



Sheffield Springs Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Attendance Policy

2018/19



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Introduction

Sheffield Springs Academy;

- Believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, committed and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their broader school community.
- Expects every student to achieve 100% attendance during an academic year.
- Believes in 'the Best in Everyone' and will work with families and give support where possible to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- Will recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

Scope

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational need they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age the last Friday in June of Year 11.

The aim of this Policy is to enable the Academy to improve student's attendance by either full and efficient Legal sanctions under section 444 of the Education Act or by referring the student and their families to the relevant agencies to access support.

Intention

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Sheffield Springs Academy are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

At Sheffield Springs Academy we give the achievement of good attendance and punctuality high priority. Students who do not attend school cannot take advantage of educational opportunities and rarely achieve their potential.

Registering students

All teaching staff are responsible for registering students within the first 10 minutes of a lesson. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

Children who are subject to Child Protection Plans or who have other serious safeguarding risks attached to them are "red flagged" in all their registers.

Red flags are used a method of communication between Academy staff and will be used in the following situations (this list is not exhaustive):

- To record information from parents as to a child's whereabouts.

planner.

Categorising Absence

3.1 Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.2 Parents should advise by telephone on each day of absence. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, verbal explanations will be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

3.3 Where students have an unacceptable level of Attendance parents will be informed in writing that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.

3.4 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received

The Attendance Officer shall be responsible for changing attendance codes early on the morning of the school day on SIMS to reflect information received from parents in order for teachers to be advised of reasons for absence. The Attendance Officers shall be responsible for first day contact to establish the reason for an unauthorised absence.

3.5 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.6 **Illness** - In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Where a student's attendance level is at an unacceptable level Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

3.7 **Medical/Dental Appointments** - Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school. Students leaving school during the school day to attend a medical/dental appointment must make prior arrangements with Student Services to collect Police Pass at the agreed time.

3.8 **Other Authorised Circumstances** this relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, or for a short period a part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

3.9 **Excluded** (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Head of Year or Behaviour Manager will make arrangements for work to be sent home. The Behaviour Manager will assist Heads of Year in collating work set by teachers for excluded students.

4.0 **Requests for term time leave of absences** Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on leave during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. The Headteacher will only authorise requests for leave during term time in very exceptional circumstances.

4.1 Parents wishing to take request leave during term time for their child must send a written request to the Headteacher before holiday arrangements are made this must be submitted to the Academy at least 4 weeks in advance. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually.

4.2 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been made the letter should state:

- If the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child may be removed from the Academy's roll if the family do not return as expected

4.3 If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, Sheffield Springs Academy will remove the Student from the Academy's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

4.4 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice.

4.5 **Religious Observance** - Sheffield Springs Academy acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this may necessitate a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

4.6 **Study Leave** Study leave may be granted for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations. The Academy will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

4.7 **Traveller Absence** The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

4.8 To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

4.9 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

5.0 When in or around Sheffield, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

5.1 Sheffield Springs Academy will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the student's school place at Sheffield Springs Academy will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

5.2 Sheffield Springs Academy can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and

- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

5.3 Sheffield Springs Academy will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

5.4 **Late Arrival to Academy** -Late Arrival Registration begins at 8.40am. The register will close at 9.30am. Students arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as 'late after registers closed' (register mark 'U'). This will count as an unauthorised absence for that school session unless a reason is provided for lateness e.g. a note from parents about an emergency doctor's appointment.

5.5 If students accrue an unacceptable amount of 'U' late marks, where an unauthorised absence has been marked within a half term parents will be subject to prosecution/fine.

5.6 On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the school reception to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

5.7 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

5.8 The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry, length of travel.

5.9 **Unauthorised absence** will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Full days absence for routine medical appointments where attendance either before or after the appointment could have been achieved.
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Failure to provide medical evidence when students attendance has dropped below 94.5%

6.0 Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from leave after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

Children Missing from Education

Sheffield Springs Academy will follow Sheffield City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol and DCSF Keeping Pupil Registers guidance when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

Sheffield Springs Academy believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Annually review the Academy's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Ensure that the Local Authority is notified of any student that is removed from roll.

