

# Attendance and Absence Policy



<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	September 2022	New Policy (review annually)
2	September 2023	No changes - update 2024
3	September 2024	Updated in line with Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024 and beamised throughout

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Statement of Intent	2-3
1. Legal Framework	3-4
2. Roles and Responsibilities	4-6
3. Definitions	7
4. Attendance Expectations	7-10
5. Absence Procedures	10-11
6. Attendance Register	11-13
7. Authorising Parental Absence Requests	13-16
8. SEND- and Health-Related Absence	16-18
9. Leave During Lunchtimes	18
10. Truancy	19
11. Missing Children	19-21
12. Attendance Intervention	21
13. Working with Parents to Improve Attendance	22-23
14. PA	23-24
15. Legal Intervention	24-27
16. Monitoring and Analysing Absence	27-28
17. Training of Staff	28-29
18. Monitoring and Review	29

## **APPENDICES**

1. Attendance Monitoring Procedures	29-34
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## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Beam Trust believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment within our schools, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school office is responsible for dealing with day to day attendance. All staff with responsibility of dealing with attendance can be contacted via email or telephone at the following:

Oughtrington Primary School [oughtrington.office@thebeamtrust.co.uk](mailto:oughtrington.office@thebeamtrust.co.uk) or 01925 752086

Thelwall Infant School [thelwall.infant@thebeamtrust.co.uk](mailto:thelwall.infant@thebeamtrust.co.uk) or 01925 267172

Ravenbank Primary School [ravenbank.officemanager@thebeamtrust.co.uk](mailto:ravenbank.officemanager@thebeamtrust.co.uk) or 01925 753926

Statham Primary School [statham.office@thebeamtrust.co.uk](mailto:statham.office@thebeamtrust.co.uk) or 01925 752142

Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the office for queries or concerns about attendance.

## **1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
  
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

## **2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Trust board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the four schools.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through each school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with SLTs to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust's Complaints Procedures Policy.

- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

Headteachers are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across their school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Senior Attendance Champion role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of their school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in their school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.

- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Arriving punctually to school.
- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

#### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

#### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

### **4. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS**

The Trust and its schools have high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.



Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

### Oughtrington

School opens at **8:50am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. Pupils arriving at school will be met and greeted by a member of staff as they enter their external door. Pupils will be expected to be on the school site by this time. EYFS and Key Stage 1 pupils will have a morning break at 10:00am and Key Stage 2 pupils at 10:30am, which will last until 10:15 and 10:45 respectively. EYFS and KS1 will have a lunch break at 12:00pm and KS2 at 12:15pm, which will last until 1:00pm and 1:15pm respectively. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked at 1:00pm for EYFS and KS1 and 1:15pm for KS2.
- The afternoon register will close at 1:10pm (EYFS and KS1) and 1:25 (KS2).

### Ravenbank

School opens at **8:40am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons by 8.50am. Pupils arriving at school will be met and greeted by a member of staff as they enter their external door. Pupils will be expected to be on the school site by this time.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked at 12.45pm for EYFS, 1.10pm for KS1 and 1.20pm for KS2. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present for the afternoon register.

### Statham

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day. School opens at **8:30am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. Pupils arriving at school will be met and greeted by a member of staff. Pupils will be expected to be on the school site by this time. Pupils will have a morning break at 10:00am until 10:15am. Lunch break is 12:00pm until 1:00pm. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8:40am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked at 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

## Thelwall

School opens at **8:45am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. Pupils arriving at school will be met and greeted by a member of staff as they enter their external door. Pupils will be expected to be on the school site by this time.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked at 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1:30pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

## **5. ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, the school office will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as possible on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

Schools will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, schools reserve the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Senior Attendance Champion (Headteacher). Schools will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Senior Attendance Champion will be informed, and a letter will be sent to parents explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored and the Senior Attendance Champion will contact the parents to discuss this.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## **6. ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

Schools use Scholar Pack to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Schools will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided

- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## **7. AUTHORISING PARENTAL ABSENCE REQUESTS**

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of

the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

### **Leave of absence**

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete an absence form (available in the school office) preferably at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence, unless exceptional circumstances apply
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice.

Schools cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

### **Illness and healthcare appointments**

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

### **Performances and activities, including paid work**

Schools will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend the school issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.



## **Religious observance**

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance preferably at least two weeks advance.

Schools will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. Schools will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

Schools may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

## **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child preferably at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

## **8. SEND- AND HEALTH-RELATED ABSENCES**

Our schools recognise that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, schools will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IEPs that have been implemented. Schools will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where a school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their social, emotional and mental health needs.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the schools will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.

- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

## **9. LEAVE DURING LUNCHTIMES**

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher – it is at the Headteacher’s discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to and considered by the Headteacher. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Pupils will leave the school premises and return at a time agreed with the Headteacher.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Headteacher’s decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a half termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

## **10. TRUANCY**

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **11. ABSENT PUPILS**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.

- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms
  - The library
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form on CPOMS, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Trust's Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

## **12. ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION**

In order to ensure schools have effective procedures for managing absence, the Senior Attendance Champion, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Regular pastoral support sessions for pupils.
  - Regular pastoral contact with parents
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.

