Join the faith and learning journey

St Antony's Roman Catholic Primary School

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

St. Antony's School is part of the Roman Catholic community of the Holy Family, where Jesus Christ is our inspiration as we raise standards and aspirations for all of our children.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

In this school, we are educating our children to:

- **know who they are - a special and unique gift from God**
- **know why they are here - we all have a purpose and responsibility to look after God's world**
- **work hard and aim high for their future- find and use their God given talents to be what God intended them to be.**

We are a Catholic community, in a modern society, where everyone is equal. The most loving and merciful Jesus Christ is our role model, and He welcomed everyone. All children are welcome in our school, and they and their families become part of our St. Antony's family. We will love and nurture them, and do our best to help them, on their faith and learning journeys, to become what God wants them to be.

Policy Name: ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted by Governors: …… (signed on hard copy)

Date: ……September 2026…….

Review date: ……September 2027

ATTENDANCE POLICY

AIMS

Our policy aims to:

- Emphasise the importance of maximum attendance at school
- Make explicit to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/guardians, pupils) expectations on attendance levels.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- Communicate to all relevant parties the legal position with respect to attendance.
- Stress the need for home and school to work together to achieve high attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.
- Intervening early and working with the LA and other relevant partners to understand and remove barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.
- Celebrate regular attendance

Regular attendance and good punctuality at school is vital. Absence from school means missed learning; without it, the learning process is fragmented and learning suffers as children will never have that learning opportunity again.

It is the responsibility of parents of registered pupils of compulsory school age to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If the child fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

National data has proven that children with good attendance achieve better results in school. Children with poor attendance and punctuality often suffer with low self-esteem and may have difficulty in forming lasting friendships. Children who are late begin the day at a disadvantage and are playing ‘catch-up’ all day. Furthermore, irregular attendance and lateness may form bad habits for future life and can prevent children from fulfilling their true potential.

The school’s Senior Attendance Champion is Heather McGowan, and can be contacted via class Dojo.

The school’s attendance officer is Mrs Saunders, and can be contacted via 01254 54686 for day-to-day attendance queries and concerns. Pupils and parents who require more detailed support with attendance can contact Mrs Linley, Family support, via 01254 54686.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDENCE

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2014) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBIITIES

The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and LA.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Appointing a member of the SLT as the school's Senior Attendance Champion, with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms Ali.

The attendance officer

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance on a day to day basis and identifying unexplained or concerning absence and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to family support and the headteacher for early intervention
- Working with the Inclusion Officer, and Senior Leader responsible for attendance, to tackle persistent absence
- Supporting the designated senior leader in leading attendance across school
- Completing paperwork relevant to the role such as: Child Missing in Education (CME), in-year transfers, deletion from role etc.
- Reporting 15 day illness absence to the LA
- Reporting 10 day unauthorized absence to the LA

The attendance officer is Mrs Saunders.

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.
- Promoting good attendance through supporting whole school attendance strategies.
- Report any patterns/ absence concerns to the attendance officer.

School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/ listen to voicemails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Conduct first-day call-backs/ send Dojo message to ascertain the whereabouts of a child who is absent
- Report any absence concerns to Mrs Linley/Mrs McGowan.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, and on time.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, or when reasonably possible, and each subsequent day of absence, providing the reason for absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with up to date contact details and more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep school updated with changes to contact details.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Be here every day ready and on-time
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

The Inclusion Officer (Blackburn with Darwen)

- The role of the inclusion officer is to work in partnership with school through termly meetings to monitor impact of attendance strategies. When the final stage of the attendance escalation plan has been reached, it is the responsibility of the inclusion officer to utilise legal powers to enforce school attendance.

WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE ATTENDANCE RATE?

The vast majority of our pupils achieve over 95% attendance. This is the minimum we expect from **ALL** pupils. 80% attendance may sound like an acceptable figure. However, this would equate to a whole day of missed learning opportunities, every 5 days.

90% absence is the equivalent of 1 day missed in every 10 school days. Sporadic absence disrupts learning, can seriously affect pupil progress and is a cause for concern.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

We take the register using SIMs. We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto the register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each day and once during the second session. See appendix 5 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The reason for illness
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the register for 3 years after the date on which the entry.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Absences due to the following reasons can be authorised.

