Early Years:
Attendance and Engagement Policy
2023 – 2024

Valence Primary School

Contents

Version control

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For the purpose of this policy:

1. A parent means:

- All birth parents whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

2. Regular attendance means:

- Children should attend every day the school is open and for all sessions (AM and PM sessions).
- The school therefore expects all pupils to have 100% attendance.

Linked strategies and policies:

- School Attendance Improvement Strategy 2023 – 2024
- Key Stage 1 & 2 Engagement and Attendance Policy 2023 – 2024
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award

Context

Impact – Attendance

Regular attendance in the **Early Years Foundation Stage** (EYFS) supports children's learning and development, ensures safety* and wellbeing, and they do not miss out on their entitlements and opportunities.
 *By the provision of reliable childcare (i.e. early childhood education and care).

Attendance (Academic Year)	Equals this many days absent	Equals this many weeks absent	Equals this many lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	60 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	120 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	180 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	240 lessons
70%	57 days	12 weeks	360 lessons

Impact – Lateness

Pupils are expected to arrive on time, the school is legally obliged to record the attendances of all children – pupils must be on time for registration. Being late disrupts the rhythm for attending school and jeopardises **all** children's learning (i.e. the late child and other children in their class).

Arriving to school late means children will miss:

- Important learning, which could affect their achievement. ▪ Social time to settle in class.

5 minutes late each day	3 days lost
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost

30 minutes late each day	19 days lost

Section 1:
Early Years Attendance and Engagement Policy

1. Aim:

> To ensure all children have opportunity to fulfil their potential by regularly attending school, including being on time.

> To reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

> To ensure all children have the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

2. Rationale

Children's early experiences have a profound and long-lasting impact on their well-being and happiness during childhood, as well as later life outcomes, including education, employment, health, citizenship and life satisfaction.

2.1 A strong start makes a difference

The first five years of children's lives are crucial to their development. During this period, children learn at a faster rate than at any other time in their lives[1], developing basic cognitive and socio-emotional skills* are fundamental for their future achievements in school and later on as adults. These skills are also the foundation for their general well-being – how they cope with future successes and setbacks, professionally and in their personal lives. In order to foster this development, children require ongoing interaction with, and care and attention from their parents and other caregivers (e.g. nursery school staff).

*Skills that enable individuals to accomplish particular tasks, such as reorganising emotions, and coping successfully with conflict.

2.2 Early Years are the most formative period in life

Research shows that the brain develops at an astonishing rate during a child's early years, and it is at the height of plasticity*, more than any other point in their lifetime. As a consequence, during this period, children are especially sensitive to external stimuli, such as the types of interactions they have with their caregivers (i.e. parents, childcare, school staff). Thus, the early years are a time of rapid cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and motor development.

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[1] Page 5, Early Years Matters, OECD 2018.

*The ability to change activity in response to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli by reorganising structure, functions, or connections, thereby facilitating the ability to learn new things.

Regular attendance at nursery school exposes children to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which promotes their growth and development.

The seven learning themes covered in the EYFS:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Missed learning in the EYFS (e.g. by pupil absence) reduces children's opportunity to fulfil their potential.

2.3 Learning about attendance in the EYFS

The early years are an optimum time for children to establish the necessary behaviours for attending school and becoming 'school ready'. This includes:

Good habits
- Children learn how to prepare for school including, preparing clothes and school things, establishing a regular sleep pattern, travelling to school, being punctual (on time for school), and regularly attending. **Secure relationships**
- Children find it easier to build and sustain a range of social relationships when they regularly attend school; social relationships are important for learning (e.g. due to group activity).
- Attending school allows parents time for activities (e.g. going to work, training or time for their own learning), restoring energy for time spent with children.

Self-esteem
- Children who are punctual and regularly attend school are more likely to feel good about themselves due to their contributions in class. Conversely, children who regularly miss sessions or who are generally late, often feel disconnected from other children, conversations, activities, and experiences.

Learning and development
- Children's learning is enhanced by being with other children and by being in the company of adults, that is, teaching and non-teaching staff, who actively support children's learning and development (e.g. by planning from one session to the next).

3. School values

Valence Primary School is based on an ethos of openness and inclusion. We are ambitious to build a culture where all can, and want to be, in school, ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the whole school. To build this culture we value the contributions of all: children, parents, staff, stakeholders, partners, and the community.

We want an environment where children feel psychologically safe, able to take interpersonal risks, express themselves without fear of being judged, their talents nurtured, and where every child is able to thrive. This compassionate approach takes account of the needs of all children within our school community.

At Valence Primary School we promote punctual and regular attendance by:

> Ensuring children attend all sessions available to them.

> Requiring parents prepare their children for school, ensure they are on time, and they regularly attend.

> Requiring parents contact the school if their child is going to be late or absent, and to provide reasons.

> Communicating with parents and following up on lateness and/or absences where no reason has been provided, or where the school has specific concerns.

> Encouraging parents take children on holiday outside of term time, thereby ensuring children have full benefit of their education of which they have a right.

> Monitoring children's punctuality and attendance.

> Routinely and systematically analysing data to look for absence trends, acting swiftly to support improved attendance.

3.1 Reasons for absence will be different for every child

We recognise that, if absent, each child will have different reasons as to why they are absent from school. Understanding each child, to see things through their eyes, is therefore important; what their interests are; and how they learn best. Where problems cannot be easily resolved through school-based support, we will work with families, in-school support, and other services to find the best way to help resolve and find solutions for the difficulties the child is facing.

This policy, therefore, provides a practical framework to inform the processes and operations for improving and sustaining good levels of attendance across the whole school, thus ensuring that no child is left behind.

4. Expectations for Early Years Attendance

4.1 A child's right to education

Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people have a right to an education no matter where they are: regardless of race, gender, or disability. Regular and punctual attendance in nursery school ensures this right is upheld.

