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Person Responsible:	Doug Grieb – Head of Operations and Marketing
Ratified by:	Liam Gaster – Head Teacher
Outcome:	The purpose of the plan is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting and modelling good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.• Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.• Acting early to address patterns of absence.• Rewarding regular attendance.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Yarrow Heights School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting and modelling good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

Acting early to address patterns of absence.

Rewarding regular attendance.

Through our Family Liaison Lead, we will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSiE) 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

3. Definitions

3.1 The School defines "absence" as:

Not attending school for any reason.

3.2 The School defines an "authorised absence" as:

An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.

Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.

Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.

An absence due to a family emergency.

3.3 The School defines an "unauthorised absence" as:

Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.

Truancy before or during the school day.

Absences which have not been properly explained.

Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.

Leaving school for no reason during the day.

3.4 The School defines "persistent absenteeism (PA)" as:

Missing 15 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the schools with the use and implementation of policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole group
- Making sure the schools are providing staff with adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Head Teacher is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Senior Leadership Team to account for the implementation of this policy.

4.2 The Head of Behaviour and Attitudes

The Head of Behaviour and Attitudes is responsible for:

Day to day implementation and management of this policy at the school.

Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to wider SLT and Head Teacher.

Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

4.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy DSLs

The DSL will:

Monitor attendance data across the School and at an individual pupil level where there is a concern.

Report concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher.

Work with the Head of Behaviour and Attitudes, Pupil Wellbeing Lead and Southampton Attendance Team to tackle persistent absence.

Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

Advise the Head Teacher when/whether to issue fixed-penalty notices.

4.4 Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:

Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

Modelling good attendance behaviour.

Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.

4.5 School office staff

Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes.

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils, to actively seek out on the day the DSL, Deputy DSL, Form Tutor or Head Teacher if they believe there may be any welfare concerns.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. Pastoral Support staff (taxi duty) are responsible for taking the attendance register during morning arrival and tutors take the register during afternoon tutor time. Morning Pastoral Support staff pass information on to the reception team, to input on to our School MIS. Any unknown absences will be forwarded to our Family Liaison Lead to follow up. This will be completed by 9:30.

Staff 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.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 0845 on each school day. The school is open to all pupils at 0815 each morning.

The register for the first session will be taken at 0845 and will be kept open until 0900. The register for the second session will be taken at 1310 and will be kept open until 1330; on Friday afternoons between 1300 and 1310.

Our receptionist will follow up any unknown absence by 9:30

We will follow up any absences to:

Ascertain the reason.

Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,

Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by telephone or email (reception@yarrowheights.com) on the first day of an unplanned absence by 0845 or as soon as practically possible (see also Section 7). If the notification is by email the school office may confirm the absence by telephone.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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 School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment prior to the appointment or before 0845 on the morning of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to Section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

5.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the Family Liaison Lead will:

Contact the parent/carer to ascertain the reason and explore ways in which the parent/carer can be supported, if necessary.

Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

Identify the correct attendance code to use.

5.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers will be advised of the pupil's previous term's attendance data through a termly report. The report will identify trends of any periods of absence, if applicable, and record actions and strategies employed to support the improvement of the pupil's attendance if required.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion.

The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

For any request for leave of absence during term-time, we ask that parents complete a 'request for leave of absence' form and submit this in advance of the absence.

6.2 Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see Sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail).

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the School will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the School, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Possible approval of term time holiday.

Study Leave.

Flexi-Schooling requests to support pupils back into full time education, following a period(s) out of School.

6.2 Reducing persistent absence

The Head of Behaviour and Attitudes, Pupil Wellbeing Lead and the Head of Education will monitor all pupil attendance on a weekly basis, and report back to the Head Teacher any notable cases of unauthorised or persistent absences.

Concerns of regular absences, leading up to persistent absences will be addressed as soon as a pattern or trend is identified. The attendance management will initially involve a call home, a letter of support, a letter of concern followed by a home visit, then School visit with a member of the SLT/Head Teacher.

Persistent absences will be discussed, and working closely with the family and the pupil, the Family Liaison Lead will agree a programme of actions and strategies to support the pupil and the family to improved attendance. These strategies may include daily reviews, supported pickups and drop offs, reward-based incentives, and positive reinforcement and encouragement.

6.3 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.

In the unlikely event that the School's attendance support strategies have not been effective or not implemented, the School reserves the right to issue a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. Penalty notices can be issued by the Head Teacher, Local Authority officer or the Police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

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

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

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

The promotion and benefits of regular attendance will be structured, planned, and delivered through tutor time, assemblies, Life Skills and PSHE learning.

Pupils demonstrating regular attendance in excess of 98% over a half term will participate in an incentive reward scheme to motivate their continued high levels of attendance. According to the needs of the pupil, their attendance will be publicly or privately celebrated.

8. Attendance monitoring

The **Head of Behaviour and Attitudes** at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis. A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the School in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see Section 5.2).

If a pupil's absence over a six-week period goes above three days, the School will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this, if a particular cause is not known/recorded, or a pattern is emerging.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Southampton Attendance Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 15%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 15%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and Local Authority level through the DfE's School Absence National Statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The School will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Board of Directors.

9. Review of implementation

The implementation of this Policy is reviewed annually by the school's Senior Leadership Team in consultation with staff and a report is made to the Governance Body.

The school may submit to Cavendish Education proposals for amendments to this Policy.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Positive behaviour support policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveler absence	Pupil from a Traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day