24 – Pupil Attendance Policy

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Workload impact ☐ Equality impact ☑ Trust virtues ☑

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1. Aims

The mission of the Minster Trust for Education is that 'Together we help every child to flourish, opening doors to fulfilling futures'. Promoting and supporting high levels of pupil attendance is vital in achieving that mission as it enables every school to support every child to flourish, both academically and personally. We are committed to achieving the highest possible attendance for all pupils and meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) by:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Working closely with other agencies to support pupils and families to improve attendance

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Board of Trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all trust and school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and ethos
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of each school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers, and share effective practice between schools
- Holding the trust executive team to account for the implementation of this policy

Pupil attendance is monitored by the Standards and Effectiveness Committee of the board of trustees. The link trustee for attendance is **Tony Walker.**

3.2 Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authorities
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs

- Making sure all staff receive adequate school-specific training on attendance processes
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Pupil attendance is monitored by the full Local Governing Body. The link governor for attendance is Vicky Tomlinson

3.3 Trust attendance lead

The trust attendance lead is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust
- Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries
- Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most, through termly attendance review meetings with each individual school
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including with teachers from across the trust, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers

The trust attendance lead is Dave Boothroyd, Strategic Lead for Education. Contact details are:

d.boothroyd@mitretrust.org.uk

3.4 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Local Governing Body
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Working with the trust lead for attendance to develop and implement strategies to improve attendance.

3.5 Designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Russyn Cast Contact details are: head@bleasbyprimary.org.uk

3.6 School attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Reporting concerns about attendance to the class teacher and designated senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Advising the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Maxine Meaden. Contact details are: office@bleasbyprimary.org.uk

3.7 Teachers

All teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance promptly at the start of each session, using the correct codes, on the school's management information system.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance
- Raising any concerns regarding attendance and patterns of absence

3.8 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls, or pass on information and requests, from parents/carers to other staff, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and timetabled session on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return. The school should be contacted using the messaging app, email office@bleasbyprimary.org.uk or the school answerphone 01636 830203.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the class teacher or the head teacher who can be contacted via 01636 830203, or by email office@bleasbyprimary.org.uk, head@bleasbyprimary.org,uk

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Each MITRE school will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

The school will take the attendance register at the start each session of each school day. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:50am and ends at 3:30pm

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 and will be kept open until 9:25 The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00and will be kept open until 1:30

4.2 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 9:00am or as soon as practically possible, by calling or emailing the school.

Absence due to physical or mental illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school should be contacted using the messaging app, email office@bleasbyprimary.org.uk or the school answerphone 01636830203,

The school will not routinely request medical evidence for short-term illness. However, where absence is longer than 5 days, or where there is a pattern of absence that gives genuine cause for concern about authenticity, the school may request medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, or appointment card. Any request for medical evidence will be made sensitively and proportionately.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.

4.3 Planned absence

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

The school should be contacted using the messaging app, email office@bleasbyprimary.org.uk or the school answerphone 01636830203,

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- **Before the register has closed** will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- **After the register has closed** will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school will proactively use data to identify pupils where poor punctuality is a concern. Schools will work with each identified pupil to understand and address the reasons for poor punctuality. This may include discussions with parents/carers, signposting and supporting access to required services.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Contact the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, we may liaise with other agencies where there is reason to consider this a safeguarding concern, including the police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Contact the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below)
- Where a parent indicates they are considering elective home education, follow the procedures set out in Section 7.4

4.6 Reporting to parents

Each MITRE school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. At Bleasby CofE Primary, attendance information for each pupil is visible on the Arbor app. It will also be shared at parents' evening and SEND review meetings. A copy of each pupil's annual attendance is included with the school end of year report.

Where attendance is low, there is frequent lateness or a pattern of absence emerges, parents will be contacted and provided with a copy of their child's attendance to date.

5. Authorised and unauthorized absence

5.1 Approval for term time absence

The Head Teacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The Head Teacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable (see Section 5.2)
- Exceptional circumstances

Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' where leave **MAY** be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent can provide evidence that they will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Head Teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement (for example, national age-group competitions in sport). Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states ''on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs''. One day per religious observance will normally be authorised.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Head Teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Head Teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there **WILL** be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.
- In difficult family situations the Head Teacher may use their discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

The examples above are illustrative, not exhaustive. Each request will be considered on its individual merits. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the criteria above, the Head Teacher is likely to consult with trust leaders prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Additional evidence from parents may be required in such cases.

Examples of circumstances **NOT** considered as exceptional include:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence by completing a leave of absence request form (appendix 2), accessible via the school website download.asp (bleasbyprimary.org.uk), or from the office. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Part-time timetables

Part-time timetables may be used in exceptional circumstances as a short-term intervention to support a pupil's return to full-time education. They will only be implemented:

- As part of a planned reintegration following extended absence
- With clear educational and/or medical rationale
- With parental agreement
- As a short-term measure
- With regular review and clear planning for return to full-time attendance
- With appropriate safeguarding measures in place

5.3 Legal sanctions

MITRE schools will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Head Teacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

In Nottinghamshire the LA issue penalty notices following a request from the Head Teacher of a school. Further details are available on their website: https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-holidays-and-closures/holidays-during-term-time

Before referring to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

MITRE schools will regularly promote the importance of high levels of attendance with parents/carers and with pupils. This will include:

- Explaining the importance of good attendance to pupils

- Regularly reporting attendance to parents/carers
- Celebrating high levels of attendance in weekly assemblies (whole school and class)
- Celebrating high levels of attendance with termly class certificates
- Celebrating high levels of attendance with annual individual certificates.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Each MITRE school will:

- Maintain high ambitions for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance for these pupils
- Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are
- Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing a pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register
- Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance
- Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school
- Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that pupils are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance, whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for all
- Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help pupils, recognising such issues can lead to a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes
- The school will monitor attendance data by protected characteristics to identify any patterns of inequality. Where attendance issues are identified for pupils with protected characteristics, the school will work with families to understand barriers and make appropriate adjustments
- Where absence is linked to disability, attendance expectations will be adjusted.
- Sanctions will not be used where absence is a direct consequence of unmet needs or failure to make reasonable adjustments

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical health or SEND

Each MITRE school will:

- Maintain high ambitions for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance for these pupils
- Ensure pastoral and academic support is provided and, where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals

Where a pupil has an education health and care plan (EHCP) and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where possible, contact will have been maintained during the absence.

- A meeting will be held with parents to discuss the best approach for the child, this may include:
- A staggered start (part-time, building up) or transition visits
- ELSA support
- A specific buddy and named adult
- A care/health plan

7.4 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Many home educated children have a positive learning experience, and parents' decisions to home educate should be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, elective home education can mean that some children are not in receipt of suitable education and are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will work with the local authority and other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This will be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child.

This is particularly important where a child:

- Has special educational needs or a disability
- Has a social worker
- Is otherwise vulnerable
- Has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

The school will:

- Arrange a meeting with parents/carers to discuss their reasons for considering EHE and explore whether any support could be put in place to address concerns
- Ensure parents/carers understand their responsibilities for providing suitable full-time education
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of the support available from the local authority
- Consider whether the request raises any safeguarding concerns, particularly if it follows:
  - A pattern of poor attendance
  - Concerns about the child's welfare
  - Exclusion or potential exclusion
  - Difficulties meeting the child's SEND needs
- Where a child has an EHCP, inform the local authority immediately so they can review the plan, working closely with parents and carers
- Make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Follow the local authority's Children Missing Education procedures where appropriate

The school will be familiar with the DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective Home Education and will work collaboratively with the local authority throughout this process.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring responsibilities and approaches

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
- Evaluate attendance through FFT Attendance Tracker and the DfE's Similar Schools Comparison Reports, enabling comparisons to be made with local and national trends.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Local Governing Body.

The trust will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the trust, by pupil groups and at individual schools
- Monitor attendance using FFT Attendance Tracker, enabling comparisons to be made with local and national trends

The trust will compare attendance data for each school to the national average and share this with the Standards and Effectiveness Committee of the trust board each term.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

The trust will:

- Identify attendance patterns across the trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools
- Ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to support individuals and groups of pupils to improve their attendance
- Hold each school to account for its pupil attendance and, where needed, support the implementation of strategies for improvement.

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

MITRE schools will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Local Governing Body and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools, local authorities, the trust and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to each MITRE school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Where there is limited improvement or engagement with support, establish an ***attendance contract*** (see appendix 3) in advance of a notice to improve (see section 5.2 above). Attendance contracts will be overseen and monitored by the school's designated senior lead for attendance. Contracts are likely to involve a range of staff in supporting improvements in pupil attendance, as well as commitment and action from pupils and parents.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and, as a minimum, every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Standards and Effectiveness Committee of the board of trustees.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Policy 12: Equality Information and Objectives
- Policy 15: Child protection and Safeguarding
- Policy 21: Behaviour
- Accessibility Plan
- SEN Policy and Information Report

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		

Code	Definition	Scenario
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Planned term-time absence request form

This form should be used to request a pupil absence during term time when a discretionary decision needs to be made by the Head Teacher. Common examples where this form should be completed include:

- Term time holiday requests
- Request to attend a family event
- Request to participate in sporting or artistic events
- Absence for religious observance

Additional Notes:

- You must get permission from the Head Teacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time.
- Make an application to the Head Teacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with). This should be at least 4 weeks in advance.
- There should be exceptional circumstances for granting leave during term time.
- The Head Teacher will decide how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Remember that taking your child on holiday during term time without the school's permission can result in fines. Please refer to the attendance policy for full details.

Child's details		**Dates of absence**	
Forename		**Start date of absence**	
Surname		**Last date of absence**	
Class/Year		**Number of school days**	

Reason for absence (select from below)				
Holiday	**Family event**	**Sporting/artistic/special event**	**Religious observance**	**Other**
Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Additional information in support of your application. Please attached any additional evidence you may wish to be considered.				

Name of parent	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix C: Attendance Contract

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
School:	

Present at meeting:	

Action agreed
EXAMPLES OF ACTION AGREED: • *Pupil will arrive at school by 8.30 a.m. every day.* • *Parent will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence and provide a note upon pupil's return.* • *Parent will provide medical evidence for every sickness absence pupil may incur.* • *School staff will be informed of any reason that is contributing to absence.*

Attendance target:	
Timescale for improvement:	

Date for review meeting:	

I confirm that this Attendance Contract was agreed by all present.

Signed:

..... Parent/carer

..... Pupil

..... School Representative

..... Other Agency (if relevant)