

The Nethersole

C of E Academy

Academic Year 2023 to 2024

Attendance Policy

To be light (living in our community and reaching out beyond it) bringing out the God-colours in the world.'

Jesus said, 'You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world.' **Matthew 5:16**



Date Policy Ratified by the LAB	January 2024
Headteacher	Mrs S J Goode
Chair of Governors	Mr C Mansell
Review Date	January 2027

Introduction

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all our pupils. We promote school attendance by making our school a happy, engaging and rewarding place to learn.

Our Attendance Policy implements the

Aims

- To improve the overall attendance of children at school.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time, every day that the school is open.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including parents, pupils, teachers, and governors.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- providing a welcoming, stimulating, and safe learning environment, where pupils are happy to come into school every day and are keen to learn.
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential.
- having high expectations of our pupils and all staff.
- providing a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum.
- recognising and celebrating achievements in all areas of school life.
- providing equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life.
- providing high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies.
- providing a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning.
- providing experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural understanding.
- providing support, guidance, and training for all those who teach and work with our children.
- fostering and maintaining links with our wider community

Legislative Framework

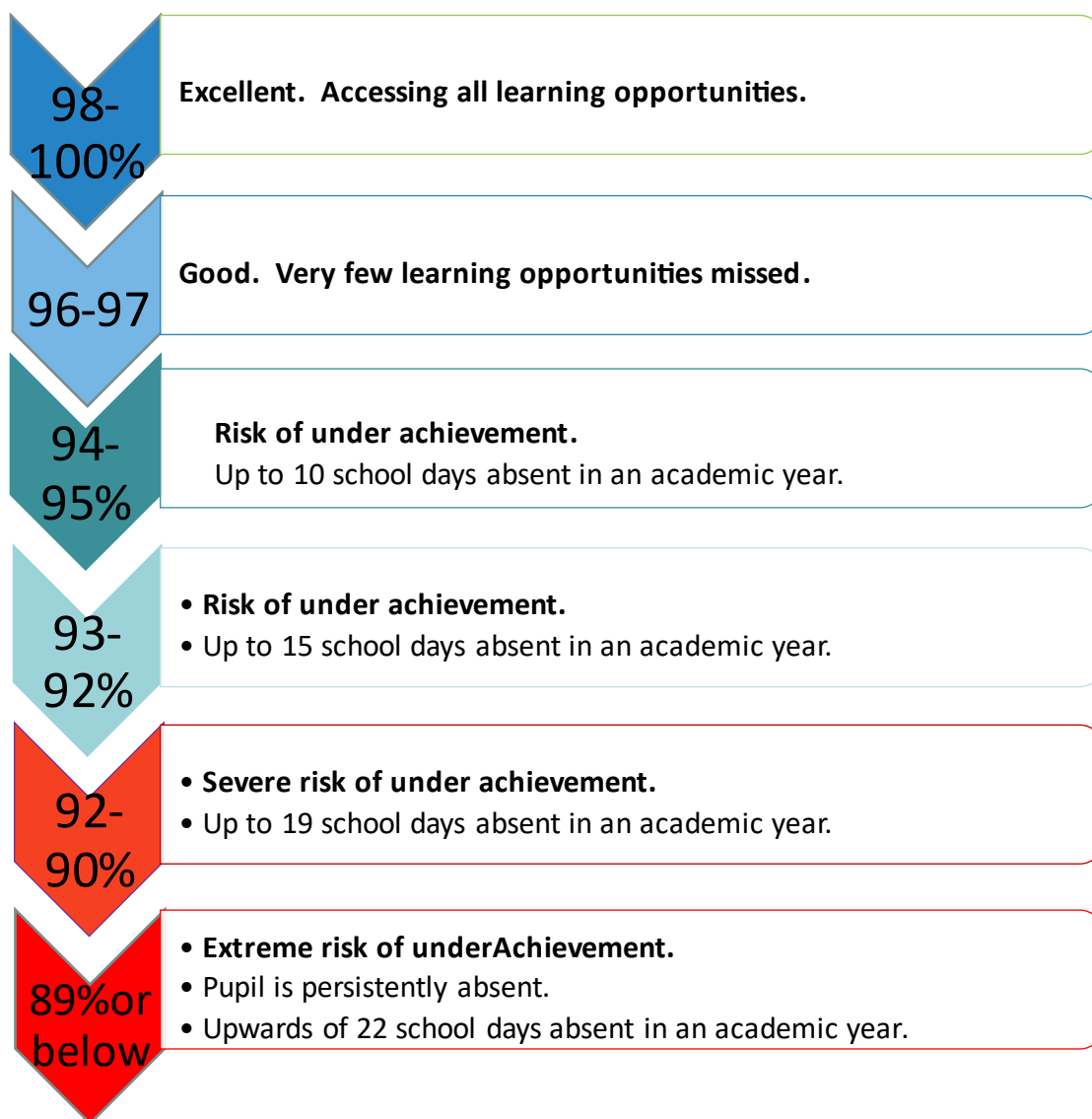
Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and fulltime basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to Warwickshire Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement. The Nethersole CofE Academy will act alongside the publication 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (5th September 2023.)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Expected Levels of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

At the Nethersole CofE Academy we expect all children to achieve attendance that is at least 96%.



