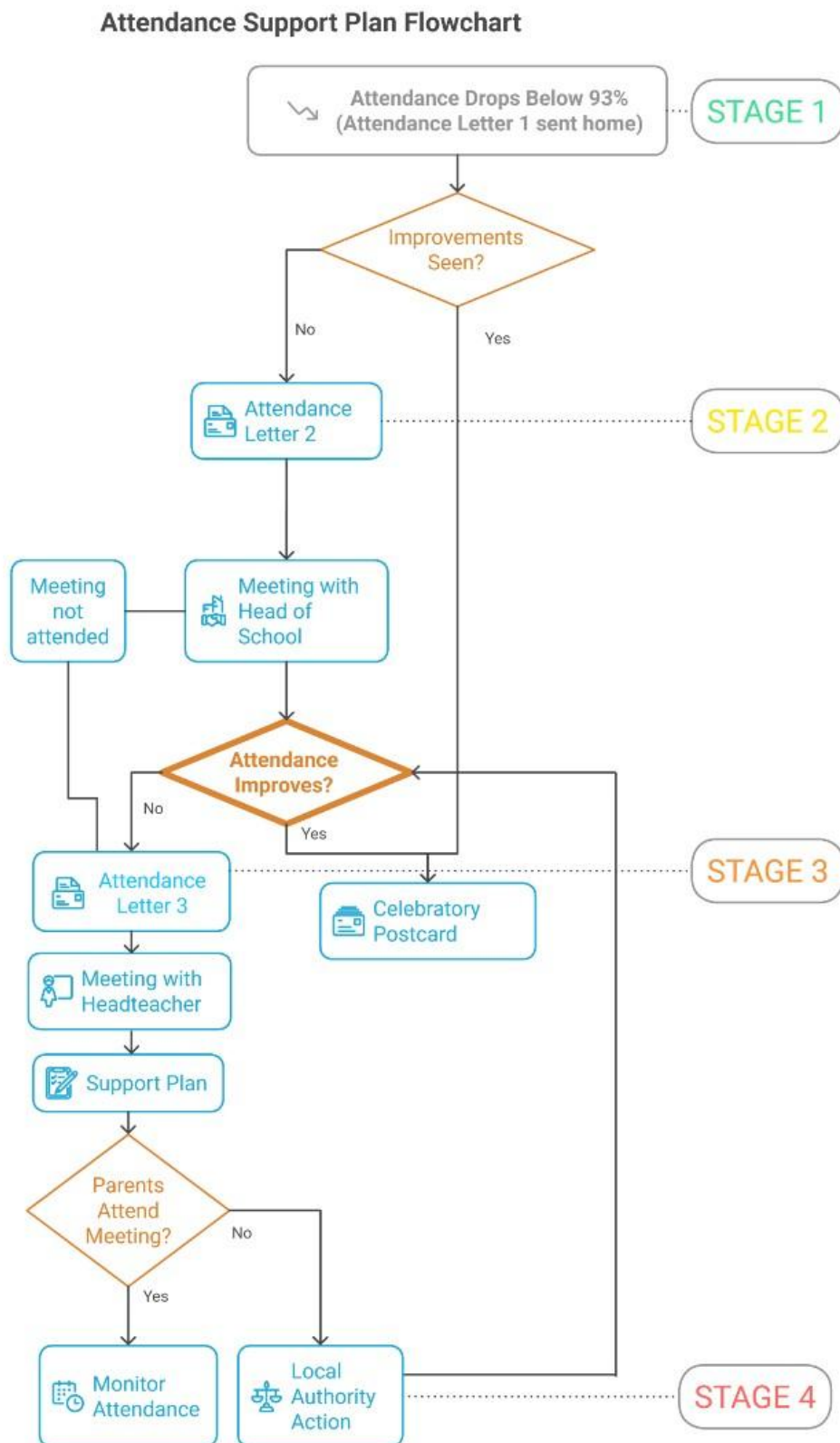
3.8 Children missing education, elective home education and moving schools

The school will follow safeguarding and Children Missing from Education procedures where a child's whereabouts cannot be established, absence is unexplained or there are concerns about a pupil's safety. The school will make reasonable enquiries, keep accurate records and notify the Local Authority as required. Where parents choose elective home education or a child moves school, the school will follow statutory processes before removing a pupil from roll.

3.9 Show or traveller families

We are very aware of the needs of our show/traveller families, who have a traditional way of life which means that they travel around the country at different times of year. These children will be catered for by ensuring that provision is made for either off-site learning (school-provided work packs, use of ICT and liaison with LA support services) or dual registration when children are not attending school. Children will be kept on roll, and the appropriate attendance codes used (B – Educated Off site, D – Dual registration and T – traveller absence).

Appendix 1: Attendance Support Plan Flowchart



Appendix 2: Bridstow Attendance Flow Chart

Bridstow Attendance Flow Chart

