



PENWORTHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Welcome back... It's great to see you!

"The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn."

Working Together to improve attendance (DfE 2022)

THE MISSION

To prepare
Articulate, Questioning, Tolerant and Independent Women
for the future.

Updated October 2023
Reviewed Annually

Our Aim, Mission and Core Values

PGHSuccess:

It is our aim to make all our students a PGHSuccess. A pupil becomes a PGHSuccess when they have the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes required to achieve their ambitions; academically, creativity and socially.

Our Mission is:

To help our students to achieve their version of PGHSuccess, we have set ourselves the mission of '*preparing articulate, questioning, tolerant and independent women for the future*', as we believe that these qualities which are central to success in our modern society.

Our Core Values:

In order to achieve our mission statement, our policies and actions are guided by six core values. These core values are interwoven throughout all we do in school, including forming the basis of our pastoral care.



Related Policies and Documentation

- a) PGHS Attendance Procedures Overview
- b) Safeguarding policy / procedures
- c) DfE - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- d) DfE – Schools Bill (2023)
- e) PGHS Attendance of Pupils with Health Needs Policy
- f) PGHS Behaviour policy
- g) Attendance Improvement Worker (AIW) Procedures
- h) Lancashire Legal Interventions Procedures and Documentation
- i) Governors Attendance Reports
- j) HoY PIPs
- k) Lancashire’s ‘Children Not in School’ Policy
- l) Lancashire’s Attendance Order Procedures (SAO)
- m) Lancashire’s Multi-agency intervention policies for CME, PME, Low Attenders and those excluded from education.
- n) South Ribble agreed protocols for Managed Moves and Elective Home Education

1.0 Policy Rationale

All children are entitled to receive a full-time education that allows them to reach their potential and live a fulfilling life. Being in school, and ready to learn, is crucial to a pupils' attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The aim of this policy is to maximise pupil attendance / punctuality, thereby leading to the best possible outcomes, academically and socially. This policy aims for as many pupils as possible to attend every school day (190 days).

Our aspiration is for all students to meet or exceed our 97% attendance target.

"Everyone must obsess over full attendance from day one, Dame Rachel De Souza Children's Commissioner for England

We believe that great attendance is the first step towards success both within and beyond the classroom. Great attendance enables pupils to take a full part in the school community and to take maximum advantage of the opportunities available. As well as being a legal requirement, there is a strong evidence base, both nationally and at school level, which shows that regular absence has a significant negative impact on both learning/outcomes and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) of the individual.

School performance data shows that the students who make the most progress consistently have high attendance. Equally, each year the majority of students who fail to fulfil their potential have low or irregular attendance.

Pre-pandemic national data consistently demonstrates a clear link between attendance and achievement. Government analysis shows that 70% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good passes at GCSE, including English and Maths; and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all. A number of reliable studies have suggested that a student who misses 10% of their KS4 education through absence is likely to attain a grade below their potential in each of their subjects. This figure increases with further absence.

Our school's performance data confirms these national trends. The table below shows the impact of attendance on student performance. The data shows a clear link between attendance and progress. Individual progress figures indicate that students with strong attendance typically achieve a grade higher in most of their subjects than those with regular absence.

Summer 2023 Progress Data

2023	Stu Count	KS2 Prior	A8	Eng P8	Mat P8	EBacc P8	Open P8	Total P8	Positive P8 Score
Less than 92%	23	107	51.33	0.22	-0.15	0.32	-0.44	-0.02	13
92% to 96%	42	107	59.02	0.71	0.24	0.83	0.71	0.7	33
97% or more	89	106.5	61.56	0.93	0.57	1.49	0.96	1.04	79

Declining, low, or irregular attendance can be a contributing cause, or an indicator of poor emotional wellbeing, a safeguarding concern, or child protection issue. We strongly believe that school is the safest environment for our students and the best place for them to develop positive, healthy, and strong relationships. A secure and growing evidence base shows a clear correlation between absence and poor mental health. Research often concludes that young people are happiest when they feel part of a community and their lives resemble that of a typical teenager.