Using Attendance data

6.3 Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

6.4 Every week the Attendance Team will provide all form tutors with attendance data for each student within their form group. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attendees at the top; every student will be colour coded as indicated on Appendix 1.

6.5 The Senior Leadership Team will receive a complete set of data.

6.6 Heads of Year will receive a complete set of data for their year groups.

6.7 This student level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 2).

6.8 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

6.9 Sheffield Springs Academy will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

7.0 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

7.1 Weekly attendance levels of each form will be sent to form tutors. The winning form will receive an attendance trophy and priority entry to the lunch queue.

Support Systems

7.3 The Academy recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in the Academy, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the Academy identify any additional support that may be required. All attendance officers have undergone advanced CP training and are part of the Academy's safeguarding team.

7.2 Sheffield Springs Academy also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.

7.4 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Referral to Pastoral Manager
- Attendance panels
- Completion of FCAF's
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Referral to the Academy's EWB Practitioner.

7.5 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students.

7.6 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Sheffield Springs Academy will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Legal Sanctions

7.8 Prosecution where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

7.9 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

8.0 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

8.1 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

8.2 Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

8.3 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

8.4 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

8.5 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

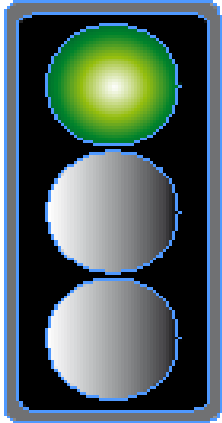
- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a leave of absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A student has accumulated an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

8.6 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days or £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the notice was issued.

8.7 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8.8 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Sheffield City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

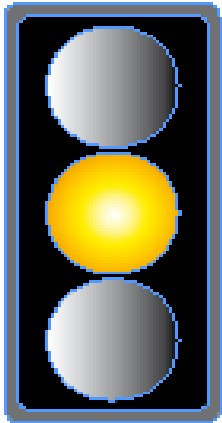
Attendance Traffic Light



Green – 0% - 4%

With this level of absence you have given yourself the best possible chance of fulfilling your academic potential.

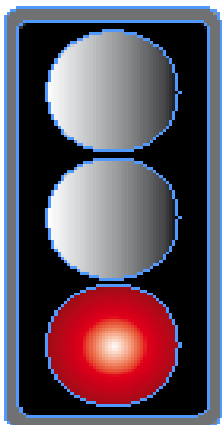
Good attendance also appeals to Colleges, Universities and Employers as it informs them that you are dedicated and reliable.



Amber – 5% -7%

With this level of absence your grades will have already started to suffer. You will have missed some important information in lessons and need to catch up!

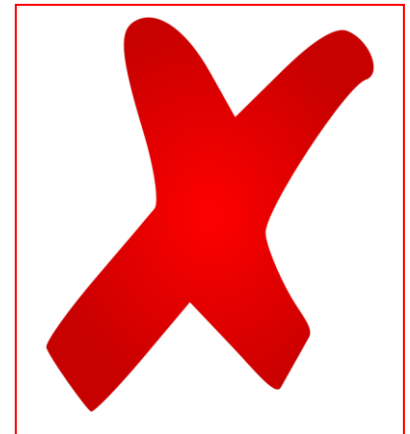
The Academy will be reviewing your absence level closely and may already be taking steps to ensure that it improves.



