

Attendance Policy

Date	Amendment	Approval
1.9.15	Change of close of registration from 9:30am to 9:10am; removal of references to teachers collecting notes explaining absence; change of persistent absence level from 85% to 90% (changes to legislation Sept 2015); change of attendance assembly to end of week;	FGB
23.1.18	Complete review; update language to make more accessible and update letters to reflect current practice;	FGB
14.7.21	Policy Review	FGB
7.9.23	Policy Review	FGB
Feb 24		
March '25	Policy Review to include Inclusive Attendance	FGB

Viewley Hill Academy is proudly recognised as an Inclusive Attendance school. Our unwavering commitment to attendance centres around child-centric actions, evidence-informed practices, and a shared understanding of everyone's roles and collective responsibilities to promote exceptional attendance.

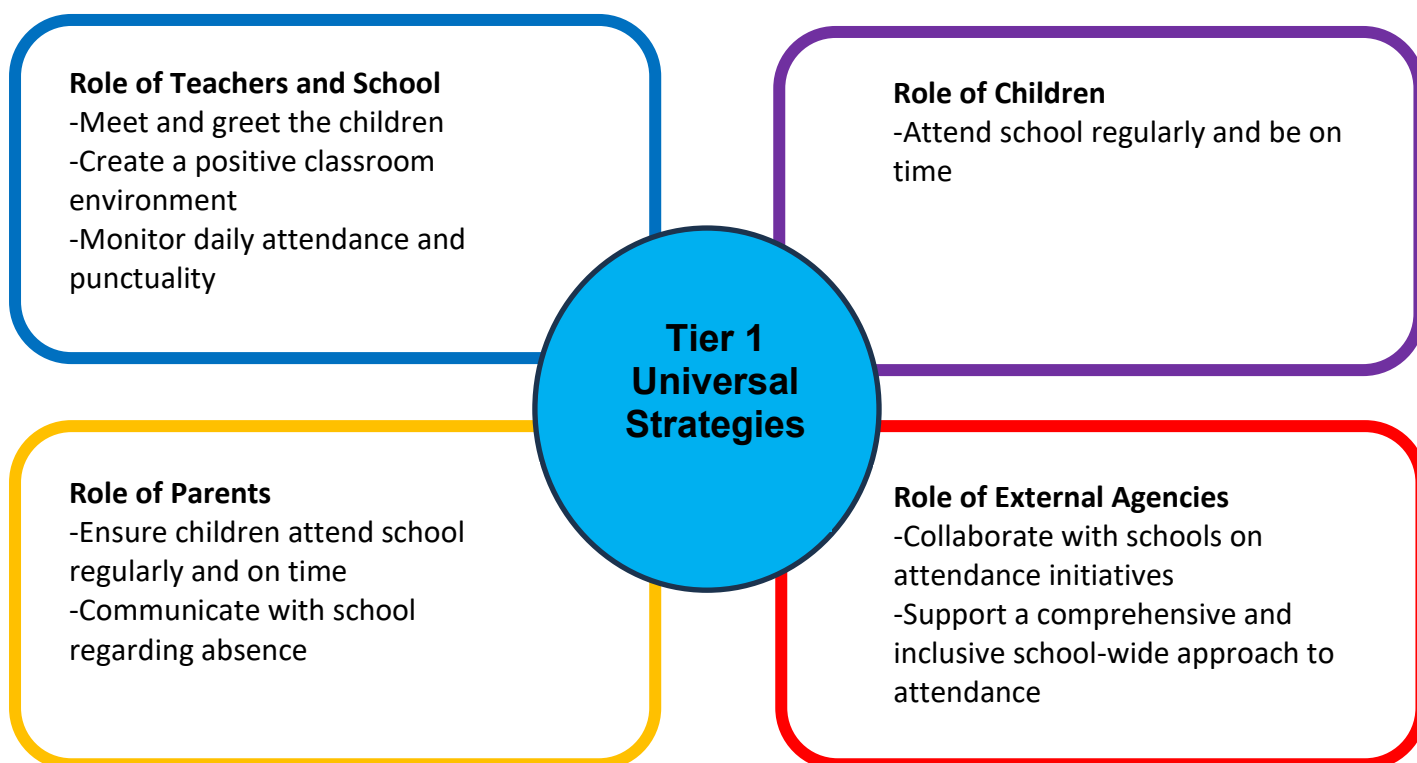
A Multi-Tiered System of Support

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

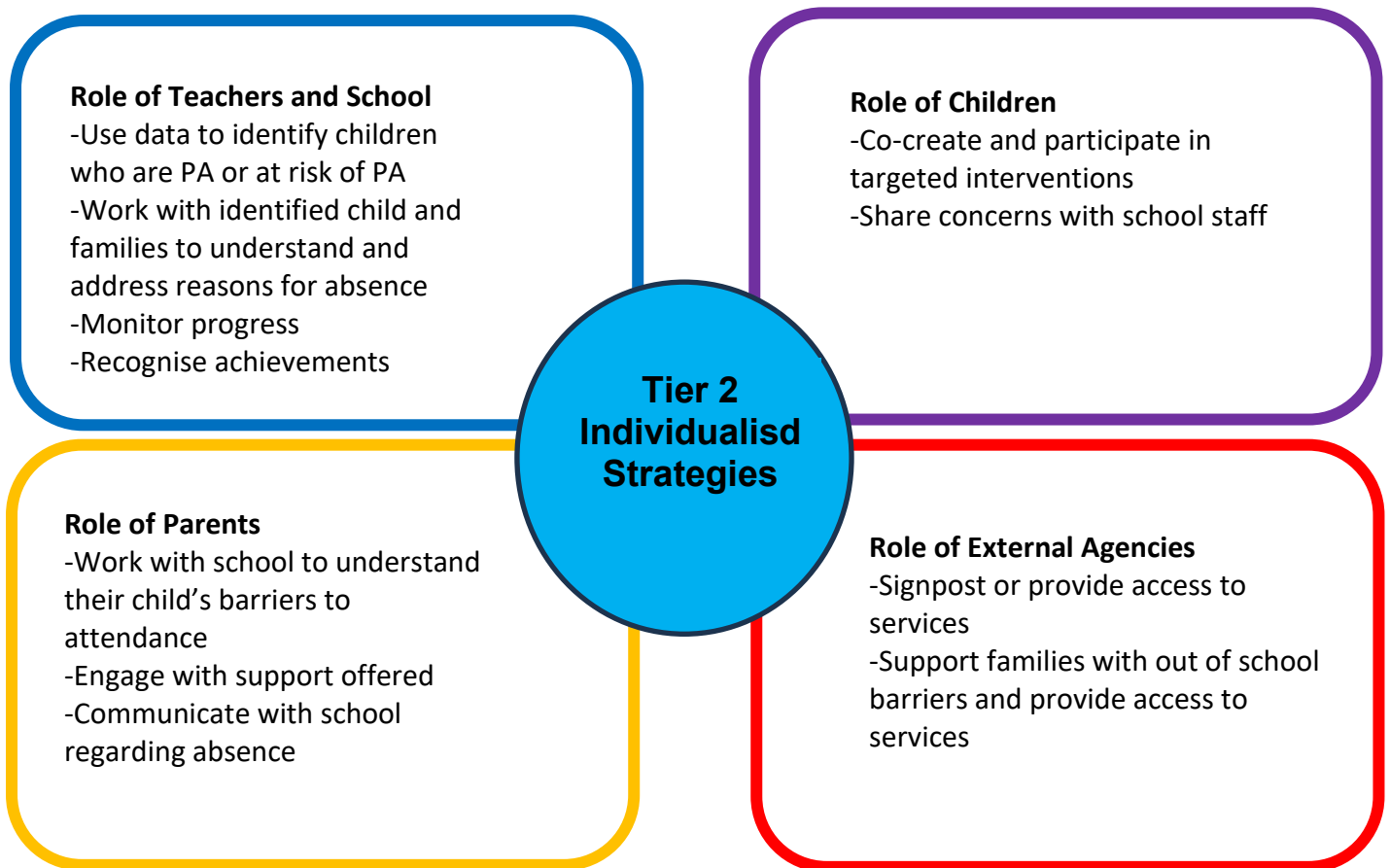
To guarantee a comprehensive approach to attendance, Viewley Hill Academy will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for school attendance involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority.

Data-driven decision-making and training requirements are pivotal to the implementation of this system. The system aligns with the Department for Education's (DFE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" statutory paper 2024.