1.1 Glossary / Acronyms

- PA (Persistently Absent) – A student whose overall attendance has fallen below 90%
- SA (Severely Absent) – A student whose overall attendance has fallen below 50%
- CME (Child Missing from Education) - Children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving a suitable education.
- PME (Pupil Missing out on Education) - children of compulsory school age who aren't accessing full-time education, either in their school or alternative provision, e.g. due to low attendance.
- AIW (Attendance Improvement Worker) – AIWs work with families of PA and SA students to improve attendance. If necessary, AIWs will consider legal measures including Education Supervision Orders (ESO) and Penalty Notices (PN).
- ESO (Education Supervision Order) - An ESO places the student under the supervision of a named person within the LA or school who will work with the student and their parents to raise attendance. The parents and student must comply with reasonable directions given by this named person, e.g. requests to attend parenting classes.
- LI1 - Legal Intervention for Unauthorised Absence, penalty notice and/or prosecution.
- LI2 - Legal Intervention for term time holidays.
- EHE – Elective Home Education. When a parent/carers decides to remove their child from mainstream education.
- ESBA – Emotional based school avoidance. Both our AIW and school counsellor are now trained to provide this support for student who are regularly absent due to EHWA issues.

2.0 Legal Duties / Responsibilities

This section outlines the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance. These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Amendments made in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.
- The Schools Bill 2023

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. “All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have” (Education Act, 1996).

2.1 Attendance Registers

PGHS is required by law to maintain an accurate record of attendance. As a school we are legally instructed to follow-up any absence. When a student is absent from education, the student’s school is legally required to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school’s register.

2.11 Reporting Attendance figures

Regulation 12(1) (2006) requires all schools to make a return to the local authority giving details of all students who regularly fail to attend school and/or who have a continuous period of unauthorised absence (10+ days). In the case of Lancashire, a member of the School Attendance team meets with the SLT Attendance Lead on a termly basis, to review attendance data, the application of interventions, and to discuss PA, SA and PME cases.

The current LA Attendance Support Worker for PGHS is Clare Lawson.
(clare.lawson@lancashire.gov.uk)

PGHS also shares its live attendance data with both the Department of Education and the Fisher Family Trust (FFT) who provide real-time analysis and national / regional comparative data, enhancing the school’s attendance monitoring and improving the targeting of interventions.

In according with the school’s legal responsibilities, students who are recorded as unauthorised absent for 10 consecutive school days, where no return to school date has been agreed, and there has been no contact with parents, and/or when the individual is believed to be missing, or to have left the area, a ‘Children Missing from Education’ (CME) referral will be submitted.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

In line with government and local authority guidance, if a student is taken out of school without pre-authorisation or with a valid reason, or if the student is kept away for longer than was agreed, we are required to register the absence as unauthorised.

NB: Government regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for a leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

PGHS is legally required to investigate all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. We are committed to making every reasonable effort (parentmail, email, phone calls, letters) to establish why a pupil was absence. However, when no reason for the absence is provided, government policy requires us to record the absence as unauthorised.

Additionally, there may be circumstances where we are not satisfied with the reason given for an absence, in these situations we are again required by law to record the absence as unauthorised. Pupils with a high level of absence are required to provide medical evidence*¹ (appointment cards, prescriptions etc...) to confirm the cause of absence. Failure to provide appropriate evidence will result in the attendance being unauthorised.

NB: Evidence of a medical appointment or a prescription can be used to authorise a short-term absence. If the absence continues, or additional absences occur, updated medical evidence will be required. If a student is required to have an extended period of absence due to a physical or mental health related condition, authorisation will only be given if the school receives written confirmation from a medical consultant – See our 'Pupils with Additional Health Needs' policy.

In line with local authority guidance, any absence prior or following a school holiday or period of religious observance will be unauthorised without medical evidence, regardless of the pupil's current overall attendance.

*¹ To aid parents, medical evidence cards can be collected from reception or downloaded from the school's website. NB: Only signed/stamped and dated cards will be accepted as medical evidence. Medical evidence cards can be provided instead of a medical certificate as school acknowledges that these are not always available and can incur a charge.

2.3 Purpose and scope of legal measures

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority (section 444 of the Education Act 1996). Penalty notices are fines of £120 imposed on **each** parent (The fine is reduced to £60 if paid promptly).

