

## The Sir John Colfox Academy Pupil Attendance Policy

|                |                                    |
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| Approving Body | Trust Board                        |
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| Owner          | Director of Education              |
| Applies to     | All Trust Schools, all Trust staff |

| Version | Date           | Reason                                                                                                                                 |
|---------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.0     | April 2018     | To establish a Trust wide policy                                                                                                       |
| 1.1     | December 2020  | Change ownership to DSI and review cycle from 3 yearly to annual.                                                                      |
| 1.2     | March 2021     | To include reduced timetables; study leave; Local Authority changes and updated government guidance                                    |
| 1.3     | March 2022     | To remove appendices.<br>To include: professional judgement for welfare checks; procedures for tracking alternative provision; carers. |
| 2.0     | September 2022 | To ensure legal compliance with new <a href="#">DfE guidance</a> .                                                                     |
| 2.1     | September 2023 | To encompass all relevant medical and governmental advice                                                                              |

Throughout this policy, the term 'parent' means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

**Relevant legislation:**

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

**Relevant government guidance:**

- [Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children](#)
- [Elective home education](#)
- [Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)
- [Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)
- [Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)
- [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)
- [Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance Effective practice examples](#)
- [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#)

Person responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at The Sir John Colfox Academy:

**Mrs Carol Duffy, Deputy Headteacher.**

## **Introduction**

Punctuality and regular attendance are crucial to a pupil's achievement at school and therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. However, any barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Schools within Initio Learning Trust are committed to work in collaboration with parents and children to ensure that all pupils benefit from regular attendance.

Good attendance is celebrated as part of our Trust wide vision and values - excellence, collaboration and respect. All staff in Trust schools communicate to pupils that their contribution to the school community is valued and respected; furthermore staff endeavour to make school a fruitful and enjoyable place to be so that a positive attitude to school and learning is fostered: through this, we aim to ensure that pupils want to attend school regularly in the first place. However, some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools will work collaboratively with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

## **Attendance and safeguarding**

The safeguarding of all pupils is of utmost importance. School provides a protective environment for those who attend. Schools are well placed to identify safeguarding issues early and regular attendance is vital for this. For those who don't attend regularly, and where all avenues of support have been facilitated, and the appropriate educational support has been provided but the unauthorised absence continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, request that a full children's social care assessment is conducted.

When a pupil is absent and no reason has been given for the absence, the school will prioritise the safety of these pupils. See '*Where the school is not notified of an absence*' below.

## **The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

Where parents have registered their child at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school

## **Working with families and partners:**

School is committed to successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly. This requires local partners to work collaboratively with families.

School will work collaboratively to:

- identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual, cohort and school level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
- Ensure aspiration to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents by building a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

- Listen to families to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- Remove barriers in school where practically able and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school.
- Escalate concerns where the voluntary support is not having an impact by explaining the consequences of non-attendance clearly and ensuring support is also in place to enable families to respond.
- Enforce attendance through statutory interventions or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education where support is not having an impact or not being engaged with

More details on roles and responsibilities can be found in appendix A

**Schools' overall approach takes these six graduated stages:**

|          |                            |                                                                                               |
|----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Expect</b>              | High expectations that all children will attend well                                          |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Monitor</b>             | Closely monitor the attendance of all pupils to spot problems early                           |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Listen / Understand</b> | Work with pupils and parents to understand any barriers to good attendance                    |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Facilitate support</b>  | Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents overcome the barriers outside of school |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Formalise support</b>   | Formalise support where informal, voluntary approaches are not working                        |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Enforce</b>             | If all else fails, enforce attendance through statutory intervention and prosecution          |

**Why regular attendance is so vital:**

There is a clear and proven link between attendance and achievement. The pupils with the highest attainment have higher rates of attendance than those achieving lower grades. Pupils who miss a substantial amount of school, fall behind their peers, and struggle to catch up as most of the work they miss is never made up, which can lead to big gaps in their learning.

Poor attendance often starts at first/ primary school, and children who fall into this pattern are likely to underachieve at upper / secondary school.

