

OA-Havering

Attendance Policy

Document control table	
Title	Attendance Policy
Approved by	OA Central
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Updates/revisions included:	Section 2 (Legislation) – Updated statutory guidance references to reflect the latest DfE <i>Working Together to Improve School Attendance</i> guidance (July 2026) and attendance-related resources. The Law on School Attendance – Revised wording relating to medical evidence to reflect the DfE expectation that evidence should not be routinely requested and should only be sought where appropriate. Our Approach to Improving Attendance – Added a new section outlining the DfE's graduated attendance model: <i>Expect, Monitor, Listen and Understand, Facilitate Support, Formalise Support and Enforce</i>. Supporting Pupils Facing Barriers to Attendance – New section added to strengthen arrangements for pupils experiencing barriers to attendance, including SEND, mental health needs, physical health needs, young carers and safeguarding concerns. Attendance Support and Monitoring – Updated to include greater emphasis on early identification of attendance concerns, support planning and monitoring of vulnerable pupil groups. Remote Education – Added clarification that remote education is not a substitute for school attendance and should only be used as part of a planned reintegration strategy where appropriate. Roles and Responsibilities – Updated attendance responsibilities for parents/carers, academy staff and the Senior Attendance Champion to align with current statutory guidance. Governance and Oversight – Expanded responsibilities for Trustees and Academy Advisory Boards to reflect the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and DfE expectations for attendance oversight and challenge. Accessibility and Clarity – Reviewed content to remove duplication, simplify language and improve accessibility for pupils, families, staff, Academy Advisory Board members and Trustees.
Academies to note: This is an OA template, should you consider any changes are needed please contact sarah.coe@oliveacademies.org.uk	

OA-Havering	
How should parents and carers report absence?	Call Zoe Boodle by 8:30am on the first morning of a child's absence giving the reason why the child will be absent and their expected return date
Who is responsible for overseeing attendance in the academy?	Leah McGee Leah.McGee@oliveacademies.org.uk 01708 478892
Registration times	
Morning	Students must arrive by 9:00am
	If a pupil arrives after 9:00am they will be classed as LATE
	If a pupil arrives after 9:30am they will be classed as ABSENT for the morning session
Afternoon	Students must register for afternoon sessions at 12pm
	If a pupil arrives after 12pm they will be classed as LATE
	If a pupil arrives after 12:30pm they will be classed as ABSENT for the afternoon session

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Introduction

Our aim is to foster a sense of responsibility, a joy of learning and to create a community where the importance of coming to school to learn is recognised by everyone. In our academy, we work together with parents, carers and pupils – we develop relationships where we listen and build our understanding of barriers to attendance so we can work out the best ways to support attendance. We recognise that absence from school is often a symptom of wider barriers rather than the problem itself. We will seek to understand and address these barriers through supportive and inclusive practices while maintaining high expectations for attendance.

Legislation

This policy has due regard to the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation and guidance, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Relevant legislation:

The Education Acts 1996 and 2002

The Children Act 1989

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Sentencing Act 2020

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended

The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013

The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963

The Equality Act 2010

Relevant statutory government guidance (the most recent versions):

[Children missing education](#)

[Keeping children safe in education](#) and [working together to safeguard children](#)

[Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)

[Elective home education](#)

[Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#)

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

[Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)

[Preventing and tackling bullying](#)

[Providing remote education](#)

[RISE Attendance Improvement resource](#) (DfE)

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

Olive Academies values and our aims

The values of Olive Academies (OA) are:

- **CONVICTION** - Everyone has the capacity to reach their potential.
- **DETERMINATION** - Not giving up on those who have not experienced success.
- **AMBITION** - All challenges can be overcome, and education is an important lifelong journey.
- **REFLECTION** - Learning from experiences and developing a capacity to improve further.

These values shape our approach to supporting children to attend school as much as is possible as we know that this is crucial for learning and wellbeing.

We recognise that improving attendance is **everyone's business**. Barriers to accessing education, especially in an alternative provision and specialist schools such as ours, are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates. They are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that a school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. Providing this for our pupils is our core objective in OA schools.