4.2 The importance of regular attendance in the EYFS

Regular and punctual attendance in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) supports children's learning and development, ensures their welfare, safety, and access to entitlements (e.g. Free education and childcare for 2-year-olds, 15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds, Early Years Pupil Premium, other specific entitlements).

The Early Years Inspection Handbook states thus,

"Although attendance at the setting is not mandatory, inspectors will explore how well providers work with parents to promote children's attendance so that the children form good habits for future learning. In particular, inspectors will consider the attendance of children for whom the provider receives early years pupil premium (point 183)."

To fulfil this expectation the school will:

- Keep accurate records of arrival and departure times for each child.
- Ensure that all staff, parents are aware of the settings policies and procedures for attendance, welfare and keeping children safe.

5. Fundamentals to promote effective engagement, regular and punctual attendance

Good attendance can only be achieved through the combined efforts of all those involved with the care and education of children, including parents, school staff, stakeholders, and partners.   To enable this the school will:

> Appoint an attendance lead who is passionate about high expectations.

> Instil a mindset of high expectations around attendance in EYFS.

> Make good attendance everyone's responsibility.

> Have a positive and welcoming environment and atmosphere.

> Promote the benefits of regular and punctual attendance for young children.

> Provide opportunities to learn about attendance and being on time.

> Provide secure conditions for learning.

> Communicate themes about the EYFS to promote attendance.

> Be sensitive of families from a range of cultures and backgrounds.

> Build good relationships between children, families and staff.

> Be sensitive and accommodating to children and families with attachment difficulties (e.g. separation anxiety).

> Anticipate family patterns (e.g. where parents may themselves have had difficult educational experiences).

> Include clear stages of action regarding lateness and absence.

> Make sure that all staff (through induction and training) know what to do if:

- A child is absent or late.
- A child has a changeable or deteriorating pattern of lateness or absence. ▪ A child goes missing.

6. Family engagement – Parents as partners

Family engagement is an interactive process by which school staff, families and their children build positive and goal-orientated relationships, where the focus for children's growth and development are put at the centre. It demands a shared responsibility of families and

professionals to achieve a mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer. Family engagement means 'doing with', not 'doing to' or 'for families'.

In an attendance context, family engagement involves parents' being engaged with staff as they work together toward improving and sustaining high levels of attendance to achieve good outcomes for children. Parents enter into relationships with staff on their child's behalf, and they deepen these relationships with their child in mind. They know their children better than anyone – their temperaments, personalities, strengths, vulnerabilities, talents, and special needs. When parents share their knowledge, they improve the experience of school for their child to achieve better outcomes for them (e.g. education, wellbeing, wider development).

6.1 The importance of information sharing between home and school

When there is a reciprocal exchange of information between home and school, children experience continuity and consistency of care – this helps children feel safe and secure. There is also a well-evidenced link between parents being involved in their child's life and academic attainment[2]. It is therefore vital that school staff and parents work together to achieve good outcomes for children.

Diagram 1. This diagram shows the reciprocal exchange of information between home and school. This relationship and information sharing contributes to helping children feel safe and secure and ready to learn.
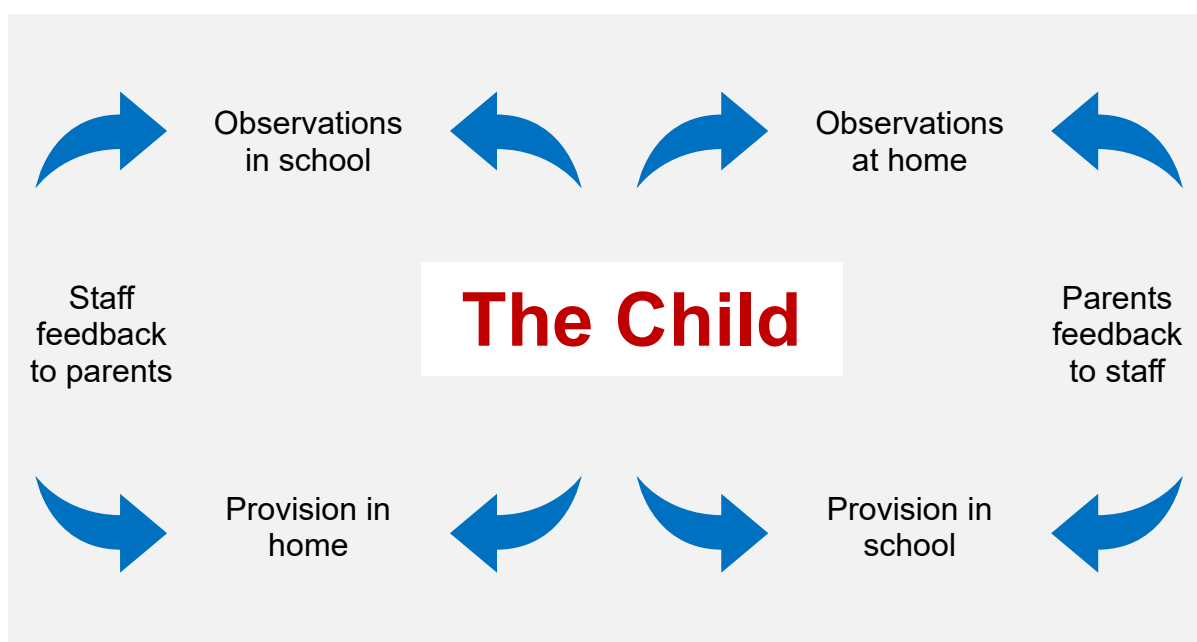
7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

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[2] Parentkind (2021) Parentkind's Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools.

> 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 designated governor responsible for attendance is Avril McIntyre and can be contacted via the school office.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at 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.

The Headteacher is Richard November and can be contacted via the school office.

7.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school.

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.

> Having an oversight of data analysis.