- Illness/receiving medical attention

- Days of religious observance (notified in advance). Only that day will be recorded using Code R. Any additional absence requested will be considered separately as a request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- Family circumstances e.g. bereavement within the immediate family (mum/dad/sister).
- Special occasions – only truly exceptional occasions would be classified as authorised (to be requested)

Requests for absence because of other reasons can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances if the application is made in advance of the absence.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; **routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours wherever possible**.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

These are absences where no letter or acceptable explanation is provided. St Antony's School **WILL NOT** authorise any absence retrospectively. **A note from home does NOT automatically make an absence valid, justified or authorised.**

- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the authorised categories (see above). Requests for leave of absence for family holidays cannot be authorised.

DfE guidelines state the following activities would be classed as unauthorised:

- Family holidays (additional new guidance includes- where the Head teacher believes that the educational progress of the child will suffer longer term, the child is working below National expectations, or the child's attendance is not already judged to be good.
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Minding the house.
- Caring for relatives.
- Awaiting repair/delivery people.
- Shopping.
- Birthday treats or family celebrations.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Where the reason cannot be established within five school days, the school will amend the entry to Code O.

PERSISTANT ABSENCE (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

SEVERE ABSENCE

- Missing 50 percent or more of school sessions for any reason

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, all staff are aware that if children go missing, this can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. St Antony's RC Primary School knows that early intervention is key to identifying any risk and to prevent the risk of a child going missing in the future.

School are updated annually on the procedures which are to be taken in the case of a Child Missing in Education. School are required to inform the local authority about the details of:

- All children who are believed to have moved out of the Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) geographical area after the school has undertaken reasonable enquiries (to be completed within 10 school days) and the child's whereabouts have still not been confirmed.
- Children who have been absent without the school's permission for a continued period of 10 days
- Children who have failed to return to school for 10 days beyond the expected return date following a leave of absence period
- Children who have relocated abroad
- All Gypsy/Romany/Traveller children who school believes have gone travelling without securing prior agreement and/or confirming a return date
- Children who are withdrawn from school, but parents are unwilling or unable to say where or how their child will continue to be educated.

In a case of CME, the school needs to make reasonable enquires and the Attendance Team must:

- Obtain as much information as possible from parents before relocation
- Maintain contact with parents following relocation
- Confirm admission with the receiving school
- Make a home visit if possible
- Make general enquiries amongst friendship groups
- Establish contact with all named people on the child's record.

Relevant CME forms will be completed and sent to the Inclusion Team.

Circumstances when a CME notification is not required:

- Those children who move out of the BwD are and their whereabouts has been confirmed – these children will be reported to the Local Authority using a 'Deletion from School Roll Notification' form
- In 'truancy' cases where a child's unauthorised absence has already been formally referred to the Inclusion Officer
- Children with long-term medical or mental health needs whose absence has been verified by a health professional.

PUNCTUALITY EXPECTATIONS

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.
Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

- The morning register will close 30 minutes after the class drop off time. Pupils will receive a late mark if they do not attend school before this time.
- If pupils arrive after 9:15am they will receive a mark of absence 'U'

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

The school will actively discourage late arrival, seek explanations from parents for lateness and monitor patterns of late arrival to identify where further support or intervention may be needed.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call/Dojo the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the absence will be unauthorised
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call/Dojo the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider conducting a home visit and will post a door-step letter asking parents to contact school (appendix 1). Where school have been unsuccessful in ascertaining the whereabouts of a child, the police may be contacted and a welfare check requested.
- For vulnerable pupils, home visits will be conducted by the safeguarding team on the first day. During the home visit, they will observe anything suspicious, or a cause for concern. If deemed appropriate, these concerns will be passed onto external agencies for support.
- Where the school is unable to establish the reason for a pupil's absence and there are safeguarding concerns, the school will take appropriate action in line with its safeguarding procedures. The school will recognise that unexplained or prolonged absence from education can be a safeguarding warning sign.

