



# Bleak Hill Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SPRING 2024

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## **Statement of intent**

Bleak Hill 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 are committed to:

- 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.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## 1. Legal framework

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

2 pieces of linked guidance removed due to DfE withdrawal remove this once ratified

- 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 (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2022) Working Together to Improve School Attendance

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Supporting children at school with Medical needs Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- 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 school'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.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the 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 attendance lead is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

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.

### 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 or applied for before travel
- Leaving school for no valid reason during the day

**Persistent absenteeism:**

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

#### **4. Training of staff**

The school 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.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

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.

#### **5. Pupil expectations**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will agree at the beginning of each school year, to try and keep their attendance at, or above, **96%** throughout the year.

#### **6. Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)**

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

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:
  - Implementing a Graduated approach to monitoring and supporting attendance issues (See Annex A)
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Having a attendance team meetings.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.

- Using fixed penalty notices.
- Creating opportunities for attendance discussions with parents/carers.

The governing board will engage in attendance decisions to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Perform weekly tracking to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Social Care Involvement CWSW
- LAC
- Pupils who are Disadvantaged
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

## 7. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone on the first day of their child's absence. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

A message will be sent to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence 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.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance lead.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance lead will be informed, and a formal letter offering support, or a meeting will be sent to the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 10 consecutive school days, the school will make a visit to the last known address and start the CME (Child Missing Education).

The school will build 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. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

## 8. Attendance register

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.

The school 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:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- 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 = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip



- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- 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.

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.

## 9. Attendance lead

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance lead who will attempt to resolve the situation through a meeting and a parent agreement/contract. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Head teacher has the power to request sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices for parents.

The attendance lead will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

## 10. Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day starts at 9:00am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by 9:10am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by 9:00am.
- The register closes at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time. (U)
- After lunch, registers are marked by 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present and in their classrooms at 1:00pm.
- Pupils attending after 9:20am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## 11. Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be

made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. 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.

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstance:

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from or going on 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.
- 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 Headteacher 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. 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".

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

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already below 90% for any reason

The issue regarding the parent/carer unable to have leave from work in school holidays is not an exceptional circumstance and is an issue that needs to be resolved between the parent/carer and their employer not the school.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## 12. Leave during lunch times

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.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

## 13. Missing children

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
  - Any outbuildings
  - Forrest school area
  - 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 Head teacher will fill in an incident form, 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 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.

## **14. Religious observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **15. Appointments**

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card must be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **16. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities**

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives 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. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

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 a school maintained by the LA 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 a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA 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 by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96% Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

## **17. Young carers**

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

## **18. Rewarding good attendance**

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- Rewards
- Certificate

- Recognition in Worship
- Newsletter page

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways

- Letters home
- Certificates

## 19. Monitoring and review

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

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2025

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

### Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Bleak Hill Primary has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is completed by the attendance lead detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the attendance lead.
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 lead.
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 below 93%, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter contains details outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance lead contacts the parents to discuss this.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored and, if attendance does not improve, parents are invited to attend a meeting in school with the attendance lead and set targets for their child.
8. After a further monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continue until attendance stabilises.
9. If targets are not met, Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final


