DARRICK WOOD INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND FIRST DAY CALLING POLICY

OCTOBER 2026

Next Review Date: October 2028

Staff should make themselves aware of all policies and amendments or updates to policies and adhere to the same, which will be made available on relevant websites and internal data and computer systems.

Executive Summary - Darrick Wood Infant & Nursery School Attendance and First Day Calling Policy October 2026:

- Attendance expectations: The school aims for a minimum of 97% attendance, working with families to promote regular attendance and punctuality.
- Arrival and registration: Main school pupils should arrive by 9.00am; Nursery sessions begin at 8.45am and 12.45pm. Morning registers close at 9.30am. Afternoon registration runs from 1.15–1.20pm for Reception and Year 1, and 1.30–1.35pm for Year 2.
- Reporting absence: Parents/carers should telephone 01689 857278 or email admin@darrickwood.cetrust.com each day, explaining the reason and expected return date. The reporting deadline differs between sections of the policy, as noted below. Daily contact may not be necessary where the school already knows a child must remain off because of an infectious disease.
- First-day calling and safeguarding: If no explanation has been received by 9.30am, office staff contact parents/carers and then other listed contacts. Priority is given to vulnerable pupils and children being monitored by the attendance team. Unexplained absence or concerning responses are escalated to senior leaders and safeguarding leads. A home visit or welfare check through children's services or the police may follow.
- Lateness: Late arrivals must report to the office and sign in. Main school pupils arriving between 9.00am and 9.30am are recorded as late; arrival after registers close normally counts as unauthorised absence unless extenuating circumstances apply. Persistent lateness leads to a meeting with parents/carers.
- Authorising absence: Only the school can authorise absence. Illness is normally authorised, although medical evidence may be requested where there are genuine concerns or prolonged absence. Necessary appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever possible, requested in writing in advance, and pupils signed out and back in.
- Term-time holidays: The policy states that holidays are not authorised and that a penalty-notice referral will be made to the local authority. It also allows for exceptional leave, although the wording is inconsistent.
- Monitoring attendance: Attendance meetings and checks take place weekly, focusing on pupils with attendance below 90%, recurring absence patterns, pupil premium pupils and vulnerable children. Parents receive attendance information in annual reports.
- Support and escalation: The process includes an initial telephone discussion offering support, letters identifying red or amber attendance concerns, and an attendance plan agreed with parents. The Headteacher holds meetings where needed. Continuing concerns may lead to an Education Welfare Officer referral and consideration of penalty notices.
- Promoting attendance: Class attendance is shared in weekly assemblies, on classroom noticeboards and in newsletters. Positive postcards are sent home to celebrate improvements.
- Responsibilities and oversight: Teachers record attendance and identify concerns; office staff prioritise first-day calling; the attendance administrator monitors data and escalates concerns; the Headteacher oversees implementation; and governors review attendance termly. Staff must also recognise and refer concerns about possible fabricated or induced illness. The next review is October 2028.

DARRICK WOOD INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND FIRST DAY CALLING POLICY

Aims

Chancery Education Trust and its Academy Schools seek to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential.

The Academy School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the Academy School community feels wanted and secure.

All Academy School staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure every child attends regularly and punctually.

The Academy School will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and support those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To achieve the above, the Academy School will maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Staff and Governors are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to achieve a MINIMUM of 97% attendance throughout the Academy School.

Legislation and guidance

The Law requires that children attend school on every day that it is open. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school every day it is open. Improving the link between attendance and wider school culture, including the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance, is a priority in all schools.

The 'Attendance Register' should, therefore, only show children as being absent due to unavoidable circumstances. Absence without good reason is against the law and the parent/ carer who allows their child to be absent without good reason may be fined/prosecuted.

All absences from school (this includes half day absences) must be classified by the Academy School (not the parent) as being either authorised or unauthorised. In assessing the absence as being authorised or unauthorised, it is therefore necessary to have information as to the reason (s) for the non-attendance. Only the Academy School can authorise an absence, not the parent.

Academy School procedures

Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE Attendance Codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must **arrive** in school by:

9.00am (8.45am and 12.45pm Nursery) on each school day.

The register for the **first session** will be taken at:

9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am.