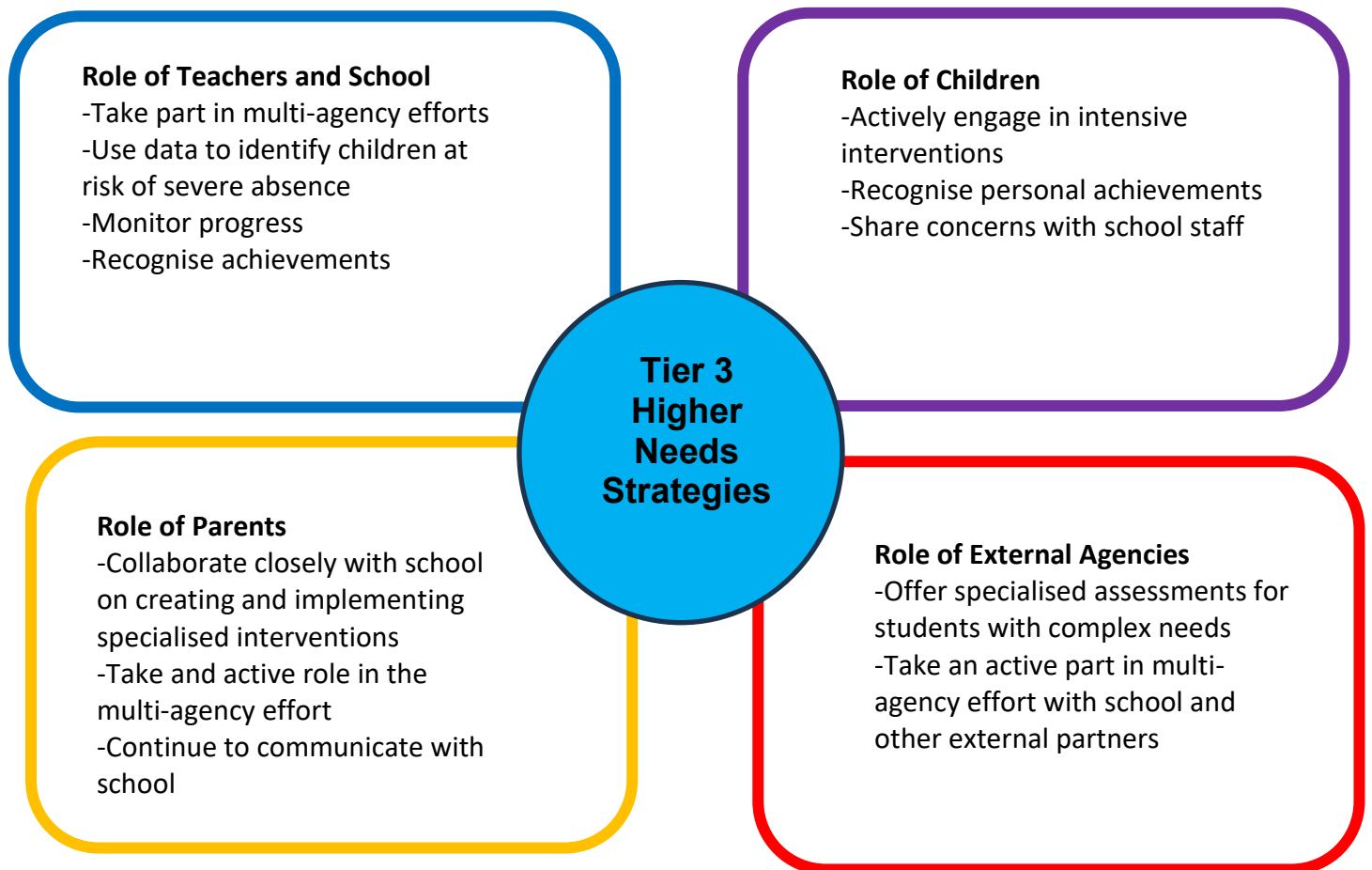
Tier 1 - Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.



Tier 2 – Internal individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges.



Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary



Our attendance policy aims to safeguard our children and their education by ensuring they attend school regularly and when they are unable to attend, we are aware of the reason. Securing good levels of attendance is therefore a priority for us.

The Importance of School Attendance at Viewley Hill Academy

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system. Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on:

- Academic Achievement: Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- Social Development: School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- Building Routine: School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school 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.

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 at school, 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. Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL 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 attendance officer 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.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.

- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Ensuring that students with special educational needs gain the additional support that they need to attend school regularly
- 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.