Schools will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

Schools will also promote the importance of attendance during assemblies and to parents via their school newsletter.

### **13. WORKING WITH PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE**

Schools will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. Schools will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social care.

Schools will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

Schools will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, except for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. Schools will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, where necessary and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Senior Attendance Champion will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Senior Attendance Champion will work with the Headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL, pastoral support and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's

family, the Senior Attendance Champion will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

#### **14. PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)**

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

Schools will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering pastoral support and academic interventions to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils, where appropriate, to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or Graduated Approach may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

Schools will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 10 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.



Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, schools will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social care, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. Schools will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **15. LEGAL INTERVENTION**

Schools will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the Senior Attendance Champion will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team at the LA.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

### **Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)**

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

### **Fixed penalty notices**

In line with the National framework for penalty notices, all state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, we are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether the local authority needs to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?

o If yes, school will continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if the support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice may be issued if either has not worked.

o If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then a penalty notice will be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention will be used to improve attendance.

NB: Support is defined as any activity intended to improve the pupil's attendance, not including issuing a penalty notice or prosecution. As part of this consideration, school and the local authority will consider what suitable forms of support are currently available and where necessary from other services and agencies.

### **Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences**

If repeated penalty notices are being issued, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national

threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken by the local authority. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions. Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued,

The payment of any fixed penalty notices must be paid directly to the local authority

## **16. MONITORING AND ANALYSING ABSENCE**

The Senior Attendance Champion in each school will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

Schools will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

Senior Attendance Champions will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

Senior Attendance Champions will work with staff across their school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. Senior

Attendance Champions will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Trust board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support SLTs in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

Schools will also benchmark their attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data, to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Board of Trustees will ensure staff from each of its schools regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

## **17. TRAINING OF STAFF**

Our schools will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The Trust board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The Trust's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The Trust's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

## **18. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The Trust's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Headteachers and the Trust Board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2025

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

### **Attendance Monitoring Procedures**

The Beam Trust has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard and effective intervention is provided where pupil's attendance falls below the standard:

1. The school checks weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and pupils are reminded of the importance of good attendance. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided, these N codes are reported to the attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls between **93-96 percent** a copy of the child's attendance report is shared with parents and a letter is sent home (**appendix 1**) raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. Dependent upon the circumstances you may be asked to meet with the class teacher/attendance officer (school specific) to discuss the attendance and discuss ways to improve attendance. Attendance at this level will then be monitored half termly.

6. If a pupil's attendance falls between **90-93 percent** a copy of the child's attendance report and a letter is sent home (**appendix 2**) and, dependent upon circumstances, you may be asked to meet with the headteacher/attendance officer to discuss this. Attendance will then be monitored fortnightly.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 percent** this is categorised as **persistent absenteeism**. A letter is sent home (**appendix 3**) explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored weekly and parents will be asked to meet with the headteacher/attendance officer to discuss this. An attendance contract will be drawn up. (**appendix 4**) The pupil's attendance is monitored for **two weeks**. You may also be asked to provide medical evidence for any future absences due to illness (doctors notes, prescriptions, appointment letters/cards)
8. After the **two week** monitoring period and if targets are met a letter is sent home from the Headteacher to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to **96 percent**.
9. If targets are not met the Attendance Officer/Headteacher makes a referral to the Local Authority attendance officer and parents will be notified of this (**appendix 5**). The Local Authority Attendance Officer will meet with the family and put a plan in place to improve attendance. A monitoring period is established (Usually every 3 weeks for 9 weeks) and if there are no improvements a fast track prosecution will be considered.

**NB: The Trust recognises the difficulty children and families with additional needs may have in meeting attendance targets and will work sensitively with children and families to improve attendance whilst being sensitive to contextual circumstances.**

## ATTENDANCE BANDS AND ACTIONS TAKEN BY SCHOOL

Colour Code	Band of % Attendance	What this means for your child's learning
	<b>98-100%</b> (99% attendance is approximately 2 days missed over the year)	Fantastic attendance which will enable your child to reach their true potential. This will be praised in school.
	<b>96-98%</b> (97% attendance is approximately 6 days missed over the year)	Very good attendance which is above our target of 96%. This will support your child and give them a very good chance of achieving their true potential. This will be praised in school.
	<b>93-96%</b> (95% attendance is approximately 10 days missed over the year)	Attendance is below the expected level. A copy of the child's attendance report is shared with parents and a letter is sent home. Dependent upon the circumstances you may be asked to meet with the class teacher/attendance officer (school specific) to discuss the attendance and discuss ways to improve attendance. Attendance at this level will then be monitored half termly.
	<b>90%-93%</b> (90% attendance is approximately 20 days missed over the year)	Attendance is a concern. A copy of the child's attendance report and a letter is sent home and, dependent upon circumstances, you may be asked to meet with the headteacher/attendance officer to discuss this. Attendance will then be monitored fortnightly.
	<b>Below 90%</b>	Attendance at this level is categorised as persistent absenteeism. A letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored weekly and parents will be asked to meet with the headteacher/attendance officer to discuss this. Dependent upon circumstances an attendance contract may be drawn up and targets set. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks. After the two week monitoring period and if targets are met a letter is sent home from the Headteacher to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent. If targets are not met the Attendance Officer/Headteacher makes a referral to the Local Authority attendance officer. The Local Authority Attendance Officer will meet with the family and put a plan in place to improve attendance. A monitoring period is established (Usually every 3 weeks for 9 weeks) and if there are no improvements a fast track prosecution will be considered.