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is   Beth Vines

7.4 The attendance manager

The school attendance manager is responsible for:

> Overseeing the day-to-day functions for attendance, including First Day contact, continuous absence, and 10 days absence procedures.

> Monitoring and analysing data (see section 11.4).

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.

> Performing the admission and deletion of pupils to/from the school's registers.

The attendance manager is Lesley Cater and can be contacted via 0203 006 9888 or lmouatt.301@valenceprimaryschool.com.

7.5 Key Person*

*A Key Person has special responsibilities for supporting a group of children and building relationships with them and their families.

Key Person is responsible for:

> Recording attendance on a daily basis, using correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 09:30.

> Promoting and encouraging punctual and regular attendance for their class.

> Speaking with parents about attendance related issues and forwarding relevant information to the school office and/or attendance manager.

> Supporting attendance interventions for their pupils, including appraising the impact absence has on children's academic progress (e.g. regarding attainment, wellbeing, wider development).

7.6 School administration/office staff

School administration/office staff will:

> Take telephone calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record information on the school MIS database.

> Operate day-to-day functions for attendance, including First Day contact, continuous absence, and 10 days absence procedures.

> Provide information and advice to parents about school attendance, including advice related to pupil absence (e.g. minor ailments, when to keep children off from school).

> Transfer calls from parents to the relevant member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

7.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Know the school's start and finish times, daily routines.

> Ensure their child attends every session the school is open.

> Ensure effective lines of communication with the school (e.g. by providing current telephone numbers and/or additional names and contact numbers).

> Establish a good rapport with their Key Person – visibility of this rapport helps children feel safe and secure, thereby promoting learning.

> Be responsible for preparing their child for school, including ensuring they have a good night's sleep, preparing clothing, having breakfast.

> Show an interest in their child's learning and extend learning at home (guidance and support is available for this).

> Do not keep children away from school due to minor ailments or unnecessary reasons.

> Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.

> Where possible, make appointments (e.g. medical) after school. If unable to do this, ensure children attend sessions before or after the appointment.

> Take family holidays *outside of school time* – find out the school's term time dates and plan around these dates. NB. Parents should only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and in advance by the right process (i.e. formal application).

> Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

> Where parents are separated, to work in partnership in the best interests of the child.

7.8 Children

Pupils are expected to:

> Be prepared and organised for school.

> Attend all sessions available to them.

> To be on time for school.

> Where possible and able*, discuss worries or concerns about school with their Key Person, parents, and carers.

*Considering children's age, ability and aptitude.

8. Recording attendance

8.1 Attendance register

The school will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will register the attendance of pupils at the start of the first session (AM) on each school day and once during the second session (PM). We will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present.

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity.

> Absent.

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry.

> The amended entry.

> The reason for the amendment.

> The date on which the amendment was made.

> The name and the position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the Department for Education (DfE) attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45 on each school day.

The register for the first (AM) session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:30. The register for the second (PM) session will be taken at 12:45.

8.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school using the following procedures:

- Contacting the school office, or
- By emailing office@valenceprimaryschool.com

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 to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, an appointment card, or other forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

8.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised absence if the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Pupils must attend school before or after their appointment. Wherever possible, appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.

Parents should request leaves of absence by completing a leave of absence form, which is available from the school office, or from the website: https://www.valenceprimaryschool.com/images/PDF/Attendance/Request%20for%20Leave%20of%20Absence%20Form.pdf

For all other term-time absence, the pupil's parent must apply in advance for requests to be considered. NB. Term-time absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. More information about this can be found in section 9.1.

8.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked late, using the L code.

> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the U code*.

*NB. This is an unauthorised code as the pupil was not present at the time of registration.

The school responds to ongoing lateness by:

- Parents logging lateness in the late book (i.e. time of arrival and the reason for their child's lateness).
- Monitoring lateness and bringing continued incidences to the attention of parents (e.g. to take appropriate action to prevent further lateness).
- Inviting parents into school to discuss reasons for lateness and to action plan to prevent further incidences.

8.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

> Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to understand the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may undertake a home visit, contact the police and/or social services.

> 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 has been established – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.

> Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving specialist support (e.g. a Social Worker).

8.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly reports, or, more frequently where pupil absence rates are of particular concern.

9. Authorised and unauthorised absence

9.1 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, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted at least 4 weeks in advance by use of the correct form, accessible via: https://www.valenceprimaryschool.com/images/PDF/Attendance/Request%20for%20Leave%20of%20Absence%20Form.pdf

The Headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised** absence include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments.

> 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 occasional purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occasional 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 an educational provision.

10. Strategy for promoting attendance

The school will use a whole school approach to promote attendance. This will include:

> Implementation of a whole school approach, thereby ensuring the contributions of pupils, parents, staff, governors, stakeholders, partners and the community.

> Training of staff about the importance of attendance (e.g. regarding pupils' education, wellbeing, wider development) and to help understanding about staff responsibilities to improving attendance and supporting pupils.

> Focusing efforts to include disadvantaged and vulnerable children where national data shows these pupils to have higher levels of pupil absence (e.g. children with SEND, children in receipt of Free School Meals, children with a social worker) and risk (e.g. welfare and attainment).

> The use of data to identify those children and groups of children (e.g. pupil cohorts) where concerns are had (e.g. due to higher levels of absence) and risks may be present (e.g. welfare and attainment).

10.1 Support for children with medical conditions or SEND

Where children have medical conditions or SEND, we will work to the same ambition for attendance and work with children and parents to maximise attendance. Specifically we will,

- Ensure join up with pastoral support, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is accessed.
- Consider any additional support from wider services and external partners.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at governing body meetings and with the local authority.

Regarding parents of children that may have medical conditions or SEND, we expect parents to,

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's possible barriers to achieving full attendance (i.e. punctual and regular attendance).
- Proactively engage with the support offered.

10.2 Support for children with a social worker

Where a child has a social worker, we will inform the social worker of any unexplained absences and if the child's name is to be deleted from the register. Regarding support, we will regularly review attendance data to help school leaders focus support on children who need it.

We expect all parents to work with the school and local authority to help them understand any possible barriers to their child achieving full attendance (i.e. punctual and regular attendance).
11. Procedures

11.1 Sharing information

Valence Primary School will make attendance and punctuality expectations known to parents by:

- Sharing information and expectations for attendance and punctuality prior to admission (e.g. by sharing its policy on attendance, punctuality and engagement).
- Sharing our systems and procedures to address children's absence and lateness, including the use of standardised letters to parents (e.g. that address specific aspects of attendance and/or punctuality).
- Uploading this policy to the school's website.

11.2 Daily Registration

The school will ensure that:

> Registration will be completed at the start of each session within 10 minutes of the start time.

> Registers will be recorded accurately, indicating clearly when a child is late, present, or absent.

> Appropriate attendance codes are used.

11.3 Systems to monitor attendance and punctuality

The school will:

> Telephone parents to establish the reason for children's absence.

> Telephone parents regarding all unexplained absences beyond five days.

> Send parents a letter when contact cannot be established by telephone.

> Undertake home visiting when attendance is irregular and/or punctuality is a concern.

> Initiate an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) when support needs to be formalised.

> Liaise with social services (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH) if no contact has been established with parents.

11.4 Monitoring and evaluation of attendance data

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the Department for Education (DfE) school absence and 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 body.

11.5 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly 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.

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any support put in place to review their success and/or to modify them for future support.

11.6 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to provide context for when discussing attendance with pupils and parents.

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any support put in place on an individual and group level to review their success and/or to modify them for future support.

> Use data to provide information and context for school displays and noticeboards when comparing attendance in school (e.g. between classes and year groups) and against national and local positions.

11.7 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. Both categories provide concern for pupil welfare and educational progress.

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.

> Initiate safeguarding measures when having concerns about children's safety and welfare.

11.8 Performance monitoring

This school will monitor all children and those with unique characteristics. Performance monitoring will help understand the extent to which our policy and procedures are improving or exacerbating equity amongst children (i.e. ensuring fair access).

Whole School	All school, both sites (i.e. Bonham Road and St George's)
EYFS	All children in the EYFS
Girls	All girls in the EYFS
Boys	All boys in the EYFS
Ethnicity	All ethnicities
Nursery	Children aged between 3 and 4, part of the EYFS
Reception	Children aged between 4 and 5, the final part of the EYFS
Nursery Additionally Resourced Provision (NARP)	Onsite provision for children with long term special education needs
SEN N	No special educational need
SEN K	Children with Special Educational Need (SEN) support
SEN E	Education, Health and Care Plan
EYPP	Early Years Pupil Premium
Disadvantaged	Children that, ▪ have received free school meals (FSM) in the last 6 years; ▪ is in the care of the Local Authority (LA) as a child looked after or was in care; ▪ is adopted; ▪ is the child of a family in the armed forces.

11.9 Safeguarding

Valence Primary School has a duty to keep registered children safe and to ensure they are free from harm. Irregular attendance can be an indication of neglect, which may initiate safeguarding activity.

The school will:

> **Recognise:** the signs of abuse and neglect.

> **Respond:** appropriately to concerns about abuse and neglect.

> **Report:** concerns to the appropriate person (e.g. Designated Safeguarding Lead) and to the appropriate authorities (e.g. social services and/or to refer concerns to the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).

> **Record:** information accurately and appropriately (e.g. on CPOMS).

> **Review:** safeguarding practices regularly to ensure they are effective.

It is important that all staff, including, managers and governors, know how to respond to different problems and especially in relation to vulnerable children.

Staff should discuss any instance when a family decides to withdraw a child from the setting. There may be good reason why a child has been withdrawn (e.g. a move to an alternative setting, or a change of residence). Conversely, staff may have concerns about children being withdrawn, as follows:

- Deteriorating attendance
- Poorer emotional wellbeing
- Strained or a worsening relationship with parents
- Poor physical condition of the child
- Other concerns about the child's welfare

Staff should discuss these concerns and perform the following actions:

- Find out which school/setting the child is being moved to or has moved to.
- Keep dated and accurate notes of any discussions had with the child's parents.
- If there have been other concerns about the child, limited information has been provided about the withdrawal, the setting should contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further advice and support.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guided by the local authority or Department for Education (DfE), and as a minimum of one year by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be reviewed by the full governing body.

13. Additions and deletions from the Register

The school will add and delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving.

At Valence Primary School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Barking and Dagenham Local Authority's Children Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Barking and Dagenham Local Authority will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

13.1 Withdrawing a place

If a child has not attended for 4 consecutive weeks their place may be withdrawn. We will only withdraw a child's place once all routes of enquiry have been exhausted, including:

> We will attempt to contact the family twice weekly to seek a justifiable explanation from them (by telephone, email, or home visit).

> We will send a letter of invite for a meeting to the parents during the fourth week to discuss the situation/warn about withdrawing the place.

> We will continue to contact parents by telephone as part of our absence procedures.

> We will send a letter in the final week to explain their child's place will be withdrawn on a specific date.