Attendance Partnership Expectations

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- To attend school – every day that the school is open unless you are too ill or the school has authorised your absence.
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day, having eaten breakfast or attend breakfast club.
- To tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents and carers:

- To ensure their children attend school every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. (A list of statutory reasons/ authorised absences can be found in Appendix 2)
- To ensure contact is made with school, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their child is unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- To ensure that their children arrive in school, on time and well prepared for the school day, having eaten breakfast.
- To only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and to do this in advance in writing to the Headteacher.
- To book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- To inform school staff if they have concerns that could affect their child's attendance so appropriate support can be put in place in a timely manner.
- To work with school staff and other professionals to improve their child's attendance, when attendance falls below the expected levels identified on the previous page.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance.
- Follow up support if needed. This may come from other professionals if this is identified as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities for Attendance

- The Nethersole CofE Academy School has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues. This is the Headteacher.
- The Nethersole CofE Academy School also has an Attendance Learning Mentor with day-to-day responsibility for attendance and attendance interventions.
- Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school. For detailed roles see Appendix 3.
- Attendance matters are reviewed by the Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Attendance issues are reported, on a minimum termly basis, to the Local Academy Board.
- Attendance issues are reported on a half termly basis to the Head of School Support. The Head of School Support will support attendance reports to the main Trust Board each term.

We believe that through attending school every day, on time, children and young people will get the best possible start in life.

Procedures for persistent absence

We will follow the following process for addressing attendance concerns of all pupils. Whole School Attendance will be monitored at a minimum of half termly. The attendance of pupils falling to persistent absence levels (below 90%) will be monitored weekly.

<p>Stage 1 - Attendance Below 96% (more than 1 period of absence)</p>	<p>Stage 1 Letter - Letter of concern will be sent home advising of the concerns and who to contact in school if support is required. Offer of school-based support made.</p>
<p>Stage 2 – Attendance Falls Below 93%</p>	<p>Stage 2 Letter – to invite parents in for a meeting. Attendance will be monitored. If attendance does not improve and is at risk of falling below 90%, the offer of Early Help Support is made. If a child has more than 3 periods of absence due to illnesses - a Medical Letter is to be sent out and a Stage 1 Letter - requesting proof for future absences to be authorised. Meeting with parent / carer held to agree an Action Plan – this sets targets and a review date. Reminder of parent’s legal responsibilities.</p>
<p>Stage 3 - Attendance Fails to Improve and Remains Below 93%</p>	<p>Parents advised in writing that previous attendance target not met, and attendance remains a concern. Formal Attendance Meeting. Agree Parenting Contract to improve attendance, including target, actions, and review date. Meeting will go ahead if parents do not attend. Case discussed with Warwickshire Attendance Service Case worker - Invite / led by Warwickshire Attendance Service Case Worker.</p>
<p>Stage 4 - Attendance Fails to Improve and Targets are not met</p>	<p>Parent notified in writing. Formal Referral to Warwickshire Local Authority Statutory Attendance Service.</p>

Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of absence, several unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns, school may escalate directly to Stage 2 or 3.

Procedures for Absence

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence by 9am if possible to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30 am school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given.

School staff will telephone any parent where their child is absent, and no reason has been given to ascertain a reason for the child's absence from school. When there is no answer, this will be followed by a text message requesting contact.

If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to their telephone call, they will follow the process detailed in Appendix 1. This includes telephone calls to other emergency contacts, home visits, and referrals to the police for a safe and well check.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance guidance 2023)

It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school.

**Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (KCSIE 2023)
Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.**

Illness:

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, earaches etc, we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the above absence process.

Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes.

If you are unsure if your child should attend school, please contact the school who will offer advice and guidance and signpost you to the relevant service.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In most cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

School will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance. In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Child is absent and there are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- Child has had three periods of absence due to illness.
- Child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Child is absent and attendance is below expected levels and there is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
- Where there is a medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

Medical appointments -

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In most cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day / during the school holidays.

Where appointments must be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day / attend school prior to the appointment.

Parents may be required to provide a copy of the appointment letter or card prior to the day of the appointment.

Other reasons for absences:

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays, or child minding.

Religious Observance -

School 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 necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies maybe contacted to verify these occasions.

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.