The register for the **second session** will be taken at:

1.15pm (Reception and Y1) and will be kept open until 1.20pm
1.30pm (Y2) and will be kept open until 1.35pm

Unplanned Absence

Parent/Carers must call the Academy School on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by:

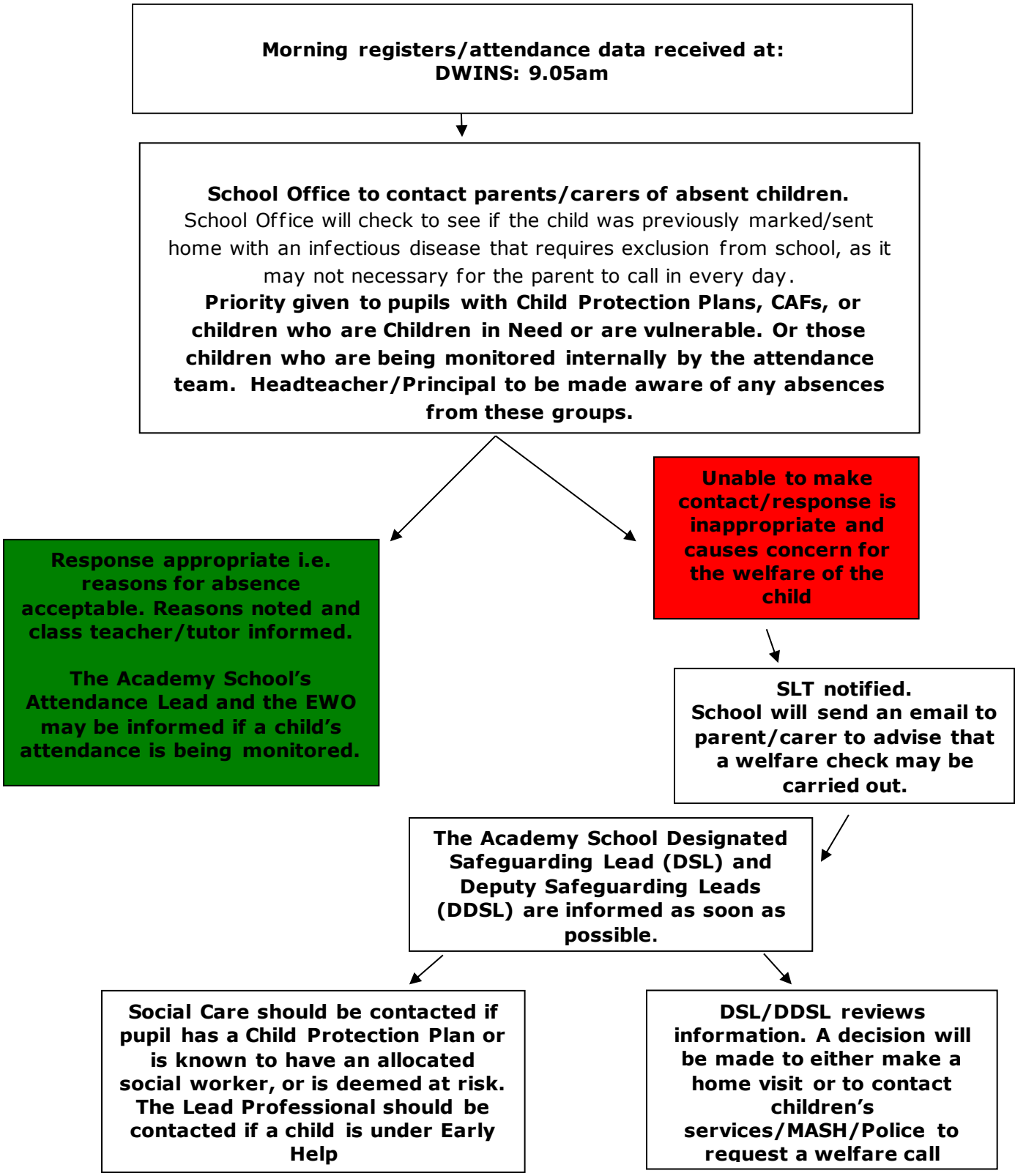
8.55am or as soon as practically possible that morning or the night before.

If the Academy School have not heard from the parent/carer by 9.30am, the School Office team will check to see if the child was previously marked/sent home with an infectious disease that requires exclusion from school, as it may not be necessary for the parent to call in every day.

(Refer to Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings for further information), if this is not the case then the First Day Calling procedure must be followed (Refer to flowchart below) to ensure that the Academy School is aware of the child's whereabouts and that everyone in the household is safe.

FIRST DAY CALLING –FLOWCHART

'First Day Calling' is important because school absence and safeguarding are closely linked. This practice not only encourages good attendance it also helps to monitor a pupil's wellbeing and is an alert to their safety.



Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the Academy School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy School may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

Lateness and punctuality

All children must attend school on time, and be present in class registration to receive their mark for the session.

Parents/Carers are expected to ensure that their child is in school by:

9.00am – main school
8.45am and 12.45pm – Nursery

Any child arriving after these times but before 9.30am will be recorded as arriving late.

Any child arriving after the registers are closed will be counted as unauthorised absence for the morning session, unless there are extenuating circumstance.

(Refer to Appendix 1 for DfE Attendance Codes).

For Health & Safety reasons we must record every person who is present on the school premises. Late arrivals are regularly monitored to alert the Headteacher/Principal's attention to persistent latecomers. The Headteacher/Principal will write to those parents/carers and invite them in for a meeting. The aim is to offer support and advice and to stress the importance of being at school on time. Repeated lateness has a negative impact on the child, the teacher and others in the class. It can impede children's social and emotional development as well as academic development.

Following up absence

The Headteacher/Principal will meet regularly with the admin team to review attendance data. An overview of all persistent absentees and attendance of PPG and vulnerable children is monitored on a weekly basis. The Academy School will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Communication/Reporting to parents

Parents/Carers will be updated with their child's attendance annually in their written end of year report. The Academy School will be in regular contact with parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the required time a child is expected to be in school. This will be in the form of written communication, followed up with meetings, where necessary.

A particular focus will be on persistent absentees (those below 90%) and those children subject to CP plans, CHIN plans, CAFs or are deemed as vulnerable.

Information on lateness, illness and absence are explained in the Academy School brochure. This highlights the importance of being in school on time and notifying the Academy School if their child is absent for any reason.

The importance of regular attendance and punctuality are also explained at induction meetings with new parents/carers.

Parents/Carers are also encouraged to share any worries or concerns that their child may have which may impact them not wanting to come to school.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Under DfE guidance, Headteachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Authorised Absences are mornings and/or afternoons away from school with good reasons which make non-attendance unavoidable, for example:

- Illness (absence for longer than a week may require as Doctor's letter)
- Hospital or special clinic appointments - for those operating during school hours only.
- Therapy sessions e.g. speech & language, physio, occupational etc. where appointments cannot be made outside school hours.
- Medical /dental appointments for emergencies only (not check-ups).
- Extenuating circumstances as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher/Principal and in accordance with DfE guidance.
- Religious observance

All such appointments must be requested in writing, in advance, to the Headteacher/Principal.

Children must be "signed out" of school and "signed in" by Academy School staff, on return from appointments with the time of arrival/departure logged.

<u>Unauthorised absences</u> are those which the school **does not consider reasonable** and no leave of absence has been given. Examples of this are:

- Keeping children off school for trivial reasons such as birthdays, outings as treats, shopping trips, tiredness after parties or holidays etc.
- Because it's raining, too hot, too cold.
- Looking after siblings
- Illness of parent
- Holidays/ family holidays during term time
- Truancy
- Minding the house
- No-one available to take child to school

<u>No holidays are authorised during term time.</u> The Academy School has a duty to ensure children are in school regularly and parents are legally obliged to ensure that their children are in school regularly.

A fixed penalty referral will be made to the Local Authority for holidays in term time. The penalty will be that deemed appropriate by the Governing Board and/or EWO. The penalty notice can only be issued by the Local Authority.

For clarification, all leave during term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Extended absences due to pupil illness will require medical authentication.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Weekly assemblies to promote good attendance – class levels of attendance are shared
- Each class has an attendance noticeboard and weekly attendance figure is noted
- Newsletters share the attendance for each class and good attendance is promoted weekly
- Positive postcards are sent home to celebrate improvements over time.