Friendships can be negatively affected by absence, too: it can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their peers.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

These tables show the impact of absence on a child's education

| Overall attendance level | Number of days lost each year | Impact on child's education                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 97%+                     | 5 days or less                | These children have every chance to make really strong progress at school.                                                                                                                                                        |
| 95%                      | 10 days                       | These children benefit from strong overall attendance and are well placed to make good progress at school. We aim for every child to have at 96% attendance overall.                                                              |
| 90%                      | 19 days                       | Children in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best                                                                                                                |
| 85%                      | 29 days                       | Children in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; there is a real risk that this lower attendance will hinder children's progress. Absence below 90% is considered to be persistent absenteeism.                   |
| 80%                      | 38 days                       | Children in this group are missing a year of school over five years of education. They are not benefitting from their right to be educated. Parents / carers of young people in this group could be issued with a penalty notice. |

| Minutes late per day = | days of learning lost per year |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 5                      | 3.2                            |
| 10                     | 6.5                            |
| 15                     | 9.5                            |
| 20                     | 12.5                           |
| 30                     | 19                             |

### **Monitoring attendance / punctuality and responding to concerns**

All staff have a duty to informally monitor the children's attendance / punctuality and to report any concerns that they may have about a pupil. In this way, pupil attendance is being monitored in the schools at all times. Concerns can then be triangulated with any other information held about the pupil such as child protection issues, mental health difficulties, SEND, caring responsibilities etc. and appropriate support can be put in place.

Best practice is that attendance is dealt with proactively using strong links with the families. For those pupils where a pattern of lateness or non attendance has been identified, pre-emptive phone calls can be a powerful tool to encourage attendance.

All Initio Learning Trust schools will follow more formal procedures for the regular and systematic monitoring of pupil attendance with particular emphasis on those who are classed as vulnerable.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored formally using data from registers and from the information held on MIS for the purpose of providing effective interventions to improve whole school, specific cohort and individual attendance and punctuality. Our school attendance monitoring procedures are:

The Tutor, Head of Year and Attendance Lead monitor student absence on a daily and fortnightly basis.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform the school if their child is going to be absent as early as possible on the day of the absence and on each subsequent day of an absence period. If after speaking with parents a student's absence continues to rise, we will consider initiating attendance procedures to support the family and student in the process of improving the child's attendance. Attendance support procedures apply regardless of whether absence has been authorised or unauthorised. The expectation remains that all children attend school for at least 95% of school time. This equates to 10 full days absent in a school year.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. This equates to one month absent from school in a school year.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

The school collects and stores data using Bromcom. This data is used for internal purposes to track attendance for individuals, groups and whole cohorts of students. This information is then used to identify those students whose attendance is a cause for concern. It is also used to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support. We monitor absence data within specific pupil groups in order to prioritise strategies and intervention for example: disadvantaged students, those students who may have a social worker or be looked-after, students with SEND or those who are under-achieving compared with their peers. We know that students with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. For the most vulnerable students, regular attendance is essential for not only their attainment but also their well-being and wider life chances.

The school will contact all parents whose child(ren)'s attendance falls below 95% and begin monitoring attendance over 3 week cycles to see improvements. Parents will be notified about improving patterns or on-going concerns and parents may be invited into school for meetings to discuss support informally with either the child's Head of Year or the school Family Liaison Officer.

Each term, the school will discuss all cases of persistent absence (attendance below 90%) with the local authority attendance team wherever concerns persist and where attempts to improve attendance have not been successful. The school and the local authority decide on how best to support each child and family. Attendance support includes a range of strategies on offer from the school and its partners as part of a graduated response and will be decided on an individual basis. Parents may be invited into school for a more formal Attendance Panel with a representative from

the local authority attendance team, or as part of a wider support group if barriers to attendance have been identified – Team around the Family (TAF). This group may include representation from other services as required. All support/agreements are clearly documented, shared with parents and impact reviewed and noted within identified timescales. Parents are fully involved and expected to work with the school in supporting attempts to improve attendance. Should attendance concerns persist, the school will formally write to parents indicating what the concerns are, the parents' continued legal obligations and of possible legal intervention if attendance does not improve.

### **The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance**

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- Works with the Heads of Year to tackle persistent absence and maintain high standards of attendance in all year groups
- Attends meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues where necessary to support the Heads of Year.
- Advises the Heads of Year and Headteacher when to issue Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Line-manages the Heads of Year, the attendance support officer – Sue Chudley and the FLO (Family Liaison Officer) to monitor attendance processes.

