

## School Commitment

Regular school attendance is key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to develop into emotionally resilient, confident and competent individuals who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

All children of compulsory school age (5–16 years) are entitled to a full-time education. At **Highfields Primary Academy**, we are committed to the improvement and sustainability of excellent attendance and take a proactive approach to tackling poor attendance. Our aim is to achieve and maintain attendance levels that are **in line with, or above, the National average**, with minimal levels of persistent absence.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of all staff. We work in close partnership with parents and carers, and with extended and external services where appropriate, to support families, remove barriers to attendance and raise achievement for all pupils.

We recognise that barriers to accessing education can be wide-ranging and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils feel welcome, are keen to attend, and are ready to learn.

Highfields Primary Academy is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Attendance is a safeguarding matter; therefore, concerns relating to attendance will be identified early and responded to promptly, consistently and appropriately.

## Aims and Objectives

- Develop and sustain a whole-academy culture that promotes the benefits of **high attendance and punctuality**, underpinned by clear expectations and positive relationships.
- Achieve and maintain attendance levels that are **in line with, or above, national expectations**, while continuing to reduce persistent absence to **at or below national levels**.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the **full-time education** to which they are entitled and is able to engage fully in school life.
- Offer a range of **high-quality extra-curricular activities** that motivate pupils and encourage regular attendance.
- Promote good attendance through **consistent, transparent and timely responses** to concerns, addressing patterns of absence swiftly in a firm but fair manner.
- Work in close partnership with parents and carers to **support them in fulfilling their legal duty**, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working collaboratively to remove them.
- Raise aspirations and expectations for pupils and families, supporting **long-term positive cultural change** towards the value of education.
- Embed a strong culture of **safeguarding**, recognising attendance as a safeguarding matter and working proactively with external agencies where there are concerns,

including children missing education.

## The Law on School Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to receive an efficient, full-time education that is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives such an education, either through regular attendance at school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents or carers choose to register their child at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means that pupils are expected to attend school every day that the school is open, except in a limited number of permitted circumstances, such as when a child is too unwell to attend or when an absence has been authorised in advance by the school.

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to maintain an attendance register, and every pupil registered at the school must be recorded in this register.

Any amendment made 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

All entries in the attendance register will be retained for a period of six years from the date on which the entry was made, in line with statutory requirements.

The attendance register will record whether each pupil is:

- present
- attending an approved off-site educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Further information regarding attendance codes can be found in Appendix 1, which sets out the Department for Education (DfE) attendance and absence codes.

## Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality





## Key Attendance Staff and Governance

Pupil attendance is a high priority at Highfields Primary Academy. The academy has a dedicated Attendance Officer (Mrs Philbey) who works closely with the Head of Academy (Mr Williams) to promote, monitor and sustain excellent attendance across the school.

The attendance team acts as the first point of contact for all absence-related matters for pupils and families. The attendance team will:

- Liaise regularly with pastoral staff and senior leaders to monitor attendance patterns and concerns
- Work with families and relevant professionals to identify and remove barriers to education
- Carry out welfare checks, including home visits where appropriate, to ensure pupils and families are safe and well, regardless of the reason for absence
- Ensure attendance remains a clear and consistent priority for pupils, parents/carers and the academy

Attendance is subject to robust governance oversight. The Chair of the Academy Advisory Board (AAB), Helen Wriglesworth, oversees attendance as the link governor and provides both support and challenge to school leaders. This ensures attendance remains a strategic priority and that actions taken are effective and in line with statutory and Trust expectations.

## Partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise that parents/carers play a crucial role in securing good attendance. While the academy works hard to provide a safe, engaging and enjoyable learning environment, a child's attendance is largely determined by the actions and decisions of parents and carers. For this reason, working in close partnership with families is essential to achieving strong attendance outcomes for all pupils.

The academy communicates regularly with parents and carers regarding attendance expectations through newsletters, messages and direct contact. Where concerns about attendance arise, parents and carers are involved at the earliest opportunity and supported to work collaboratively with the academy to improve attendance. This includes discussing concerns, identifying barriers to attendance, and agreeing actions and support where appropriate.

The academy uses positive attendance strategies that are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and responsive to the needs of pupils and families.

## Attendance Procedures

### Daily Routine

To support pupils in arriving at school on time and settling calmly at the start of the day, the academy operates the following morning routine:

- **School gates open at 8:15 am.**
- **School doors open at 8:25 am.**
- All pupils are expected to be **in their classrooms and ready to learn by 8:30 am.**
- **School gates close at 8:35 am.**

Any pupil arriving after **the gates have closed** must enter the academy via the **Main Reception**, where they will be recorded as late and issued with the appropriate mark in the attendance register.