Attendance monitoring

- Registers are marked twice a day
- The class teachers and office staff will log reasons for absence
- Weekly attendance meetings are held between the Headteacher/Principal and Admin Officer with responsibility for attendance
- Weekly checks are made to identify children with less than 90% attendance as well as worrying patterns of absence e.g. every Monday
- Support plans are implemented and swift actions are put in place to improve attendance.
- Positive postcards are sent home to celebrate improved attedance.

What we do when we are concerned about a child's absence

- An initial telephone is made to the parent to discuss the child's absence, noting their percentage and an offer of support is discussed, with the aim to increase the child's attendance percentage.

- An letter of concern will be sent to parents/carers inviting them to discuss the problem in order to find ways to improve attendance
- The letter identifies if the child has fallen into the red or amber category for attendance
- The Academy School makes contact with parents to discuss concerns and ways of improving attendance. Written records are kept of outcomes of discussions. An attendance plan is created between school and the parents.
- Headteacher/Principal will hold attendance meetings with parents/carers to discuss concerns, next steps, support etc
- If after meeting with parents/carers the child's absence continues to be of concern, we will make referrals to an Education Welfare Officer to review the case
- Referrals for penalty notices are considered. EWO will issue penalty notices for children who are absent more than 10 sessions in a 10 week rolling period. See https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Article/162531 for further information

Fabricated or Induced illness

All staff should be aware of what fabricated or induced illness (FII) is and the signs and symptoms to look out for, whilst this is a very rare condition, it should never be ignored.

What is fabricated or induced illness?

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerated or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. In fabricated or induced illness, the parent may present the child as ill when they are healthy, deliberately induce symptoms of illness, manipulate test results, or exaggerate or lie about symptoms.

Indicators of fabricated or induced illness

Some of the indicators of fabricated or induced illness, include

- The medical history doesn't make sense
- Treatment is ineffective
- The symptoms disappear when the parent/carer isn't around
- They can be seen repeatedly by different professionals looking for different things

In all cases, the child's normal life is restricted. Cases of fabricated or induced illness are very complex. Where fabricated and induced illness is suspected, referrals should be made without alerting the child's parent/carer.

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Board

The Local Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the Academy School. This information is contained in the Headteacher/Principal's

Report that presented and discussed at the board meetings on a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher/Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher/Principal

The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the Academy School, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher/Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Admin Officer with responsibility for attendance

The Admin Officer with responsibility for attendance:

- Monitors attendance data at the Academy School and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher/Principal
- Arranges letters/calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Alerts SLT to attendance concerns
- Alerts SLT on a daily basis of those children who are absent and who are considered vulnerable (CP, CHIN, SEND, Early Help)
- Alerts SLT and DSL's if a child cannot be accounted for after first day calling
- Attends welfare home checks with SLT/DSL's

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class teachers also organise celebration assemblies and incentives for promoting attendance. Class Teachers are the first point of contact to speak with parents if a child is absent frequently. It is important that class teachers identify if there may be a problem or concern at school that is limiting a child's attendance.

Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on MIS.

Office staff are expected to undertake first day calling as a priority job every morning.

Office staff are responsible for drawing any concerns about attendance on a day-to-day basis to the Headteacher/Principal.

Office staff are responsible for notifying the Headteacher/Principal of any child who is absent who is under the care of a CP plan or is deemed a vulnerable child.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

PARENT INFORMATION

Aims

1. To create a warm, welcoming, secure atmosphere where children feel valued
2. To provide a stimulating and accessible curriculum
3. To provide a bright, clean and attractive environment
4. To encourage children to attend every day and arrive punctually
5. To develop a positive attitude to the importance of prompt arrival and regular attendance

Parents' Responsibilities

Parents and carers are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. This means that they are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. They are also responsible for informing the Academy School of any absence on each day of absence. They should state the nature of the illness and when the child is expected to return to the Academy. When the child returns to the Academy School, a brief letter or email should be sent informing the Academy School of the reason for absence. If no reason for absence is provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and reported to the Headteacher/Principal who will follow this up with individual parents/carers.