13.2 Transfer

If parents decide to move their child to another school, we expect parents to inform us about this. We will then activate their child's removal from the school's roll and records will be forwarded to the new school/provision.
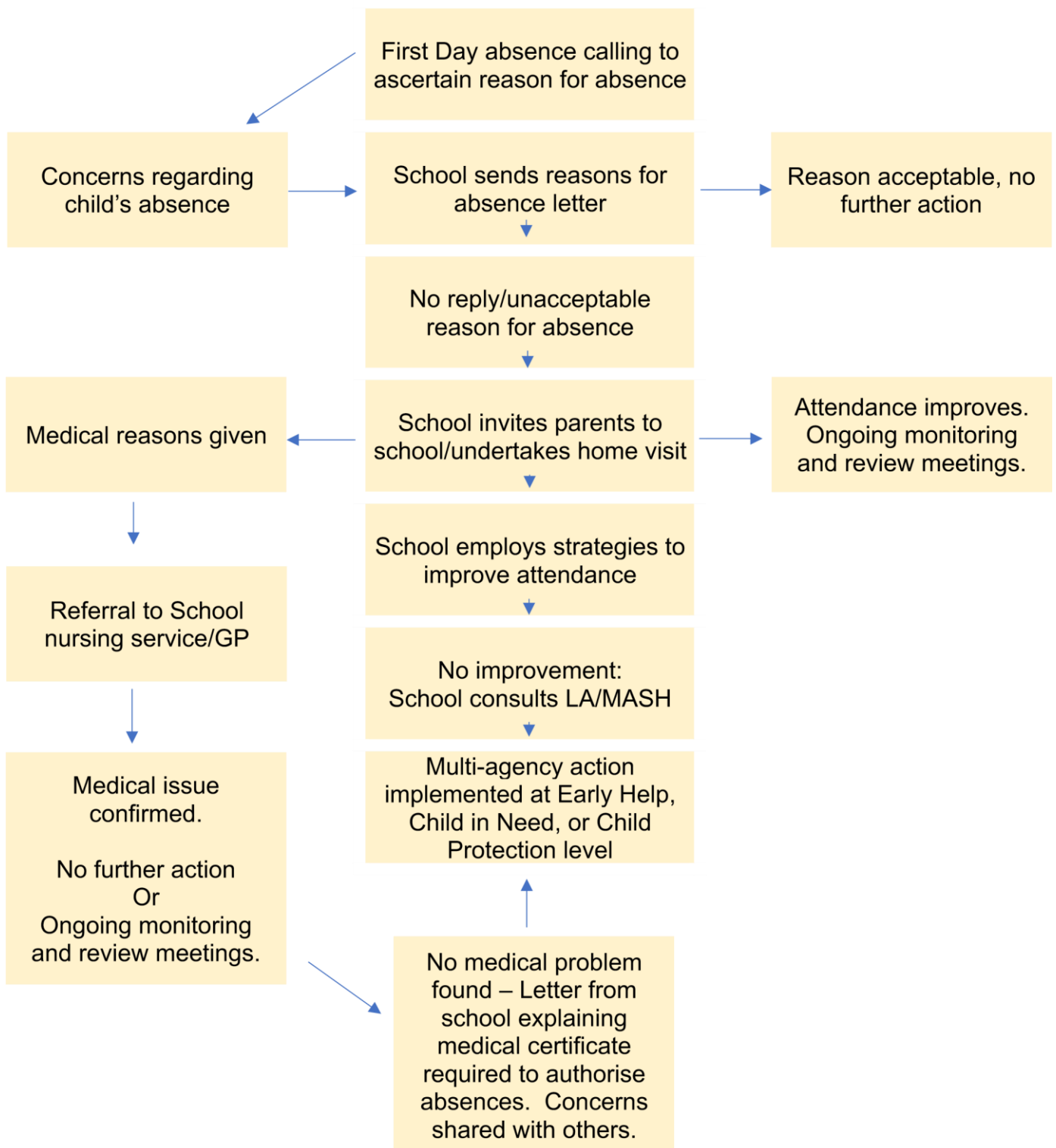
Appendix
1: Absence and Attendance Codes

Code / \	Present in school / = am \ = pm
Code L	Late arrival before the register is closed
Authorised absence means that one of a specific set of circumstances applies. Parents should be aware that is only the school that can authorise an absence:	
Code C	Leave of absence granted by the school
Code H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family granted by the school
Code E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
Code M	Medical or dental appointment
Code R	Religious observance
Code S	Study leave
Code T	Traveller absence
Unauthorised absence is where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established:	
Code G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided
Code O	Absence without authorisation
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Attending another school at which the pupil is registered:	
Code D	Dual registered at another school
Attending an educational activity that takes place outside of the school:	
Code B	Off-site educational Activity
Code J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
Code P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
Code V	Educational visit or trip
Code W	Work experience
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances:	
Code Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Administrative codes:	
Code X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
Code Z	Prospective pupil not an admission register
Code #	Planned whole or partial school closure

2: Procedures for non-attendance - flowchart

Concerns about the child's non-attendance are shared and discussed within the school (e.g. between teams: academic and pastoral). Where concerns are ongoing the school shares these with others within a multi-agency context and support framework (e.g. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub/MASH).

Appendix

```
                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │ First Day absence calling │
                    │ to ascertain reason for   │
                    │ absence                   │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
```

| Concerns regarding child's absence | → | School sends reasons for absence letter | → | Reason acceptable, no further action |

School sends reasons for absence letter
↓
No reply/unacceptable reason for absence
↓

| Medical reasons given | ← | School invites parents to school/undertakes home visit | → | Attendance improves. Ongoing monitoring and review meetings. |

Medical reasons given
↓
Referral to School nursing service/GP
↓
Medical issue confirmed.

No further action
Or
Ongoing monitoring and review meetings.

School invites parents to school/undertakes home visit
↓
School employs strategies to improve attendance
↓
No improvement:
School consults LA/MASH
↓
Multi-agency action implemented at Early Help, Child in Need, or Child Protection level
↑
No medical problem found – Letter from school explaining medical certificate required to authorise absences. Concerns shared with others.

3: Sharing concerns in school

Whole School Approach - This form is completed in partnership with the child and family to share attendance related concerns within the confines of the school to achieve early help from within the universal support of the school.