School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in ongoing dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

School will authorise absence of Traveller children if their parent(s) are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to and has given indication that they intend to return. Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances)

- The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by those with parental responsibility. We would always notify parents with parental responsibility should such a request be made.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
 - The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.
- Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The resident parent should complete a Leave of Absence Request form available from the school office or the school website. The Head Teacher may ask parents to provide supporting evidence when assessing a parent’s case for exceptional circumstances.

Punctuality -

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer.

To access the school day we ask parents to ensure that their children are in school by 8.40am and at the latest 8.50am, when there are a range of educational activities and interventions. The formal school day starts at 8.50am.

Children arriving after 8.50am will be late for school and must report to the school office.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (Code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 9.10am.

The registers are monitored daily and to identify pupils who are arriving late and regular late arrival for school will be challenged as not acceptable.

The following procedures are put in place to resolve poor punctuality:

- 6 Late arrivals in a Half Term – Letter.
- 6 U codes in half a term - a letter sent home, offer of school support.
- 10 U codes - Stage 2 attendance letter / Meeting / Action Plan / review.
- Further U codes and attendance below 90% - referral to Warwickshire Local Authority.

Reintegration of Long-Term Absentees -

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of students learning, and positive strategies should be employed to minimise such effects.

Key Principles to consider -

- We should always keep in touch with a student / and his / her family during a long absence.
- We should always make sure he / she is welcomed back.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher / SENDCO to consider a phased return where appropriate. This needs to be considered in line with the Warwickshire LA process and procedure, which includes seeking expert advice from relevant professionals and co-ordinating a multi-agency meeting. Consideration needs to be given to any special / additional needs the pupil may have and appropriate support identified. Consideration must be given to a package of support which may include providing a mentor (staff member / student.)

Class Teachers should ensure that the pupil feels welcomed back to school in an appropriate way and take any necessary steps to support their re-integration.

Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child who is absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence

has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to an increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Every half day of absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the Headteacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Headteacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks. School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categorise absence (Appendix 2).

Use of Attendance Data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

The Nethersole CofE Academy will collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about children from their previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Appendix 1

First day absence report run to identify any children absent and no reason provided.



All late arrivals recorded and added to Arbor to complete the morning register by 9.10am.

All messages regarding pupil absence entered to Arbor by 9.20am.



Telephone call made for all children when reason unknown.
Calling completed where no reason known / inadequate reason provided.
Text message sent to follow up where no answer.

Telephone calls made to other contacts / emergency contacts when unable to make contact.



A risk assessment made as to whether a home visit needs to be undertaken for pupils absent with no reason given and no response to first day call or emergency contacts based on individual circumstances. Contact will be made with Social Workers attached to any absent pupil where first day contact has not been made.
Any child on **3rd day of absence** where no reason or an inadequate reason given will have a home visit. Home visits made and letter left if no response.



Cases identified for referral to Police for Safe and Well checks.

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e., pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days more than agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-attendance in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19) Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 3

The Nethersole C of E Academy Roles and Responsibilities for School Attendance

Name	Role	Responsibilities
BDMAT Trust Board – Trustees.	BDMAT Trust Board – Trustees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
CEO (BDMAT).	CEO (BDMAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic responsibility for oversight of Head of School Support
Head of School Support (BDMAT).	Head of School Support (BDMAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review school attendance. Support school leaders with persistent absence monitoring and share best practice across the MAT to improve attendance. Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (e.g. pupil registration, attendance registers.) Half termly reports to the Trust Board.
Schools Governors.	Schools Governors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing school attendance and checking if attendance policy and procedures are having the required impact. Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy.
Headteacher.	Headteacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorising/authorising absences. Responding to all Leave of absence requests in line with DfE guidance. Compliance with relevant legislation. Overview of clear and escalating interventions.
Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.	Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with relevant legislation. Data analysis and Strategic Plan for attendance. Implementing school policy and leading on whole school approach. Line management.
Headteacher and Attendance Mentor.	Headteacher and Attendance Mentor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of clear and escalating interventions. Evaluation of interventions. Promoting school attendance. Responsibility for links with CSAWS and the LA Statutory Team. Attendance at attendance panels. Responsibility for termly reports to Local Academy Board and half termly reports to Head of School Support.
Attendance Mentor.	Attendance Mentor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining registers. Identifying children whose absence needs further follow up action in line with the school absence procedure. Rewards and incentives. Home visits. Contacts with parents. Attendance interventions in line with the policy and procedures.

Class Teachers	Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking registers. • Promoting importance of regular school's attendance. • Providing early warning of attendance concerns. • Positive role modelling. • Following policy and procedures consistently.
School Office	School Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late arrivals. • Half termly attendance letters. • Taking absence calls. • First day calling / text messages. • Communicating with Attendance Mentor. • Entering Late Codes.