School staff, governors, parents and children all have a role to play in ensuring good attendance, but we can only do this by having honest communication in place between us and by working together to overcome and difficulties or barriers to attendance.

Within this policy we will refer to parent/ carer. By this we mean:

- Any person who is a natural parent of the child
- Any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- Any person who has day to day care of the child, that is they live with and take care of the child

Parents/carers responsibilities

- To establish a Routine: Parents should establish a daily routine that includes regular school attendance. Consistency in waking up, getting ready for school, and arriving on time helps children develop good attendance habits.
- To support the school in their efforts to encourage good levels of attendance by not taking holidays in term time. (Please see section on holidays in term time for more information.)
- To notify the school before 9am, in person or 24-hour answerphone, on each day of absence with the reason for their child's absence
- To ensure that their child attends on time each day
- To avoid making dental or non-urgent medical appointments during the school day

Children's responsibilities

- To attend school each day that they are well enough
- To arrive at school on time

School responsibilities

Name of Staff Member	Roles and Responsibilities
Mrs Scaife	Attendance Champion
Mrs Moore	Attendance Parental Support Advisor
Mike Bulmer	Attendance Officer
Mrs Scaife/ Mrs Barkley	Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Mrs Barkley	Head Teacher
Mrs A Baker	Governor for School Attendance

- To monitor and track levels of attendance for all pupils
- To reward good attendance and punctuality regularly
- To engage with parents in a proactive manner when attendance is becoming a concern
- To offer support to parents and children who may be having difficulties that are preventing attendance or punctual arrival to school, making referrals to other agencies where necessary
- To take steps to enforce attendance where necessary by referral to the Attendance Officer and the local authority

Governor responsibilities

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- 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 KCSIE 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.

Name of School Attendance Champion: Mrs Scaife

Attendance Champion: The role of an Attendance Champion in improving children's attendance in schools is critical in ensuring that students attend school regularly and

achieve their educational potential. Attendance Champions have a multifaceted role that encompasses various responsibilities and strategies aimed at enhancing attendance rates. Here are some key aspects of their role:

Developing and Implementing Attendance Policies: Attendance Champions work closely with school leadership and staff to develop and implement effective attendance policies and procedures.

Data Analysis: Attendance Champions collect and analyse attendance data to identify trends and patterns. They use this information to pinpoint areas of concern, such as elevated levels of persistent absence, frequent lateness, or particular year groups or demographic groups with attendance challenges.

Early Intervention: Recognising that early intervention is crucial, Attendance Champions identify children at risk of poor attendance. They collaborate with teachers, parents, and support staff to address attendance issues as soon as they arise.

Supporting Families: Attendance Champions work closely with parents and guardians to build positive relationships and engage them in improving their child's attendance. They may conduct home visits, organise meetings to review attendance, and provide guidance on strategies to promote regular attendance.

Providing Resources: Attendance Champions may connect families with resources and services that can help alleviate attendance-related challenges, such as housing support, counselling, or healthcare services.

Monitoring and Reporting: Attendance Champions continuously monitor attendance records and report attendance data to school leadership, governing bodies, and local authorities as required. They ensure that accurate records are maintained.

Staff Training: Attendance Champions provide training to school staff on effective attendance monitoring, reporting, and intervention strategies. They ensure that all staff members understand their roles in promoting attendance.

Legal Compliance: Attendance Champions are knowledgeable about legal requirements related to attendance, including regulations governing authorised and unauthorised absences. They ensure the school complies with these regulations.

Safeguarding: Attendance Champions are vigilant for safeguarding concerns related to attendance. They recognise signs of neglect or abuse and report them to designated safeguarding officers or authorities as necessary.

Community Engagement: Attendance Champions may collaborate with community organisations, social services, and local authorities to address attendance issues within the broader community context.

Continuous Improvement: Attendance Champions regularly evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies and interventions. They adapt their approaches based on data and feedback to achieve sustained improvements in attendance rates.

Promoting a Positive School Culture: Attendance Champions contribute to creating a school culture where attendance is valued, and students feel motivated and supported to attend regularly.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

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

PUNCTUALITY & REGISTRATION

At Viewley Hill Academy the school day starts at 8:30am for Nursery and 8:50am for children Y1-Y6 and by this time all children are expected to be in their classrooms ready for the class register to be taken. Doors are open from 8:40am in Key Stage 1 and 8:45am in Key Stage 2. Parents are welcome to drop their children off at school anytime from 8:40 to 8:50am or earlier if the child attends the breakfast club.

The school register is taken by the class teacher twice a day in line with the regulations that govern the marking of the register. Registers will close at 9:30am and 1:30pm. Should a child arrive between 8:50 and 9:30am they will need to be brought into the main reception by a parent/carer and a reason for late arrival provided. The child will then be escorted to their classroom by a member of staff. A late 'L' code will be entered into the register with the reason provided by parent/ carer. Should a child arrive to school after 9:30am/1:30pm, they will be given a 'U' code which means unauthorised absence.

We actively discourage late arrival at school due to the impact it can have on both the individual child and the rest of the class. Arriving late to school can be embarrassing for the child and disruptive to the rest of the class if the teacher must spend time with the child who is late instead of with the rest of the class.

MONITORING LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE

The attendance of all children under 96% will be monitored regularly (every 2 weeks) by the Assistant Head Teacher, School Attendance Officer and PSA. Parents will be sent letters each half term informing them if their child's attendance has fallen below 96%. If attendance has improved then letters of congratulation will be sent.

If attendance remains a concern, parents/carers may be invited to attend an attendance meeting in school to identify how we can support you and to agree a plan to improve attendance levels.

Home visits are also made by the PSA and Attendance Officer where attendance is a concern. These can be with or without notice to the parent/carer.

Following the period of the support plan, a date will be agreed to review the attendance of the child. If attendance has improved this will be noted in terms of a telephone call, home visit or letter home congratulating the parent on the improvement. If attendance remains a concern or where attendance is below 90%, formal attendance procedures may be taken. This will commence with the issue of a warning letter to parents/carers and then an invitation to an Attendance Case Conference. If the child's attendance does not improve following this intervention, parents/ carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecuted in the magistrate's court for failing to secure the regular attendance of their child.

Irregular attendance of a compulsory school age child is an offence under the Education Act 1996. The school hope to work with parents and children to avoid taking steps to enforce attendance however they will do so if it is clear the required improvements have not been made.

NOTIFYING THE SCHOOL ABOUT ABSENCE

100% attendance is expected for all our children unless there is an acceptable explanation for the absence. There are two types of absence, these are:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed, which at Viewley Hill Academy is 9:20am
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave. We recognise that sometimes children are ill and cannot attend school for this reason. If this is the case parents should contact the school in person, over the phone or by email to tell us about the reason for absence.
- Not all illnesses require absence from school however; minor illnesses can be dealt with in school as can prescribed medicines that require 4 doses daily. A child having head lice should be treated as soon as possible but it does not require an absence from school.
- 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
- Where regular absence occurs due to reasons of illness or where the school spot a pattern of illness, absence will be challenged. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence such as an appointment card or prescription in order that the school can consider whether to authorise the absence. Support can be offered via a referral to the School Health Service that can give advice on managing illnesses and expected lengths of absence. The school, with parents' permission, can write to the child's GP to receive advice on whether the illness warrants the amount of absence.

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, which at Viewley Hill Academy is 9:30am
- 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

Parents are responsible for notifying the school of the reason for absence on each day the child is absent. Only the school can decide on the basis of the information they receive whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Please note that giving a reason for absence does not automatically mean that the absence is authorised. Unauthorised absence can lead to intervention from our Attendance Officer and formal attendance procedures.

RISK OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE

The term "Risk of Persistent Absence" refers to a situation in which a student's attendance is at a level that suggests they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

While there is no specific threshold for "Risk of Persistent Absence," it is typically used to describe students whose attendance is consistently low and becoming a concern, as the school communicates to parents in days, **we identify 10 days or more as Risk of PA and we will follow internal school procedures.**

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Persistent absence is a term referred to by the government for any child who has less than 90% attendance no matter what the reason for the absence. Persistent absence is measured on a half termly basis and you will receive a letter from school if your child has an attendance in this category. Schools are expected to take measures to prevent persistent absence. In some cases, it may be necessary to hold an Attendance Case Conference to begin formal procedures to bring about an improvement in attendance.

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

SEVERE ABSENCE (OR SEVERE PERSISTENT ABSENCE)

The term "Severe Absence" or "Severe Persistent Absence" is used to describe the most serious cases of non-attendance.

Focus and support will be provided to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of external agency partners.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

National regulations that changed in 2013 state that headteachers may not grant leave of absence in term time except in exceptional circumstances. We strongly advise that any holiday in term time should be avoided due to the impact on the child of the lost learning time. If parents still wish to apply for a leave of absence these forms can be requested from the school office.

All leave of absence requests should be made prior to a holiday being booked. Where a parent/ carer feels that exceptional circumstances apply they must detail this on the form and return to school at least two school weeks before the leave is taken. Parent/ carer applications will be replied to in writing within two working weeks of receipt and notification given as to whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

In the likely event that absence is unauthorised the school reserves the right to refer to the local authority for a penalty notice fine to be issued for the absence. Please see appendix for fines that came into effect August 2024.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the school achieving good levels of attendance and at least in line with national averages of 96%. All school staff have a responsibility for promoting and encouraging good levels of attendance and are therefore alert to emerging patterns of late arrival and absence. The school takes a variety of steps to achieve good levels of attendance. For example:

First Day Calling

The school operates a first day calling system whereby all parents/ carers of children who are absent without reason are telephoned and the reason for absence discussed and recorded. Where no answer is received from the first contact telephone numbers, and where it is possible an answerphone message will be left and the parent/ carer requested to call the school back as soon as possible. It is our policy to have at least two contact names and telephone numbers for each child on our roll. Known contacts for the child will be tried throughout the day in an effort to discuss the reason for absence and know the child's whereabouts.

Home Visits

Where concerns arise due the lack of contact from parents/ carers or due to the nature of the reason provided, a home visit may be made by our Parent Support Advisor (PSA), Mrs Moore, Attendance Officer Mike Bulmer or another member of the school team. Mrs Moore will also make home visits at parents' request to discuss attendance concerns or where no reason has been provided for the second day of continuous absence.

The school will contact the local authority and make a Child Missing Education referral if the whereabouts of the child cannot be established.

Missing children

Pupils have to be collected by an adult to leave the school premises during the school day; this requires adults to bring proof of a medical appointment. Should there be a family emergency that requires the removal of children during the school day then please speak to our PSA who will offer support where needed . 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, 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.

Attendance Officer

The role of our Attendance Officer is to track patterns of absence, persistent absence and late arrival to school. In doing so they may make telephone calls, send letters home to parents/ carers, make home visits, hold meetings to discuss attendance and put into place improvement plans. The Attendance Officer will work with parents/ carers and children to remove any difficulties that may be preventing good attendance or punctuality. They will also start formal attendance procedures where appropriate and, on behalf of the school, ask the local authority to issue fines to parents/ carers for unauthorised absence including unauthorised holiday absence.

Rewarding good attendance

Every **week** attendance is discussed and celebrated in assembly and the classes with attendance over 96% will get a letter of VIEWLEY. When they have collected all of these then a class reward will be offered to spend as they wish. The class with the best attendance in EYFS/ KS1 or KS2 will get an extra playtime that week.

Every **term**, children who have achieved the school target of 96% or higher and with no more than 5 late marks are also rewarded with a treat.

Appendices

Viewley Hill Absence and Punctuality Procedures

	What is done	Leading to
Daily	Register check; Parents of absent children contacted; if not contactable by telephone, a home visit may be made and a card put through the door; Late reports completed; parents contacted where necessary;	Letters generated; Home visits; Meetings in school;
Weekly	Class attendance calculated; School attendance calculated: celebration boards updated;	Attendance shared; with children; Extra playtime
Every 2 weeks	Under 96%, under 90% and under 85% reports run and interrogated; Trends in absence identified. Tracking of focus pupils updated and further actions as necessary; Punctuality analysed- late 2 or more times in the two weeks being analysed.	Telephone Calls Home Attendance Letters generated; Home visits; Meetings in school;
Half Termly	As above	Attendance Letters Generated. Well done phone calls/letters;
Termly	96% Attendance reward Punctuality analysed and support offered	Punctuality letters generated Attendance shared at Parent Consultations
Annually	100% annual attendance reward	Annual attendance shared at part of reporting.



PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ABSENCE ARE CHANGING

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice fines issued for unauthorised absence that occurs after 19th August 2024.

Per parent, per child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: three siblings absent for term time leave will result in **each** parent receiving three **separate** fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

5 consecutive days of term time leave.

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term leave of 5 or more consecutive days and for fewer days where this has happened before.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.



Penalty Notice fines will be considered where there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10 week period.

Second Offence

(within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

(No option to pay at £80 level)

Third Offence

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or Irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' Court.