



Attendance Policy

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Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance	7
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	11
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	15
7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school	15
8. Attendance monitoring	18
9. Monitoring arrangements	20
10. Links with other policies	20
11. Appendix 1: attendance codes	22
Appendix 2: Harrow Attendance Intervention Model – AIM	25

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

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

Why is attendance so important?

- Government legislation requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the School Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE) and are therefore used as one of the many measurements of the effectiveness of educational provision.
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact a child's learning.
- Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The FGB will review school attendance as part the Governing Body Meetings – this process will be supported by the Headteacher and Attendance Lead.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

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

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Deputy Headteacher and can be contacted via the attendance inbox FAO Mrs Varsani at attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk.

3.4 The attendance officer

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the codes for present or absent, and submitting this information via Arbor for the Attendance Officer to follow up on absences by 9.00am each day.

3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the Arbor.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Welfare Room where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Email attendance officer with any absence information received by the school office to attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk

3.7 Parents

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

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

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Contact the school via phone or email to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- To, when required, keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Headteacher or Attendance Officer phone on 020 8428 1324 or email : -
 - Mrs Bhudia (Headteacher) – via attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk
 - Mrs Varsani (Attendance Lead) -via attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk
 - Mrs Patel (Attendance officer) - attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.
- To attend school punctually.
 - To attend appropriately prepared for the day.
 - To discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.25pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at the end of the lunchbreak e.g. 12.45pm / 1pm / 1.30pm and will be kept open until 15mins after the start of the afternoon session.

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence

codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office on 0208 428 1324 or emailing the attendance email – attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

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

4.3 Planned absence

We strongly 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 e.g. returning to school after an appointment or being at school before an appointment.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and proof is provided. If this does not happen, it will be recorded as unauthorised until relevant information is presented at school to confirm the appointment.

The school can be notified about upcoming appointments by emailing the attendance email – attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk with proof of appointment supplied.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise. This must be done by emailing the attendance email – attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Regular and punctual attendance is both the legal requirement and essential for your child to maximise the opportunities available to them.

- Children need to be in the school playground by 8.45am. The gates open at 8.30 a.m.
- Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
- The school gates will be closed at 8.45a.m. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office and Welfare Room, where they will be entered into the late book with their name and time of lateness. The parent will be asked why their child is late for school. This is then transferred into the registers.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.15am, the pupil will receive a 'U' if the lateness is unauthorised. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety. Any arrival after school start time could be considered an **unauthorised** absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an **authorised** absence coded 'M'.

A pupil who arrives late:

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

Persistent lateness by a child is treated as seriously as any other absence from school. Parents of children who seem to be developing patterns of lateness (more than 1 late per week or 5 late marks in a half term) will be reminded in writing of the importance of good time keeping.

If lateness persists parents will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Lead or Headteacher and will be warned of the legal consequences of continued lateness. If the lateness continues, the school concerns will be referred to the Education Welfare Service for advice and support. A Penalty Notice may be issued by the Court Attendance Officer or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

4.5 Late collection from School

- Children should be collected on time at the end of the school day at 3.25 p.m. for all students. Teachers will remain at their exit point with the children until 3.35 p.m. At this time, they will be brought to the school office and registered as being late to be collected. We realise that occasionally children can be collected late for a variety of reasons. The school should be informed in advance by telephone/email to the year group email and office email if a parent is likely to be late to collect their child or if the parent has made arrangements with an alternative adult to collect their child.
- If a parent has not collected a child by 3.50 p.m. **and we have not heard from the parent**, we may phone Children's Services to seek advice. If needed students will be placed into After School Club with parents being charged for the total session.
- We consider a late collection 3.40 p.m. The first time each half term that a parent is late to collect their child from school they will be given a verbal reminder re:collecting children on time. For subsequent times a parent is late to collect their child they will be taken to our after school club and the parent will be required to pay for a full session when they collect their child.

4.6 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call or email the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact either Children's Services or the Police to seek further advice.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below).

