	Vanguard Learning Trust *The Vanguard Learning Trust is a group of local primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon. We strive to be a Trust that serves its local community and is pioneering in its approach to broadening our students' lives. We believe in effective teaching which allows our students to shine both in and out of the classroom and that intellectual curiosity is at the core of every learning experience. Whilst schools in the Trust have their own ethos and values, they share the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential and life is a journey of discovery.*

Attendance policy
Part A: Trust-wide

Summer 2026

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Part A: Trust-wide

Section 1: Overview

1.1 Aims

This policy demonstrates Vanguard Learning Trust's commitment to securing excellent attendance across all schools. The Trust's approach is rooted in statutory guidance, evidence-informed practice and shared learning from local and national contexts. The Trust recognises that regular school attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, educational achievement, wellbeing, positive relationships and future life opportunities.
Trust schools will:

- set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils;
- promote the benefits of regular attendance for academic progress, wellbeing, belonging, social development and future opportunities;
- recognise that poor attendance may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns, unmet needs or barriers to learning;
- identify, understand and remove barriers to attendance as early as possible;
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence, through early, proportionate and targeted intervention;
- ensure all pupils can access their full entitlement to education;
- act promptly when patterns of absence or lateness emerge, recognising that regular attendance is essential to ensure pupils can access a coherent, well-sequenced curriculum over time;
- work in partnership with families in a way that is respectful, supportive, empathetic and solution-focused;
- provide timely, targeted and inclusive interventions for pupils most at risk of poor attendance;
- support punctuality across the school day, reinforcing the importance of arriving at school and to lessons on time; and
- promote a culture in which attendance is understood as everyone's responsibility and every child's right.

The Trust is committed to building inclusive school communities where pupils feel safe, valued, connected and supported to attend and thrive.

1.2 Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance in *'Working together to improve school attendance'*, which applies from 19 August 2024 (click here), as well as *'School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures'* (click here). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996 (click here)
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002 (click here)
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (click here)
- The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, along with the 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments (click here)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (click here)

The policy also reflects:

- School census guidance (click here)
- *'Keeping children safe in education'* (click here)
- *'Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools*' (click here)

1.3 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

1.4 Policy monitoring arrangements

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed through the Trust's wider quality assurance and school improvement processes. The policy will be reviewed in response to updated guidance from the Department

for Education or local authority, and at a minimum annually by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school. Following review, Part A of the policy will be approved by the board of trustees and Part B of the policy will be reviewed by the school's local governing body. In addition to Trust-wide quality assurance activity, school leaders will regularly review how attendance systems, processes and culture reflect:

- high expectations for attendance and punctuality;
- positive school culture, belonging and inclusion;
- effective family engagement strategies;
- accurate attendance recording and effective use of management information systems;
- early identification and removal of barriers to attendance;
- effective support for vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); and
- current Ofsted expectations relating to attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and inclusion.

The Trust will quality assure attendance systems, culture and practice across all schools through its wider school improvement and safeguarding processes.

Section 2: Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Attendance is everyone's business

Promoting good attendance is a shared responsibility across the Trust. Creating a culture in which pupils attend regularly, arrive on time and feel a sense of belonging requires a consistent whole-school approach and strong partnership working with families and external agencies. All staff have a role to play in promoting positive attendance. Staff should recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider need or vulnerability and should respond in a way that is supportive, consistent and professionally curious. The Trust seeks to ensure that this culture is consistently understood, modelled and reinforced by all staff.

2.2 Trustees and the local governing bodies

The trustees and local governing body (LGB) of each school are responsible for:

- setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality across the school community;
- promoting a culture in which good attendance is valued, recognised and understood as fundamental to safeguarding and educational success;
- ensuring the school fulfils its statutory duties in relation to attendance, including:
    - recording attendance accurately;
    - maintaining appropriate attendance registers;
    - sharing required attendance information with the Department for Education and local authority; and
    - working effectively with relevant partners to remove barriers to attendance;
- ensuring attendance is appropriately prioritised within safeguarding, SEND, inclusion and pupil premium arrangements;
- ensuring the school has effective systems in place for identifying, monitoring and improving attendance;
- ensuring sufficient resources and staffing are allocated to attendance improvement work;
- making sure school leaders analyse attendance data regularly and use this to identify patterns, trends and groups requiring additional support;
- holding school leaders to account for the effectiveness of attendance systems, interventions and outcomes;
- ensuring attendance support is inclusive, proportionate and responsive to pupils' individual needs;
- monitoring the attendance of vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known to social care;
- ensuring attendance procedures are clearly communicated to parents/carers and are written in accessible, parent-friendly language;
- supporting the sharing of effective attendance practice across the Trust through attendance forums and school improvement activity;
- ensuring staff receive regular attendance training appropriate to their roles; and
- reviewing attendance data, trends and improvement priorities on a regular basis.

Governors and trustees should seek assurance not only regarding attendance outcomes, but also regarding the quality, consistency and impact of attendance practice and culture across the school.

2.3 The headteacher

The headteacher of each school is responsible for:

- ensuring the effective implementation of this policy;
- establishing and maintaining a culture in which good attendance is expected, promoted and celebrated;
- ensuring attendance is prioritised as part of the school's safeguarding, inclusion and pastoral responsibilities;
- ensuring all staff understand their role in promoting attendance;
- monitoring attendance data regularly and reporting this to governors and trustees;
- ensuring attendance concerns are identified and addressed promptly;
- overseeing the effectiveness of attendance interventions and support strategies;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate professional development relating to attendance, safeguarding, family engagement and barriers to attendance;
- working with parents/carers and external agencies to remove barriers preventing regular attendance;
- ensuring pupils with SEND, medical needs or mental health needs receive appropriate support to maximise attendance;
- communicating high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality clearly and consistently to pupils and parents/carers;
- ensuring the school works effectively with the local authority and other relevant agencies where attendance concerns arise;
- authorising fixed penalty notices or other legal interventions, where appropriate and in accordance with local authority procedures; and
- ensuring statutory attendance data and information is shared appropriately with the local authority and Department for Education.

The headteacher will ensure attendance practice is underpinned by a supportive, relational and inclusive approach whilst maintaining clear expectations and accountability.

2.4 The Trust attendance lead

The Trust attendance lead is responsible for:

- developing and maintaining the Trust-wide attendance policy and related guidance;
- ensuring Trust attendance procedures reflect current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice;
- working with relevant school staff to monitor attendance trends, patterns and risks across the Trust;
- supporting schools to improve attendance through advice, challenge, quality assurance and targeted support;
- supporting schools in identifying groups and cohorts at increased risk of poor attendance, including pupils with intersecting vulnerabilities;
- facilitating Trust-wide attendance networks, forums and professional development;
- supporting schools with complex attendance cases and strategic attendance planning;
- promoting evidence-informed and relational attendance practice across the Trust;
- sharing effective practice and resources between schools; and
- working collaboratively with school leaders and external partners to improve attendance outcomes.