Appendix 1 Letter to send home at 93-96% (attach child's attendance report with this letter)

Dear Parent/Carer

**School Attendance Letter of Concern- Below 96%**

**Name:**

**DOB:**

**Date:**

Attendance in school is monitored very closely and any pupils with less than 96% may be challenged as regular school attendance is crucial if pupils are to achieve positive outcomes. At present ..... 's attendance is only.....% (see attached attendance report).

It is important this improves as research has found poor school attendance does have a detrimental effect on a child's academic progress and I hope, with your cooperation, we will see an improvement.

**(DELETE IF CIRCUMSTANCES MEAN A MEETING IS NOT APPROPRIATE OR NECESSARY)** Your child's class teacher will arrange a meeting with you to discuss ways that we might be able to support you in ensuring attendance returns to above 96%.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion

**Appendix 2 Letter to send home at 90-93% (attach child's attendance report with letter)**

Dear Parent/Carer

**School Attendance Letter of Concern- Below 93%**

**Name:**

**DOB:**

**Date:**

Attendance in school is monitored very closely and any pupils with less than 93% are a cause for concern. Regular school attendance is crucial if pupils are to achieve positive outcomes. At present .....’s attendance is only.....% (see attached attendance report).

It is important this improves as research has found poor school attendance does have a detrimental effect on a child's academic progress and I hope, with your cooperation, we will see an improvement.

**(DELETE IF CIRCUMSTANCES MEAN A MEETING IS NOT APPROPRIATE OR NECESSARY)** I would like to invite you to a meeting on..... at ..... to discuss ways that we might be able to support you in ensuring attendance returns to above 96%.

Your child's attendance will now be monitored fortnightly.

**Yours sincerely**

**Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion**

**Appendix 3 Letter to send home below 90% (attach attendance report to letter)**

Dear Parent/Carer

**School Attendance Letter of Concern- Below 90%**

**Name:**

**DOB:**

**Date:**

Attendance in school is monitored very closely and any pupils with less than 90% are classed as persistent absentees. Regular school attendance is crucial if pupils are to achieve positive outcomes. At present .....’s attendance is only.....% (see attached attendance report).

Your child will not be achieving their full potential and will be at risk of not meeting age expectations.

Please note under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

I would like to invite you to a meeting on..... at ..... to discuss ways that we might be able to support you in ensuring attendance returns to above 96%.

Your child’s attendance will now be monitored weekly.

**Yours sincerely**

**Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion**

Appendix 4 Attendance contract (below 90%)

**Improving Attendance Contract**

This contract has been negotiated to help and the parents/carers and the school to work more effectively together to improve his/her attendance.

Child's Name	
Date of Birth	
Parent/carers name	
Parent/carers name	

Improvements we are seeking to achieve:
•
•
•
•

school will support this by:
•
•
•
•

Parents/carers agree to support this by:
•
•
•
•

Other agencies/professionals to be involved in this agreement include:
•
•
•

Any Additional Notes

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This contract will be in place until: \_\_\_\_\_ and will be reviewed every 2 weeks.

The first review meeting will take place on:  
(Earlier reviews can be requested at any time, by either party)

Declaration

I/We understand this contract has been agreed for the purposes outlined above

Signed	Name	Date

Entry into this contract is voluntary and consent can be withdrawn by any party at any time. Withdrawal from this contract, or failure to complete the agreed actions may result in escalation of concerns by the school or local authority in accordance with their safeguarding and/or attendance policies. Action may include prosecution for parents' failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## Appendix 5 – Notifying parent/carer of referral to LA attendance officer

Dear Parent/Carer

### **School Attendance Letter of Concern- Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service**

**Name:**

**DOB:**

**Date:**

Following my previous letters and contacts with you .....’s attendance remains a cause for concern and is only.....%.

As his/her attendance has not significantly improved, I have no further option other than to refer the case to the Local Authority. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, you are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance and punctuality of your child at school. The Government have decreed that any pupil with an attendance level of under 90% will be classed as a ‘persistent absentee’. Unfortunately your child is on track to becoming a persistent absentee and they will be falling behind in their learning.

An Attendance Officer from the Local Authority will be in contact with you and may consider further action. May I take this opportunity to remind you that the outcome of their involvement will be influenced by an improvement in your child’s attendance at school. I would urge you to ensure your child attends school regularly from now on. If they are absent for any reason it is still a requirement that you must provide medical evidence to support their absence.

As always I am willing to discuss this matter with you further either in person or by phone. Thank you in anticipation for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely