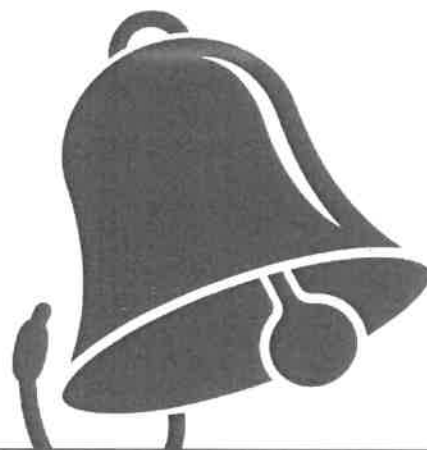


Southam Primary School



SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

PART OF STOWE VALLEY MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance Policy

Chair of Governors signature

W. Lester

Headteacher's signature

E. Langer

Ratified: September 2022

Review: September 2023

Person responsible for overseeing the implementation: Headteacher and Subject Leader



Stowe Valley
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust

Registered Office: Southam College, Welsh Road West, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 0JW

Registered in England No: 10445759. A Company Limited by Guarantee Telephone 01926 812560

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1. Policy statement

Philosophy

SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. It is the policy of our school to celebrate both.

All staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. We recognise that parents have a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems. We will provide effective and efficient communications with pupils, parents, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support to meet our objectives.

This policy is based on current government guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022' and Statutory Regulations.

Objectives:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, Pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify Pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

2. Definitions

In this policy there are some key definitions which will be used, we have referenced the meaning of these terms below for ease of understanding:

Persistent Absence - Where a pupil's attendance figure reaches 90% or below, they are deemed as 'persistently absent' from school.

Severe Absence - Where a pupil is absent from school more than they are present, therefore with an attendance figure of 50% or below, they are deemed as 'severely absent'.

Parents - For the purpose of this policy a parent means; All natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Vulnerable Pupils - For the purpose of this policy vulnerable Pupils are those who;

- Have a social worker or previously had a social worker;
- Is a Child looked after;
- Are Children with an Educational health care plan;
- Are Children who are severely absent (their attendance in school is 50% or below).

3. Statutory/Legal Guidance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school¹.

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

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations in 2013 only allowing Head Teachers to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in **exceptional circumstances. Holiday requests will not be granted.**

4. Key Staff and Contacts

School-based contacts

Role	Contact Details
Headteacher	Emma Longworth
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Emma Longworth
School Absence reporting line	01926 812520 Southamprimary@stowevalley.com
Nominated Attendance link Governor	Jess Marshall
All of the above can be contacted via the School office on 01926 812520	

¹ The education Act 1996, part 1, section 7. Additional legal requirements may be found in *The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006*.

Other useful contacts

Agency / Contact	Contact Details
Ranjit Samra-CEO Stowe Valley Multi-Academy Trust	01926 812560 Ranjit.Samra@stowevalley.com
Samantha Godfrey-Director of Safeguarding Stowe Valley Multi-Academy Trust	01926 812560 Godfrey.s@stowevalley.com
Warwickshire Attendance Service	01926 476600
Access to Education team	01926 736323
Children's Social Care – Integrated Front Door Warwickshire County Council	1926 44

5. Safeguarding

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Absence can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when Pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if their numbers change.

SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence as it will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm.

SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school and evidence of absences may be requested, such as medical evidence.

5.2 Children missing education

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) leaders have ensured that:

1. Staff understand what to do when children do not attend regularly.
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for Pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions) are in place.
3. Staff know that travelling to conflict zones could be an indicator of FGM and forced marriage.

4. Procedures are in place to ensure that we always inform the local authority when we plan to take Pupils off-roll or when they:
 - a. leave the school to be home educated
 - b. move away from the school location
 - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or are permanently excluded

We will ensure that Pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves, we will record the name of the pupil's new School and their expected start date.

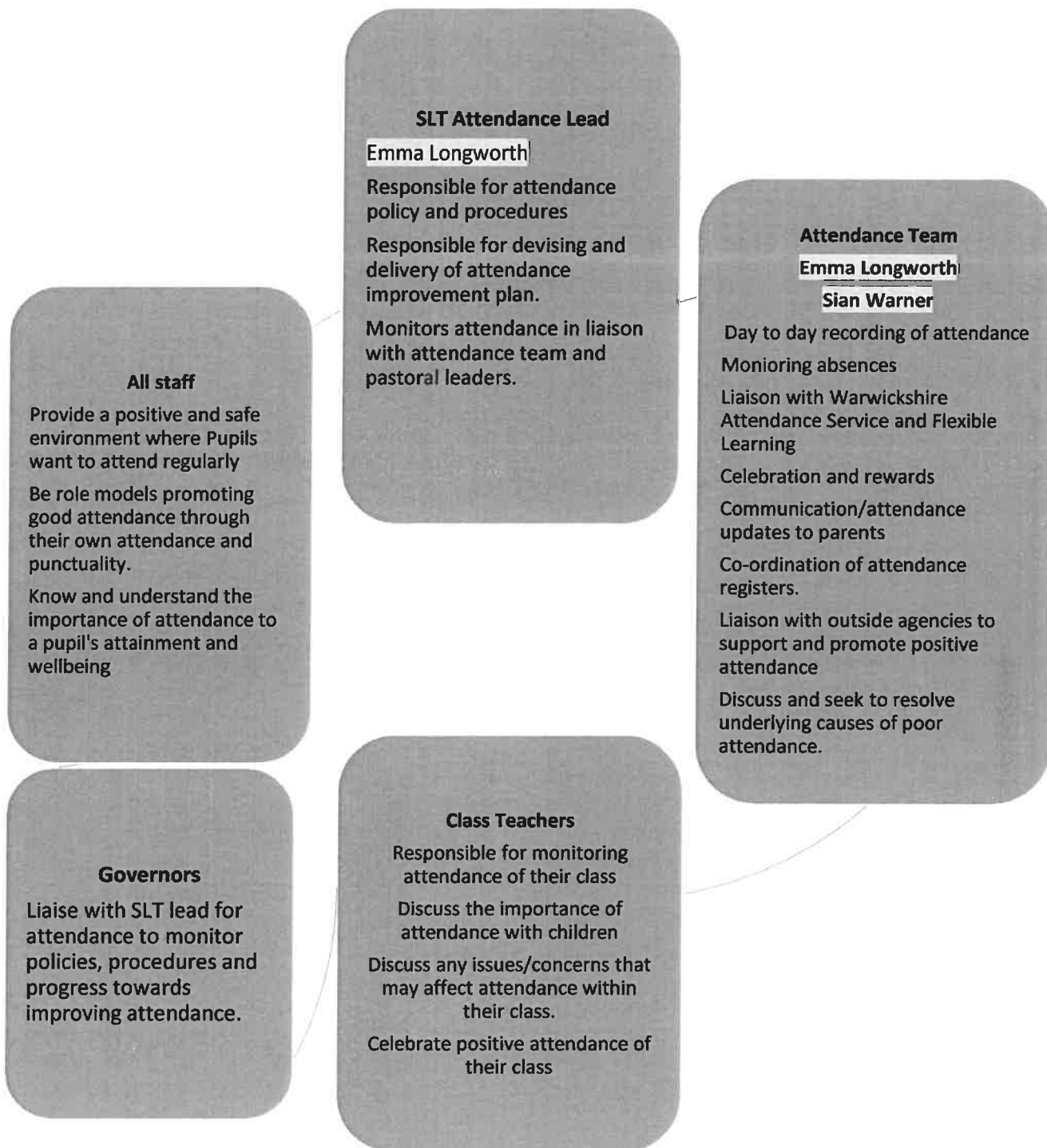
Staff will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the Local Authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff will be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

5.3 Vulnerable Pupils

SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL routinely monitors the attendance of vulnerable Pupils. If we have concerns about Pupils, we work closely with outside agencies to ensure parents understand the importance of good attendance and attendance procedures. There are a number of ways we may monitor the attendance of vulnerable Pupils in addition to the universal daily process of monitoring attendance for all;

- a. Watch List - Vulnerable Pupils are included on the school internal 'Watch List'.
- b. Daily school contact from a member of the office team to parents/carers (and any external professionals such as social workers) for absences of vulnerable Pupils or those at risk of persistent or severe absence.
- c. Warwickshire Flexible Learning Team – the attendance lead is in regular communication with the flexible learning team to ensure Ill Health Pupils are engaged and progressing. The attendance of these Pupils is captured daily.
- d. Dual Registration – **SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL** maintains its responsibility to ensure that Pupils who are dual registered are attending each day and progressing with their education.
- e. SEND – Pupils who have special education needs or disabilities who are poor attenders are monitored. At regular meetings, attendance is discussed and tracked and interventions are put into place by senior leaders.
- f. Severely Absent Pupils - Pupils who are severely absent are assigned a key member of staff who makes regular contact with the child and family to support them in removing the barriers to attendance and engage them back into school. All contact and agreed interventions are robustly recorded and the impact is monitored regularly.

6. School Responsibilities



7. Day to Day Attendance Procedures

7.1 Registers

Registers are taken each AM and PM session, within the first 10 minutes of the start of the day.

In the morning if the child has not arrived in school and we have not been informed of a reason the following actions will be taken;

- ☒ A message or telephone call will be sent to the parent/carers

If no appropriate response is received

- ☒ A telephone call will be made on the second day of unexplained absence

If no appropriate response is received

- ☒ A home visit will be completed on the 3rd day of the unexplained absence.

The DSL notifies Children's Social Care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two consecutive days without explanation.

7.2 Absence and Punctuality

Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible to inform us if a child is to be absent or late on **EACH** day that the child is eligible to attend.

This can be done via;

1. Telephone **01926 812520**
2. Email southamprimary@stowevalley.com

Pupils are late if they are not in school by 8.45am

The attendance team and class teachers will monitor lateness and punctuality. Sanctions and parental contact will be used as appropriate.

Where parents are phoning in daily to report pupil absence the school will follow an 'Explained absence process'. An explanation from a pupil's parent does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If a pupil is absent from school for more than 5 consecutive days, on the 6th day the absence will automatically be unauthorised until medical evidence is provided by the parents to the school or the parent makes contact with the school to discuss further. An explained absence that reaches a 6th consecutive day without medical evidence may then result in a home visit so that the school safeguarding team and the attendance team can speak to both the child and the parent and support can be put in place as needed.

7.3 Authorisation of Absence

We are advised by government legislation and Local Authority guidance that attendance can only be authorised if the following applies:

- Medical reasons - please note medical evidence and/or a parental written note will be asked for upon return to school for Pupils whose attendance falls below the schools expected threshold (95%). **Medical evidence will always be required on the 6th day if a pupil has five consecutive days absence from school due to illness or the pupil's attendance is below 90%. Notes are to be returned to Emma Longworth.**
- Religious celebration observation
- If transport provided by the school/Local Authority cannot bring the child to school.

Absences may also be authorised for the following reasons, but this will be at the discretion of the attendance team and the Head Teacher:

- Where a Leave of Absence has been completed by parent/carer and is agreed by the Head Teacher
- Where a pupil has a medical appointment that cannot be changed e.g. a consultant appointment
- When the pupil has no fixed abode, their parent is engaged in a trade which requires them to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and the pupil has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months
- Other exceptional circumstances e.g. family bereavement and for a limited period.

7.4 Medical Appointments

Where possible, appointments should be made out of school hours or in school holidays. However, we realise this is sometimes not possible. Pupils should come into school before and after appointments to ensure they miss as little lesson time as possible. Pupils should sign out and in at the attendance office before leaving/upon their return to school.

8. Leave of Absence During Term Time

Arranging holidays during term time causes issues for many reasons:

- the pupil's education suffers;
- lessons and extra-curricular activities are missed;
- there is often no opportunity for teachers to set additional work or to assist a child in catching up on their return from holiday; and
- Parents may be in breach of their legal obligation to send their child to school.

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

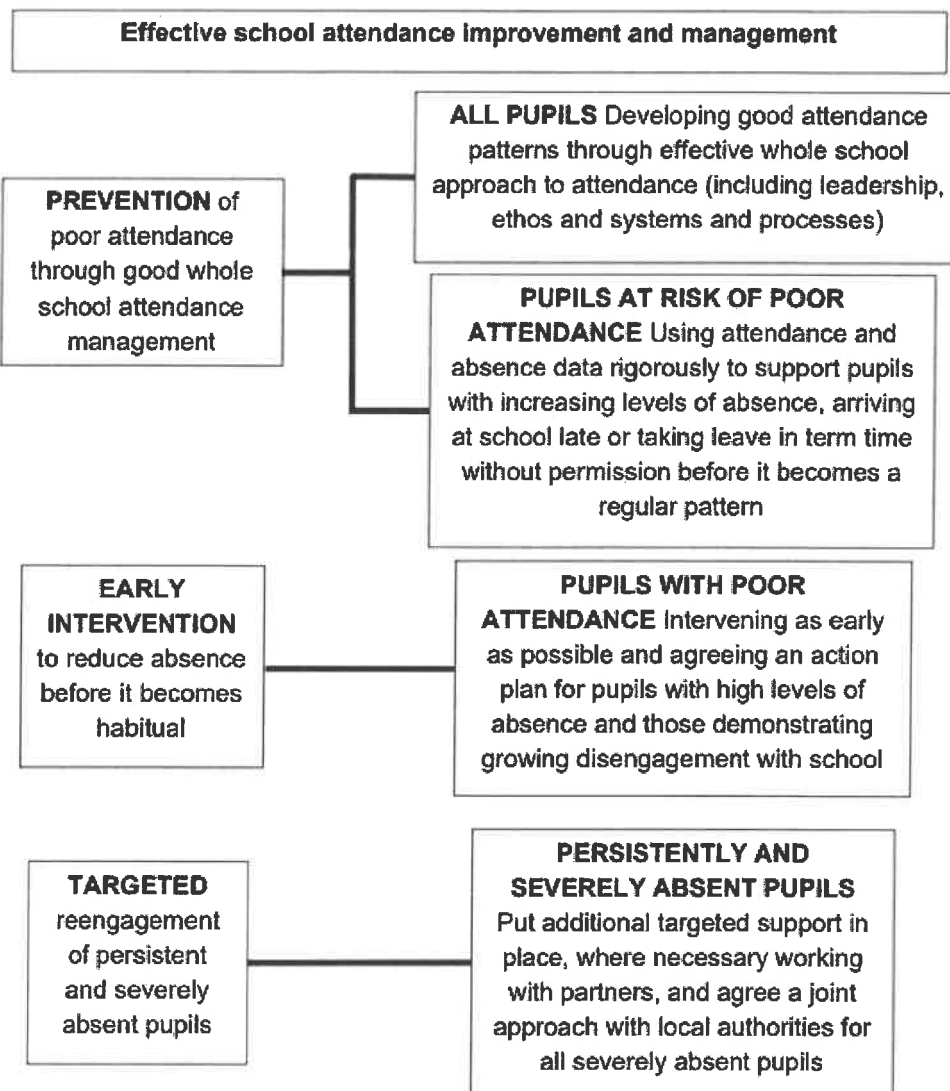
- Head teachers **shall not grant any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent, i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