The Trust attendance lead is Adam Walthaus and can be contacted via emailing awalthaus@vlt.org.uk

2.5 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school

Each school will identify a designated senior leader responsible for attendance (sometimes referred to as the attendance champion or designated attendance lead). This leader is responsible for:

- leading and championing attendance improvement across the school;
- promoting a consistent culture of high expectations, belonging and inclusion;
- ensuring attendance systems and procedures are implemented consistently;
- monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly;
- identifying pupils and groups requiring additional attendance support;
- ensuring early intervention takes place where attendance concerns emerge;

- overseeing attendance interventions and evaluating their impact;
- working collaboratively with pupils, families and external agencies to improve attendance;
- ensuring attendance communication with families is respectful, clear and solution-focused;
- coordinating reintegration and attendance support plans where required;
- ensuring appropriate referrals are made to safeguarding, SEND or external services where attendance concerns indicate wider need;
- supporting staff to apply attendance processes consistently; and
- providing regular attendance updates to senior leaders, governors and the Trust.

The name and contact details of the designated senior leader responsible for attendance can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

2.6 School attendance team

The attendance team in each school is responsible for:

- monitoring daily attendance and punctuality;
- identifying and following up absence concerns promptly;
- analysing attendance data and identifying emerging patterns;
- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- communicating with families regarding attendance concerns;
- arranging and contributing to attendance meetings and support plans;
- working closely with pastoral, safeguarding and SEND teams to support pupils with barriers to attendance;
- supporting reintegration following periods of absence;
- escalating attendance concerns in line with school procedures; and
- supporting the implementation of attendance improvement strategies.

The names and contact details of relevant attendance staff can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

2.7 Staff responsible for completing registers

Staff responsible for completing attendance registers are responsible for:

- completing attendance registers accurately and on time;
- recording attendance using the correct national attendance codes;
- following school procedures where attendance concerns arise;
- reporting safeguarding concerns linked to absence or punctuality promptly; and
- ensuring any amendments to attendance records are made in accordance with statutory requirements.

Further details regarding registration procedures can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

2.8 Office staff

Designated office staff are responsible for:

- receiving and recording absence notifications from parents/carers;
- ensuring unexplained absence is followed up in line with school procedures;
- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- communicating attendance information to relevant staff; and
- supporting effective communication between home and school regarding attendance matters.

2.9 Parents/carers

For the purpose of this policy, the term ‘parent/carer’ refers to:

- all natural parents, whether married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and/or
- any person who has day-to-day responsibility for the care of a child or young person.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time;
- notify the school on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence, unless otherwise agreed by the school;
- provide clear reasons for absence and an expected date of return;
- work collaboratively with the school to address attendance concerns;
- attend meetings and engage with support offered to improve attendance where appropriate;

- avoid arranging holidays or unnecessary appointments during term time;
- provide the school with up-to-date emergency contact details; and
- seek support at an early stage if barriers to attendance arise.

Parents/carers play a vital role in promoting positive attendance and helping children establish good attendance habits for life.

2.10 Students

Students are expected to:

- attend school regularly and on time;
- attend all timetabled lessons and registration periods;
- engage positively with support offered to improve attendance;
- communicate with staff where they are experiencing difficulties affecting attendance, where appropriate; and
- contribute positively to a culture in which good attendance is valued.

In sixth form settings, pupils may additionally be expected to follow specific absence reporting procedures outlined in Part B of this policy.

Section 3: Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

Each school will maintain an attendance register and record the attendance of all pupils at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session, in accordance with statutory requirements. Attendance registers will record whether pupils are:

- present;
- attending an approved educational activity;
- absent; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Schools will use the national attendance and absence codes in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (click here) and current Department for Education guidance. Attendance registers are legal documents and must be completed accurately, consistently and in a timely manner.

3.1.1 Amendments to the attendance register

Any amendment made 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; and
- the name and role of the person making the amendment.

All amendments will be made in accordance with statutory requirements and school procedures. **Appendix 1** outlines the attendance and absence codes used by the Department for Education.

3.1.2 Other information

The school will also record:

- for students of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not;
- the nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity;
- the nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; and
- relevant attendance information required for safeguarding or statutory reporting purposes.

Schools are required to share attendance data securely with the Department for Education and local authorities in line with statutory expectations. Schools will retain attendance registers and related records for a minimum of 6 years in accordance with statutory requirements and data retention guidance. Timings of the school day and registration arrangements can be found in **Part B**.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school of the reason for their child's absence on the first day of absence as soon as reasonably practicable and in line with the procedures outlined in **Part B** of this policy. Unless otherwise agreed by the school, parents/carers should continue to notify the school on each subsequent day of absence. Where a pupil is absent due to illness, the school will normally authorise the absence unless there is a genuine concern regarding the authenticity of the illness. Where appropriate, the school may request medical evidence to support the absence. This may include:

- an appointment card;
- prescription information;
- prescribed medication;
- a doctor's note; or
- other suitable evidence.

Schools will not routinely request medical evidence unnecessarily and will consider the individual circumstances of each case. Where the school is not satisfied that the reason for absence is genuine, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Parents/carers will normally be informed where this is the case. Where absence due to illness becomes frequent or patterns emerge, the school will consider whether additional support, assessment of need or safeguarding action is required.

3.3 Planned absence

Medical and dental appointments should, wherever possible, be arranged outside the school day. Where this is not possible, parents/carers should notify the school in advance and pupils should only be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary. Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made in advance and in accordance with the procedures outlined in **Part B** of this policy. The headteacher will determine whether a request for leave of absence should be authorised in line with statutory guidance and the circumstances outlined in Section 4 of this policy.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Promoting punctuality is an important part of improving attendance and establishing positive routines for learning. A pupil who arrives late before the register closes will be recorded as late using the appropriate attendance code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be recorded as absent for the session using the appropriate attendance code. Schools will monitor patterns of lateness and work with pupils and families where punctuality concerns emerge. Persistent lateness may result in further intervention or support. Further details regarding punctuality procedures and responses can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where a pupil expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without explanation, the school will follow up the absence promptly and proportionately. This may include:

- contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence to establish the reason for absence;
- making reasonable attempts to contact all emergency contacts provided;
- identifying whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised;
- recording the correct attendance code as soon as the reason for absence is established;
- continuing to follow up unexplained absence where necessary;
- considering safeguarding concerns where a pupil cannot be located or where absence is unusual;
- making referrals to relevant services or agencies where appropriate;
- offering support to remove barriers to attendance; and/or
- considering formal intervention where support has not been successful or engaged with.

Where a pupil is missing from education or there are concerns regarding their safety or welfare, schools will follow their safeguarding and children missing education procedures and may involve the local authority, police or children's social care where appropriate. Attendance concerns will be considered alongside wider safeguarding, wellbeing and contextual information.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Schools will regularly communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality. This may include:

- attendance percentages;
- information regarding patterns of absence or lateness;

- communication regarding attendance concerns;
- invitations to attendance meetings; and
- recognition of positive attendance or improvements in attendance.

Schools will seek to ensure attendance communication is clear, supportive, accessible and solution-focused. Further details regarding attendance reporting arrangements can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

Section 4: Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only authorise absence from school in line with statutory regulations and Department for Education guidance, including the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'. Leave of absence during term time will only be granted where there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are expected to be rare, specific to the individual case, and not a norm. The headteacher may authorise absence for:

- participation in a regulated performance or regulated employment;
- attendance at an interview;
- study leave in relation to public examinations (where appropriate);
- a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable agreed as part of a support plan; and
- exceptional circumstances, as determined by the headteacher.