According to government guidance, the term ‘parent’ means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

As a school we work closely with the local authority to ensure government guidance relating to attendance is consistently and fairly applied. Legal interventions, including penalty notices and prosecutions, will only be used as a last resort, when support has not worked or has not been engaged with.

In cases of significant absence - either an extended unauthorised period of 10 sessions or more, or regular absence resulting in the individual pupil being classified as persistently (<90%) or severely absent (<50%) – the school will work with the local authority to use legal interventions to promote better attendance, including penalty notices and prosecutions.

In a case of persistent or severe absence, parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of legal action. The poorly attending pupil will be set a monitoring period of 15 days. Any further absence during this period will result in a Legal Intervention (LI1) being submitted to the court office, who will review the case and decide how to proceed. In less severe cases a Penalty Notice may be issued, however, in cases where absence is believed to be significantly harming the young person, a prosecution may be actioned under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

NB: Failure to comply with a Penalty Notice can result in the case being escalated to a full prosecution.

2.31 Term time absence: Final position following Isle of Wight Council v Platt decision in Supreme Court

The Supreme Court delivered its judgement in relation to the Isle of Wight Council's appeal which sought clarification on what is meant by “fails to attend regularly” in the context of a prosecution for unauthorised non-attendance at school.

The Supreme Court said that “regular” means “in accordance with the rules published by the school” and rejected the view that regular meant “sufficiently frequently”. This clarifies the position regarding term time absence. The judgement confirmed that schools can determine whether an absence is authorised or not.

2.4 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Although we acknowledge that parents have the right to home educate their children, as a school we believe that in almost all circumstances the best place for a child to learn and develop is in a mainstream school. Parents who opt to home educate their children are 'legally required to ensure their child continues to receive a full-time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs' (Schools Bill, 2022).

There is evidence indicating that a sizeable number of EHE children do not receive a suitably broad education and that this negatively impacts on their academic and social development, limiting their future opportunities.

In cases of low attendance, the school will work with parents to improve their daughter's attendance. We strongly discourage parents from opting for EHE to avoid attendance related legal sanctions. Where it is believed that the potential of court action may have contributed to the decision to home school, this will be communicated to the local authority's EHE team.

All South Ribble schools have agreed a process for actioning EHE decisions. Prior to formally requesting EHE, parents are encouraged to come into school to discuss the decision with a senior or pastoral leader. If the parent decides to proceed with the EHE request, their decision must be clearly communicated in writing. School will confirm receipt of the request and provide a 5-day cooling off period.

If after this time, parents still intend to EHE, the local authority will be informed, and the young person will be added to Lancashire's 'Children Not in School' (CNIS) register. To ensure parents have made the right choice, a 5-day cooling off period will be provided. The local authority can request information relating to the young person's educational provision. In cases where it is unclear whether the young person is benefiting from an appropriate education, a 'School Attendance Order' can be issued. Failure to comply with the order can result in a fine of up to £2,500.

NB: All South Ribble secondary schools have an agreed protocol for Elective Home Educated pupils. As part of this agreement, EHE students returning to mainstream **must** return to their original school; a place at an alternative secondary school will be offered, regardless of the period of time spent in home education.

3.0 Responsibilities

“Improving attendance is everyone’s business... it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff within school.

Working Together to Improve Attendance – Sept 2022

3.1 The school will ensure that:

- Everyone in school will work tirelessly to ensure the school environment is welcoming, safe and supportive for all of its students;
- School actions foster feelings of belonging, encouraging its students to invest in our community and conform with our norms;
- Attendance policy expectations and procedures are published and publicised;
- All staff are provided with regular attendance focused training;
- Students are registered accurately and efficiently;
- Attendance targets are set for all pupils;
- Modified attendance expectations when appropriate, e.g. to reflect a SEN or medical need;
- Appropriate support is provided to enable students to tackle the barriers preventing regular attendance, including in-school counselling (e.g. ESBA) and the option to access external services through an Early Help Assessment;
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly monitored at all levels;
- The attendance team and pastoral / senior leaders work with pupils and their parents to reduce absence wherever possible;
- Attendance data patterns are monitored and used to identify wider issues, including EHWP, safeguarding and child protection concerns;
- Teaching staff work with pupils to minimise the impact of any absence;
- Attendance data is submitted to the local authority in a timely and appropriate manner; and,
- Legal interventions are applied in line with government and local authority guidance to ensure consistency and fairness.

3.2 Students are expected to:

- Aspire towards perfect attendance;
- Work with their teachers to minimise any lost learning;
- be punctual to school and their lessons; and,
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

3.3 The Parents / Carers are expected to:

- Aspire towards perfect attendance;
- Create an atmosphere at home where school attendance is seen as the norm;
- Promote and celebrate high / improving attendance;
- Make every reasonable effort to ensure their child is able to attend school, e.g. ensuring suitable transport;
- Only allow their daughter’s to be absent in unavoidable circumstances;
- Inform the school on each day of absence and give a specific reason;
- Avoid making routine appointments (e.g. orthodontists) during school time;
- Ensure the minimal amount of time is taken when an unavoidable absence occurs;
- Provide appropriate medical evidence to confirm both physical and mental health absences;
- Inform school of any planned ‘Leave of Absence’ in good time;
- Work with their daughter and the school to minimise the impact of any absence;
- Work with the school to identify additional services which may be needed to enable regular attendance, including accessing Early Help when appropriate; and,
- Understand that they have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in education and that schools are obliged by law to do all they can minimise absence.

3.4 The school's **Governors** are expected to:

- Monitor the attendance of students through regular updates and reports;
- Support the school in the implementing its attendance procedures, e.g. lead Attendance panels as and when requested; and,
- Review policy updates to ensure legal requirements are met and best practice followed.

3.2 School Roles

All staff members play an important role in student attendance. Securing great attendance is the first priority of all staff. After all, if a student isn't in school, the rest of our actions have no impact! All staff should do all they can to make school a welcoming environment where young people feel belonging.

3.21 ALL Staff will:

- Help to create an atmosphere which is inviting, where pupils feel secure and comfortable;
- Work to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of all students;
- Appropriate adaptations are in place to ensure all young people can progress and succeed;
- Encourage students to be involved in all aspects of school life, inc. trips, clubs and events;
- Accurately record attendance/punctuality to lessons;
- Complete registers through a verbal name call to ensure accuracy;
- Take appropriate action to sanction poor punctuality;
- Work directly with linked individuals (e.g. through the attendance partners initiative) to raise attendance amongst persistently / severely absent students;
- Ensure students are adequately supported when they return after an absence;
- Comment on attendance/punctuality at progress evenings and on school reports where these factors have hindered progress; and
- Prioritise attendance related procedures and training.

3.22 Form Tutors will:

- Register students accurately and on time (Complete reg at 8.55, save and close at 9.00)
- Promote great attendance at every opportunity;
- Ensure great attendance is acknowledged and rewarded (passport criteria, individual and form competitions etc...)
- Ensure students are provided with appropriate attendance and punctuality data;
- Tackle students who persistently arrive late;
- Oversee the completion of 'Absence checklists' by their tutees;
- Complete form tutor 'attendance chats' with members of their form and ensure they are recorded on ClassCharts;
- Notify the appropriate HoY when punctuality/attendance deteriorates; and
- Collect in, and pass on, letters and medical evidence relating to absences to the school's Attendance Officer.

3.23 Subject teachers will:

- Monitor student attendance in their lessons and take appropriate action to ensure any knowledge gaps resulting from absence are addressed (including the completion and monitoring of Absence Checklists);
- Liaise with their HoD and/or HoY when appropriate, to ensure students have the opportunity to access missed resources; and,
- Ensure, when appropriate, that absence is raised as a barrier to progress in all communications with parents, including the student's monitoring grades, written report and Progress Evening consultation.

3.23 HoY will:

- Monitor and report on attendance (Termly HoY PIP Review);
- Complete attendance interviews with pupils with deteriorating attendance, a pattern of missed sessions or a concerning number of broken weeks (See attendance intervention guidance);
- Ensure form tutor and HoY interviews are recorded on the SharePoint attendance tracker and that parents are notified through ClassCharts;
- Monitor the completion of 'Absence checklists' by students in their year groups, and intervene when tutors need support ensuring these are completed correctly;
- Support Attendance Partners working with linked students in their year group;
- Ensure the Attendance Officer has an up-to-date list of students with high level EHWP concerns (High Risk).
- As directed by the SLT Attendance Lead, support pupils with persistent attendance issues.
- Respond to parental queries relating to attendance interventions;
- Review attendance figures to identify patterns of absence which could indicate an EHWP issue or safeguarding concern – record concerns on CPOMS;
- Ensure excellent and improving attendance is celebrated and acknowledged; and
- Work with students, parents, form tutors, SLT and the AIW where attendance issues persist.

3.35 Attendance Officer will:

- Ensure attendance and absence is correctly recorded and categorised;
- Contact parents/carers when reasons for absence are unknown, or unauthorised;
- Ensure letters are sent home when no explanation is given for a new period of absence;
- Provide data updates as requested by the SLT Attendance Lead;
- Report school attendance statistics to the LA and DfE as requested;
- Raise concerning attendance patterns with HoYs, SLT, AIW, and DSL as appropriate;
- Record any safeguarding concerns resulting from attendance patterns, or interactions with parents, on CPOMS;
- Immediately notify linked staff of absence of high-risk students (list of students to track provided by DSL, SLT, FSW, AIW, and HoYs);
- Record information relating to attendance interventions on the SharePoint Tracker;
- Work with the AIW to ensure priority pupils are acted upon, including accompanying on home visits.
- Attend appropriate training to ensure appropriate skills and up-to-date knowledge of attendance procedures.

3.26 SLT Attendance and Punctuality Lead will:

- Monitor attendance figures, including comparisons with national (FFT and DfE);
- Review attendance policy annually and assess its impact;
- Monitor attendance/punctuality procedures and ensure correct implementation;
- Provide governors with a termly 'Attendance and Punctuality' report;
- Add attendance and persistent absence data for key pupil groups to the Data Dashboard;
- Support HoYs, the Attendance Officer and the AIW, when working with 'difficult' parents;
- Oversee the authorisation of 'agreed' absence and 'educational visits';
- Lead on attendance focused CPD;
- Regularly communicate attendance ambitions and policy expectations to students, staff, and parents;
- Liaise with the Safeguarding and Pastoral teams to ensure students absent due to EHWP issues or safeguarding / child protection concerns are appropriately supported, during their period of absence and when they return to school;
- Oversee rewards, support programmes and sanctions aimed at increasing attendance / punctuality;
- Oversee the work of the AIW to ensure action is taken against persistent non-attendees;
- Oversee the completion of legal documentation for the issuing of legal interventions (including penalty notices and prosecutions);
- Support in the production of legal documentation related to the issuing of legal interventions for persistently / severely absent students;
- Coordinate the provision of EBSA provision;
- In circumstances where the school is considering using legal measures against the parents of a PME pupil., the SLT lead will liaise with the DSL to organise a multi-agency strategy discussion; and
- Prepare for and host termly attendance meetings with a member of Lancashire's Attendance Support Team.

3.27 AIW (Attendance Improvement Worker) will:

- Track and monitor the attendance of targeted persistently absent students;
- Work with families, school-based services (e.g. FSW, School Nurse, Counselling Service) and external agencies to improve attendance;
- Lead in the provision of the school's EBSA (Emotional Based School Avoidance) strategy, including the provision of 1-2-1 and small group support sessions;
- Where appropriate, act as the lead professional, or provide support, to Early Help Assessments / Plans (EHA/EHP);
- Ensure all interventions and communications are recorded on the SharePoint tracker;
- Communicate with parents throughout the process of gathering evidencing and submitting requests for Penalty Notices and Prosecutions;
- Support the SLT lead in the completion of legal intervention paperwork;
- Evaluate and report back on the impact of attendance procedures & legal interventions;
- Ensure an up-to-date knowledge of the attendance legal framework, including the completion of relevant training;
- Authorise agreed absences and educational visits; and
- Record any EHWP, safeguarding or child protection concerns (CPOMS) which become apparent through the provision of attendance interventions and alert the HOY, SLT attendance lead or DSL as appropriate.

3.28 DSL

- Ensure all members of the attendance team have adequate safeguarding training;
- Ensure the Attendance Officer has an up-to-date list of high-risk students with safeguarding concerns;
- Contact parents and the allocated social worker of students who are on a CIN or CP plan, where necessary on the day of absence;
- Provide appropriate information to the pastoral and attendance team when a student with safeguarding / child protection concerns is absent;
- Liaise with the AIW and school counsellor to ensure EBSA support is in place for students with low attendance and safeguarding / child protection concerns;
- Ensure attendance issues are raised at multi-agency meetings relating to students with safeguarding needs and worrying attendance patterns. Ensure a written record of these discussions is kept and that appropriate information is recorded on cpoms and shared with the SLT attendance lead; and
- Provide guidance and support when attendance measures, including legal interventions, are applied to students with safeguarding concerns.

4.0 Attendance Related School Procedures

4.1 Registering Attendance and Reasons for Absence

- Each student is officially registered twice a day – once by the form tutor at 8.55 and then by the Period 4 teacher at 1.20. In addition, each student is registered by their class teacher at the start of Periods 1, 2, 3, and 5.
- Latecomers, student who arrive after the main entrance has been locked at 8.50, are signed in via the late room (Dining Room). If no valid reason is given, the student will be issued with a break time detention.
- Arrivals after 9.30 are considered as absent and must be explained by parental contact. Otherwise unauthorised absence is recorded.
- Any absence must be specifically explained by parents as soon as possible (a statutory requirement). Parents are required to contact the school with the precise dates of any absence and the exact reason.
- Contact with the school should be made on each day of absence. Where parents fail to make contact, the School Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact them. If contact isn't possible on the first day of absence, a letter will be sent requesting confirmation of the reason for absence. A record of letters sent will be recorded on the SharePoint tracker, and if appropriate on CPOMs;
- When contacting school, a clear reason for the absence must be given, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If when a parent is contacted, the whereabouts of the student is unknown, the caller should advise the parents to contact the police and the attendance officer should notify the Head's PA who should also log the missing child with the police. This should be recorded on CPOMS.
- Absences are categorised into one of the following groups:
 - Illness
 - Medical Appointment*¹
 - Permitted religious observance*²
 - Unauthorised absence (truancy or not allowed)
 - Authorised absence – only issued in exceptional circumstances

*¹ If a medical appointment cannot be scheduled out of school hours, we ask that parents send a copy of the appointment letter/card for our records. Alternatively, parents can submit a dated and stamped medical evidence card. These can be picked up from the school's reception or printed from our website. Where appropriate, we expect students to attend school before, and/or return to school after, the appointment. If no evidence of the appointment is provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

*² LA guidance allows students to take a maximum of two days per academic year for religious festivals e.g. Eid.

Students who are absent from school due to taking part in an authorised event outside of school, such as a sporting competition or arts audition, are recorded as being on an 'approved educational activity', which has the legal equivalence of being 'present' in school. Official confirmation of the event's date, time, and location, along with an outline of the planned activities and a copy of the event's risk assessment is needed for event authorisation (See section 5.1).

- NB: Medical evidence will be requested if a pupil is absent either side of a school holiday, or day of religious observance.
- Medical evidence will be required for any pupil who is absent for more than two consecutive days. This should be given to the attendance officer upon the pupil's return to school.

Failure to produce appropriate evidence (e.g. appointment cards or prescriptions) may result in the absence being unauthorised.

- In the event that the school has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire, heating failure or other structural damage, no attendance registers are completed.
- If at any point, an attendance related communication identifies an EHWPB issue or safeguarding concern, this should be recorded on the appropriate systems (CPOMs) and key staff notified.

4.2 Attendance Interventions

4.21 Absence Checklists

ALL students returning to school following an absence are supported with an Absence Checklist (included within the student's planner). The checklist has been designed to help students catch-up on any crucial missed work which may prevent / hinder future progress.

NB: Checklists are a support to help students keep up with their peers. They are not a sanction.

- The student's form tutor will oversee the setting up, and monitor the completion, of the Absence Checklist. On occasions – for instance following a prolonged period of absence – it may be necessary for the form tutor to liaise with subject teachers to ensure catching-up doesn't become overwhelming. It may be necessary to work with parents to agree a suitable catch-up plan.
- At an appropriate time, subject teachers should discuss missed work with the individual, identifying any 'must know' knowledge which has been missed. NB: Absent students should be directed to act on essential knowledge only (i.e. gaps in understanding which will prevent future learning), there is no need for students to complete every task set during the missed lesson(s).