Appendix
In-school Early Help Form - Attendance

Date of contact		Time of contact	
Contact type: school/home/telephone			

1) Identifying details

Name of person completing form	
Role of person completing form	

Pupil's name		Present?	Y/N
Year Group			
Class Teacher		Present?	Y/N
Name of Parent 1		Present?	Y/N
Name of Parent 2		Present?	Y/N

2) Reasons for unexplained/unauthorised absence and/or lateness

Identify absences and/or lateness on attendance certificate (print out). Discuss these with the pupil and their parent(s) to determine their reasons.
Reasons explained by child (if able):
Reasons explained by parent(s):

3) Barriers to achieving punctual and regular attendance

Discuss pupil barriers for achieving punctual and regular attendance.
Barriers explained by child (if able):

Appendix

Barriers explained by parent(s):

4) Impact on attainment

What has been the impact of absence and/or lateness on the pupil's academic progress?
Key Person's comments:
Child's views (if able):
Parent(s) views:

5) Concerns

As a group, discuss and agree your overall concerns for the pupil achieving punctual and regular attendance.
Our concerns are:
We think these might be happening because:
We will know when things have improved when:

6) Support

Agree support to improve attendance and/or punctuality with pupil and their parent(s).
In-class support:
What can the pupil do differently:
What can the parent(s) do differently:
Is there a requirement for additional in-school support? If so, provide details:

7) Review

First review	
Date:	
Time:	
Attending:	
Second review	
Date:	
Time:	
Attending:	

8) Signed

Pupil	

Parent 1	
Parent 2	
Member of staff	

Purpose and Information Sharing

This form is to be completed by teaching and non-teaching staff when discussing attendance related difficulties with children and their families. With reference to the Department for Education guidance *'Working together to improve attendance'* (May 2022) the emphasis is on 'support' and finding solutions together with children and families.

Use Arial font size 12. Once completed the form should be uploaded to the school's MIS database (CPOMS) – this is to share information with other school staff in the interest of supporting the child, and for compliance with data protection law (as below).

A copy of this form should be provided to the parent(s) or carer(s).

Record keeping and confidentiality

This form is to be completed in accordance with how Valence Primary School manages the retention and deletion of records. Valence Primary School's use of this personal data is to support the best interests of the child and is recorded in accordance with data protection law (i.e. Data Protection Act 2018) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Valence Primary School has published a privacy notice on its website which explains how the school uses and keeps personal data. This can be found at: https://www.valenceprimaryschool.com/en/privacy.html

Safeguarding

Valence Primary School has a duty to share information, where relevant, to safeguard children. This includes:

- to prevent harm;
- promote the welfare of children; and
- identify risk in order to prevent harm.

The school will share information, as appropriate and identified, should a need to safeguard children become apparent/known through the completion of this form. This will be done in accordance with Valence Primary School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy found at:
https://www.valenceprimaryschool.com/en/statutoryu/statutory-policies.html

Appendix 4: Sharing concerns with parents

1. Meeting with parents

Parents' reactions may vary when concerns are raised about their child. It is therefore important to put parents at ease. Discussions of a sensitive nature should always be conducted somewhere private, comfortable, and accommodating (e.g. by the inclusion of playthings for children, drinking water, tissues, etc.). Parents should be listened to, and silences tolerated – parents are more likely to appreciate conversations that give space and time to understand concerns presented.

A 'case' relates to support given to a child in the interests of improving their attendance and/or reducing lateness. The emphasis is on support, thereby 'casework support' is the activity of working in partnership with families to improve their child's attendance and punctuality - parents should be encouraged and enabled to take part in their child's improvement journey.

2. Casework Support

a)	Parents have a right to be treated with respect. Valence Primary School works with parents in the interests of the child. School staff should be encouraging parents to understand that a good education is of benefit to the child and how parents can be actively engaged in their child's learning.
b)	When meeting with parents the standard letters should be used (see Appendix 4).
c)	Parents should know that notes of discussions will be taken in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Parents are entitled to have copies of notes taken. This allows parents to check the accuracy of what has been recorded and to take direction from what may have been agreed.
d)	The purpose of meeting parents is to share concerns about the child's attendance and/or punctuality, to gather factual information, offer advice and guidance, and to plan for improvements.
e)	All adults should be identified, and their status established (e.g. who has Parental Responsibility). Similarly 'significant others' (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles). This is to establish those other adults who provide regular and consistent care to the child and who may be in a position of influence and/or to provide support.
f)	At the meeting, the family composition should be established, and an assessment made of the support required. Arrangements should be made for follow up meetings, where appropriate, at dates and times that suit the family (e.g. there may be a need to accommodate working parents).
g)	Meeting notes should show attempts by the member of staff to offer help and advice. It is important to establish that parents know of the absences and to evidence attempts by the member of staff to identify barriers to achieving full attendance and suggest how those barriers might be removed. Attendance summaries and (academic) progress information should therefore be used to help parents understand: ▪ the child's overall attendance ▪ the degree of absence and/or lateness ▪ the trend/profile of absence and/or lateness
	▪ the impact absence may have on the child's learning

h)	Meeting notes should avoid the use of judgemental language.
i)	For each open case there should be a S.M.A.R.T* plan based on the % of attendance at the time of when the attendance concern was first presented with a clear understanding about the improvement required (e.g. what changes are required, by whom, and by what date).
j)	All open cases will be 'case managed' in regular one-to-one support sessions at no longer than six weekly intervals.
k)	At casework support sessions the member of staff will need to bring for each case discussed a case file containing: ▪ an up-to-date attendance summary filed chronologically; ▪ an up-to-date chronology; ▪ copies of all contact records filed chronologically; ▪ copies of other correspondence filed chronologically.
l)	Casework discussion will be uploaded to CPOMS.

*S.M.A.R.T: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound.

Appendix 5: Standard letters to parents

Template letter 1: N Code

Dear <parent's name>

Child's name:
DOB:
Class:
Year Group:

Re: Section 175 Education Act 2002, safeguarding duty to investigate unexplained pupil absence

According to our records, <child's name> has been absent from school without a reason provided. <child's name> absence has therefore been marked with **Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**.

To provide a reason why <child's name> has been absent from school, please complete the below tear-off slip and return this to <name of person/department> as soon as possible.

Unauthorised Absence from School

After a two-week period unexplained absence is converted to **Code O: Absent without authorisation.**

If you wish to discuss this letter, then please contact me on <telephone number>.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Cater - Attendance Manager

- -

Please complete this slip and to return to <name of staff/department>.

Child's name:
Dates of unexplained absences: <dates of N codes>

Explanation for dates of unexplained absence:

Parent/carer signature:

Template letter 2: Meeting letter

Parents name and address

Valence Primary School
St George's Road
Dagenham
Essex
RM9 5AH

Date: XX/XX/XXXX

Our ref: Attendance/XX

Contact telephone number: [NUMBER]

Dear [parent name]

Re: EYFS Attendance – [name of child]

I would like to meet with you to discuss concerns about [child's name] attendance.

There may be problems at home that the school are unaware of, and I may be able to offer you some advice or support. You may also have concerns about [child's name] experience of nursery school.

I would therefore like to meet with you in school/ visit you at home [delete as appropriate] on:

Date:
Time:
Venue:

If you are unable to meet me at that time, please let me or the school know as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary journeys.

I have enclosed a copy of the attendance summary for your information.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Name of school staff

Enc. Attendance summary.

Template Letter 3: Lateness

<Address>
<Address>
<Address>

Dear [parent's name]

Re: School Attendance / Lateness – named of child

This letter is about the home-school agreement in place for <child's name> and our commitment to ensuring they regularly attend school.

Having reviewed <child's name> attendance we are concerned about the number of late marks they have had (i.e. Code L).

Being late negatively impacts children's learning and disrupts teacher time and their organisation. The table below shows how much time can be missed over a year by being late to school.

5 minutes late every day = 3 days lost learning
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days lost learning
15 minutes late every day = 10 days lost learning
20 minutes late every day = 13 days lost learning
30 minutes late every day = 19 days lost learning

I have enclosed a copy of <child's name> Attendance Summary for your information.

If <child's name> arrives 30 minutes after the close of registration, they will be marked with **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed,** this is an unauthorised absence mark.

To ensure <child's name> has every opportunity of educational success please make sure they regularly attend school, and they are on time.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss <child's name> attendance, please contact <named school person> on <telephone number>.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Cater – Attendance Manager.

Template Letter 4: Illness & Medical Absence

<Address>
<Address>
<Address>

Dear [parent's name]

Re: School Attendance: Authorised Absence – named of child

Regular and punctual attendance is important to ensure children fulfil their educational potential.

When looking into the reasons why <child's name> has been absent from school, most of their absence has been due to illness and/or medical reasons.

If <child's name> has any further absence from school, then medical evidence must be obtained and provided to the school from a medical professional (e.g. a doctor). Information can be a doctor's note or an appointment card.

Only a Head Teacher can authorise a child's absence and only in **Exceptional Circumstances**.

If evidence is not supplied when <child's name> returns after an illness or medical absence, they will be marked **Code O: Absent without authorisation**. This means the school is not satisfied with the reason given.

I have enclosed a copy of the Attendance Summary for your information.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss <child's name> attendance, please contact <named school person> on <telephone number>.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cater – Attendance Manager.

Template Letter 5: Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM)

<Address>
<Address>
<Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

Re: School Attendance - <child's name>

Following my letter sent to you dated <date of letter> we have ongoing concerns about <child's name> attendance and/or punctuality.

I enclose <child's name> most recent Attendance Summary for your information.

There may be some problems that we are unaware of, and I may be able to offer some advice or support. I am therefore inviting you to discuss <child's name> attendance as follows:

Meeting: **Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM)**
Date: **Thursday 20 June 2023**
Time: **09:15AM**
Venue: **Valence Primary School – Bonham site**

This is a supportive measure to understand the reasons behind <child's name> absence and/or punctuality difficulties, and to improve their attendance over time in partnership with you.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss <child's name> attendance, please contact <named school person> on <telephone number>.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Cater – Attendance Manager.

Appendix 6: Assessment following Initial Meetings with Families

Assessment following Initial Meetings with Families
Assessment of Way Forward [include aggravating/mitigating factors]

Current attendance and brief account (bullet points) of barriers to attendance and outline of casework to date:
Aggravating factors (e.g. parentally condoned absence, lack of parental engagement):
Mitigating factors (e.g. sickness or unavoidable cause):
What is your recommendation?

Time Limited Plan (who is going to do what and by when)
Parent(s) will:
1.
2.
3.
Child will:
1.
2.
3.
School will:
1.
2.
3.
Practitioner will:
1.
2.
3.
Agreement
We commit to the actions as listed. We will achieve these by working together to help [child's name] achieve full attendance (i.e. to be punctual and to regularly attend).

Signed Parents(s): Date:	
Signed school representative: Date:	
Signed school practitioner (e.g. School Nurse): Date:	
Review date:	

Information Sharing and Consent

We need to collect the information in this assessment so that we can understand what help you may need. If we cannot provide support to all your needs, we may need to share some of this information with other agencies, so they can help us to provide the services you need. If we need to share information with any other agencies, we will ask you about this before we do it.

We will treat your information as confidential and will not share it with any other agency unless we are required to do so by law, or unless you or any other person will come to some harm if we do not share it. All information will be kept in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR**).**

I/we agree to the sharing of information, as agreed, between agencies that are providing me with a service or those that may need to see my assessment to plan, monitor, or measure outcomes. I understand the information recorded in this assessment will be stored and used for the purpose of providing services to my family and may also be used for monitoring and auditing.