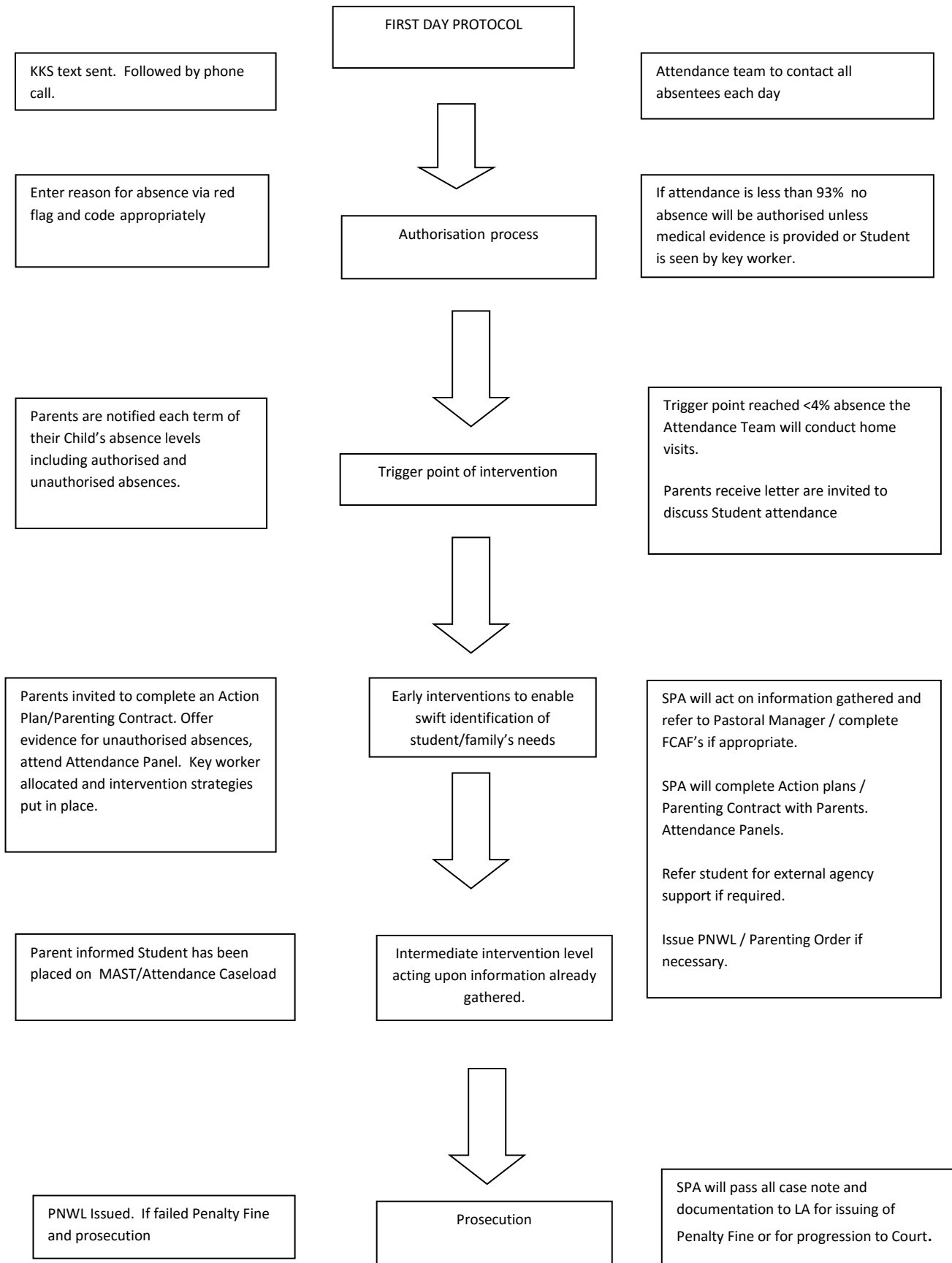
Red – Above 8%

With this level of absence your chances of success are definitely at risk. If you have been ill, the Academy will support you in doing the extra work needed to catch up.

It is likely that if you have patterns of absence or unexplained absences, the Academy will already be taking steps to ensure your attendance improves. This might include working with other agencies to support your family in helping you to improve your attendance or even taking court action.