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents have immediate access to their child's attendance via the Arbor app. As and when needed we will contact parents regarding their child's absence to better understand the challenges faced and offer support when and where possible. This will tend to follow on after a half termly monitoring exercise.

To support this and develop the understanding that parents have regarding attendance, the school will share information about the importance of attendance and punctuality.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

Guidance from the Department of Education means that Headteacher **may not** grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**.'

Parents should respect these regulations under which we legally work, and if they do need to take their child out of school during term time, they need to make it very clear in your request how the circumstances are "**exceptional**". If this is not clear then under the legislation, the Headteacher will not be allowed to grant leave. Legally the Headteacher cannot authorise absence retrospectively.

Parents should not book annual leave or pay for any travel arrangements until they have received confirmation that the Headteacher has authorised the period of absence requested.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated, and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence (except in emergency), and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the School Office or School Website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

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

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something that is beyond the control of the family which requires absence from school e.g. the death of a significant relative. Exceptional circumstances must directly relate to the pupil in question which would require their absence from school. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the School Office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose

- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

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

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

5.2 Sanctions

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

Penalty notices

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

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

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

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

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

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

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

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

Information regarding penalty notices can be found on Harrow Council's website [Education Penalty Notices – Harrow Council](#)

Notices to improve

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

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

They will include:

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- The Attendance Officer, class teachers, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, and Assistant Headteacher work together to give children and parents positive feedback when they achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- An "On Time Owl" award is presented to classes that have had zero lateness in the previous week. Certificates are awarded each term to classes across the school that have maintained the highest attendance levels.
- Every fortnight, the School Newsletter updates parents on attendance for each year group, with improvements highlighted and celebrated. At the end of each half term, the class with the best attendance is rewarded with a special experience, such as afternoon tea with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, or Assistant Headteacher.
- Children who achieve 100% attendance are recognised in an assembly at different points throughout the year where appropriate. At the end of the year, they are awarded a certificate.
- Parents are reminded of the importance of regular and timely attendance through Arbor emails and fortnightly newsletters each half term.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

When supporting students who are returning to school after an absence of a significant period the first thing we ensure we do is recognise and respect the reasons for absence – this is important as it can give contextual information around the approach that we need to implement to support them moving forward. There can be multiple reasons as to why a child is absent from school for an extended period of time, some examples include;

- **Mental health** – depression, anxiety, panic attacks and self-harm
- **Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**: Children with SEND, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and sensory processing difficulties, may have a harder time learning, communicating, and regulating emotions. There is potential that an unmet SEND need is the cause to low attendance.
- **Poverty**: Children living in poverty are more likely to be absent from school.
- **Relationships**: Challenges around the interactions that they are having with their peer group can cause a student to disengage from school.
- **Racism**: Racism can compound disadvantages and lead to increased absences.
- **Inadequate housing**: Children with mental health problems are more likely to live in households that are behind on rent or mortgage payments.
- **Academic pressure**: Excessive academic pressure can cause children to be reluctant to attend school.
- **Strict behaviour policies**: Overly strict behaviour policies can make children feel unwelcome at school.
- **Lack of sense of belonging**: Children who don't feel like they belong at school may be more likely to be absent.
- **Irrelevant curriculum**: A curriculum that doesn't interest children may make them less likely to attend school.

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

There are several ways to support pupils who are absent due to complex barriers; much of this is dependent on the reasons as to why they are absent in the first place. Determining the reasons behind this is a positive step to improving attendance. Some of the other considerations include:

- **Creating an individualised plan**: Collaborate with professionals to assess the barriers and create a plan to address them.
- **Communicating with families**: Communicate regularly with parents and carers, using the child's name and specific data. Use positive messaging that encourages parents to consider the social benefits of school.