4.2 Granting a leave of absence

Leave of absence is granted at the discretion of the headteacher, taking into account the individual circumstances of each request, the pupil's attendance history and any wider safeguarding or welfare considerations. Each school will define and apply the meaning of 'exceptional circumstances' in a consistent way, as outlined in **Part B** of this policy. In line with statutory guidance, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday. Where a request is refused and absence is subsequently taken, this will normally be recorded as unauthorised. The school may request evidence to support any application for leave of absence where appropriate. Requests should be made in advance using the school's agreed procedures, details of which are set out in **Part B** of this policy. Where a pupil is over compulsory school age (for example in sixth form), requests for leave of absence may be made by the pupil or by a parent/carer with whom they normally live, in line with school procedures.

4.3 Other valid reasons for authorised absence

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons, in line with statutory guidance:

- illness (including physical and mental health-related illness);
- medical or dental appointments that cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours;
- religious observance where the day is set apart by the relevant religious body;
- travel for occupational purposes, including for families who are recognised as travelling for work (for example, showmen, travellers or other occupational travellers), where agreed with the school;
- unavoidable circumstances that prevent attendance, including but not limited to:
    - disruption to travel caused by emergency or severe weather;
    - school site closure;
    - lack of access arrangements where the local authority is responsible; or
    - other circumstances beyond the control of the pupil or family.

Schools will consider each case individually and will apply authorisation decisions consistently, fairly and in line with statutory expectations.

4.4 Sanctions

The Trust is committed to ensuring that attendance concerns are addressed through a graduated response, which prioritises early help, support and engagement with families. Formal sanctions will only be considered where support has been offered and either not engaged with or not effective. Attendance processes are not intended to be punitive in isolation. Meetings, letters and interventions are part of a wider support pathway designed to improve attendance. Decisions regarding escalation will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual circumstances of the pupil and family.

4.4.1 Notices to improve

Where the national threshold for persistent absence or unauthorised absence has been met and support is deemed appropriate, but engagement with support has not been sustained, the school will normally issue a Notice to Improve where support has not been engaged with and attendance remains a concern. A Notice to Improve will be issued in accordance with the relevant local authority code of conduct and will include:

- details of the pupil's attendance and any relevant absence patterns;
- information on statutory parental responsibility for attendance;
- details of support already offered or provided;
- further support available to address attendance barriers;
- a clear improvement period, typically between 3 and 6 weeks;
- the expected level of improvement required; and
- a warning that failure to improve attendance within the agreed timeframe may result in further legal intervention, including a penalty notice.

4.4.2 Penalty notices

Penalty notices may be issued by the headteacher (or authorised staff), the local authority or the police in line with local authority codes of conduct. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will ensure that:

- the national threshold for consideration has been met (typically 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period);
- appropriate support has been offered or considered;
- a Notice to Improve has been considered where appropriate; and
- issuing a penalty notice is the most appropriate and proportionate response in the individual case.

Penalty notices will be issued in line with local authority procedures and current statutory guidance. Where issued, penalty notices are payable to the local authority. Current national framework levels are:

- First penalty notice: £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days;
- Second penalty notice (same pupil within 3 years): £160 if paid within 28 days;
- Third penalty notice within a 3-year period: no further penalty notice will be issued; alternative legal action will be considered.

Penalty notices may also be issued in relation to unauthorised absence during exclusion periods where a pupil is present in a public place during restricted days, in line with statutory regulations. All decisions regarding penalty notices will be made in line with the principles of fairness, proportionality and equality, including consideration of duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Section 5: Monitoring attendance

5.1 The Trust's approach

The Trust adopts a graduated model of attendance support and intervention, aligned with a three-tier approach of universal, targeted and intensive support. This reflects national best practice and the expectation that attendance improvement should be rooted in early identification, proportionate response and sustained partnership with families.

- **Universal support** focuses on creating a strong culture of belonging, high expectations, positive relationships, clear routines and consistent messaging about attendance. Attendance is promoted as part of the school's wider ethos and personal development offer.
- **Targeted support** is provided for pupils whose attendance begins to fall or who are at risk of persistent absence. This includes early identification, family engagement, mentoring, attendance plans, and personalised support strategies.
- **Intensive support** is implemented for pupils experiencing persistent or severe absence. This may involve multi-agency working, individualised reintegration planning, formal attendance contracts and the use of statutory interventions where appropriate.

This graduated approach ensures that support is responsive, proportionate and focused on removing barriers to attendance as early as possible.

5.2 Strategies for promoting attendance

Each school will implement a range of strategies to promote and improve attendance. These will be tailored to context and set out in **Part B** of this policy. Strategies may include:

- clear and consistent communication of attendance expectations to pupils and families;
- celebration and recognition of good and improved attendance;

- early identification of attendance concerns using daily and weekly data;
- structured family engagement, including attendance meetings and support discussions;
- mentoring, pastoral support or key adult check-ins for pupils at risk of poor attendance;
- targeted interventions for specific cohorts or year groups;
- use of attendance contracts or agreements where appropriate;
- coordinated support with SEND, safeguarding and pastoral teams;
- use of external agencies and local authority support where required; and
- removal of in-school barriers to attendance where identified.

Schools will ensure that attendance communication is consistent, relational in tone and focused on support and partnership.

5.3 Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

Schools will provide appropriate support for pupils who are absent or returning following a period of absence. This includes pupils with medical needs, mental health difficulties, SEND, or other complex barriers to attendance. Support may include:

- phased or supported reintegration back into school;
- temporary adjustments to timetables where appropriate;
- additional pastoral or key adult support;
- coordination with external agencies and health services;
- reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND;
- strategies to rebuild confidence, belonging and routine; and
- targeted academic or emotional support to reduce the impact of missed learning.

Where a pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and attendance becomes a concern, or where barriers to attendance are linked to their needs, the school will consider whether the local authority should be informed and involved in reviewing support arrangements. The focus will always be on enabling sustained attendance in a safe, supportive and inclusive way.

5.4 Using data to monitor attendance

Schools will use attendance data systematically to identify patterns, trends and areas for improvement at whole-school, cohort, year group and individual pupil level. Attendance data will be monitored:

- daily (operational safeguarding and follow-up);
- weekly (pattern identification and early intervention);
- half-termly and termly (strategic analysis and evaluation); and
- annually (trend analysis and strategic planning).

Schools will ensure attendance data is:

- accurate and consistently recorded within the management information system;
- used to identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence;
- used to identify vulnerable groups and cohort trends, as well as students with intersectional risks;
- shared appropriately with senior leaders, safeguarding leads, SENDCos and governors; and
- used to inform intervention planning and resource allocation.

Schools will also benchmark attendance against local, regional and national data to identify relative performance and areas for improvement. Further information about how the school monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality data), and systematically and regularly analyses it can be found in **Part B**.

5.5 Analysing attendance data

Schools will analyse attendance data to:

- identify emerging patterns of absence, including lateness and partial attendance;
- identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence;
- recognise cohort-level trends (for example year groups, disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND);
- understand contextual and historical patterns of attendance; and
- identify barriers to attendance that may require further investigation or support.

Analysis will be used to inform targeted action rather than reporting alone. Where concerns are identified, schools will ensure that attendance data is triangulated with safeguarding, pastoral and academic information where appropriate.

5.6 Using data to improve attendance

Attendance data will be used to drive timely and effective intervention. Schools will:

- implement targeted actions in response to identified attendance concerns;
- ensure pupils and families receive appropriate support based on need;
- provide regular attendance information to staff to support conversations with pupils and families;
- report attendance concerns to relevant leaders, including safeguarding, SEND and pastoral teams where appropriate;
- evaluate the impact of interventions and adjust approaches where necessary; and
- share relevant information with external partners and agencies where appropriate and lawful.

Data will be used to support early intervention rather than solely to monitor compliance. Impact of interventions will be evaluated not only through attendance percentages but also through engagement, reintegration and sustained improvement over time.

5.7 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90%. Severe absence is defined as attendance below 50%. Reducing persistent and severe absence is a key priority for the Trust and will be addressed through early, sustained and coordinated action. Schools will:

- identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence as early as possible;
- investigate underlying barriers to attendance, including safeguarding, SEND, medical, emotional or contextual factors;
- ensure timely and appropriate support is put in place;
- engage parents/carers in structured and supportive discussions;
- provide targeted interventions aimed at improving attendance and re-engagement;
- use a consistent but relational approach to follow-up and monitoring;
- work collaboratively with external agencies where required; and
- consider statutory interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.

All responses will be proportionate, individualised and focused on improving attendance through support wherever possible. Schools will ensure that persistent and severe absence is treated as both an educational and safeguarding concern, with appropriate escalation where necessary. Further details of the school's approach towards targeting unauthorised absence, for example via meetings, letters and closer monitoring can be found in **Part B** of this policy.

Version history

First issue/revision date	Approved by	Summary of changes if not first issue
May 2026	BoT	Strengthened alignment with DfE statutory guidance ('Working together to improve school attendance'), including early intervention and multi-agency working. Strengthened links to Ofsted EIF expectations across behaviour, attitudes, safeguarding, leadership and personal development. Reframed attendance as a safeguarding, inclusion and curriculum access priority throughout. Significant revision of Section 2 (roles and responsibilities) to clarify accountability, relational practice and Trust-wide expectations. Improved consistency of terminology and expectations across all roles, particularly attendance leadership and family engagement. Refined Sections 3.2 and 4.3 to strengthen clarity on illness, authorisation and safeguarding-sensitive escalation. Enhanced focus on early intervention, relational practice and family engagement (Sections 3.5, 5.2, 5.6). Improved proportionality and clarity in Section 4.4

		(Notices to Improve and penalty notices). Strengthened graduated response model in Section 5.1 with clearer practice alignment. Enhanced expectations for attendance data use, monitoring and benchmarking (Sections 5.4–5.6). Updated Appendix 1 codes for clarity, safeguarding context and statutory alignment.
July 2025	BoT	Minor language adjustments to reflect guidance. Section 2.2: Information regarding the headteacher's responsibility to share information from the attendance register with the local authority. Section 4.4.2: Information about penalty notices issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place. Section 5.1: Information regarding a tiered approach to attendance intervention. Section 5.3: Clarity that where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.
July 2024	BoT	N/A - new policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. Attendance codes must be used consistently and in line with statutory guidance. Incorrect coding may affect safeguarding decisions, census returns and school accountability measures.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent - leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable (temporary)	Student is on a temporary, agreed reduced timetable as part of a support plan and remains formally on roll
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances as defined by the school in line with statutory guidance
Absent - other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Traveller families known to be travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (physical or mental health)	Student is unable to attend due to illness.

E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Student is excluded or suspended and no alternative provision is in place.
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: · In police detention · Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or · Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent - unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes. Code N should only be used temporarily and updated once the reason for absence is known.
O	Unauthorised absence	Student is absent without authorisation and no acceptable reason has been provided or accepted by the school
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

	Vanguard Learning Trust *As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust's mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. The Trust has a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through a curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows students to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust's vision and values, with the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential.*

Attendance policy
Part B: Ruislip High School
Summer 2026

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Part B: Ruislip High School

1. Expectations

The school's view on attendance is that it is everybody's responsibility. Every student is a valued member of the school and their presence is crucial for the collective success and well-being of the community overall. Aligned with the recommendations from an ImpactEd report entitled *'Understanding Attendance*' from January 2024 (click here), the school is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and that they belong. The school aims to foster strong, positive relationships between students, and between students and school staff, to help build a supportive and connected community. Additionally, the school strives to communicate the importance and benefits of good attendance at every opportunity, helping students understand how their learning experiences contribute to their personal and academic growth.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Although attendance is everybody's responsibility, some members of the school community have a specific role in supporting attendance or providing oversight of the school's endeavours. These roles are outlined below.

2.1 The board of trustees

As outlined in **Part A**, the board of trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures across the Trust on at least a termly basis, which includes Ruislip High School. The board also holds the headteacher of the school to account for the implementation of this policy.

2.2 The local governing body (LGB)

The LGB of Ruislip High School is responsible for regularly reviewing attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Further information about the LGB's role in reviewing attendance data can be found in **Part A**.

2.3 The headteacher

The school's headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy at the school and monitoring school-level absence data, which is then reported to the governors. Additionally, the headteacher supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students as well as trends and patterns across groups of students. The headteacher works closely with the local authority to consider a range of legal interventions to improve attendance, including the issuing of penalty notices as a last resort.

2.4 The senior leader for attendance (the 'attendance champion')

Ruislip High School's attendance champion is Mr Khaleel Ladhani. The attendance champion plays a crucial role in promoting and managing student attendance across the school. Their responsibilities include working with the attendance manager and attendance officer to monitor attendance by regularly tracking and analysing attendance data to identify patterns, trends and areas of concern. Their role also involves maintaining accurate records and ensuring that attendance registers are up to date. They support students and families by addressing barriers to regular attendance, offering support and advice, and arranging meetings. The attendance champion is key in fostering a culture where good attendance is valued and recognised, contributing to the overall well-being and academic success of students.

2.5 The attendance manager

The attendance manager is Mrs Elizabeth Oakley. The attendance manager's role is to work closely with the attendance champion, attendance officer, head of years, form tutors, students and their families to ensure we have individual attendance support plans in place to help overcome barriers to attend school. They are responsible for notifying the local authority's school attendance support team of persistent absences and collaborating with them to support improvement. They also report on students with persistent absences to year leaders and the senior leadership team (SLT), send out student absence letters on behalf of the

headteacher, and provide general management information on student attendance as required by SLT or the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH).

2.6 The attendance officer
The school's attendance officer is Mrs Manjdadria. The attendance officer liaises closely with class teachers to ensure that registers are completed accurately and are available for scrutiny. The officer monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level. They notify parents/carers of student absences when parents/carers have not provided information through the school's management information system. The attendance officer reports attendance concerns to the attendance manager, headteacher, assistant headteacher, or designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and advises the headteacher when legal interventions should be explored, such as fixed-penalty notices. Additionally, the attendance officer accurately enters any manual registers onto the school management information system, which includes attendance information for offsite students. They also oversee the signing in and out process by students and will inform appropriate pastoral staff of any concerns. They ensure that latecomers are correctly recorded in the attendance registers and liaise with the pastoral team to arrange the collection and dispatch of work for students who are absent due to long-term illness.

2.7 Heads of year and the SLT
Heads of year and the SLT of Ruislip High School are responsible for monitoring attendance data both across the year group and at an individual student level. They pay particular attention to the attendance of students categorised in vulnerable groups. Additionally, they report any attendance concerns to the attendance officer and SLT. Collaborating with the attendance manager and officer, teachers, family-liaison officers and the school attendance support team, they work to address and reduce persistent absenteeism. To further support these efforts, heads of year and members of the SLT arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and record any actions taken.

2.8 Form tutors
Form tutors are responsible for monitoring, flagging concerns and being a point of contact between home and school to discuss attendance concerns.

2.9 Assistant heads of year
Assistant heads of year are responsible for monitoring attendance data both across the year group and at an individual student level. They pay particular attention to the attendance of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, they report any attendance concerns to the attendance manager, attendance officer and SLT.

2.10 Class teachers
Class teachers are responsible for accurately recording attendance within lessons on a daily basis (within 10 minutes of the lesson beginning), using the correct codes and saving this information on the school's management information system. Class teachers also monitor attendance and trends of students' attendance to their lesson and report any concerns to the attendance manager and attendance officer.

2.11 Parents/Carers
By law, all students of compulsory school age (normally 5 to 16 years old) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure this happens, either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to provide them with a suitable, full-time education. Once a child is registered at a school, parents are legally responsible for ensuring they attend; this means students should not have sessions of unauthorised absence.

2.11.1 How parents/carers support good attendance
To support their child's school attendance, parents/carers should take several actions. Emphasising the importance of their child having a good rate of attendance, ideally 97% or higher, is crucial. Creating a good routine for mornings at home so that students can arrive punctually and be properly equipped will also help mornings start calmly. Establishing a good bedtime routine is essential so that children can sleep well, get

enough rest and make mornings less of a struggle. Parents/carers should also know the routines of the school day to avoid issues, such as ensuring students have their PE kits on the right days. Reading all school communications helps parents/carers stay informed about what is going on at school and can encourage conversations with their children. Attending all school open evenings and functions is another important step. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of the school day. Parents/carers should only grant days at home for genuine illness and contact the school via the school's online communication platform as soon as possible to explain why their child is absent and when they are expected to return. If appropriate, arranging for a family member or a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick can also help maintain good attendance. Parents/carers should not arrange for their child to take holidays during school time.

2.12 Students

Students at Ruislip High School are expected to attend school every day and be punctual. This means arriving at school on time, ready to begin the day's activities. Regular attendance is crucial for ensuring that students do not miss out on important learning opportunities. In addition to being on time for school, students must also ensure they attend every lesson promptly. This punctuality applies to each class throughout the school day, reinforcing the importance of being present and ready to engage in learning activities from the beginning of each session. Unless absolutely necessary, students should remain in every lesson for its entire duration. This policy is designed to maximise learning time and minimise disruptions, helping students fully benefit from the instructional time provided.

3. Communication

Effective communication is paramount in ensuring high attendance rates at school, as it fosters a collaborative environment between the school and families. Ruislip High School's attendance officer and attendance manager play a critical role in monitoring and promoting good attendance, acting as the primary liaisons between the school and the parents/carers. They are supported by the attendance champion, a senior leader dedicated to attendance issues, ensuring that robust systems and strategies are in place. The school utilises a variety of communication methods, including regular updates to parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. These updates can be disseminated through emails, letters and parent-teacher meetings, helping to keep families informed and engaged. Ruislip High School maintains a 'buzz' of attendance through a well-planned series of events and communications that highlight the importance of regular attendance. To support these efforts, the school's designated attendance champion and attendance manager will work closely with pastoral staff, including heads of year, class teachers and welfare staff, all of whom are instrumental in supporting various attendance initiatives. The pastoral team can be contacted for further assistance in addressing attendance concerns and providing additional support to students and their families. By employing a comprehensive approach that includes clear communication and dedicated support roles, Ruislip High School aims to minimise student absences and promote a culture of regular attendance. **Appendix A** and **B** contain examples of home-school communication.

4. Procedures

Procedures are crucial for the monitoring of attendance because they ensure consistency, accuracy and accountability. They provide a standardised approach for recording and tracking student presence, enabling timely identification of absences. This facilitates early intervention for at-risk students, promotes a safe learning environment and supports legal compliance regarding compulsory education. Clear procedures also streamline communication between stakeholders, ensuring everyone is informed about attendance-related issues. Additionally, accurate attendance records are vital for funding, resource allocation and analysing patterns to improve overall school performance and student engagement.

4.1 Student arrival and lateness

Students are expected to arrive promptly for school by the times outlined below.

Table 1: Start times for Ruislip High School

	Door opens for morning clubs at	Main school doors open at	Classroom doors open at	Student marked late if they arrive after
Times	7:30am	8:10am	8:25am	8:30am (L code) 9:00am (U code)

4.1.1 Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at Ruislip High School on time each day. Students who arrive after the official start time indicated in Table 1 should sign in at the school office. School starts at 8:30am for all students. Any student who arrives late to school without an authorised reason will receive a detention on the same day or next available day. The school is aware that sometimes unexpected lateness occurs which cannot be helped. In these circumstances, a parent/guardian needs to contact the school (via the school's management information system) and inform them of the reason their child was late. Students need to arrive at school by 8:30am at the latest. Any student who arrives at school between 8:31am to 9:00am, without written and valid communication from parents/guardians, will receive a 30 minute detention on the same day. Heads of Year will monitor repeat offenders and further sanctions could be applied and punctuality contracts put in place. If a child arrives no later than 30 minutes after the official start time, they will be marked in the register as 'authorised late: late before registration closes.' If a child arrives more than 30 minutes late, they will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence: late after the register closes.'

4.2 Absences

Each school day consists of two sessions, a morning (referred to as AM) and an afternoon (referred to as PM). Therefore, if a child is absent from school for one whole day, this will equate to two sessions of absence. There are two types of absence: authorised and unauthorised. The school is responsible for deciding whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised therefore, the information provided by parents/carers helps the school to determine the outcome of the absence. As a school, any authorised absences ultimately will be the decision of the headteacher and the school has the right to request any evidence of any absence. Any absences that have not been reported will be marked as unauthorised.

4.2.1 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absence is when no satisfactory explanation is received by the school. Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as holidays and birthdays and please note that this is not an exhaustive list. Unauthorised absences are reported to the local authority. If there are patterns of absence (including truancy), the head of year (or assistant head of year) will contact parents/carers and arrange to meet them to discuss the school's concerns, and to work with the student and parents/carers to improve their attendance to school and lessons. If there is a safeguarding concern, a home visit may be conducted. In more serious cases, the senior leader for attendance will be involved.

4.2.2 Notifying the school

Parents/carers must inform the school via the school's designated online communication system if their child is ill and will be absent from school. A detailed reason for absence must be received before 8:20am on each day of absence. A child simply being 'unwell' is not a reason to be absent from school. The attendance officer will notify the parents/carers of students who are not in school with a message. Although medical appointments and illness constitute an authorised absence, they will still affect a child's percentage attendance; therefore, the school requires parents/carers to provide documentation for these absences. For advice and information on whether children are well enough for school, parents/carers are advised to visit the 'Is my child too ill for school?' page on the NHS website (click here).

4.2.3 Contact details

Ruislip High School must have up-to-date contact numbers for all parents/carers so that they can be contacted when their child is absent or in case of an emergency.

4.3 Working with the local authority
Collaboration between schools and local authorities is crucial for improving attendance. Joint efforts ensure that barriers to attendance are identified and addressed, providing holistic support to students and families. This partnership fosters a community-focused approach, enhancing engagement, resources and interventions, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes and reduced absenteeism.

4.3.1 Issuing of penalty notices
Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties continue the school may refer the child to the attendance team at the local authority. The team will also try to resolve the situation but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance fail and unauthorised absences persist, the team can use sanctions such as the issuing of a penalty notice as a last resort; this is currently £80 rising to £160 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days, a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid penalty notice, which could lead to a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. More information can be found in the Department for Education's statutory guidance: *'Working together to improve school attendance'* (click here). Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the local authority attendance team themselves to ask for help or information; they are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858. Attendance advice may be sought at any time by the school and it may be necessary to fast track a referral to them.

4.3.2 Child missing from education
Where a pupil accrues 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised and unexplained absence, the school has a statutory duty to inform the local authority. A Child Missing Education (CME) referral will be made where a child is on the school roll (has a school place) but is not attending, and reasonable enquiries have failed to establish their whereabouts or confirm an onward destination. As part of our safeguarding duty to undertake these joint enquiries, the school's attendance or safeguarding team will attempt to contact the family, which may include conducting a home visit to check on the pupil's welfare.

4.4 Exceptional leave during term time
The school will not authorise any leave during term time. Parents/carers who feel it necessary to take their child out of school for an extended period of time due to unavoidable and extreme/exceptional circumstances must make a formal request by completing the *'Exceptional leave form'* document (refer to Letter 4, **Appendix B**). This should be submitted to the headteacher at least two weeks before the intended period of absence. Any supporting documents should be submitted with the request form, such as flight details or exam letters. There is no right of appeal in regard to any decision made concerning requests for exceptional leave during term time. If the child will be late returning from a period of leave, the school requires parents/carers to produce documentation to evidence this. Where holidays are taken which have not been authorised, the school will inform the local authority attendance team, who may issue a penalty notice of £80 per parent per child if it is paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within 21 days, it advances to £160 per parent per child. If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action. More information can be found on the Department for Education's website (click here). Where there is reason to believe that a prolonged absence is the result of a holiday, the school will pursue it as it would if it was informed about the holiday in advance. Suspicion of prolonged absence due to a holiday in term time is enough to pursue a penalty notice through the local authority.

4.5 Extreme/exceptional circumstances
Extreme or exceptional circumstances generally include situations that are rare, significant or unavoidable. The following scenarios illustrate what is meant by this term:

1. Bereavement: the death of a close family member.
2. Serious illness: when a child or close family member has a serious/critical illness that requires the child to be absent.
3. Family crisis: emergency situations involving members of the child's family that require immediate attention.

4. Religious observances: religious festivals or ceremonies.
5. Examinations: external examinations or assessments.
6. Legal requirements: attending a court hearing, being involved in a custody dispute or other legal obligations.
7. Unexpected travel disruptions: unforeseen travel disruptions that make it impossible for the child to attend school (eg. natural disasters).

These exceptional circumstances typically do not include:

- Holidays during term time.
- Family events like birthdays or weddings.
- Minor ailments (colds, headaches).

4.6.1 Curriculum areas

Subject teachers should flag concerns with student attendance and punctuality promptly to the appropriate curriculum leader.

- Stage 1: The subject teacher should call home to discuss concerns with the parents/carers. The next time the student attends their lesson, they should raise the issue with the student.
- Stage 2: If attendance/punctuality does not improve after this, the curriculum leader should contact the parents/carers to address these ongoing concerns and meet with the student.
- Stage 3: If there is still no improvement, the curriculum leader should liaise with the head of year for advice and support. They should also inform the assistant headteacher in charge of attendance. A meeting with the student, their parents/carers, head of year and curriculum leader should take place.

4.6.2 Pastoral

Attendance tracker is updated regularly through each term and checked regularly by the head of years and the attendance manager.

- Morning registration closes at 9am.
- Students arriving after their start time will be marked as L (late).
- Students arriving after 9:00am will be marked as U (late after registration).
- Tutors, assistant heads of year and heads of year follow-up students whose attendance is becoming a cause for concern with their parents/carers in order to agree on improvement strategies.
- Persistent absentees may be assigned to a mentor within the school who will closely monitor attendance and deploy a rewards ladder for strong attendance.

5. Identifying trends and patterns

It is important to note that consistent attendance is essential for a student's academic and social development. Ruislip High School will work with parents/carers and other professionals as needed to support students in attending school regularly and meeting their full potential. The school uses the following procedures for monitoring daily attendance and informing parents:

- Daily attendance reminder messages are sent to all parents/carers who have not notified the school of their child's absence.
- If there is still no improvement, if parents/carers do not respond to the school's letters, or if parents/carers fail to show up for arranged meetings, then the school will refer the family to the local authority's attendance team.
- School staff may undertake home visits if absences are not reported, to check that the child is safe and well.

5.1 *'Attendance Tracker'*

The school's attendance monitoring procedure, *'Attendance Tracker',* is designed to support students in attending school regularly and making the most of their educational opportunities. To ensure that attendance concerns are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, the following letters and actions will be taken at key intervals (see **Table 3** below):

- **Stage 1: Early support and intervention**
  The form tutor, or the most appropriate member of staff, will make contact with the student and their family to discuss attendance and agree strategies that can support improved attendance. The focus will be on understanding any barriers and working collaboratively towards positive outcomes.
- **Stage 2: Attendance support meeting**
  The head of year, assistant head of year, or the most appropriate member of staff will arrange a meeting with the student and their family. A supportive attendance agreement will be developed, identifying actions, responsibilities and any appropriate interventions. Progress will be reviewed regularly.
- **Stage 3: Enhanced attendance support**
  The head of year, a senior member of staff, or the most appropriate member of staff will arrange a further meeting with the student and their family to review progress and consider any additional support that may be required. This may include referrals to specialist services or further targeted interventions where appropriate.

Throughout all stages, Ruislip High School will work in partnership with students and families to identify barriers to attendance, provide appropriate support and promote regular school attendance as a key factor in academic success, wellbeing and future opportunities.