### **Form Tutors**

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information on Bromcom or directly to the school's attendance officer. They will be the first contact when a student's attendance starts to decline.

### **Reception Staff and the school attendance officer**

Reception staff and the attendance officer (Rachael Hussey) are expected to take calls from parents about absence and to pass information about school absence to the attendance officer. The attendance officer will record details of absences on Bromcom using the appropriate codes. The attendance officer checks the accuracy of codes, updates and amends registers, ensures there are no N codes beyond 5 days of the absence and contacts parents on the first day of absence if no reason has been provided for absence. The attendance officer monitors truancy alerts and liaises with the person on-call or a member of SLT about when to contact home. The attendance officer ensures that all truancy alerts are responded to and contacts home as directed. The attendance officer updates the attendance data tracking sheet weekly and completes all attendance administrative tasks e.g sending out the attendance letters in accordance with the published schedule and under direction from the attendance lead.

### **The Family Liaison Officer**

The school Family Liaison Officer (FLO) – Sarah Higgins -is employed by Initio Trust and holds a designated role to support students who;

- who are at risk of becoming non-attenders,
- who are already persistent non-attenders

in order to support them engage with the school and education. The Family Liaison Officer will focus their work on preventative and early intervention activities, assist in tackling underachievement by working with families, children in school and teachers to enable all children to have full access to educational opportunities and help them overcome barriers to learning. The FLO provides contact, information, advice, guidance, support and encouragement as required, to parents, students and other agencies as appropriate. In some circumstances, the FLO may make home visits to support families and students who may be struggling to attend school.

### **Expectations for punctuality and attendance**

#### **Punctuality**

Schools will actively discourage late arrivals and will be alert to any patterns of late arrival in order to start an early discussion with the family to provide appropriate support. Registers start at 8:45am and close at 9:05am for morning sessions and 1:25pm and close at 1:35pm for afternoon sessions. It is the expectation that all pupils will arrive in time for morning and afternoon registration. If a pupil arrives after registers open but before they close, they will be marked as '*late arrival before registers close*' (L) If a pupil arrives after registers close, they will be marked as '*unauthorised absence*' (O) or another more appropriate attendance code.

The school will use logical consequences in line with the Behaviour Policy to tackle lateness. In summary, if students are late to lessons twice in a week or once for more than 6 minutes, they will be required to catch up on lost learning time for 30 minutes at a time specified by their Head of Year. This may be during lunchtime or after school. Heads of Year will intervene in the case of persistent punctuality issues. Intervention may include, but is not limited to punctuality reports, parental involvement or punctuality contracts.

#### **Attendance**

All pupils will be expected to attend school on every day that it is open. If an unexpected absence occurs, there are expectations that relate to pupil safety. A parent MUST notify the school on 01308 422291 and press '1' when prompted by 8:45am on the first day of the absence detailing the pupil's name, class and nature of absence. If the absence is prolonged, there is an expectation that the parent will notify the school by 8:45am at the latest on each day of absence. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school on the first day of the unplanned absence and every day thereafter by phoning the school absence number.

#### **Appointments during the day**

Parents must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parents must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for their own appointment, not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a family member can attend an appointment.

#### **Pupils with medical needs and/ or SEND**

Initio Learning Trust understands that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. However, their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore our attendance ambition for these pupils will be the same as they are for any other pupil.

Although our ambitions are the same for all pupils, we are mindful of the unique barriers that these pupils may face and we are committed to putting support in place where necessary to help them access full time education.

Parents of pupils with medical needs and / or SEND who are struggling to attend school should contact the school's Family Liaison Officer (Sarah Higgins) or the SENDCO (Louisa Hocking) as soon as they can in order for the school to understand the support required. This could include making reasonable adjustments or having Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCP) with Medical Absence Plans (MAP). In some cases, advice and support may be sought from external partners such as health services. Our work with families in these instances is crucial to ensuring specific support approaches, including supporting home routines and encouraging external professionals to schedule appointments outside of the school day. For families suggesting part time attendance, please see the section on part-time timetables.

### **Where the school is not notified of an absence**

Pupil safety is the priority for the systems in place to follow up on non-notified absences.

Schools will use their knowledge of families to identify pupils who may be more vulnerable when absent and these families will be contacted first. These pupils will be communicated to staff so that all can be aware of their additional vulnerability pertaining to absence / punctuality.