Pupils attending **Breakfast Club** may arrive from **8:00am** through the **Main Entrance**. Pupils attending Breakfast Club will be supervised by staff and escorted safely to their classrooms at the start of the school day.

At the end of the school day, gates are opened for pupil collection at **3:00 pm**, ensuring a safe and orderly dismissal.

### Attendance Register

In line with statutory requirements, attendance is recorded electronically using **Bromcom**.

- Class teachers are required to complete the attendance register at the **start of each morning and afternoon session**.
- The morning register is taken at **8:30am**.
- Pupils arriving **after 8:40 am** will be recorded as **late ('L')**.
- Pupils arriving **after 9:00 am** will be recorded as **unauthorised late ('U')**, which will negatively impact their overall attendance percentage.
- The afternoon register is completed **immediately after lunchtime** for each Key Stage.

Registers must be completed accurately and promptly to support safeguarding and attendance monitoring.

### Lateness and Punctuality

Punctuality is essential to ensuring pupils can access learning fully from the start of the day. Lateness is monitored daily and forms part of the academy's wider attendance and safeguarding procedures.

- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed will be marked as **unauthorised ('U')** unless an alternative code is appropriate due to exceptional circumstances (for example, an unplanned medical appointment).
- Where concerns arise regarding punctuality, parents/carers may receive a **letter outlining concerns** and may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss reasons for lateness and agree actions to improve punctuality.
- Persistent lateness can result in significant loss of learning time, gaps in learning, and may indicate underlying **safeguarding concerns**.

Class teachers are expected to remain alert to emerging patterns of lateness and must report concerns promptly to the **Attendance Lead** and the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** where appropriate.

### Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, such as severe weather or significant local disruption, the **closing of the attendance register may be delayed at the discretion of the Head of Academy**. Any changes will be clearly communicated to parents and carers.

## Absence Procedures

### Unplanned Absence

Parents / carers are expected to notify the academy on the first day of an unplanned absence, for example where a pupil is unable to attend due to illness. Notification must be made by 8:50 am on the day of absence.

Parents / carers must continue to inform the academy each day their child is unable to attend, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed in advance with the academy.

Parents and carers can report an absence using one of the following methods:

- **Telephone:** 01302 651037
- **In person:** At the Main Office
- **Email:** [info@highfieldspa.org.uk](mailto:info@highfieldspa.org.uk)

Absences that are not reported will be followed up promptly by the academy's attendance staff in line with safeguarding procedures.

### Absence Due to Illness

- Absence due to illness will normally be authorised unless the academy has genuine concerns regarding the authenticity or frequency of the illness.
- Where there are concerns, the academy may request medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, doctor's note or other appropriate documentation.
- Medical evidence will not be requested unnecessarily. However, it may be required to:
  - better understand a pupil's medical needs
  - support pupils with medical conditions
  - ensure the academy is fulfilling its statutory duties, including arranging suitable education for pupils unable to attend school due to health needs
- **Only the Head of Academy** has the authority to authorise absence. Absence will not be authorised unless the reason provided is accepted by the academy.

### Planned Absence

#### Medical or Dental Appointments

Parents and carers are encouraged to arrange medical and dental appointments outside of academy hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible:

- Pupils should be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary
- Parents/carers must inform the academy as soon as possible and provide evidence if requested
- Failure to notify the academy in advance may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised

### Leave of Absence During Term Time

By law, the Head of Academy may not grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**.

**Exceptional circumstances are defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as rare, unusual or unforeseeable.**

- Each request is considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific facts and context of the application
- Permission for leave is granted entirely at the **discretion of the Head of Academy**
- Parents/carers must complete a **leave of absence request form at least two weeks in advance**
- Parents/carers may be invited into the academy to discuss the request with a member of the attendance team
- **Extended leave** (exceeding two weeks) will require a formal meeting with academy staff
- Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of the academy during term time, as any absence negatively impacts learning
- The **National Penalty Notice Framework** will be followed, and a penalty notice may be issued for unauthorised leave, including holidays

## **Authorised Reasons for Absence**

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance, where the day is exclusively set apart by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
  - The academy may seek confirmation from the relevant religious body
  - In line with DfE guidance, one day of absence may be authorised for religious observance
- Bereavement of close relatives
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes, including Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen, Circus families, Bargees and New Travellers
  - Absence may be authorised where travel is for occupational purposes and has been agreed with the academy, but where it is not known whether the pupil is accessing alternative education

## **Reintegration Following Absence**

Following Short-Term Absence

Where a pupil has been absent for a short period, the academy will:

- Welcome the pupil back positively and value their return
- Work with the class teacher to identify missed learning
- Put appropriate interventions in place to support the pupil to catch up

## **Following Long-Term Absence**

Where a pupil has been absent for a prolonged period, for example due to illness, the academy will:

- Welcome the pupil back and support their emotional and academic wellbeing
- Work in consultation with parents/carers to support a successful return
- Ensure all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances
- Work with external agencies where appropriate
- Consider a **personalised or phased return programme**, where required
- Nominate a **key member of staff** to monitor and review the pupil's reintegration

## Following Up Absence

The academy will follow up all pupil absences to establish the reason for absence, ensure that appropriate safeguarding actions are taken where necessary, determine whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised, and apply the correct attendance code in line with statutory guidance.