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

We ask parents/guardians to ensure that children arrive on time for school. Morning registration is staggered as follows:

Key Stage	**Gate**	**Door**	**Drop off**	**Pick up**
Nursery & Reception (EYFS)	Near main road	N – nursery door at the front of school. REC – reception door at the back to EYFS yard.	8.30am 8.30am	11.30am 3.00pm
Years 1, 2 & 3	Delph Lane side	YEAR 1 – main yard, new door on artificial grass. YEAR 2 – main yard, steps near the woods. YEAR 3 – main yard, steps near the hall.	8.35am	3.05pm

Years 4, 5 & 6	Delph Lane side	YEAR 4 – main yard, steps near the woods. YEAR 5 – main yard, steps near the woods. YEAR 6 – main yard, steps near the hall.	8:35am	3:10pm

If their child is ill, parents/guardians must notify school on the first day of absence. In return, school will:

- Contact home on first day of absence if no message has been received. If we cannot get through on the telephone a message will be sent on Dojo.
- Send a letter to parents/guardians if no explanation of absence or contact can be obtained (Appendix 1)
- Follow up promptly any concerns parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to or feeling of well-being of being in school.
- Reward excellent attendance.

St Antony's is a caring family. We understand that there may be times where there are genuine difficulties in getting your child to school. We are here to help and support our families; there are many services that can be offered such as; breakfast club, nurture and family support services. Please do not hesitate to contact school if you need them.

REPORTING TO PARENTS/CARERS

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via:

- letters for attendance that meet threshold/ trigger points (see attendance monitoring protocol)
- letters/Dojo message when attendance has improved;
- informal and formal meetings when a child's attendance continues to drop.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school punctually and regularly. Pupils whose attendance is causing concern may be referred to the Education welfare officer who may visit the home to discuss any difficulties the parents may be experiencing in ensuring their child's regular attendance. Where it is deemed that parents are failing in their duty to ensure regular attendance the parents can be liable to be issued Penalty Notices and could result in legal consequences.

LA REPORTING

The school must inform the LA, on a monthly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Where a child has missed 15 days of school due to illness the school must submit 15 day illness absence report to the LA.

LEGAL SANCTIONS

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.
The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent, for the same child, within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days, with no option for a discounted rate.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDERS

An education supervision order (ESO) is a formal legal intervention once all voluntary support has been exhausted. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

Education supervision orders initially last for one year. The local authority will notify parents in writing of the intention to proceed to an ESO, and will set up a meeting to discuss it with the parent. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

APPLICATION FOR REQUESTING LEAVE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Parents should request an Application for Absence from School Form (Appendix 2) at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed date. **These can be obtained from the school website or the school office and must be returned to the school office.** This request will be considered by the Head Teacher using the DfE's 'exceptional circumstances' criteria. You may be requested to attend an appointment with the Head Teacher. Parents/guardians will be notified what decision has been made. If the absence has not been authorised and you continue with the absence, this may trigger a referral to the Education Welfare Officer with a request for a fixed penalty notice to be issued in accordance with Section 444A of the Education Act 1996. You will be informed by school that the absence has been referred (Appendix 3).

If you take your child out of school without completing an Application for Absence from School Form, this will automatically trigger a referral to the Education Welfare Officer regarding a fixed penalty notice to be issued in accordance with Section 444A of the Education Act 1996, on your child's return to school. A letter (Appendix 4) will be sent to you by school as this absence will be unauthorised.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

We actively encourage and promote good attendance throughout school. We treat attendance as everyone's responsibility. Some of the strategies we use for rewarding and improving attendance include:

- Celebrating class weekly attendance winners during gold book assembly. The winners receive a treat from the treasure chest.
- Sharing weekly attendance on Dojo
- Having a clear display for attendance in the hall celebrating good attendance
- Leaders meet and greet children in the yard at the start of the day, and teachers meet and greet children at classroom doors. We do this to ensure that all children get a positive interaction at the start of the day.
- Planning engaging lessons, and ensuring there are many wider opportunities planned for the children such as a range of trips and visits, special themed days in school
- Rewarding children with 100% attendance each term.
- Rewarding children with 100% attendance at the end of the year. This could be a prize such as an amazon voucher or trip.
- Holding special days to celebrate attendance such as 100% attendance day.
- Holding parent workshops regarding attendance to ensure that we all work together to improve attendance
- Encouraging pupils and parents through class dojo/ conversations
- Sending well done messages/letters when attendance improves.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The school will:

- Monitor the attendance data weekly at a class and school level.
- Monitor attendance and absence data termly and yearly at an individual pupil level, and group level (pupil premium, SEND, EAL)
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Conduct daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly checks as appropriate on a pupil who is causing concern and has been escalated.

Refer to the appendix for our attendance monitoring protocol.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Extract regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate. school will maintain the same high ambition for their attendance as for all other pupils, while providing additional support and reasonable adjustments where needed.

In line with the SEND Policy and Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IEPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate (e.g. school nurse, MHST, or paediatric referral).

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to a social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues/need, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a SEMH concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their SEMH need.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil of compulsory school age will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness, and work with the LA to support continuity of education.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return through carefully structured transition
- Ensure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework and the Assess, Plan, Do, Review Process (APDR)
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Using a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, with parental agreement, regular review dates, a clear proposed end date and the aim of returning the pupil to full-time education as soon as possible. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Small group work and interventions.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Where a pupil subject to a part-time timetable has an EHC plan, the school will discuss the arrangement with the LA so that the pupil's support package can be reviewed as appropriate. Where the pupil has a social worker, the school will keep them informed and involved in the process.

The school will compare attendance data to the local and national average and share this with the governing body.

This policy has been approved by the Governing Body in Autumn 2026

This policy will be reviewed annually

Date ……

Dear Parents/Guardians

Re: Unauthorised Absence

Your child has been absent without explanation on the dates detailed below.

Please complete the slip and return to school immediately, indicating the reason for their absence. If no reason is received, we will have no alternative but to record an unauthorised absence against your child's record and the matter will be referred on to the Education Welfare Officer at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

Yours faithfully

H McGowan

H McGowan

Mrs H McGowan
Head Teacher

……

FAO School Office **Absence Notification**

Pupil Name:……..

Class……..

Dates of Absence…….

Reason for Absence……

……

Appendix 1

Children's Service and Education Directorate

Inclusion Team

UPN	

APPLICATION FOR DISCRETIONARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Name of School
DfE Number

If you wish to request discretionary leave of absence for your child, please complete this application form and return it to the Headteacher as soon as possible and in advance of making any travel arrangements. Please note that there is no entitlement in law for parents to take their children out of school during term time without first obtaining permission from school.

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see code C1)
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable) 18

Exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

If you do take your child out of school without securing advance permission or he/she fails to return to school on the agreed due date, you are likely to be issued with a

Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Fines will be issued in accordance with the National framework for penalty notices and the local code of conduct.
The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS, AND EVERY DAY IS IMPORTANT

Child's First Name	Child's Surname	D.o.B.			Year Group	Gender
						Male ☐ Female ☐

Parent (s) / Carer (s)			
First Name		First Name	
Surname		Surname	
Relationship to Child		Relationship to Child	
Address		Address	
Contact Telephone		Contact Telephone	
Email Address		Email Address	

Request Details	
Reason for Request	

Destination (City & Country)					
Date of Departure		**Date due back in School**		**Number of missed school days**	
Emergency contact in Blackburn with Darwen (inc. contact number)					
Parent/Carer's Signature			**Date Request made**		

School Section			
Date of meeting/conversation with parent/carer		**Leave Authorised**	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
Exceptional circumstances considered			
Head teacher's/Principal's signature		**Date**	

For absences of 10 days or more please forward this form prior to the child's departure to education.welfare@blackburn.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Date …….
Dear Parents/Guardians

Re: Unauthorised absence

With regard to the absences detailed below, and in accordance with the Application for Absence Form from school being returned to you unauthorised, we now write to advise you that as the absences were unauthorised we have now referred this matter on to the Education Welfare Officer who will be contacting you in due course regarding a fixed penalty notice under Section 444A Education Act 1996.

Child/children's name/s:…….DOB……

…….....DOB …….

……. DOB …….

Absence dates: First day of absence:……

Last day of absence:…….

Number of school days:…….

Yours faithfully

H McGowan

Mrs H McGowan
Head Teacher

Appendix 3

Date …….

Dear Parents/Guardians

Re: Unauthorised absence

With regard to the absences detailed below, and as no Application for Absence Form has been completed, we now write to advise you that as the absences were unauthorised we have now referred this matter on to the Education Welfare Officer who will be contacting you in due course regarding a fixed penalty notice under Section 444A Education Act 1996.

Child/children's name/s: …… DOB ……

…… DOB ……

…… DOB ……

Absence dates: First day of absence: ……

Last day of absence: ……

Number of school days: ……

Yours faithfully

H McGowan

Mrs H McGowan
Head Teacher

Appendix 4

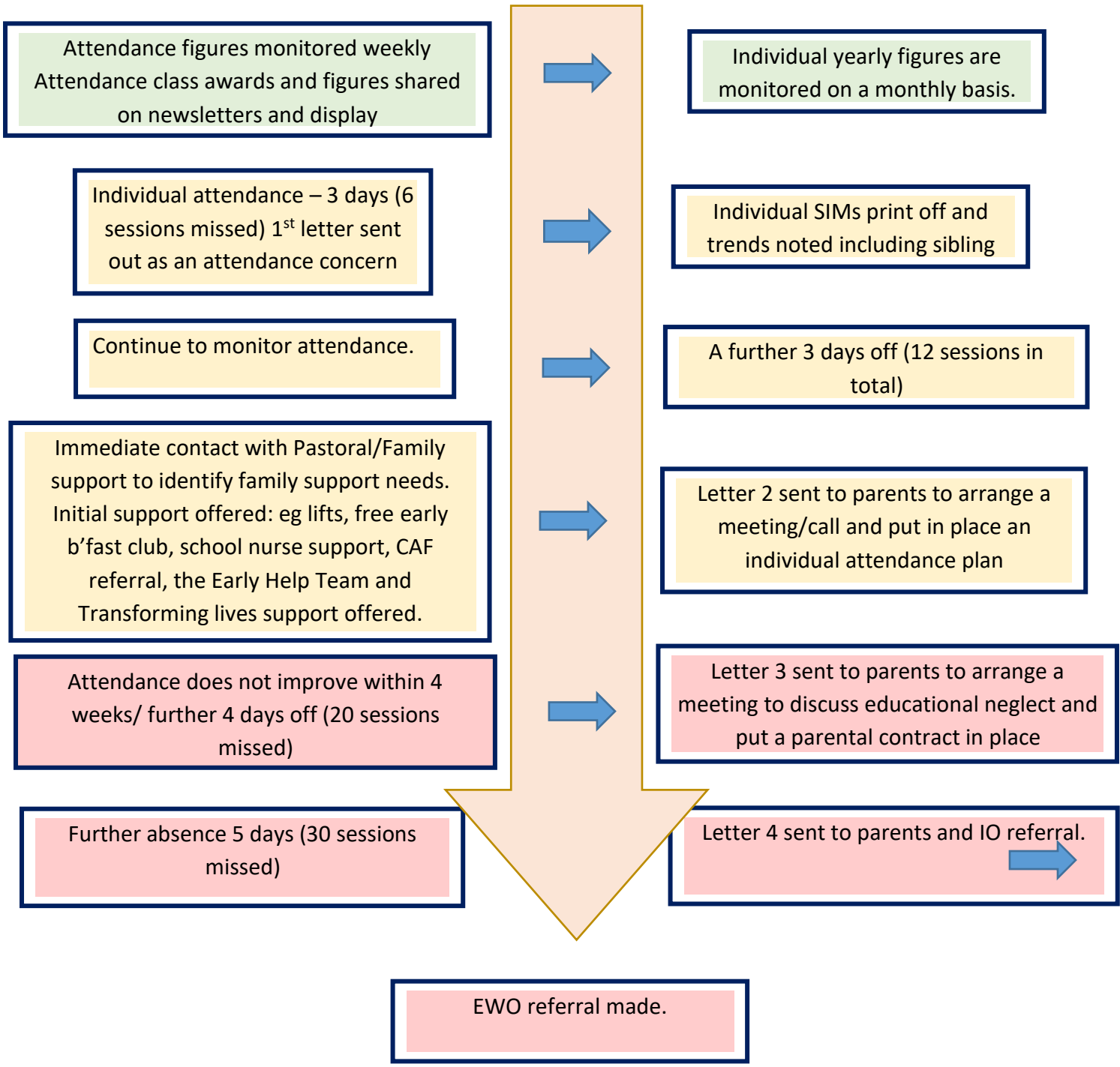
Attendance codes - Appendix 5

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance- updated September 2024

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the 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
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROTOCOL

This is the supportive process we follow to ensure good attendance for all pupils.



Appendix 6

Appendix 7: Letters

Letter 1: Trigger 3 days or 6 sessions missed

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

To the parent/carer of x,

Our Attendance Team monitors school attendance and punctuality daily, as your child's learning and well-being is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that working together with parents/carers is the best way to result in positive attendance outcomes for our children and ask that you support us with ensuring your child regularly attends and is on time.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored daily and the school seek to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained.

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 96% (no more than 8 days or 16 sessions missed) throughout a pupil's schooling.

We cannot be complacent where there are instances of persistently low attendance, or if children are regularly late to school. Attendance in school is a high priority.

We have noticed that your child has missed x number of sessions which is the same as x days.

We will therefore be monitoring your child's attendance closely. Should your child's attendance continue to drop, we will write to you again and invite you in for a meeting.

We appreciate your support with improving your child's attendance and if we can help in any way by offering you any support, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Ali.

Kind Regards,

The Attendance Team.

Letter 2: Trigger 6 days/ 12 sessions missed (IAP)

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

To the parent/carer of x,

The Attendance Team wrote to you recently informing you that your child's attendance was being monitored as it was a concern.

As mentioned in the previous letter, regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly and the school seek to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained.

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 96% (no more than 8 days or 16 sessions missed) throughout a pupil's schooling.

This letter serves as a reminder of your legal duty to ensure regular attendance at school. According to school records, **your child's attendance has continued to drop.** Your child has missed xxx sessions which is xxx days.

As a result of this, we would like to invite you for a meeting to discuss this concern further and offer you some support. We will work together to create an individual attendance plan.

Meeting Date & Time:

We hope to see you at the meeting. If this date and time is not convenient, we will endeavour to rearrange. Thank you for your continued support.

Kind Regards,

The Attendance Team.

Letter 3: Trigger 10 days/ 20 sessions (Parental Contract)

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

To the parent/carer of x,

The Attendance Team wrote to you recently informing you that your child's attendance was being monitored as it was a concern. We have since met with you and offered some support to encourage better attendance, and have created an individual attendance plan.

Through careful monitoring, we have noticed that **your child's attendance has continued to drop.** Your child has missed xxx sessions which is xxx days.

We have a duty of care to meet with you further to discuss small targets and a parental contract in order to improve attendance.

As discussed in our previous meeting, regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly and the school seek to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained.

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 96% throughout a pupil's schooling.

This letter serves as a reminder of your legal duty to ensure regular attendance at school.

Due to your child's attendance being a significant concern, the following meeting has been arranged:

Meeting Date & Time:

If this date and time is not convenient, we will endeavour to rearrange. Thank you for your continued support.

Kind Regards,

The Attendance Team.

Letter 4: Trigger 15 days/ 30 sessions (Inclusion Officer referral)

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – Referral to the Inclusion Officer

To the parent/carer of x,

The Attendance Team wrote to you informing you that your child's attendance was being monitored as it was a concern.

Furthermore, we invited you to a meeting on _____ to offer support and guidance on this issue, and to put an Individual Attendance Plan in place. As your child's attendance continued to drop, a follow up meeting was held on _____ to implement a parental contract and small targets were set to improve attendance.

You failed to attend/attended these meetings.

As a school, we have continued to monitor your child's attendance and are very concerned that their attendance has not improved and has continued to drop. Your child has now missed xxx sessions which is xxx days.

Due to this, the case will be referred to our Inclusion Officer, Sharon Norcliffe.

This letter serves as a reminder of your legal duty to ensure regular attendance at school. School will no longer authorise your child's absences and will require you to supply medical evidence.

Unauthorised absences can result in legal intervention which may consist of Education Supervision Orders, Educational Prosecution, Parenting Orders and a Fixed Penalty Notices.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at school, or please see below the Inclusion Officer's details:

Sharon Norcliffe
Inclusion Officer
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
5th Floor | 10 Duke Street | Blackburn | BB2 1DH
Tel: 01254 222515
Email: Sharon.Norcliffe@blackburn.gov.uk

Kind Regards,

The Attendance Team.

Letter: Failure to attend meetings

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – Be an Attendance HERO!

To the parent/carer of x,

You were invited to attend two attendance meetings on [date] and [date] to discuss your child's attendance.

Unfortunately, you failed to attend the meeting and to inform school that you would not be attending. You must contact school to arrange another meeting. Failure to do so may result in a referral into the Inclusion Team at Blackburn with Darwen, and potential legal action.

Please contact school and confirm a meeting date within seven days of receiving this letter.

Kind Regards,

The Attendance Team.