5.2 Attendance communications

The following letters will be distributed to parents/carers throughout the school year:

- **Letter 1: Start of academic year attendance letter**
  A letter will be sent to all students and their families at the beginning of the academic year outlining the importance of regular school attendance, the positive impact attendance has on educational outcomes and wellbeing, and the school's commitment to working in partnership with families to support excellent attendance.
- **Letter 2: Attendance review communication**
  Following a review of attendance data, students and families will receive a personalised attendance letter. The content will reflect the student's current attendance and may include:
  - recognition and encouragement to maintain high levels of attendance;
  - supportive guidance for students whose attendance is approaching 95%, encouraging them to achieve and maintain this important benchmark; and
  - identification of attendance concerns where attendance is below 90%, together with information about the support available to help improve attendance.
- **Letter 3: Attendance progress communication**
  A further attendance review letter will be sent to students and families. Depending on attendance patterns, this communication may:
  - acknowledge and encourage sustained excellent attendance;
  - celebrate significant improvements in attendance;
  - encourage students whose attendance is close to 95% to continue making progress; and
  - highlight ongoing attendance concerns and outline the support available where attendance remains below expected levels.
- **Letter 4: End of year attendance communication**
  A final attendance letter will be sent during the academic year. This communication may:
  - recognise students who have maintained excellent attendance;
  - celebrate substantial improvements made throughout the year;
  - encourage students to continue working towards attendance above 95%; and
  - reinforce the importance of improving attendance where concerns remain and signpost available support.

Table 3: Overview of attendance letters and actions

Timeline	Key actions and letters
Start of school year	Letter 1 issued

End of autumn term 1	Attendance tracker 1.0 actioned
End of autumn term 2	Letter 2 issued
End of January	Attendance tracker 2.0 actioned
End of spring term 2	Letter 3 issued
End of spring term 2 *(Year 11 and 13 only)*	Attendance tracker 2.5 actioned
End of April *(Year 7 to 10 and Year 12 only)*	Attendance tracker 3.0 actioned
End of summer term 2	Letter 4 issued

6. Celebrating good attendance

Ruislip High School recognises the importance of celebrating and incentivising good attendance to encourage students to maintain consistent and punctual attendance. As such, the school utilises a variety of strategies to reward students who demonstrate excellent and/or improved attendance. The school rewards good attendance in the following ways:

- The tutor group with the highest weekly attendance receives a tutor group breakfast during form time.
- Class rewards are given on the school's reward system.
- Certificates are awarded to students in celebration assemblies who have achieved 100% attendance on a termly basis and to those who have made significant improvements.

By celebrating both outstanding attendance and meaningful improvements, the school aims to create a positive and motivating atmosphere that highlights the value of regular school attendance and supports students in their journey towards academic success.

6.1 Celebrating improved attendance

Ruislip High School recognises that celebrating and rewarding students for improving their attendance can be a great way to motivate them and reinforce positive behaviour. The methods of celebration taken by the school include acknowledging students during school assemblies, on tutor group displays and on the digital signage. The school also rewards improving attendance through providing attendance certificates for achieving specific milestones and half termly awards for significantly improved attendance. Additionally, assistant heads of year run various incentive programmes for students who have significantly improved their attendance.

7. Students who may need additional support

Ruislip High School is committed to providing tailored support to students facing various challenges that affect their attendance. The school recognises that certain groups of students may require additional assistance to overcome these barriers and ensure their regular participation in school.

7.1 Students with complex barriers to attendance

For students with complex barriers to attendance, this includes students with emotional-based school non-attendance, Ruislip High School takes a comprehensive approach by closely collaborating with families and external agencies to address the root causes of absenteeism. The school conducts thorough assessments to identify specific challenges these students face, whether they stem from home, social or economic factors, or a combination thereof. Working with families, the school develops individualised support plans that may include flexible scheduling, pastoral support or access to community resources via a referral to local 'early help' services. The school also strives to remove any barriers by providing a welcoming and inclusive environment, offering personalised learning plans and ensuring that these students have access to necessary support services such as counselling, mentoring and/or therapies where appropriate.

7.2 Students absent due to mental and/or physical ill health, or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Students who are absent due to mental and/or physical ill health, or an issue related to their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive targeted support to help them maintain their educational progress. The school's SEND co-ordinator (SENCo) can liaise with a wide variety of specialists including counsellors and healthcare professionals, who work together to create and implement individualised education plans or health care plans. The school will maintain regular communication with these students and their families, providing necessary adjustments. The goal is to ensure that these students receive a continuous and supportive education, tailored to their unique needs and circumstances.

7.3 Students returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When students return to Ruislip High School after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school implements a structured reintegration process to help them transition smoothly back into the school environment. This process includes an initial meeting with the student and their family to discuss any concerns and create a personalised reintegration plan. Key strategies may include a phased return to school, catch-up sessions and/or additional academic support to bridge any learning gaps. The school may also provide emotional and social support to help these students readjust and reconnect with their peers and teachers. By offering comprehensive reintegration support, the school aims to ensure that students feel welcomed, supported and ready to re-engage with their education.

8. Mental health

Ruislip High School recognises the critical importance of mental health and its impact on student attendance. In accordance with the Department for Education guidance *'Working together to improve school attendance'* (click here), the school has established clear responsibilities and proactive measures to monitor, promote and support mental health within the community. To effectively support mental health, the school regularly monitors the well-being of students through various means, including surveys, wellbeing check-ins along with observations by teachers and staff. The school evaluates the effectiveness of mental health initiatives by gathering feedback from students, parents/carers and staff and by reviewing attendance data to identify patterns that may indicate underlying mental health issues. This ongoing assessment allows the school to adapt and refine its approach to ensure that the school's support for mental health is meeting the needs of all students.

8.1 Emotional resilience

Building emotional resilience is a key component of the school's long-term strategy and it is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum and provision of pastoral support. The school delivers a personal, health and social education programme that includes social and emotional learning activities, mindfulness exercises and resilience training. These programmes are designed to equip students with the skills they need to manage stress, build positive relationships and navigate challenges effectively. Additionally, the school's pastoral care team provides personalised support and mentoring to students who may need extra help in developing their emotional resilience.

8.2 A holistic approach

Ruislip High School takes a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and well-being, fostering a strong ethos and culture of care. This approach includes creating a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported. The school prioritises open communication, encouraging students to voice their concerns and seek help when needed. The school also collaborates with external mental health professionals and organisations to provide additional resources and support for students and their families. By integrating mental health awareness and support into all aspects of school life, the school aims to create a nurturing and resilient community that prioritises emotional well-being. **Appendix C** illustrates the support and approaches taken to support students at each stage of its attendance monitoring and intervention strategy.

9. Feedback

Ruislip High School values the input of the whole community in helping to shape and refine the attendance policy. The school collects feedback through regular surveys distributed to students, parents/carers and staff, as well as during parent-teacher meetings and school council sessions. This feedback is carefully reviewed and considered in policy evaluations to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of the school community.

10. Further support

To provide comprehensive support for students, Ruislip High School actively engages with 'early help' services and other external agencies. These collaborations enable the school to access a wide range of resources and expertise in order to address the various challenges that may affect students and their attendance. Effective partnerships with local health services, social care and mental health organisations (such as CAMHS) ensures that students and families receive the necessary support and interventions promptly and effectively. For additional support, the school recommends the following helplines and websites:

- **Childline**: A free, confidential service for young people seeking help and support (website: https://www.childline.org.uk, phone: 0800 1111)
- **YoungMinds**: A mental health charity offering advice and support to young people and parents (website https://www.youngminds.org.uk, parent helpline: 0808 802 5544).
- **NSPCC**: Provides support and information for children and families (website: https://www.nspcc.org.uk, helpline: 0808 800 5000).
- **Samaritans**: Offers emotional support for anyone in distress (website: https://www.samaritans.org, phone or text: 116 123).