The academy operates a first-day response system. Where a pupil is absent and the academy has not been informed in advance, parents and carers can expect to be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. First-day calls are made within one hour of the register closing. If parents/carers or primary contacts cannot be reached, the academy will contact the first and second emergency contacts.

If the academy is unable to establish the reason for a pupil's absence through school communication systems or telephone contact by 9:40 am, further appropriate actions will be considered. A home visit will always be considered on the first day of absence. Where this has not been undertaken, a home visit will be carried out on the second consecutive day of absence if a reason for absence has still not been established through contact with parents/carers or emergency contacts. The academy expects at least two emergency contacts for each pupil and actively seeks to maintain a minimum of three emergency contacts wherever possible. Where necessary, and if concerns remain, the academy may consult with the Police to request a Safe and Well visit.

Where concerns arise through daily contact attempts or home visits, including indications that Early Help support may be required or where a potential safeguarding concern is identified, the matter will be immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This will be done verbally and recorded appropriately on CPOMS in line with safeguarding procedures.

Any absences that remain unexplained will be monitored closely and followed up on a weekly basis, including through written correspondence to parents and carers.

If at any point further concerns are identified and the Attendance Lead or DSL is unsure of the most appropriate course of action, the matter will be escalated to the Head of Academy for consultation and decision-making.

Where a pupil is known to have a social worker, external family support worker or youth justice worker, the academy will make contact with the relevant professional on the day of absence to inform them and to agree appropriate actions to safeguard the pupil.

## Rewards and Positive Attendance Strategies

To promote high levels of attendance and to recognise both **individual and collective achievement** as well as **improvements in attendance**, Highfields Primary Academy uses a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies. These approaches are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and motivating for pupils.

Every week, the class with the **best attendance** is awarded the **Attendance Trophy** during Proud Assembly. The progress of each class's attendance is displayed around the academy, and parents/carers are informed of class attendance outcomes through the weekly newsletter.

Individual attendance is also recognised. **Half-termly certificates** are awarded to pupils who achieve **100% attendance** across the half term. Pupils who maintain **100% attendance for the full academic year** receive a special celebratory reward in recognition of their commitment. In addition to these core rewards, the academy uses a range of positive reinforcement strategies, including:

- Attendance certificates and special awards
- Celebration assemblies and public recognition
- Positive letters, newsletters and text messages home
- Inclusion in prize draws and incentive-based rewards
- Reinforcement through small prizes and recognition for improvement as well as high attendance

Highfields Primary Academy also operates a **Breakfast Club**, which supports parents/carers in promoting good attendance and punctuality by providing a safe and structured start to the school day. Pupils attending Breakfast Club may arrive from **8:00 am**. Places must be **booked in advance**, and parents/carers will be informed when a place has been allocated. Pupils are supervised by staff and escorted safely to their classrooms at the start of the school day.

## **Pupils with Medical / Health Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

The academy recognises that some pupils may face **greater or more complex barriers to attendance** than their peers. These may include pupils with long-term or complex medical conditions, mental health needs, or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). At **Highfields Primary Academy**, our ambition for **good and regular attendance applies to all pupils**, and we are committed to working flexibly and compassionately to support every child to attend school as regularly as possible.

To support pupils with medical or health needs, the academy will:

- Ensure that pupils have a **comprehensive healthcare plan** (or equivalent), where required, which addresses their medical, educational, social, emotional and mental health needs and is shared with relevant staff.
- Work closely with parents/carers, pupils and relevant **external agencies**, including health services and the Local Authority, to ensure appropriate support is in place.
- Liaise with Local Authority services to secure additional support where a pupil's medical needs impact attendance, including planning for alternative provision where appropriate.

To support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, the academy will:

- Work collaboratively with families, pupils and the Local Authority to develop and implement **attendance support strategies** that meet individual needs.
- Ensure pupils can access the provision outlined in their **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** or SEND Support Plan.
- Consider adjustments to practice, routines and policies to support pupils who find regular attendance challenging.
- Make **reasonable adjustments** in accordance with **Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010** where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments will be agreed with parents/carers and the pupil, and will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective.

Where it becomes clear that a pupil will be absent from school for **15 school days or more**, whether consecutively or cumulatively, due to health needs, the academy will notify and work with **Doncaster's Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service** and other relevant services. This will help to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made so the pupil can continue to access education and receive suitable support.

## Part-Time Timetables

All pupils, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a **full-time education**. The use of a part-time timetable is therefore **exceptional** and must only be considered as a **temporary measure** to meet a pupil's individual needs.

In very limited circumstances, a part-time timetable may be agreed, for example where a pupil is unable to attend full-time education due to a medical condition or as part of a carefully planned **reintegration programme** following a period of absence. Part-time timetables are not a long-term solution and must never be used as a means of managing behaviour.

Where a part-time timetable is agreed, the following principles will apply:

- The arrangement will be **time-limited**, with a clear end date by which the pupil is expected to return to full-time attendance.
- The timetable will be agreed in writing by the academy and the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides.
- A **named senior leader** will be responsible for overseeing, monitoring and reviewing the part-time timetable.
- Formal reviews will take place at least **fortnightly** and will involve parents/carers and, where appropriate, other professionals. These reviews will ensure the arrangement remains appropriate and is in place for the **shortest possible time**.
- Where a pupil has a **social worker**, they will be kept fully informed and involved in the planning and review process.
- Where a pupil has an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**, the academy will discuss the part-time timetable with the Local Authority so that any support package can be reviewed and adjusted promptly.
- Any periods when the pupil is not required to attend the academy as part of an agreed part-time timetable will be recorded as **authorised absence using the appropriate attendance code (C2)**.

The academy will continue to work closely with families, external agencies and support services to ensure that pupils on part-time timetables are supported effectively and return to full-time education as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

## Nursery Pupils

Developing positive attendance habits from an early age is vital in supporting children's learning, wellbeing and long-term success. Highfields Primary Academy strongly encourages parents and carers of children in **Nursery and Reception**, including those who are not yet of compulsory school age, to ensure that their children attend **every session available to them** and arrive on time.

Regular attendance in the early years helps children establish routines, build secure relationships, and access the full range of learning experiences that support their development. Every child who is enrolled at the academy is therefore expected to attend on the days and at the times they are required to, so that they can achieve their full potential.

Attendance and punctuality are **monitored across all year groups**, including Nursery and Reception. Parents and carers are expected to notify the academy promptly of any absence, in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Where a child under the age of five has been allocated a place at the academy, both the academy and parents/carers are expected to **follow this Attendance Policy**. The academy will work in partnership with families to support regular attendance and address any emerging concerns at the earliest opportunity.

## Monitoring Attendance

Attendance at Highfields Primary Academy is monitored closely and systematically to ensure that pupils with **good and improving attendance are recognised**, and that **concerns are identified and addressed early**. Senior leaders and members of the attendance team regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils, groups and cohorts who may require additional support or intervention.

### Daily Monitoring

Attendance registers are checked daily by the attendance team. Where a pupil is absent and no prior notification has been received, the academy will make contact with the family in line with established absence and safeguarding procedures. Daily monitoring ensures that concerns are identified promptly and that appropriate actions are taken to safeguard pupils and support families.

### Weekly Monitoring

Whole-school attendance data is analysed on a **weekly basis** to identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality. This analysis is carried out by the **Attendance Lead** alongside a member of the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** and is used to plan targeted intervention and support.

Weekly attendance meetings are used to:

- Monitor individual pupil attendance
- Identify pupils who require additional support
- Review progress against agreed attendance targets
- Allocate responsibilities and agree next steps

Individual pupil attendance is monitored to identify:

- Improvements in attendance
- Patterns of non-attendance
- Frequency and reasons for absence
- Persistent absence
- Vulnerable pupils and those with low attendance

### Termly Monitoring

The effectiveness and impact of whole-school attendance strategies are reviewed at least **half-termly** by the Senior Leadership Team. This evaluation informs future actions and priorities and is used to shape attendance-related objectives within the **Academy Improvement Plan**. Attendance data, trends and the impact of interventions are reported **termly** to the **Academy Advisory Board (AAB)** and to the **Delta Academies Trust Executive Leadership Team**. This ensures robust governance oversight, accountability and strategic challenge in relation to attendance outcomes.

## Reporting to Parents and Carers

To support parents and carers in meeting their legal responsibilities and to maximise individual pupil attendance, Highfields Primary Academy is committed to keeping families **well informed** about their child's attendance and actively involving them where concerns arise. Open, timely and consistent communication is central to our approach to promoting good attendance and addressing issues at the earliest opportunity.

The academy uses a range of methods to communicate attendance information and celebrate success. Parents and carers may receive **emails or MCAS app messages** to recognise good or improving attendance. Teaching staff also play an active role in discussing attendance with pupils and families, and attendance is shared and discussed during **Parents' Meetings and Parents' Evenings**. Attendance information is included in **annual reports** to parents and carers.

Where attendance concerns arise, the academy will communicate directly with parents and carers through:

- Absence texts and app notifications on the first day of absence
- Letters requesting reasons for unexplained or unaccounted-for absences
- Written notifications where attendance is a cause for concern
- Invitations to attend meetings to discuss attendance and agree actions for improvement

As part of our safeguarding procedures, the academy may also carry out **home visits** where contact cannot be made or where concerns persist. Where no response is received at the home, a calling card or slip will be left and followed up with further telephone calls or emails. These contacts may also serve as reminders of parental responsibilities where a child is not in school and may be out in the community.

Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to download and use the MCAS app. This platform enables parents to:

- Track their child's attendance on a daily basis
- Report absences and provide reasons for absence
- Receive attendance-related messages and updates from the academy

Through consistent communication and partnership working, the academy aims to support families effectively and ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and safely.

### **Strategies for managing persistent and severe absence from the Academy**

Highfields Primary Academy is committed to ensuring that all children and families understand the importance of regular attendance and the impact it has on learning, wellbeing and long-term outcomes. Every minute in school matters, and time missed through absence can have a significant effect on a child's attainment, progress and wider development.

A pupil is considered persistently absent where their attendance falls below 90%, and severely absent where attendance falls below 50%. The academy closely monitors attendance levels and patterns to identify concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The academy operates a tiered and graduated approach to promoting good attendance and challenging absence. This approach ensures that support is offered early, barriers are addressed, and appropriate challenge is applied where attendance does not improve. Further details of the academy's graduated response to attendance concerns can be found in **Appendix 3**.

| <b>How many days off will make your child persistently absent?</b> |                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Half Term 1                                                        | 3 ½ days off school from September until October half-term holiday will make your child persistently absent. |
| Half Term 1-2                                                      | 7 days off school from September until the Christmas holiday will make your child persistently absent.       |
| Half Term 1-3                                                      | 10 days of absence from September until February half-term will make your child persistently absent.         |

|               |                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Half Term 1-4 | 12 ½ days of absence from September until the Easter holidays will make your child persistently absent                            |
| Half Term 1-5 | 15 ½ days of absence from September until May half-term will make your 9 child persistently absent.                               |
| Half Term 1-6 | 19 days of absence for the full academic year (September to end of summer term in July) will make your child persistently absent. |

## Intervention and Support Where Attendance Is a Concern

The academy uses a range of **positive strategies and early interventions** to promote high levels of attendance. However, where normal academy procedures do not result in sustained improvement, further measures — including **formal intervention and legal action** — may be considered.

Where attendance concerns are identified, or where a pupil is at risk of becoming a **Persistent Absentee**, the academy will take the following steps:

- Contact parents/carers promptly where attendance is a concern, particularly where reasons for absence are unclear or where absences are unauthorised
- Invite parents/carers to attend a meeting with the **attendance team** to discuss attendance concerns, identify barriers, and agree appropriate support
- Consider whether **Early Help**, pastoral support or **multi-agency involvement** is required to support improved attendance
- Review the needs of pupils with **medical conditions, SEND or additional needs** to ensure that appropriate support and adjustments are in place
- Formalise support through a **written and signed Attendance Contract** where attendance does not improve, setting clear targets, expectations and review dates
- Monitor attendance closely during the agreed review period and provide ongoing support where appropriate
- Escalate concerns to the **Local Authority** if attendance does not improve despite support being offered, which may result in further action, including **penalty notices or prosecution** in line with statutory guidance

Further details of the academy's **graduated response and escalation procedures** can be found in **Appendix 3**.

## Legal Sanctions

In line with the **National Framework for Penalty Notices**, the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice to parents/carers for the **unauthorised absence** of a child of compulsory school age from the academy.

Penalty notices are issued **by the Local Authority**, not the academy, and may be applied **per child**. For example, where siblings are absent without authorisation, **separate penalty notices may be issued for each pupil**, which may result in multiple fines being issued to parents/carers.

Penalty notices may be considered in the following circumstances:

- **Unauthorised term-time leave**
  - Where a pupil is absent for **five or more consecutive school days** for the purpose of term-time leave that has not been authorised by the academy.
- **Persistent unauthorised absence**
  - Where a pupil has accumulated **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period**.
  - Please note that there are **two sessions per school day**; therefore, persistent lateness after the register has closed may contribute towards this threshold.

- **Exclusion-related absence**

- Where a pupil who has been excluded from the academy is found in a **public place during school hours** without a justifiable reason.

Where attendance concerns reach the threshold for legal intervention, the academy will work in partnership with the Local Authority and will follow all statutory procedures. Legal sanctions are considered only after **support and intervention** have been offered, unless immediate safeguarding concerns require otherwise.

|                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Offence</b>                  | The first time a penalty notice is issued a for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be <b>£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days issued to and to be paid to the local authority</b> . The fine will be reduced by the local authority to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.                                                                    |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Offence (within 3 years)</b> | The second time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be <b>£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days</b> issued to and to be paid to the local authority.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Offence (within 3 years)</b> | The third time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. Instead the case will be presented at the Magistrate's court. A Magistrates fine can be <b>up to £2500 per parent per child</b> . Cases found to be guilty in Magistrates court can show on a future DBS certificate due to failure to safeguard a child's education. |

Highfields Primary Academy follows the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices Appendix 4.

### **Children Missing from Education**

The academy will always follow up with parents and carers when a pupil is not in school. To enable effective and timely contact, the academy requires a minimum of **two up-to-date contact numbers**, including emergency contacts, for every pupil. Parents and carers are expected to inform the academy **as soon as possible** if any contact details change.

All staff are familiar with and follow the academy's **Children Missing Education (CME) Policy**, which sets out the procedures for locating, safeguarding and, where necessary, reporting pupils who are missing from education.

The academy recognises that a child missing from education may be a **significant safeguarding indicator**, including potential risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. In such cases, the academy will act promptly and in accordance with **Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)** and the statutory guidance *Children Missing Education (2016)*. These procedures are applied rigorously, particularly where a pupil goes missing from education on **repeat occasions**, in order to reduce risk and prevent future occurrences.

In line with statutory requirements, the academy will notify the **relevant Local Authority** of any pupil who:

- fails to attend the academy regularly, or
- has been absent without permission for a **continuous period of 10 school days or more**

Notifications will be made at intervals agreed with the Local Authority, or, where no agreement exists, in accordance with requirements set by the Secretary of State. Further details can be found in **Appendix 2** of this policy.

### **Partnership with Others**

In order to safeguard all pupils and their families, the school will be proactive in liaising openly and professionally with all external agencies with the aim of protecting a child and their family and improving attendance outcomes. These agencies include Admission Team, Education Social Work Service, Children's Social Care, Police Service, Special Educational Needs team and the School Nursing Team.

## Children not Collected

The following procedure is followed when children are not collected by an appropriate adult at the end of the school day or extra-curricular activity.

- If **not collected at 3.00 pm**, children are kept safe with the Head of Academy or member of the Safeguarding Team. Parents/carers will be contacted to collect them as soon as possible. Other emergency contact numbers will be rung if parents/carers cannot be reached until an appropriate adult can collect them.
- If **no contact is made**, two members of staff will escort the child home, leave them with their parents or another appropriate adult and ask for up to date contact numbers.
- If there is **no suitable adult** at home, the staff will return to school with the child and Children's Social Care/Police will be contacted so that appropriate actions can be taken.
- The same procedures will be followed if a child is not collected after a school visit or extra-curricular activity.
- Children who have **permission who go home alone** at the end of the school day must have written consent from a parent/carer. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to update this permission if they wish to do so by contacting the **Main Office**.

## Children Leaving School Premises without Permission

Every effort is made to ensure that the school site is as safe and secure as possible, and children are supervised appropriately at all times. In the event that a child is reported missing, the following procedures will be followed.

- A thorough search of the school site and immediate locality is made by all available staff.
- Admin staff will ring the child's contact numbers so they are fully informed and also to check whether or not the child is at home.
- If the child has not been located after these actions the police will be notified.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust

The Trust will:

- Recognise and ensure that attendance is a priority across all academies, embedded through policy, practice and ethos
- Ensure that school leaders fulfil their statutory duties and expectations in line with national guidance
- Review trust-wide attendance data, identify trends, provide challenge, and ensure appropriate support is in place to improve attendance for individual pupils and cohorts
- Ensure that regular training on attendance is available for academy staff
- Promote and facilitate the sharing of effective practice across academies to drive attendance improvement
- Recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider issues and that improving attendance is underpinned by effective school improvement, including high-quality teaching, behaviour, SEND provision, wellbeing and safeguarding

## Head of Academy

The Head of Academy is responsible for:

- Ensuring this Attendance Policy is implemented consistently across the academy
- Monitoring academy-level attendance data and reporting to the Trust
- Overseeing, directing and coordinating the academy's work to promote regular and improved attendance
- Developing and sustaining a whole-school culture that values and promotes good attendance for all pupils
- Supporting staff in monitoring attendance for individual pupils, cohorts and vulnerable groups
- Ensuring a clear attendance strategy is in place and monitoring progress against agreed targets
- Appointing a dedicated senior leader with responsibility for championing and improving attendance
- Ensuring strategies to promote attendance are implemented consistently across the academy
- Determining, in collaboration with senior staff, whether absences should be authorised or unauthorised
- Informing parents/carers where a pupil fails to attend regularly
- Liaising with multi-agency partners, including Local Authority services, where attendance concerns persist or escalation is required

## Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead will:

- Monitor attendance data daily at both academy and individual pupil level
- Ensure attendance registers are accurately completed and checked
- Follow daily procedures for first-day absence and follow-up robustly
- Ensure unaccounted-for absences are investigated and followed up appropriately
- Work with staff, pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance
- Arrange and lead calls and meetings with parents/carers where attendance is a concern
- Hold informal and formal attendance meetings where attendance does not improve
- Monitor attendance trackers weekly and record actions taken
- Produce attendance reports and data for the Head of Academy
- Work with Doncaster Education Welfare Officers to address persistent absence
- Develop, monitor and review attendance plans, strategies and interventions
- Act as lead practitioner where the academy is the most appropriate service to support families
- Engage actively in multi-agency working with the Local Authority and other partners
- Contribute to the evaluation of attendance strategies and interventions

## Office / Administrative Staff

Office and administrative staff will:

- Receive and record absence notifications from parents/carers accurately and promptly on Bromcom
- Retrieve and record messages from the My Child at School app in a timely manner
- Inform the Attendance Lead of absence reasons and concerns
- Follow first-day absence procedures in line with this policy
- Report attendance and safeguarding concerns promptly to SLT or the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Build positive, professional relationships with pupils and families

## Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance accurately and on time using the correct codes on Bromcom
- Promoting and rewarding good attendance within the classroom
- Building positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers
- Talking regularly with pupils to promote attendance and identify barriers
- Raising concerns about attendance or punctuality with the Attendance Lead promptly
- Holding initial discussions with parents/carers where attendance concerns arise
- Working with attendance and pastoral staff to implement interventions and reasonable adjustments
- Sharing relevant information that may affect attendance, including concerns regarding illness authenticity

## Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are required to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day it is open unless they are too unwell or have an authorised absence
- Avoid arranging leave of absence during term time
- Notify the academy by **9:00am** on the first day of absence, providing a reason
- Continue to inform the academy on each day of absence unless agreed otherwise
- Arrange medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible
- Seek support from the academy where their child is experiencing difficulties
- Attend meetings with academy staff to discuss attendance when requested
- Inform the academy of any changes in circumstances that may affect attendance
- Ensure all contact and emergency details held by the academy are up to date
- Work positively with academy staff and recognise the importance of regular attendance