Name	**Signature**	**Date**

Is there any individual or agency you do not wish information to be shared with?	Yes		No	

If yes, please give details:

Appendix 7: Contact Record (for recording contact with families)

Name of staff:

Date of contact: Time of contact:

Type of contact [phone/home/office/school]:

Name of child/ren		Present?	
Name of Parent 1		Present?	
Name of Parent 2		Present?	
Name of others present			

Record of contact
What actions were agreed and by whom? What is the timescale?

Date and time for review of agreed actions:					

Printed name:
Signed: Date:

Appendix 8: Overview – roles and responsibilities

Governing Body	Headteacher	Attendance Lead	Attendance Manager	Key Person	Administration
Promote importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.	Implementation of policies at the school.	Lead attendance across the school.	Oversee day to-day functions for attendance.	Record attendance on a daily basis.	Take calls from parents about absence and record information on the school MIS database.
Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.	Monitor school llevel absence data and report it to governors.	Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement.	Monitor and analyse data.	Promote and encourage punctual and regular attendance for their class.	Operate First Day contact, continuous absence, and 10 days absence procedures.
Regularly review and challenge attendance data.	Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.	Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes.	Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.	Speak with parents about attendance issues; forward information to school office and/or attendance manager.	Provide information and advice, constructive challenge, to parents about school attendance.
Monitor attendance figures for the whole school.	Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.	Have an oversight of data analysis.	Provide regular attendance reports to staff and report concerns to Attendance Lead / Headteacher.	Support attendance interventions for their pupils.	Transfer calls from parents to the relevant staff.
Make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.	Issue fixed penalty notices, where necessary.	Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.	Work with Education Welfare Officer to reduce persistent and severe absence.		

Hold Headteacher to account for the implementation of policies.	Utilise all other statutory measures to secure regular attendance.	Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.	Advise Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices / other legal measures to secure regular attendance.		
		Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.	Perform admission and deletions of pupils to/from the registers.		

Appendix 9: Graduated Whole School Support

Performance Cycle	Tier 1 Class Teacher / HLTA	Tier 2 Attendance Manager	Tier 3 Attendance Lead	Tier 4 Strategic Intervention (Triage)
Understand	▪ Number of pupils in their class: frequently <u>late</u>: ○ with 95% attendance and below, including Persistently Absent and Severely Absent pupils.	▪ Review attendance related concerns of Class Teachers – support as appropriate. ▪ Profile whole school absence by type (e.g. Disadvantaged, Vulnerable, Unique characteristics).	▪ Analyse school's attendance data in comparison with national, and LA. ▪ Evaluate effectiveness of in-school support and processes to improve attendance.	▪ The volume, distribution (e.g. by year group) and specific needs of those pupils where support has not achieved attendance improvements.
Plan	▪ Whole class activities to promote and encourage punctual and regular attendance. ▪ Parent-teacher reports to: ○ review individual pupil attendance; ○ explain interrelationship between pupil absence and attainment; ○ initiate discussions about barriers to attendance.	▪ Benchmark school's attendance data with national and LA positions. ▪ Prepare and distribute 'Attendance Performance Report' through cycles of reporting (e.g. HT1 to HT6). ▪ With the Designated Attendance Lead, agree priorities for whole school and meeting with individual pupils and their families.	▪ Devise specific strategies to address poor attendance, including: ○ Staff development. ○ In-class and whole school approaches. ○ Communication with pupils, parents, and the community. ○ Targeted Support from partners and/or contractors.	▪ Determine type and urgency of support for pupils with complex attendance related difficulties and/or that have co-occurring conditions, including: ○ Behavioural difficulties. ○ Pastoral needs. ○ Medical conditions. ○ Welfare/social needs. ○ SEND. ○ SEMH.
Do	▪ Record pupil attendance daily. ▪ Promote, encourage and model punctual and regular attendance for their class. ▪ Speak with parents about attendance related issues. ▪ Record discussions and actions had with parents and pupils. ▪ Forward any attendance and/or welfare concerns to the Designated Attendance Lead and/or Safeguarding Lead. ▪ Recognise and celebrate individual and class improvements.	▪ Meet with children and families as prioritised with Designated Attendance Lead. ▪ Meet with Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss pupils with little or no engagement from families and/or no attendance improvement. ▪ Refer cases to EWO for Targeted Intervention by them. ▪ Forward any attendance and/or welfare concerns to the Designated Attendance Lead and/or Safeguarding Lead.	▪ Provide a clear vision to the school community about expectations for punctual and regular attendance. This should explain types of support, rewards, and sanctions. ▪ Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues. ▪ Profile and organise information to triage support for pupils and families at Tier 4. ▪ Prepare reports for Senior Leadership Team/Governors.	▪ Prepare reports to refer acute, chronic, and complex cases to the LA 'Staged Approach to Improving Attendance', including: ○ Stage 2: Vulnerable Pupils Hot Clinic (VPHC). ○ Stage 3: Statutory Intervention. **Acute:** resulting from a single issue. **Chronic:** repeated and prolonged. **Complex:** varied and multiple issues.
Review	▪ Effectiveness of class-based attendance related activities. ▪ Share effectiveness of activities with year group/whole school.	▪ Attendance trends over the academic year (HT1 to HT6). ▪ Effectiveness of in-school Early Help and Targeted Support.	▪ Information from Attendance Manager in relation to effectiveness of in-school Early Help and Targeted Support.	▪ Effectiveness of in-school triage process for difficult cases. ▪ Effectiveness of LA Staged Approach.

Appendix 10: Relevant legislation and guidance

Relevant legislation

The Education Act 1996
The Children Act 1989
The Children Act 2004
The Childcare Act 2006
The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
The Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003
The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Sentencing Act 2020
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
The Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012

Relevant government guidance

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage
Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour
Children missing education
Keeping children safe in education
Working together to safeguard children
Working together to improve school attendance
Elective home education
Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying