



**The Orchards
School**

A PLACE TO FLOURISH AND GROW

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by: Governing Body

Date:

Last reviewed on:

**Next review due
by:** November 2022

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Attendance Policy

1. AIMS

The Orchards School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Ensuring the safety of all pupils in line with our safeguarding ethos

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our target this year is to ensure all children have at least 96.2% attendance. We do know that from time to time children are really too poorly to come to school.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- DfE School Attendance July 2018

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Attendance Policy

3. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix 1).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Head of School or Executive Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. The Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

If leave of absence is taken with the request not having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in a referral to the Local Authority where a Penalty Notice may be issued. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Children Missing Education Team, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education. For more information refer to the Children Missing Education policy.

4. PROCEDURES

Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and at the beginning of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Attendance Policy

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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school opens at 8.45am for a soft start and the doors close at 9.00am. Morning registration is at 8.55am. Afternoon registration is at 1.00pm. The register closes at 9.40am and pupils arriving at this time or after, are marked in the register with code U, (Unauthorised late) which impacts on the child's overall attendance percentage.

- A first day phone call is made by School office staff to contact the parent/carer if a child is marked as absent with no reason. If no contact can be made a text will be sent requesting the parent/carer to inform the school of a reason for absence.
- If no contact is made after the second day and the child is still absent then the school may carry out a safe and wellbeing check.
- If attendance falls below 95% an advisory letter is sent to parents.
- If attendance falls below 93% an advisory letter is sent to parents.
- If attendance falls below 90% a letter of concern is sent to parents.
- If attendance continues to be below 93% then parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Deputy Head Teacher or Head of School and be placed on an Attendance Support Plan.

See Appendix 2 for Advisory Letters

If attendance continues to drop after being on an Attendance Support Plan then the case will be referred to Worcestershire Children First, alongside professional discussions with other relevant agencies.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible. The office is manned from 8.30am every day, with an answer machine service available prior to this time.

The Orchards School can be notified by phoning 01527 872271 or emailing office@theorchardsschool.org

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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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.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

You can notify the schools as follows: by phoning 01527 872271 or emailing office@theorchardsschool.org

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code and parents/carers are asked to complete a late form on arrival.

To follow this up late letters are sent out to remind parents on the affects lateness has on education if the child is late on three separate occasions per half term.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If lateness and punctuality continue to be a problem then the parent/carer will be asked to meet with the Head of School or Deputy Head Teacher to discuss how support may be put in place.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a child is absent and no reason has been given then the school office staff will ring to gain a reason. If no contact is still made then school will text a reminder for the parent/carer to provide a reason. If this is still not forthcoming then on the second day of absence the school may carry out a safe and wellbeing check. If the child returns then the parent/carer will be asked in person or letters are sent out on a weekly basis to gain a reason for absence.

Reporting to parents

Parent/Carers will receive information on attendance within the end of year school report on an annual basis. If a child's attendance declines then letters will be sent out to inform parents/carers of their child's current attendance.

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5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. 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.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher will consult with Worcestershire Children First, alongside other relevant agencies, prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

A form from the school office must be completed to inform the school of the planned absence in advance so that we know that they are safe and well.

Please note: Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

1. The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils)
2. *Year six transition day (for pupils in year six) NOT APPLICABLE AT THE ORCHARDS*
3. *Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six) NOT APPLICABLE AT THE ORCHARDS*
4. *Year nine options time (for pupils in year nine) NOT APPLICABLE AT THE ORCHARDS*
5. *At any time during years 10 and 11 (for all pupils in these year groups) NOT APPLICABLE AT THE ORCHARDS*
6. At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents by each school).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher's discretion.

Note a term-time holiday will not be approved and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments

Attendance Policy

- 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 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

6. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

At school we reward pupils for good attendance and punctuality as follows:

- Building relationships and opening lines of communication with parents at to facilitate ease of communication both ways about attendance concerns.
- 100% Half-Termly reward certificates tied to House Points and the Roll of Honour
- Enriched and engaging curriculum matching our learners needs.

7. LEGAL SANCTIONS

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 per parent, per child within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

8. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The school office staff monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health and every day that they absent from school.

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If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days we may contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this and may carry out a safe and wellbeing check.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving Family Front Door, Worcestershire Children First, alongside professional discussions with other relevant agencies.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

A report on attendance is compiled on a weekly basis by the office staff and sent to the Deputy Head teacher to identify any pupils whose attendance falls below 90%, attendance between 90 – 93%, holidays and absences. The Deputy Head Teacher the shares this with the Head of School and/or the Executive Headteacher.

For those children whose attendance is below 93% meetings may be held to discuss any barriers to attendance.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing board

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head of School and the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Head of School and the Executive Headteacher

The Head of School and the Executive Headteacher are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head of School and the Executive Headteacher also support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Deputy Head Teacher as the attendance officer

The Deputy Head Teacher as the attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher
- Works with Worcestershire Children First; Family Front Door; and other pertinent outside professional agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

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Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Parents/carers

Parents should inform the school office of a child's absence before 9am every day that they are absent.

If no reason is provided for absence within 4 weeks of this occurring this will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents should be aware that, where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence, will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Local Authority for consideration for prosecution.

If leave of absence/term time holiday is required, parents must fill in a leave of absence form available from the school office at least 4 weeks in advance.

The School is unable to authorise holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absences due to term time holiday may incur a penalty notice.

There is an expectation to work with school and the Education Welfare Officer to resolve any attendance issues.

Pupils

Pupils register in their classrooms both in the morning and afternoon.

If pupils are late, they should enter the building through the school office with a parent or carer who should inform the office staff about the lateness and the school office team will sign them in with a reason for lateness.

If pupils are taken out of school during the day due to appointments or illness then the school office team will sign them out with the time, date and reason.