We recognise that to support our pupils to attend school, we need to build **strong and trusting relationships with parents and carers** and other partners so that we can work together to remove barriers to attendance and put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the responsibility of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a collective effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust, the local authority, and other local partners.

The law on school attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the **legal responsibility** of every parent and carer to make sure, if their child is registered at a school, that they ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means attendance every day, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Categorisation of absence

When a pupil is absent from school, the law categorises that as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

The law states that it is for school leader to determine into which category any absence fits, it is for the academy to decide whether any absence is 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

Authorised absence

Examples of the type of absence which may be authorised:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (although these should be made wherever possible out of school hours.)
- Exceptional family circumstances (at the discretion of the school)

Unauthorised absence

Examples of the type of absence which will not be authorised are:

- Birthdays
- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Special treats
- Looking after family members
- Holidays in term time

The need for parental explanation

All absences must be explained either by telephone call, text message, email or letter by a parent or carer. However, this does not automatically authorise the absence.

The academy will not routinely request medical evidence for short-term illness. Medical evidence may only be requested where there are genuine concerns regarding attendance, safeguarding, support planning, repeated illness absence patterns or where the authenticity of absence needs clarification.

Long term absences must be discussed with academy staff to enable them to offer the pupil access to education to which they are entitled. Where a parent/carers anticipates in advance that their child will be absent then as much advance notice as possible should be given.

Holidays during term time

Parents/carers are reminded that they do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for holidays. The DfE guidance states, '*As headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.*' Examples of circumstances which by themselves are very unlikely to be considered as special and thus leading to a grant of permission include:

- To fit in with parental working patterns
- Economic reasons, such as cheap flights and/or accommodation
- To overlap with beginning or end of term.

Attendance will be enforced through statutory intervention (fixed penalty notice) or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education – should persistent unauthorised absence occur the headteacher may refer to the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices or prosecute (see section 6).

Parents must put requests for term time leave in writing to the Head of Academy or request a term time leave form through the Office Manager. Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Children Missing Education (CME) and removing students from roll

If a pupil fails to attend the academy for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their place with us.

If the academy has reason to believe the student may no longer be living at the address held on record and staff are unable to confirm the whereabouts of the student through the academy's usual processes, staff will follow the Local Authority CME guidance and make referrals as appropriate.

- If a parent/carer notifies the academy in writing that the student and family are moving out of the area and the student no longer requires a place, the academy will remove the student from roll from the date of moving and will, at the same time, notify the Local Authority (LA) using the CME referral form.
- The academy will add and delete students from roll in line with the law and will complete the local authority CME referrals and Ground for Deletion notification forms in accordance with Local Authority guidance.
- The academy will seek advice from the CME team if unsure about any individual cases:
CME@haverling.gov.uk
- When removing a student from roll due to Elective Home Education (EHE) the academy will also follow the relevant LA EHE notification processes.
- Where a child has an allocated social worker, youth justice worker or is identified as a young carer, these professionals will be informed where attendance concerns reach safeguarding thresholds.

Elective Home Education

It is a parent's right to be able to withdraw their child from school to educate them at home if they wish to. There are legal responsibilities parents/carers must fulfil if they wish to educate their child at home, which are monitored by the Local Authority. Please speak to the Head of Academy in the first instance if you are considering this option.

Our approach to improving attendance

The purpose of ensuring regular attendance at school is so that pupils can get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. **The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.**

Our experience at Olive Academies that some of our pupils face significant challenges outside of school and regular attendance gives us the best opportunity to understand each pupil's needs and to identify what support is needed to help them to achieve and grow as individuals.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently but we will always consider the individual needs of our pupils and their families, some of whom may have specific barriers to attendance that we need to work with them to remove. As with all our work, we know that this can only be done by building strong relationships with families, by listening to them and understanding their individual situations.

We will work with families and others to treat the root causes of absence and remove barriers to attendance.

How do we encourage good attendance?

At Olive Academies we promote good attendance in several ways: working with each individual pupil and their parents and carers; working across each academy; and working across the trust.

We work with families, parents and carers to make sure they understand the importance of good attendance. The reasons for this are outlined in this policy.

We use our staged approach to supporting attendance – this is available in appendix 1 and includes details about incentives and rewards given to pupils who attend regularly and steps that will be taken when they do not. These include working alongside parents and carers to support them as well as monitoring and putting in place plans as necessary – examples of general and specific actions include:

- information sharing and meetings with parents and carers to make sure they understand the procedures both at induction and as needed, e.g. provision of an annual attendance information leaflet
- clear information on the website and ensuring parents and carers have seen this attendance policy
- regular communication with parents and carers when attendance becomes an issue – done using the method best suited to individual carers, be it text, email, phone, face to face meeting
- home visits
- weekly conversations with tutors/coaches
- attendance boards to celebrate improvements
- weekly attendance rewards and certificates
- sign posting to other services, e.g. via a common assessment form (CAF)

Where there is **persistent or severe absence**, OA staff will put in place an individual action plan which will include input from other support services and the local authority who will work together to identify ways of removing barriers to attendance.

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance will be enforced through statutory intervention (Fixed penalty notice) or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Fixed Penalty Notices and the Local Authority Attendance Service

The academy may request legal intervention where attendance support has not been successful or has not been engaged with. This may include notices to improve, penalty notices or prosecution in line with local authority procedures.

First offence - First Penalty Notice **per parent, per child**, must pay:

- £80 if you pay within 21 days
- £160 if you pay after 21 days but within 28 days

Second offence - Penalty Notice within 3 years **per parent, per child**, must pay:

- £160 within 28 days

Any other offence within 3 years - Legal proceedings will be taken if:

- their child has any further unauthorised absences within 3 years

These may be issued for:

- Unauthorised holidays in term time.
- Parentally condoned absence where the parent is deemed capable but unwilling to address attendance problems (e.g. a failure to engage with support measures).
- Where a pupil is stopped by parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- A parent continually fails to explain a pupil's absence in accordance with the school's procedures.

This is not an exhaustive list, and each case will be considered individually.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

The Graduated Approach to Improving Attendance

At Olive Academies, we follow the Department for Education's graduated approach to improving attendance. We recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider barriers affecting a child or family, and that successful attendance improvement relies on understanding and addressing those barriers. We will always seek to work in partnership with pupils, parents, carers and other professionals to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

1. Expect

We promote a culture where good attendance is valued and expected. We set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils and communicate clearly with pupils, parents and carers about the importance of regular school attendance for learning, wellbeing and future success.

2. Monitor

We regularly monitor attendance data for individual pupils, groups of pupils and whole-school trends. This enables us to identify emerging concerns early, recognise patterns of absence and intervene before attendance issues become entrenched. Particular attention is given to pupils who may be vulnerable to poor attendance, including those with SEND, social workers, mental health needs, young carers and pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

3. Listen and Understand

Where attendance concerns arise, we will work with pupils and families to understand the reasons for absence. We recognise that attendance difficulties can be linked to a range of factors, including health needs, anxiety, special educational needs, family circumstances, transport difficulties or other barriers. We will take a supportive, respectful and non-judgemental approach to understanding individual circumstances.

4. Facilitate Support

Where barriers to attendance are identified, we will work collaboratively with pupils, families and relevant professionals to provide support. This may include pastoral support, reasonable adjustments, family support, early help, mentoring, referrals to external agencies, attendance mentoring, support for mental health needs or other interventions tailored to individual circumstances.

5. Formalise Support

Where attendance does not improve despite initial support, we may implement more formal measures such as attendance action plans, attendance contracts, multi-agency meetings, early help assessments, reintegration plans or referrals to the local authority attendance team. Clear targets, responsibilities and review arrangements will be agreed with pupils and families.

6. Enforce

In a small number of cases, where support has been offered and either has not been successful or has not been engaged with, the academy may seek statutory intervention to protect a child's right to education. This may include notices to improve, penalty notices or prosecution in accordance with local authority procedures and national legislation. Enforcement action will normally be considered only after appropriate support strategies have been explored.

Our Commitment

Throughout every stage of this process, Olive Academies will strive to build positive relationships with pupils and families, understand individual needs, remove barriers to attendance and ensure that every child receives the education to which they are entitled. Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and requires a collaborative approach between pupils, families, academy staff, trust leaders and partner agencies.

Supporting Pupils Facing Barriers to Attendance

Olive Academies recognises that some pupils face significant barriers to regular school attendance. We understand that absence is often a symptom of wider difficulties rather than the problem itself. Our approach is based on building strong relationships, understanding individual circumstances and working collaboratively with pupils, families and partner agencies to remove barriers and support successful engagement in education.

We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where all pupils feel that they belong and are able to access their education. We recognise that barriers to attendance may be temporary or long-term and may be linked to a range of factors, including:

- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Social, emotional or mental health needs
- Physical health conditions or medical needs
- Anxiety related to school attendance
- Trauma or adverse childhood experiences
- Family circumstances or housing instability
- Caring responsibilities, including young carers
- Safeguarding concerns
- Bereavement or significant life events

- Transport or accessibility difficulties
- Bullying, discrimination or relationship difficulties
- Involvement with social care services or youth justice services

Where attendance concerns arise, the academy will seek to understand the underlying causes and work with pupils and families to identify appropriate support. Support will be tailored to individual needs and, where appropriate, may include:

- Regular pastoral support and check-ins
- Attendance mentoring or key worker support
- Early Help assessments and family support
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or medical needs
- Referrals to internal or external specialist services
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Reintegration planning following periods of absence
- Multi-agency meetings involving relevant professionals
- Support with transport, routines or transition arrangements
- Attendance action plans developed jointly with families

The academy will be particularly mindful of pupils whose attendance may be affected by mental health needs, physical ill health or SEND. We will work with families and relevant professionals to ensure appropriate support is in place and that reasonable adjustments are considered where required under the Equality Act 2010.

Remote education is not a substitute for school attendance and will only be used in exceptional circumstances where a pupil cannot temporarily attend school. Any remote education arrangements will form part of a planned reintegration pathway back to full-time education wherever possible.

Attendance data will be monitored carefully to identify pupils and groups who may require additional support. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with social workers
- Looked after and previously looked after children
- Young carers
- Pupils receiving support for mental health needs
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence
- Pupils at risk of severe absence

The academy will work closely with parents, carers, the local authority and other professionals to ensure that support is provided at the earliest opportunity. Our aim is always to help pupils overcome barriers, improve attendance and achieve the best possible educational and life outcomes. Improving attendance is a shared responsibility and is most successful when schools, families and other agencies work together.

Supporting Pupils to Attend Regularly – Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

Pupils are expected to be responsible and independent. Except where there are exceptional circumstances, they are personally responsible for maintaining good attendance and being punctual.

- Pupils must attend all sessions that are agreed and outlined in their timetable
- Pupils will not leave the academy site without permission from staff.
- Pupils should arrive on time to the academy
- Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be marked as late
- Pupils who arrive over 30 mins after school starts will be marked as absent for the session.

Parents/carers

- Parents/carers must telephone the academy absence line by 8:30am on the first day of any absence to explain the reason for absence and give an expected return date.
- Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance and denying pupils access to education is a form of neglect.
- It is parents and carers' responsibility to make sure their child comes to school on time via the agreed transport method.
- Parents/carers must provide an up-to-date contact number and an emergency number that may be used in exceptional circumstances. It is important that should the need arise, we can contact parents /carers without delay and that our messages are responded to as soon as possible.
- Parents/carers who do not give an acceptable reason for the absence of their child must understand that the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents and carers should provide evidence of appointments where reasonably available.

Olive Academies' responsibilities

Olive Academies will:

- Follow the staged process to supporting and ensuring good attendance (as outlined in appendix 1)
- Keep accurate records of attendance and any follow-up communication with parents and carers.
- Operate a first-day contact system. Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided, the academy will make reasonable attempts to contact parents/carers on the first day of absence to establish the reason for absence, ensure the pupil is safe and identify any support that may be required.
- Arrange a home visit where a pupil has been absent for two or more days and the academy has not been able to contact the parents/carers.
- Notify parents and carers if pupils abscond from academy premises and if necessary, notify the police.
- Not routinely request medical evidence for short-term illness. We recognise that obtaining medical evidence can sometimes be difficult for families. Where attendance concerns arise, the academy will work with parents, carers and relevant professionals to understand the reasons for absence and determine what support may be required. The Head of Academy may

request appropriate evidence where this is necessary to support decision-making, safeguarding or attendance planning.

- Contact parents/carers if a pupil becomes unwell during the school day and make appropriate arrangements for the pupil to return home safely, taking account of their age, needs and circumstances.

The School Senior Attendance Champion

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (this may be the Head of Academy)

The designated senior leader:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues swiftly
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans and attendance contracts in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families where appropriate
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate attendance training.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Leah McGee 01708 478892

Monitoring Attendance

Within each academy and across the trust, we have in place rigorous monitoring systems to be able to track and analyse attendance data so that we can identify individual challenges **as well as trends each academy and across the trust**. Each academy has an attendance lead who works with the Trust Welfare and Attendance lead to develop action plans and target efforts at individuals and across the academy.

Attendance figures are reported at every local Academy Advisory Board (AAB) meeting and the school leader is asked questions about what actions are being taken and progress being made. Each AAB has a link member for Behaviour & Attitudes who has a specific focus on overseeing attendance. The two categories that are analysed are:

- **Persistent absence:** A pupil persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of the possible sessions
- **Severe absence:** A pupil is severely absent if they miss 50% or more of possible sessions

The Academies send daily returns on attendance to Wonde the DfE data collection service. More information can be found [here](#).

Attendance data is reviewed regularly at pupil, cohort, academy and trust level by the Central Education Team and the Strategic Leadership Group.

Governance and Oversight

The Trust Board and Academy Advisory Boards recognise that good attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, educational achievement, wellbeing and positive outcomes for pupils. In line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, attendance will be monitored and scrutinised at both trust and academy level.

The Board of Trustees will:

- Promote a culture across the Trust that values and supports good attendance.
- Ensure that the Trust complies with statutory attendance legislation and Department for Education guidance.
- Receive and scrutinise trust-wide attendance information, including attendance of vulnerable groups and trends over time.
- Hold Trust leaders to account for attendance performance and the effectiveness of attendance strategies across all academies.
- Seek assurance that appropriate systems, staffing, training and resources are in place to support attendance improvement.
- Monitor attendance performance across the Trust and challenge areas of concern, particularly where there are significant variations between academies or pupil groups.
- Ensure that attendance arrangements reflect the Trust's safeguarding responsibilities and commitment to inclusion.
- Receive assurance that academy leaders are fulfilling their statutory attendance duties.

Academy Advisory Boards (AABs) will:

- Champion the importance of regular attendance within their academy community.
- Receive and scrutinise academy attendance data, including attendance, persistent absence and severe absence rates.
- Monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, pupils with social workers, looked after and previously looked after children, young carers and disadvantaged pupils.
- Provide appropriate challenge and support to academy leaders regarding attendance trends, patterns of absence and the actions being taken to improve attendance.
- Seek assurance that pupils and families facing barriers to attendance are receiving appropriate support.
- Monitor the effectiveness of attendance interventions and support strategies implemented by academy leaders.
- Ensure attendance remains a standing consideration within safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion and pupil welfare discussions.
- Escalate significant concerns or emerging risks relating to attendance to Trust leaders and Trustees where appropriate.

Academy Leaders will:

- Implement this policy and fulfil all statutory duties relating to attendance.
- Maintain accurate admission and attendance registers.
- Monitor attendance regularly and identify pupils requiring support at the earliest opportunity.
- Work collaboratively with pupils, families, local authorities and partner agencies to remove barriers to attendance.
- Provide regular attendance reports to the AAB and Trust leaders.
- Evaluate the impact of attendance interventions and adapt approaches where necessary.

Review of this policy

This policy and the procedures will be reviewed at least annually. It will be approved by the Interim Director of Standards within the trust and submitted to the AAB and the Board of Trustees.

Appendix 1 - Our Attendance Procedure

Good attendance is crucial – attendance is monitored closely and when there is absence, appointed staff will follow procedures as outlined below.