- **Providing support while absent:** Provide learning and connections while the pupil is absent, and welcome them back when they return.
- **Offering catch-up support:** Provide support to help the pupil catch up after an absence.
- **Creating a supportive environment:** Foster a supportive school environment, and address health and wellbeing.
- **Providing academic support:** Provide academic support, and ensure the curriculum is culturally responsive.
- **Involving community services:** Involve community services, and consider peer mentoring and role models.
- **Considering flexible timetables:** Consider a personalized approach with flexible timetables.
- **Providing transportation:** Consider providing transportation.
- **Encouraging extracurricular activities:** Facilitate access to extracurricular activities, assemblies, and school trips.
- **Using telepresence technology:** For pupils who are motivated to engage with school, telepresence technology can help them "dip their toe" back into the school community.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Depending on the nature of the absence the approach with this scenario may change. In general we would look at the following approach, this is dependent on a needs driven approach while working in line with the Supporting pupils with medical needs policy;

- **Creating a reintegration plan:** Discuss with the school, home, or hospital tuition service how the child will return to school. This could include a gradual return, such as part-time attendance.
- **Meet with the student and family:** Meet with the student and a family member before they start back to discuss their concerns and agree a plan for their first day. This can help alleviate any anxiety. Information from this can be used to further inform any support that might be needed for elements of special requirements.
- **Request support from medical or hospital staff:** Depending on the nature of the health condition a meeting with professionals would further inform and support a smooth transition into school.
- **Liaise with the school nurse or medical professional:** Where possible we would liaise with a medical professional to ensure all relevant information is updated. This means that the best possible provision is in place to support that child. School needs to be aware that medication may have changed or the medical professionals involved may have been adjusted.

- **Inform staff:** Inform staff who need to be aware of the circumstances surrounding the student. Up to date information, where appropriate needs to be shared.

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

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

Depending on the nature of the absence the approach with this scenario may change. In general, we would look at the following approach and depending on a needs driven approach;

- **Creating a reintegration plan:** Discuss with the school, home, or hospital tuition service how the child will return to school. This could include a gradual return, such as part-time attendance.
- **Meet with the student and family:** Meet with the student and a family member before they start back to discuss their concerns and agree a plan for their first day. This can help alleviate any anxiety. Information from this can be used to further inform any support that might be needed for elements of special requirements.
- **Inform staff:** Inform staff who need to be aware of the circumstances surrounding the student. Up to date information, where appropriate needs to be shared.
- **Setting achievable targets:** Set small goals, such as visiting the school building outside of school hours or attending one lesson.
- **Providing extra help:** The school may be able to provide one-to-one or small group help. This could include a learning mentor or in-school counselling.
- **Monitoring for changes:** Look for changes in behaviour or quality of work.
- **Consulting with parents and carers:** Discuss concerns with the student, parents, and carers early on.
- **Considering safeguarding:** Persistent absenteeism or sudden changes in attendance patterns could indicate something is wrong.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

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

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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

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

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will, when and where appropriate:

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

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the following stakeholders in the school; Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) and Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

- Behaviour policy
- Harrow Council's AIM (Attendance Intervention Model) policy (2026)
- DfE Working together to improve school attendance (2026)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

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

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

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

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

Appendix 2: Harrow Attendance Intervention Model – AIM

Phase	School actions	LA Attendance Team Services	LA Children's Services
Phase 1	First day response – log of texts/calls 1st school warning letter – after either 10 unauthorised days or attendance drops below 90%. School to set monitoring period to review attendance. If no improvement during monitoring period – Second school warning letter to be issued. EPN to be issued when threshold for unauthorised absence is met	Issue Education Penalty Notice (EPN) if required	
Phase 2	Meeting / School Attendance panel with parents - Complete CAF with parental agreement for Early Support or refer to other services - School and parents to sign attendance contract - School to inform parents about possible referral to LA pre-court panel and specify monitoring period		MASH Team receive CAF and consider for Early Support, worker allocated
Phase 3	If no progress has happened and further unauthorised absences have occurred, school to send Pre-Court Panel referral form to LA with chronology. School to attend pre-court panel meeting with LA.	Review chronology, arrange pre-court panel if appropriate.	
Phase 4		If no progress or engagement at	

		Pre-Court Panel after monitoring period, LA to pursue court action.	
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