Process for following up on unexplained absence:

- Parents will be informed of their child's absence and asked to contact the school using a text message by 10am.
- If no contact is received by the school by 10:30am, a phone call will be made to the primary contact detailed on the pupil's files.
- If there is no answer, contact will be attempted with other contacts detailed on the pupil's file.
- If no contact can be made by 11am, the school will take every reasonable step to satisfy themselves that the pupil is safe. This may include *\*list not exhaustive* contacting sibling's schools, contacting Social Care / Early Help if a worker is involved with the family, making a home visit and, in some cases, informing the police.
- The school should be satisfied with every absent child's safety by 11.30am at the latest.

The school will hold a record of pupils that they deem to be additionally vulnerable when not in school, which could include knowledge of mental health difficulties either for the pupil or their family, child protection concerns or medical needs amongst others. The school will also produce a flow chart that details the process, including timings, for following up on unexplained absences to ensure every pupil's safety.

### **Absence thresholds**

All families will receive a letter at the beginning of the school year summarising the school's expectations for attendance and punctuality; how the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance and punctuality and the process for reporting absence and requesting leaves or absence. This policy will also be available on the school's website as well as being sent home at least annually or on update.

There is a tiered system to respond to low and/or falling attendance levels. These figures expressed as % attendance levels are intended as a guide. However, a decision may be made to intervene earlier at any stage if there is particular concern about a child's attendance.

|                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Attendance below 95%:</b></p>                                | <p>A standard letter is typically sent to any parent whose child's attendance has dropped just below 95%. This letter is for information – it notifies the parent of this attendance level and explains that the school will continue to monitor the child's attendance. Where the cause for a child's attendance dropping below 95% is very specific and clearly known and evidenced to the school, we may decide that such a letter is not required or appropriate. For example, where a child has had a known and confirmed medical issue and where this is the only substantial cause for the lower attendance. In such circumstances, the child's attendance will be closely monitored – further reduction in attendance may prompt this initial letter, without the need to wait for the next formal half- termly audit.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Attendance between 90% and 94%</b></p>                       | <p>A second letter will be issued where a child's attendance sits at this level. This letter will indicate whether or not there have been improvements since the first letter. If attendance remains at this level for a third time, it will be treated as for attendance which is below 90%.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Attendance which is below 90%</b></p>                        | <p>Attendance at 90% equates to 19 days absence through a year and is therefore a cause for concern. In such circumstances, parents will receive a specific letter which very clearly identifies that the attendance level is a significant cause for concern (except for in exceptional circumstances where the attendance is not a cause for concern, such as known medical conditions). Parents are requested to attend a meeting, the purpose of which is to explore the reasons for the child's low attendance and agree appropriate support. The content of this meeting will be used to draw up an attendance improvement plan which will be shared with the parents and a review date will be agreed. Participants in that meeting may vary according to the circumstances but may often involve staff such as the allocated lead within the school, tutor, SENCo and pastoral staff. The school may also invite the Local Authority Inclusion Lead. At this stage, school should make it known and confirm in writing that absences cannot be authorised without medical evidence unless there are exceptional reasons which render this inappropriate (for example, a known medical condition); school cannot routinely authorise absence where a child's attendance has reached this level of concern.</p> |
| <p><b>Attendance which continues to decline from below 90%</b></p> | <p>Unless there are specific circumstances, the school will not be authorising absences at this stage because attendance at 90% equates to 19 days absence through a year. If attendance is not showing reasonable improvement within three weeks of the last communication to parents, then schools will take further action which will involve further meetings with the parents. It is likely that a referral for intervention by the Local Authority will be appropriate; certainly advice from the LA Inclusion Lead will be sought.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Please see appendix B for sample letters.

**Leaves of absence**

Headteachers have no discretion to grant a leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the headteacher has all the information in writing to be able to determine whether the request is truly exceptional.

Any request for absence which might be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' should be put in writing to the headteacher as far in advance as possible. Parents should include any relevant supporting documents using the leave of absence form

<https://www.colfox.org/page/?title=Leave+of+Absence+Requests&pid=15>. The decision whether to authorise leave, and if so, how much, remains with the headteacher. Parents will be notified of the headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the leave is not authorised and the leave of absence is still taken and is a leave of absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more in a 12 week period, the school will need to refer to the Local Authority who will then make the decision whether to issue a penalty notice.