written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

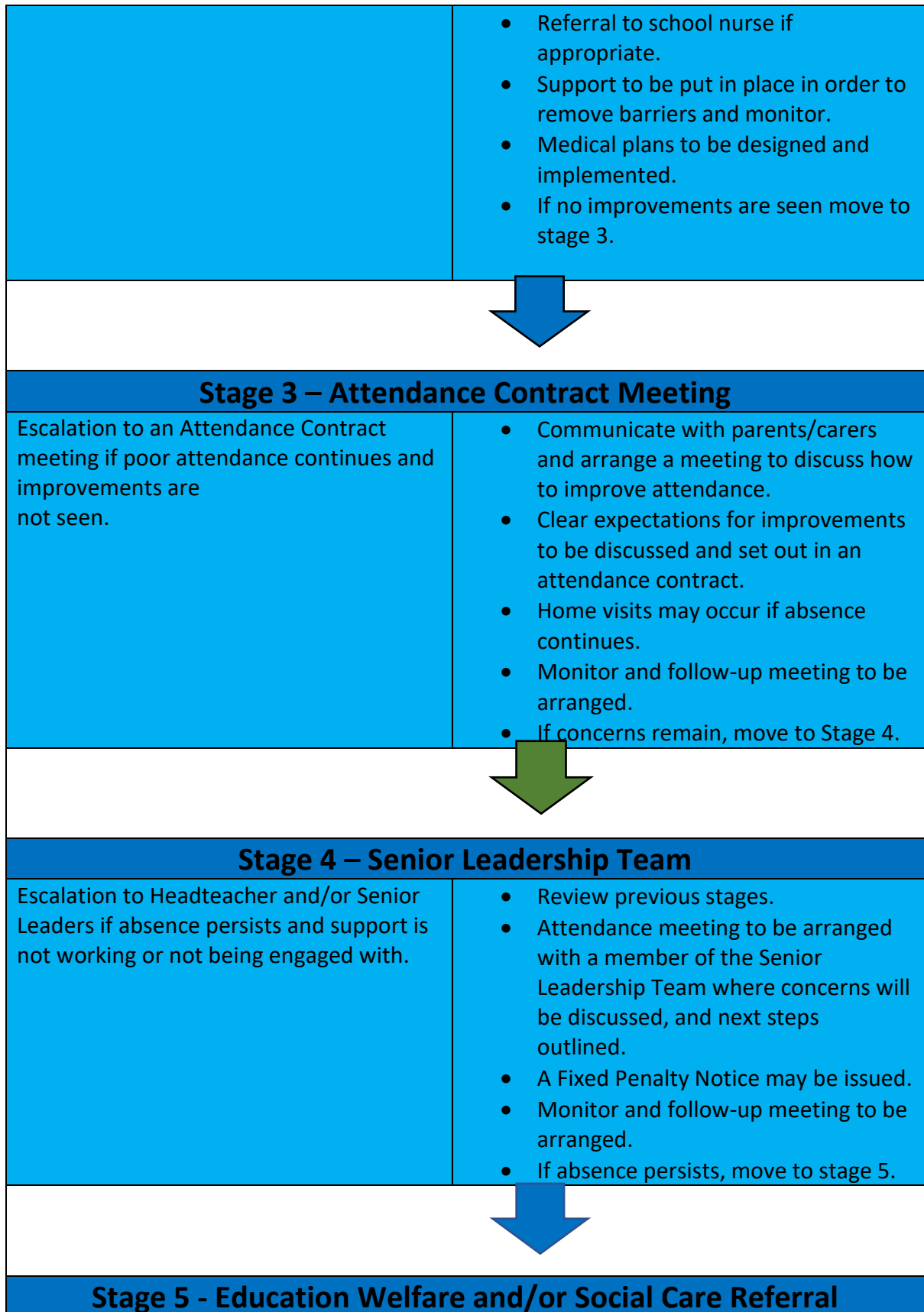
## Annex A

### Graduated Approach

In order to ensure that all attendance concerns are responded to efficiently, a graduated approach has been implemented at Bleak Hill Primary School. The following 5 stages describe how we will respond to attendance concerns.

Attendance Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance below 93% is considered an attendance concern</li><li>• Persistent Absentee below 90% Attendance</li><li>• Entrenched poor attendance significantly below 90%</li><li>• Attendance below 50% with the need for external agency support</li><li>• Absence patterns</li><li>• Arrivals after classroom doors have closed</li><li>• Lateness after the register closes</li><li>• School anxiety that requires pastoral support</li><li>• Family circumstances that impact on attendance</li></ul>

Stage 1 – Class Teachers and/or Support Staff	
An attendance concern is identified either by attendance data monitoring or by class teacher/support staff observations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class Teacher and/or Support Staff to speak to pupil and parent/carer to identify the reasons for attendance concerns.</li><li>• Support to be put in place and monitor.</li><li>• If no improvements are seen move to Stage 2.</li></ul>
	
Stage 2 – Pastoral Team	
Escalation to Pastoral team if no improvements are seen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pastoral lead will contact parent/carer to discuss attendance concerns.</li><li>• Letters home informing of concerns and offer of support.</li><li>• Pupil voice to determine any barriers to attendance.</li><li>• Medical evidence requests to be sent if appropriate.</li></ul>





<p>Escalation to Education Welfare and/or Social Care via TESSA in order to protect the pupils right to an education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review previous stages.</li> <li>• EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool) will be considered.</li> <li>• Possible referral via TESSA to social care and/or Education Welfare.</li> <li>• Possible statutory intervention or prosecution.</li> </ul>
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