Attendance Management



Sheffield Springs Academy Attendance Strategy

0 - 4%

Pupils whose attendance is within these parameters should be congratulated and receive positive encouragement to maintain high levels of attendance. Actions at this level are the responsibility of the Form Tutor. Information will be supplied weekly for form activities by the

- Form Tutor**
- Celebrate class achievement
 - Celebrate individual achievement
 - Verbal praise & encouragement
 - Use planners to record / celebrate / encourage attendance during weekly form activity
 - Maintain form attendance board

5-7%

Attendance at this level is beginning to cause concern. Reasons for absence may be unauthorised. Early intervention is a preventative measure.

The Form Tutors and has a key role in ensuring communication with parents via the student planner.

Year Leaders / Attendance Team to provide advice and support to ensure the pupil's needs in school are met.

The school Attendance Manager will consider the need for a parenting contract or penalty notice warning letter Formal letter to parents.

All parental contacts to be recorded.

- Form Tutor**
- Speak to child about reasons
 - Speak to parent about reason & concerns / communicate via student planner / communicate any authorisation of absence to Attendance Manager
 - Forward any pastoral concerns to Attendance Manager / Year Leader

- Year Leaders**
- Peer support with 6th formers
 - Curriculum groupings
 - Teacher deployment
 - Learning mentor or Teaching Assistant support
 - If appropriate, booster class/1:1 tuition
 - Seek school nurse support

- Attendance Manager**
- Text message / phone call for every day of absence
 - Consider if CAF / MAST intervention required
 - PSA support sought
 - Parenting Contract agreed / Action Plan to be completed- review after 4 weeks (attendance panel if no improvement)

8 -10%

There are serious concerns over attendance at this level and the pupil is at risk of becoming persistently absent (PA) or all absence is unauthorised. A more formal approach is required.

The school Attendance Manager takes the lead role in dealing with the parents to ensure they support their child's attendance.

The completion of a CAF / attendance action plan has assisted in identifying the issues that are affecting the pupils' attendance but has not yet made an impact. Targets & parenting contract (if required) agreed with parents at attendance panel.

- Form Tutor**
- Continue to speak to child about reasons
 - Maintain parental contact - Speak to parent about reason & concerns / communicate via student planner / communicate any authorisation of absence to Attendance Manager
 - Forward any pastoral concerns to Attendance Manager / Year Leader / Pastoral Manager
- Attendance Manager**
- Text message / phone call for every day of absence
 - Home visit for every absence if on PA list
 - Review Action Plan and call Attendance Panel if needed
 - Completion of a CAF
 - Implement a PSP if appropriate
 - Penalty notice warning letter sent / monitored
 - External case work support via Sheffield CYPD / MAST service

Above 10%

A pupil with this level of attendance is in a high risk group and will be identified as persistently absent (PA) once their attendance has fallen to 85%. PA list is reviewed daily.

Identification of student's need has taken place via Action Plan / CAF. A key member of staff is allocated to ensure support is available e.g. Pastoral Manager.

Child in Need meeting / legal intervention / MAST involvement to ensure parents accept their legal & moral responsibilities to support their child. Prosecution takes place whenever circumstances allow.

- Attendance Manager**
- Identify member of staff to be pupil & parents key contact in school
- Attendance panel actions / outcomes reviewed and followed up if required
 - Review Parenting Contract / Action Plan and follow up if required
 - Revisit CAF / MAST involvement
 - **Child** in Need Meeting if appropriate
 - Prosecution
 - Attendance Team make weekly contact with parent
- Pastoral Manager**
- To monitor and support child
 - Review & coordinate resources to support the pupil
 - Key contact with external support agencies (MAST)
- Year Leaders**
- Ensure that curriculum provision / support meets student's needs
 - Ensure that reintegration / support strategies are in place

Whole School Approach: School is a welcoming environment for learning to take place. Children are happy and feel safe. There are clear links between regular attendance and educational outcomes for pupils. Their health and emotional well-being needs are met. Attendance is a responsibility shared by all school staff. Parents and pupils are supported by caring staff.



Attendance letters flowchart

Absence levels above 4%