**The following situations *might* be considered examples of 'exceptional circumstances'.**

*Please note that this is dependent on context and is not an exhaustive list:*

- Return of parent from active service (Forces);
- Death or serious illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling;
- Young Carers;
- Disability or respite leave;
- Periods of obligatory religious observance;
- Approved public performances (with clear supporting evidence).

**The following (*not exhaustive*) are examples of situations which would not typically be considered as exceptional:**

- Family holiday/cheaper holiday dates;
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time;
- Attendance at a wedding or christening of an extended family member or friend;
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK;
- Limitations on parents / carers leave' entitlement or dates; parents / carers' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays;
- A family member going for medical treatment abroad.

#### **Absence for performance**

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence for approved public performances provided that clear evidence is issued of the approved nature of this activity. The following will also be taken into account in reaching a decision:

- The nature and purpose of the performance;
- The frequency of absence requested and the likely impact on the child's education and progress; and
- The child's attendance record

Where licences are issued by the Local Authority, absences will be monitored to ensure that they comply with the permissions given in the licence. Where the licence specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the licence do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise leave of absence. Headteachers should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education Any concerns will be communicated to the school attendance lead.

#### **Promoting and Incentivising good attendance and punctuality:**

Promoting good attendance and punctuality is an integral part of the school's culture. School will visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life and the curriculum. School improvement strategies for attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students will also consider how to promote good attendance and punctuality.

Incentives for good attendance and punctuality may also be used. These can include, but are not restricted to:

- A designated team to support attendance in school comprising:
  - Carol Duffy, Deputy Head teacher and school lead for attendance.
  - Sue Chudley, Head of Year and whole-school attendance support.
  - Sarah Higgins, Family Liaison Officer.
  - Rachael Hussey, Attendance Officer (admin).The team is supported by the school pastoral team including the Heads of Year, tutors, dedicated pastoral officers and the Inclusion team.
- Regular review of attendance data to identify students who may need early intervention to support attendance. We also monitor absence data within specific pupil groups in order to prioritise strategies and intervention for example: disadvantaged students, those students who may have a social worker or be looked-after, students with SEND or those who are under-achieving compared with their peers. We know that students with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. For the most vulnerable students, regular attendance is essential for not only their attainment but also their well-being and wider life chances.
- Regular meetings with the County Inclusion team to identify students and families who may need support.
- Termly and annual celebrations of those students with good attendance (over 95%).
- House points for good attendance
- Individualised rewards for targeted students.
- Making students aware of the importance of attendance and healthy routines via assemblies, the PSHE curriculum and tutorial programme.
- Supporting students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Easy and readily available access to pastoral support for all students via our student Hub.
- Communication with parents about the importance of attendance and regular communication where student absence becomes a concern (below 95%).
- Arranging further support for families and students through our Inclusion or SEN departments, with the school's Family Liaison Officer, nurse, counsellor, 1-2-1 tuition or by signposting external agency support such as Early Help, Children's Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, counselling services or NHS Social Prescribing.

#### **Off-site education, alternative provision or specialist provision**

Where a child's needs are recognised by the school, and specialist resources not available in school are required, the allocated lead within the school may authorise absence for specific times when such tuition or therapy may be given outside of school. For pupils using alternative provision or off site education, the allocated lead will ensure that the safeguarding and quality of education for the pupil is good or better by following Initio Learning Trust's procedures. All pupils placed in a more appropriate provision will have full time education and clearly defined outcomes agreed before the

placement starts and attendance will be tracked by the provider and the school at which the pupil is on roll. Such pupils will be coded appropriately and, if in attendance at the agreed appropriate provision, will not be marked as absent. Stringent safeguarding checks will be carried out before and during the placement as well as checking safeguarding daily through the daily attendance phone call.

### **Part-time timetables**

A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. Initio Learning Trust uses the advice from Government health officials when dealing with anxiety. A prolonged period of absence is likely to increase any anxiety. Because of this, part-time timetables are not appropriate to be used for those suffering with anxiety unless a medical professional recommends this. Where a part-time timetable is considered in the pupil's best interests, there MUST be agreement from the family; if there is no agreement then it will be classed as an unofficial exclusion. If a pupil has a part-time timetable agreed, the Initio Learning Trust Part-Time Timetable process must be followed which includes a thorough safeguarding risk assessment, desired outcomes for the child, expectations of work completed when not on school premises and a six week timetable that is gradually increased to maintain full time education by the end of week six.