## Appendices

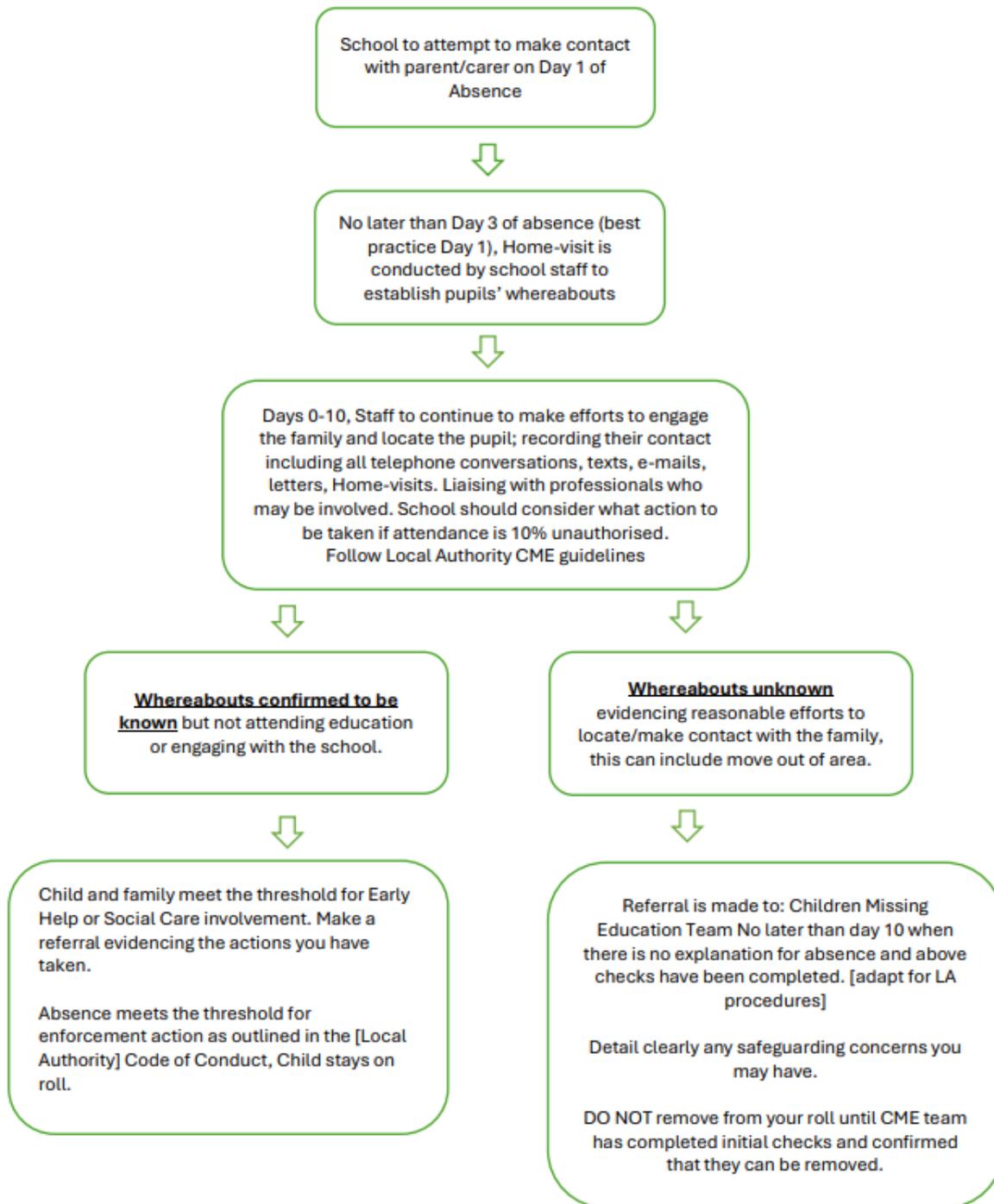
### Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the Depart for Education 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| K                           | Off-site educational activity                                                                                                       | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity arranged for by the local authority                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| B                           | Off-site educational activity                                                                                                       | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| D                           | Dual registered                                                                                                                     | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| P                           | Sporting activity                                                                                                                   | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| V                           | Educational trip or visit                                                                                                           | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Authorised Absence</b>   |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| C                           | Authorised leave of absence                                                                                                         | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| C1                          | Authorised leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance OR undertaking regulated employment abroad. | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence where a license has been issued by the local authority for where a BOPA has been issued by the local authority for activities such as: theatre or television, such as acting in films and commercials, paid or professional sport and/or modelling. |
| C2                          | Authorised absence as part of a planned part-time timetable                                                                         | Where a pupil is accessing a part time timetable sitting alongside the present mark in line with the planned timings of the day for that individual.                                                                                                                                          |
| E                           | Excluded / Suspended                                                                                                                | Pupil has been suspended/ excluded but no alternative provision has been made                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| I                           | Illness                                                                                                                             | Academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness (not medical or dental appointment)                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| J1                          | Attending an interview for another educational establishment or employment                                                          | Attending a job interview or a meeting at another Academy / College for reasons such as in year transfer.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| M                           | Medical/dental appointment                                                                                                          | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| R                           | Religious observance                                                                                                                | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| S                           | Study leave                                                                                                                         | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| T                           | Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence                                                                                                  | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Unauthorised Absence</b> |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| G                           | Unauthorised holiday                                                                                                                | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| N                           | Reason not provided                                                                                                                 | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                             |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             |                                                                         | replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided within 5 school days)                                             |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence                                                    | No reason for absence established or the academy is not satisfied that the reason is an authorised absence                        |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration                                              | Pupil arrived at academy after the register closed                                                                                |
| <b>Administration Codes</b> |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Q</b>                    | Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements                     | Pupil is unable to attend as access arrangements are not in place such as; transport and aides for pupils with disabilities.      |
| <b>X</b>                    | Not required to be in academy                                           | Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend                                                                     |
| <b>Y1</b>                   | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available | If a pupil is not within walking distance (3miles) and transport too / from the academy is not available as it normally would be. |
| <b>Y2</b>                   | Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption                    | Caused by local, national or international emergency.                                                                             |
| <b>Y3</b>                   | Unable to attend due to part of the Academy premises being closed.      | If the Academy cannot safely accommodate all year groups.                                                                         |
| <b>Y4</b>                   | Unable to attend due to the whole site being unexpectedly closed.       | Adverse weather such as flooding or snow.                                                                                         |
| <b>Y5</b>                   | Unable to attend due to criminal justice detention                      | If the pupil is unable to attend due to being in police detention, remanded in youth custody or has been detained.                |
| <b>Y6</b>                   | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law       | For instances where guidance is issued to stop the transmission or instances of infection or disease.                             |
| <b>Y7</b>                   | Unable to attend because of any other avoidable cause                   | Where an emergency has prevented the pupil (not the parent) from attending the Academy. Such as; completing community service.    |
| <b>Z</b>                    | Pupil not on admission register                                         | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy                                                                          |
| <b>#</b>                    | Planned academy closure                                                 | Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day                                                          |

## Appendix 2 – Children Missing in Education Flowchart



## Appendix 3 – Delta Academies Trust Attendance Flow Chart