Objectives

At the Academy School, we recognise that regular and punctual attendance is absolutely vital if children are to make sustained progress. Using the Academy School's computerised attendance system, children's attendance is carefully monitored by the Headteacher/Principal, class teachers, office staff and Admin Officer with responsibility of attendance.

Where a child's attendance gives cause for concern, the Academy School will contact the parents. If the child's attendance does not improve, the Academy School will write to the parents inviting them into school to discuss the issue. If a pattern of poor or non-attendance continues, the Academy School may inform the Educational Welfare Officer and a formal referral may be made. The Educational Welfare Officer will then pursue the issue and make parents aware of their legal responsibilities.

First Day Call Procedure

If your child is not going to be in school please call the office on

01689 857278 or email admin@darrickwood.cetrust.com

Please do this before:

9.00am on each day of their absence.

If we have not heard from you by **9.30am,** the office staff will contact you. If we are unable to contact you, we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence.

If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is, then we may make a home visit. However, if we still have not been able to get a response, consideration will be given as to whether we alert the police to carry out a home welfare check.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe.

Lateness

Parents should ensure that their child is at school by 9.00am (8.45am or 12.45pm Nursery).

Once the children are settled, the class teacher marks the registers. Any child not in the classroom for registration is marked as absent. Any child arriving after the gates are closed/register has been taken must report to the office to be signed in. Any child arriving between class registration and 9.30am is marked by the school office as present but late. Any child arriving after 9.30am continues to be marked as absent for that session. It will be marked as authorised/unauthorised absence depending on the reason for late arrival and will require a letter of explanation.

If lateness persists then parents/carers are invited into school to meet with the Headteacher/Principal to discuss the issue.

What we do when we are concerned about a child's absence

- An initial letter of concern will be sent to parents/carers inviting them to discuss the problem in order to find ways to improve attendance
- Attendance support makes contact with parents/carers to discuss concerns and ways of improving attendance. Written notes are kept of outcomes of discussions
- Headteacher/Principal will hold attendance meetings with parents/carers
- Education Welfare Officer alerted and a referral made

AUTHORISED ABSENCE	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
▪ Illness of child ▪ Medical/dental appointments ▪ Therapy sessions (Speech & Language, Physio) ▪ Family bereavement ▪ Religious observance	▪ Minding the house ▪ Looking after brothers/sisters ▪ Shopping trips in school hours ▪ Illness of parent ▪ Day trips ▪ Family holiday ▪ Weather too hot/cold ▪ Tiredness/late night ▪ No-one available to take child to school

Holidays During Term Time

Parents are not permitted to take holidays during term time, as children are then missing valuable education time.

Under Department for Education guidance a Headteacher/Principal may only grant leave of absence **in very exceptional circumstances**.

This does not include:

- A Family Holiday;
- A surprise visit or one booked without your knowledge;
- Leave to visit relatives abroad;
- Holiday booked due to difficulties with shift work patterns or rotas.

Leave of absence during term time may be granted in the event of a **medical emergency only**. In this eventuality, details of flights or travel arrangements and when they were booked may be required before authorised absence is granted. This does not include a planned trip to coincide with cheaper flight times during term time for example, to visit a poorly relative.

For clarification, all leave during term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence and extended absences due to pupil illness will require medical authentication.

Should you need to discuss the implementation of this policy further, please contact the Academy School.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Headteacher/Principal and approved by the Local Governing Board.

Useful Links and Policies

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
Gov.uk - Working together to improve school attendance
Gov.uk – Safeguarding children in whom illness is fabricated or induced
Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings
Penalty Notices for School Attendance - https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Article/162531

Monitoring and Implementation

	Name	Date
Policy written by	Headteacher/Principal	October 2026
Review by Committee	CET Board	October 2026
Agreed by Committee	CET Board	December 2026
Adopted by Governing Board	Local Governing Board	February 2027
To be reviewed every two years		
Review by	October 2028	

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
B	Off-site education
C	Other authorised circumstances
C1	Participating in regular performance or undertaking regular employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Holiday NOT agreed
I	Illness
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending and interview for employment or for admission into another educational institute
K	Attending educational provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers close)
M	Appointments
N	No reason
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Sports
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements

R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers)
V	Visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Z	Pupil not on roll