In exceptional circumstances and with significant evidence that it is in the pupil's best interest, a part-time timetable may be extended for a further period of time. Weekly reviews of the part-time timetable must occur with the family and school and stringent records kept of how successful the timetable has been.

### **Study Leave**

Study leave, where used, will only be granted to pupils in year 11. Study leave will not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete. If a school does decide to grant study leave, provision will still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. All pupils are different and have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations and this will be catered for.

### **Staffing for monitoring and promoting good attendance**

Schools will identify appropriate key staff to undertake attendance monitoring and adhere to the following key principles:

- There will be a school attendance officer, usually within the administration team, who will ensure that careful records of attendance are maintained which conform to the codes set out by the Department for Education and provide information as requested by staff. Year group and separate SEN attendance team meetings are held fortnightly.
- The school will have an allocated Senior Leader for attendance who will have a close link with the school attendance officer;
- Schools will work in close partnership with the Local Authority through the Inclusion Leads for their locality;
- All staff will have training in attendance including how to complete registers, how to spot patterns of absence / punctuality, how to use other information about a pupil to see the wider context, how to report concerns and how to build relationships and offer support for families that struggle to maintain good attendance.

### Contacting staff about attendance

|                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>The Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance is:</b>               | <b>Mrs Carol Duffy</b><br><b>duffyc@colfox.dorset.sch.uk</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>The attendance admin officer is:</b>                                       | <b>Mrs Rachael Hussey</b><br><b>attendance@colfox.dorset.sch.uk</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>To tell your school that your child is going to be absent, you should:</b> | <b>Please tell us by 8.45 am at the latest.</b><br><b>Telephone the school on 01308 42291 and select option 1. Leave a message giving your child's name, tutor group and reason for absence.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>If a parent is concerned about their child's attendance, they should:</b>  | <b>Speak with the child's tutor in the first instance. You can arrange that by leaving a message at school reception or by sending them an email directly.</b><br><b>If you have already done that and remain concerned, you can speak to your child's Head of Year. You can arrange that by leaving a message via the school reception or by sending them an email directly.</b> |
| <b>Other key staff involved in supporting attendance are:</b>                 | <b>Sarah Higgins – Family Liaison Officer</b><br><b>Sue Chudley – Attendance support.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>If you wish to request a leave of absence for your child, you should:</b>  | <b>Obtain the 'Request for Leave of Absence form' from the school website or office. Complete this form and give it to the school as early as possible <u>before</u> the requested absence is due to happen.</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |

**Wider support**

Wider support is available, please see links below for more information:

- [West Sussex website for resources to help Emotionally Based School Avoidance](#)
- [Dorset SENDIASS](#)
- [BCP SENDIASS](#)
- [Dorset Education Advice Line](#)
- [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

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**Appendices:**

***A) Summary of expectations***

| <b>For ALL pupils:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <b>Parents / pupils are expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>School is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>The Local School Committee is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>The Local Authority is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p> | <p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance</p> | <p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p> | <p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p> |

| <b>For pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (95-90% attendance):</b>                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <b>Parents / pupils are expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>School is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>The Local School Committee is expected to:</b>                                                        | <b>The Local Authority is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p> | <p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p> |

| <b>For persistently absent pupils (below 90% attendance):</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <b>Parents / pupils are expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>School is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>The Local School Committee is expected to:</b>                                                        | <b>The Local Authority is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p> | <p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings                                         |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>For severely absent pupils (less than 50% attendance):</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Parents / pupils are expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>School is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>The Local School Committee is expected to:</b>                                                        | <b>The Local Authority is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p> | <p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need</p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                          | and child protection plans.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>For pupils with medical conditions and / or SEND with poor attendance (below 95%)</b>                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Parents / pupils are expected to:</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>School is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>The Local School Committee is expected to:</b>                                                        | <b>The Local Authority is expected to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p> | <p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and local school committee meetings and with local authorities.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p> |

| For pupils with a social worker:                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parents / pupils are expected to:                                                                                                                                | School is expected to:                                                                                                              | The Local School Committee is expected to:                                                              | The Local Authority is expected to:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered</p> | <p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it</p> | <p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after</p> |

