Gardners Lane &
Oakwood Federation

Attendance Policy

Approved October 2026

Review October 2027

Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation

- Our Vision -

'Aspire & Achieve'

Aims and objectives

Gardners Lane & Oakwood Federation, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. **We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.**

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (July 2026 version and any subsequent updates). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/hn1afkus/gcc-pn-code-of-conduct.pdf
- https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold and should be read alongside current local authority attendance procedures and the national attendance absence codes (see Appendix A).

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before *9.15am* 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

- Receive and review attendance reports as part of the Headteachers Report to Governors (Every Full Term). The link Governor for attendance is: Claire Price

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- 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
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Requesting that Gloucestershire County Council considers the issue of a Penalty Notice in accordance with the GCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and national framework.
- Authorising attendance certificates for legal proceedings.

The Senior Attendance Champion, Headteacher GLPS, Mr Tuck (01242 515761)
OPS Mrs Hayet-Patino / Mr R Jacks (01242 515775) are responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents including the requirements around sharing the school's attendance policy.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school attendance officer – Claire Thelwell,
cthelwell@gardnerslane.gloucs.sch.uk is responsible for:

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENDCo to tackle persistent absence

- The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring thresholds and advising the Headteacher when a referral to Gloucestershire County Council should be made for consideration of a Notice to Improve or Penalty Notice.

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Ensure that any N codes are amended within 5 school days to O code if reason for absence cannot be established.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office no later than the time the register is closed/as soon as possible after the register is completed.

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

School processes for recording attendance and absence

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
    - The nature of the activity if 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by *8:45am* on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open no longer than 30 minutes after registration takes place. The register for the afternoon session at Gardners Lane will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm, the register for the afternoon session at Oakwood will be taken 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

Registers will be taken at the same time for all registered pupils in each session, unless different lawful session arrangements apply.

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

Parents/Carers can contact the Attendance Officer directly by email, cthelwell@gardnerslane.gloucs.sch.uk or call/text 07907 723588.

Oakwood: Parents/Carers must call the office on 01242 515775, option 1 "reporting your child absent" then leave a message. Alternatively, send a message to admin via Class Dojo or email, admin@oakwood.gloucs.sch.uk.

Gardners: Parents/Carers must call the office on 01242 515761, send a message to admin via Class Dojo or email, admin@gardnerslane.gloucs.sch.uk.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or where there are prolonged, repeated or complex patterns of illness-related absence, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide reasonable medical evidence. This may include an appointment card, prescription, relevant communication from a health professional,

or other appropriate evidence. We will not routinely request medical evidence and will only do so where there is a genuine and reasonable doubt, where evidence will help us understand and support the pupil's needs, or where it informs reasonable adjustments or suitable provision.

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

Where absence is linked to a pupil's special educational needs or disabilities, physical or mental health, the school will work with parents/carers, the pupil where appropriate, the SENCo, pastoral staff, health professionals and other partners to understand barriers to attendance and identify support. This may include reasonable adjustments, a time-limited phased return, pastoral support, an individual support plan, or referral to appropriate services. The school will keep arrangements under review and will avoid using legal intervention where absence is directly linked to unmet needs and appropriate support has not yet been explored. Remote education will not be used as a routine substitution for attendance at school. Where it is considered, it will normally be used only as a short-term and last-resort part of a planned package of support, such as a reintegration plan, and only where it is in the pupil's best interests and supports a return to regular attendance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will normally be marked using Code U (arrived after registration closed).

If a child is arriving late often, letters to remind parents about punctuality will be sent out in the first instance. If a child is persistently late the parent/carer may be subject to the AIM process where they will be required to attend meetings with the school. This could result with a fixed penalty notice or Notice to Improve.

Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please communicate this to the school office prior to the appointment. In some circumstances the office may require to see official documentation of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

- 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as **one off events which are unavoidable**, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

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

The school will not operate blanket approaches that automatically approve or refuse requests for leave of absence. Each request will be considered on its own merits by the headteacher, with regard to the law, statutory guidance and the individual circumstances of the case.

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 the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office or see **Appendix B**. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances *(see definition above)* (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R).
- Illness (Code I)

Procedures following unexplained absence:

For Gardners Lane School contact SCHOOL OFFICE on 01242 515761 or email admin@gardnerslane.gloucs.sch.uk

For Oakwood School contact SCHOOL OFFICE on 01242 515775 or email admin@oakwood.gloucs.sch.uk

- Call the pupil's parent/carer 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 *follow missing protocols which could result in a welfare check and the police being called.*
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will start the AIM process and may issue a fixed penalty notice if required.

Strategies for promoting attendance

At Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation we try to promote good attendance by:

- Regularly promoting the value of good attendance in communications
- Working closely with families to achieve good attendance
- Celebrating good attendance through certificates and rewards

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels through letters.
- Monitor attendance and absence data fortnightly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor attendance patterns for specific pupil groups, including pupils with SEND, pupils with a Social Worker, pupils supported by youth offending services, pupils with medical or mental health needs, young carers and any other pupils who may be vulnerable to poor attendance.

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to parent support advisors, class teachers and senior leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

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.

Where appropriate the school may request that the local authority issues a Notice to Improve before a penalty notice is considered. A Notice to Improve gives parents/carers a formal opportunity to improve attendance. If sufficient improvement is not made during the specified improvement period, a penalty notice may be issued where legal threshold and evidential requirements are met

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Set targets and timelines for improving attendance by meeting with the parent/carer and starting the AIM process. Signpost to Early Help and use the Graduated Pathway when appropriate
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, requesting a Notice to Improve from the Local Authority. Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court
- Follow a staged attendance concern process that sets out who takes action, what action is taken and when concerns are escalated. This will include the school's trigger points for early conversations with parents/carers, written communication, attendance meetings, support plans, referrals to wider services, formal attendance contracts and, where appropriate, requests to the local authority for a Notice to Improve, penalty notice or prosecution consideration. The school's current attendance escalation process is attached as Appendix C

- Penalty notices may be considered where the national threshold has been met for unauthorised absence. This includes unauthorised term time leave recorded using Code G, and other unauthorised absence recorded using code O or Code U, where the relevant threshold and evidential requirements are met.

Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Notices to Improve and Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct Attendance - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice may be considered where there have been **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**

Penalty notices may also be issued where a parent allows a pupil to be present in a public place during school hours within the first five days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, without reasonable justification. These penalty notices are issued under the exclusion provisions and remain payable at £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. They are not included in the rolling three-year national framework for attendance related penalty notices.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangement

The most recent version of this attendance policy will be published on the school website and made available to parents/carers.

Behaviour & Relationship Policy

Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum *annually* by *Claire Thelwell and Oliver Tuck (GLPS), Claire Thelwell and Emily Hayet-Patino and Robin Jackson (OPS).*

Appendix A: School Codes

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CODES

PRESENT CODES	
/ \	Present during registration
B	Educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K V P or W codes
K	Attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	Arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	Educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	Attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
ABSENT CODES	
C	Absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Head Teacher
C1	In a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the Head Teacher and parents/carers
D	Dual registered
E	Suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (both physical and mental health related: not medical or dental appointments
J1	Job/school/college interview
M	Medical or dental appointment
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed
S	Study leave

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	Unable to attend as pupils is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupils NOT the parent
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES	
G	Holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by Head Teacher)
N	Reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Late after register has closed
ADMINISTRATIVE CODES	
Z	Prospective pupil not yet on register
#	Planned whole school closure (e.g. holidays, insets and polling station days)

Appendix B: Leave of Absence Form:

ABSENCE REQUEST

Child's Name:	**Class:**
Date of first day of absence:	**Year:**
Date of last day of absence:	**DOB:**
Number of days child will be absent from school	

Please provide reason for requesting a leave of absence To establish if your reasons for the above absence are for exceptional circumstances, please give as much detail as possible (including your destination). The decision will be based on the information you provide on this form.
Parents – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. ***Please provide details for two parents***

Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No	Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No
Signature		Signature	
Date		Date	

Information for parents/carers

- '*Improving attendance is everyone's business*', and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.
- Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.
- **The penalty amount is £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.**
- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
- If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
- Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
- The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.
- Parents/carers **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any requests are considered on an individual basis following guidelines issued by the DfE and LA.
- Holiday absences will not be authorised if they are not considered to meet exceptional circumstances.
- If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.

ABSENCE REQUEST RESPONSE (office to complete)

Name and Address of Parent	
Name and Address of Parent	
Pupil Name and DOB	

***Copy to be sent to each parent for each child**

Your request for absence on the following dates: ___ /___ /___ to ___ /___ /___ (totalling ____ days, has been considered and will be marked as

AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED (delete as applicable)

This request does/does not (delete as applicable) meet criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'

Please note: Unauthorised absence (usually 10 sessions within 10 weeks) may be notified to the Local Authority, which may result in a penalty notice being issued to each parent for each child of up to £160.

Your child's current attendance percentage is : _____

Signed: **(Headteacher)**	**Date:**

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- **The penalty amount is £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.**
- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
- If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
- Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
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- If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school

on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.

Appendix C: Attendance Procedures

The school is committed to promoting excellent attendance and will work in partnership with families to identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity.

Whilst the procedures below outline the school's usual graduated response, the school reserves the right to move directly to a higher level of intervention where concerns are significant, where there has been a lack of engagement from parents/carers, or where safeguarding concerns exist.

Attendance support will always be tailored to the individual needs of the child, including any identified SEND, medical needs, mental health needs or other vulnerabilities.

First Day Absence Response

Absent from school → parent contacts by 9:15 → If no contact, school calls home → if unable to reach first contact by phone or dojo, school will contact 2nd and 3rd contacts → no contact after 2 days → welfare check carried out → all absences will be recorded as N codes if we have not heard from parents, after 5 days this will be amended to unauthorised.

Attendance Monitoring

Attendance dips below 94% → Letter 1 sent → 4 weeks monitoring → If no improvement, letter 2 is sent → 4 weeks monitoring → If no improvement, parents invited to an Attendance Support Meeting with the Attendance Officer to identify barriers and put a support plan in place → 4 weeks monitoring and support → Attendance Support Review meeting → If no improvement, we will arrange an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with the Attendance Officer and Headteacher. This is the beginning of the legal process and the Inclusion Team at GCC will be notified → AIM Review after 4 weeks.

Persistent Lateness

5 lates → Letter 1 sent → 2 weeks monitoring → Letter 2 sent → 2 weeks monitoring → Parents invited to Attendance Support Meeting if no improvement → 4 weeks monitoring → Attendance Support Review meeting → AIM process

O Codes

5 unauthorised absences → Letter home → 10 unauthorised absences → NTI Requested alongside Attendance Support Meeting/AIM

Unauthorised Holiday

Leave Request Form Submitted → Exceptional Circumstances? → No – Leave Refused → If holiday is 10 sessions or more, FPN will be requested from GCC

Leave Request not submitted → Letter sent home to ask for reasons for absence → Exceptional circumstances? → No – FPN Requested

Additional Measures

- Medical evidence may be requested for frequent illness absence.
- Early Help, AIM, CME and safeguarding referrals may be considered at any stage.
- Attendance below 90% = Persistent Absence.
- Attendance below 50% = Severe Absence.
- SEND and vulnerable pupils may receive personalised support.