9. Attendance Intervention

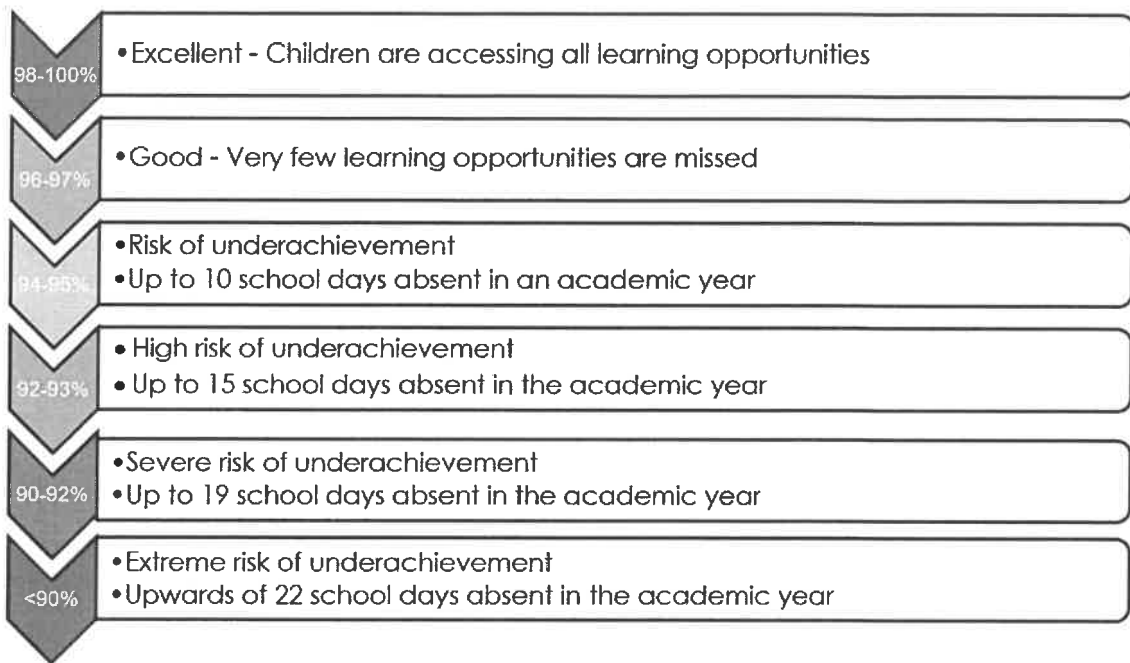
Intervention will follow a staged approach and Pupils will be monitored and different strategies will be used depending on the stage they are at in the process outlined below and their personal situation.



SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL tracks attendance data forensically and uses this data to regularly decide upon the strategies as listed below.

0- 2 days absent	99%- 100%	Class teachers	Sen check in message to child Via Class Dojo on second day of absence
4- 7 ½ days absent	96%- 98%		Stage 1 letter sent Class teachers to discuss attendance with pupils (depending on age)
9 ½ - 17 days absent	93%- 95%	Attendance lead	Stage 2 letter sent Barriers to attendance will be discussed and support put in place to remove these Referrals to external agencies as needed Praise postcards/ messages used if attendance improves
19- 25 days absent	90%- 92%	Attendance lead	Stage 3 letter sent Barriers to attendance will be discussed and support put in place to remove these Actions can include: Referral to Warwickshire Attendance Service Praise postcards/ messages used if attendance improves
27+ days absent	Under 89%	Attendance lead	Compulsory medical evidence required for every absence Key member of staff assigned and will have weekly contact with child and family Barriers to attendance will be discussed and formalised support put in place to remove these barriers Referral to external agencies as needed Referral to Warwickshire Attendance Service Parents may face legal action and a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

This flow chart is a guide and each case will be assessed and reviewed depending on each Pupils' individual needs and which interventions will be most effective in supporting them to improve or maintain positive attendance. Early intervention will be sought so Pupils can be supported meeting their attendance targets. The nature of pupil absence is crucial when applying this approach and individual circumstances will be considered.



9.1 Attendance Incentives

SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL promotes and incentivises good attendance on a continual cycle throughout the school year as we know it is vital to celebrate attendance on a regular basis. Examples of the way SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL promotes good attendance includes:

- Messages to parents and pupils on the school social media sites
- Praise postcards sent home for improved attendance
- Assemblies celebrating individual, class or year group attendance
- Prizes given to individuals or classes based on attendance. This is not based solely on the highest attendance, but may include the most improved attendance over a set period of time.
- Stickers, stamps, postcards or other forms of recognition for excellent or improved attendance.

All pupils

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

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

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

Persistently absent pupils

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

Severely absent pupils

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

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

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

Support for pupils with a social worker

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

Annex C

DfE “The link between absence and attainment at KS2 - 2013/14 academic year”

The analysis of the link between overall absenceand attainment when taking prior attainment and pupil characteristics into account showed that, for each KS2 and KS4 measure, overall absence had a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e. every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome.