Worcestershire Children First

The school may refer a pupil to Worcestershire Children First where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. Worcestershire Children First will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Religious Observance

School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

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It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. A form from the office must be completed to inform school of the absence.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence

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

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

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

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

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

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

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

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

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service

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- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

10. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The school will review this policy annually and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

11. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head and Head of School and ratified by The Orchards Governing Body, before being shared with all stakeholders.

12. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy is linked to our child protection, safeguarding and children missing in education policy

Attendance Policy





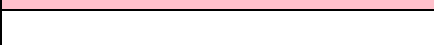
APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are taken from The Orchards ScholarPack MIS System, in line with DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Registration Codes: Updated: August 2021

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
I01	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
I02	Authorised absence due to illness: confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
J	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an interview
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance)

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Register Code	Description
X	Not required to be in school
X01	Non-compulsary school age absence - not counted in possible attendances
X02	Pupil self-isolating with Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
X03 (2020-21 academic year)	Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) INSIDE school setting
X04 (2020-21 academic year)	Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) OUTSIDE school setting
X05	Pupils required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)
X06	Pupil not in school because they have been advised specifically by their Doctor or public health authority that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and should not attend
X07	Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in Government advice
X08 (2021-22 academic year)	Not attending in response to outbreak management
X09 (2021-22 academic year)	Self-isolating: close contact required to isolate by NHS Test and Trace
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances
Colour Key	Description
	Present
	Authorised Absence
	Approved Educational Activity - Counted as Present
	Unauthorised Absence
	Not Counted in Attendance Calculations

The codes X (Not required to be in school, formerly marked as Early Years) and I (illness NOT appointments) are still available if your school wishes to continue with their use. Alternatively, X01 and I01 are equivalent codes in the new DfE subcategories should you wish to use them instead.

Note: the subcategory codes for X and I relating to Covid-19 non-attendance are outlined in this Department for Education guidance (March 2021):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965878/Recording_non-attendance_related_to_coronavirus.pdf

Attendance Policy

APPENDIX 2: ATTENDANCE ADVISORY & CONCERN LETTERS

Letter sent when attendance falls below 95%



A PLACE TO FLOURISH AND GROW

PERRYFIELDS ROAD | BROMSGROVE | B61 8GN
01527 872271

OFFICE@THEORCHARDSCHOOL.ORG
HEAD OF SCHOOL: MRS M RUMNEY

Date

Re: School Attendance

Dear the Parent's/Carer's of ~~[[firstname]]~~ ~~[[surname]]~~

I am writing to inform you that during our recent attendance analysis, it was noted that the attendance of your child has started to deteriorate. We have a duty to investigate attendance that drops below 90%, because this level of attendance is regarded as a Persistent Absence by the DFE (96% is satisfactory). ~~[[firstname]]~~'s attendance currently stands at ~~[[percent]]~~. This does not include absences related to COVID as it does not impact on overall attendance.

In order to derive the full benefit from their education, it is essential that pupils attend school regularly. I appreciate that there may be genuine reasons for some of this absence, but it is important that attendance improves considerably.

School ~~are~~ keen to support with any issues that may be affecting your child's attendance, so please contact me to discuss the matter further if needed. In the ~~meantime~~ I will monitor ~~[[firstname]]~~ attendance in the hope that I can report to the Pastoral Attendance Team that there has been a marked improvement.]

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Williams

Deputy Headteacher

Attendance Policy

Letter sent when attendance falls below 93%



Date

Re: School Attendance

Dear the Parent's/Carer's of [\[\[firstname\]\]](#) [\[\[surname\]\]](#)

I am writing to inform you that during a recent meeting with our Pastoral Support Team analysing concerning attendance, it was noted that [\[\[firstname\]\]](#)'s attendance is below 93%. We have a duty to investigate attendance that drops below 90%, because it is regarded as a Persistent Absence by the DFE, we thought that you would like to be informed that your child [\[\[firstname\]\]](#)'s currently stands at [\[\[percent\]\]](#).

In order to derive the full benefit from their education, it is essential that pupils attend school regularly and the DFE state that satisfactory attendance is 96%. I appreciate that there may be genuine reasons for some of this absence, but it is important that attendance improves considerably.

School [are](#) keen to offer support with any issues that may be affecting your child's attendance, so please contact me to discuss the matter further if needed. In the [meantime](#), I will monitor [\[\[firstname\]\]](#)'s attendance in the hope that I can report to the Pastoral Attendance Team that there has been a marked improvement.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Williams

Deputy Headteacher

Attendance Policy

Letter sent when attendance falls below 90%



A PLACE TO FLOURISH AND GROW

PERRYFIELDS ROAD | BROMSGROVE | B61 8QN
01527 872271

OFFICE@THEORCHARDSSCHOOL.ORG
HEAD OF SCHOOL: MRS M RUMNEY

Date|

Re: School Attendance

Dear the Parent's/Carer's of [\[\[firstname\]\]](#) [\[\[surname\]\]](#)

I am writing to inform you that during a recent meeting with the Head of School, it was noted that [\[\[firstname\]\]](#)'s attendance is below 95% and currently stands at [\[\[percent\]\]](#). I appreciate you may have provided reasons for these absences however, due to this low level of attendance, your child is now on our weekly monitoring list.

In order to derive the full benefit from their education, it is essential that pupils attend school regularly and the DFE state that satisfactory attendance is 96%. I appreciate that there may be genuine reasons for some of this absence, but it is important that attendance improves considerably.

School [are](#) keen to offer support with any issues that may be affecting your child's attendance, so please contact me to discuss the matter further if needed. In the [meantime](#), I will monitor [\[\[firstname\]\]](#)'s attendance in the hope that I can report to the Head of School that there has been a marked improvement

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Williams

Deputy Headteacher