By continuously gathering feedback and leveraging external support, the school strives to create an effective and supportive attendance policy that promotes the well-being and success of all students.

Appendices

Appendix A: Examples of home/school communication regarding attendance
Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers
Appendix C: Materials used to illustrate the school's steps to monitoring and support.

Version history

First issue/revision date	Approved by	Summary of changes if not first issue
October 2026	LGB	2.5 The attendance manager - removal of text 4.3.1 Issuing of penalty notices - fines updated 4.3.2 Child missing from education - clarification 4.6.2 Pastoral - update to time
September 2026	LGB	Minor terminology, name changes and formatting throughout. 4. Table 1. Updated late codes in line with DfE guidance 4.1.1. Removal of old policy text 4.2.1 Added text on unauthorised absences 4.3.2 Added a line about welfare checks by FLOs 4.6.2 Removal of old tracker system 7.1 - Information about EBSNA student

Appendix A: Example of home/school communication regarding attendance

Good morning,

Please can you report the reason for your child's absence using the following procedure on the Arbor app:

- Click on Attendance
- Click on Log Absence
- Enter the reason for your child's absence and the time period they will be absent for
- Click Log absence

If you do not report your child's absence to the school before the end of the school day, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers

Letter 1 - Invitation to attendance panel meeting

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

Re: Attendance Panel Meeting for [Child's Name]

I hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to inform you that there are concerns regarding [Child's Name]'s school attendance. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that every student receives the best possible education and regular attendance is crucial to achieving this goal.

Over the past [insert time period], [Child's Name] has been absent for [insert number] days. These absences have accumulated to a point where it is affecting their academic progress and social development. We understand that there may be valid reasons for these absences and we wish to discuss how we can support [Child's Name] in improving their attendance.

To address these concerns, we would like to invite you to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. The details of the meeting are as follows:

Date: [Insert Date]
Time: [Insert Time]
Location: [Insert Location]

During this meeting, we will review [Child's Name]'s attendance record, discuss any underlying issues contributing to their absences, and work together to develop a plan to improve their attendance. Your input and co-operation are vital in helping us to support [Child's Name] effectively.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting the school office at 01895 464064 by [insert RSVP date]. If you are unable to attend on the scheduled date, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can arrange an alternative time that is convenient for you.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to support [Child's Name]'s education. Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 2 - Concerns about a student's unauthorised absence

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Unauthorised absence from school

We have noticed that [name] has recently taken an unauthorised [absence/absences] from school. [Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] days on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

It is important that [name] attends regularly so that they can get the best out of their education. We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. Please let us know if there is anything going on at home or at school which might be making it difficult for [name] to attend regularly.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on 01895 464064 as soon as you can so that we can arrange a meeting to discuss any reasons for these absences, as well as how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Please note that the Department for Education (click here) states that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in Part A of our trust's attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Senior lead for attendance

Letter 3 – Invite parents/carers of a student with SEND in to discuss attendance

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Invitation for a meeting to discuss attendance

We would like to invite you to come in to have a conversation about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is/are:

- Anything happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend
- Any issues around the level of support we are offering [name] to support their special educational needs
- Anything happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- Anything we can do to make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

Please contact the school office on 01895 464064 as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss the above, as well as what support we can offer to make regular attendance easier.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
SENDCO

Letter 4 - Request for leave of absence during term time

Parents do not have the right to take their children out of school during term time. By law parents/carers must request permission from the headteacher for your child to miss school for any reason.

This form must be completed for any form of planned absence (with the exception of medical and dental appointments) and it should be submitted for authorisation at least 10 school days before the proposed absence. Copies of details relating to the request such as flight details or exam correspondence should be included in the request.

A request must be made for each individual child.

A request for leave of absence during term time for non-urgent medical and dental appointments does not require the completion of this form. However these appointments should be made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible the school must be informed in writing explaining the reason for absence and giving as much notice as possible.

FAO Headteacher

I/We request of the Headteacher that leave of absence be granted to:

Child's name:	
Class:	
From:	
To:	
Reason for leave request:	
If the leave is for a holiday, please state why the holiday needs to be taken during term time:	
Parent/Carer Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	

Return to parent/carer

Child's name:	
Class:	
Attendance %:	

The period of absence that has been requested from …….. to ……..
has/has not been agreed and will be treated on the child's record as authorised/unauthorised.

There is no right of appeal to this decision as all absences are recorded at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Signed: ……..…….
(Headteacher) Date: …….

Letter 5 – Accepting a request for a leave of absence

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I am able to agree to your request.

I have not come to this decision lightly. At Ruislip High School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment. We consider each request for a leave of absence on its merits and the family's specific circumstances.

Please be aware that the fact that I have agreed to this request does not mean I will necessarily be able to agree to any similar request from you, or other parents/carers, in the future.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Headteacher

Letter 6 – Declining a request for a leave of absence

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].
In this case I am afraid I cannot consent to your request.

At Ruislip High School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its specific circumstances and I have taken many factors into consideration.

As each request is different, this decision cannot be compared with decisions made by the school in the past and it will not affect any decisions made in the future.

I am sorry to have to disappoint you on this occasion.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Headteacher

Letter 7 – After an unauthorised holiday

Dear parent/guardian,

Re: Holiday absence

I am writing about your action in taking [name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date]. We are treating this as an unauthorised absence because [explain the evidence you have].

At Ruislip High School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We have the power to grant leaves of absence under exceptional circumstances and a holiday is not generally considered to come under those circumstances. As outlined in the Trust's attendance policy, we expect parents/carers to consult the school before making any plans that will involve their child's absence from lessons or other commitments. Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on their education.

Insert the following if the child's absence has reached the threshold for a penalty notice and you have decided it's appropriate to issue one (see paragraph 181 of Working together to improve school attendance for questions to consider when making this decision):

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice. When you receive the notice, you must pay:

- £80, if it's paid within 21 days
- £160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action. More information can be found on the Department of Education's website (click here).

Insert the following if the threshold for a penalty notice has not been reached:
Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in the trust's Attendance Policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website and are available from the school office.

We would like to arrange a meeting so that we can discuss this absence further. Please contact the school office as soon as possible on 01895 547036.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Headteacher

Letter 8 – Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].
In this case, I am prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.
Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity.

However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not necessarily mean that I will agree to a similar request from you or other parents/carers in the future.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Headteacher

Letter 9 – Concern about punctuality

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Poor punctuality

I am writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].
They arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

They also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

The school day begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time]. Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child does not miss schoolwork and prevents disruption to the teacher and other students. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice, if your child arrives late after the register closes in 10 sessions in a rolling period of 10 weeks. More information can be found on the Department for Education's guidance '*Working together to improve school attendance*' (click here).

We would like to invite you to come in for a chat about [name]'s punctuality. We would like to find out whether there is anything:

- Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to get to school on time
- Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- We can do to make it easier for [name] to be on time for school

Please contact the school office on [number] to arrange a meeting.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Senior lead for attendance

Appendix C: Attendance ladder that is used to illustrate levels of good attendance