4.22 Attendance Meetings

The attendance of all students is monitored by the SLT Attendance Lead. Where a student's attendance profile causes concerns, a formal meeting and/or letter will be sent home to parents.

An attendance meeting / letter may be triggered by one, or a combination of, the following concerns:

- A student's overall attendance has suddenly fallen;
- A student has accumulated a number of unauthorised absences;
- A student's overall attendance percentage has fallen below a key milestone, e.g. below 90% the threshold for Persistent Absence; or
- A student's pattern of absence raises concerns
 - absence only on specific days
 - the regularity of broken weeks
 - regular absence due to poor punctuality

Formal attendance meetings are held in a staged manner to reflect the school's level of concern. Initial meetings will be held with the student's form tutor. If the individual's attendance deteriorates further, then the HoY will meet with the student. Parents are notified of these low-level meetings through the issuing of a ClassCharts red.

In cases where absences result in significant concerns, the SLT Attendance Lead and/or the school's Attendance Improvement Worker (AIW) will meet with both the student and their parents, ideally in person, but over the phone/zoom when this isn't possible. Parents will receive a written invite to these meetings, and minutes of the meeting, including agreed actions, will be recorded (Edukey). In extreme cases, meetings may be held with the school's Headteacher or a member of the governing body (see panel meetings below).

4.23 Attendance Communications

In addition to the meeting related correspondences outlined above, the school implements a half-termly attendance communication programme for students with sliding attendance (typically between 95% and 92%). The structure of these communications are based on research informed best practice shared by the DfE.

- Priority students are identified at the start of each term.
- Students are identified using a range of data, such as YTD percentages and number of broken weeks etc. Selection parameters are refined each term to ensure effective targeting.
- Any student with extenuating circumstances is removed.
- Identified students receive:
 - (a) A formal letter stating why their daughter has been identified as an attendance concern and explaining the impact of absence on educational outcomes and wellbeing.
 - (b) A series of personalised ParentMail messages, typically at the start of each term, after 3 weeks, following the half term, and in the final week of the term.
 - (c) To maximise impact, these messages are personalised, will make the connection between attainment and achievement, and remind parents that they can make the difference.

Example Parentmail Messages:

Start of term:

Dear {Parent Name}. Last term, {Student Name} missed {Number of days missed in previous term} days of school. Absences can have lasting effects on learning. This {term/half term} is a fresh start and we appreciate your support in getting {Student Name} to school every day.

3 weeks later / half-term:

Dear {Parent Name}. Since the start of term, {Student Name} has missed {Number of days missed in previous term} days of school.

This is great news. Every day that {Student Name} is in school, she is learning more and expanding her knowledge. With your continued support, we can ensure {Student Name} keeps up with her peers.

This means she has missed {number of lessons} in the past {time period}, resulting in further knowledge gaps in her understanding. We appreciate your support in helping {Student Name} to ensure her Absence Checklist has been completed and to avoid any further absences this term.

Final Message:

Dear {Parent Name}. Last term, {Student Name} missed {Number of days missed in previous term} days of school. To date this year, she has missed {Number of days missed since September}, meaning she has been absent for {number of lessons}. Absences can have lasting effects on learning. To support you and {Student Name} next term, we will be providing an Attendance Partner to help you to get {Student Name} to school every day.

Dear {Parent Name}. Last term, {Student Name} only missed {Number of days missed in previous term} days of school. We appreciate your help in getting {Student Name} to school every day. Due to your efforts, {Student Name} has maximise her learning and progress.

The aim of these meetings (4.22), letters (4.23) and Parentmail is to:

- Raise the student's attendance record with their parent/carer
- Ensure the parent/carer is aware of our school's attendance target
- Highlight the school's legal responsibilities in regard to attendance
- Initiate the opportunity for a more detailed discussion on attendance barriers
- Agree an appropriate action plan to improve future attendance – Both home and school actions should be agreed.
- Where appropriate, offer additional help and support, such as access to the Haven or help from our Family Support Worker (FSW).

Administration of Attendance Letters

To ensure attendance letters can be used as legal evidence if the student's case eventually requires court action (a penalty notice or prosecution) all official attendance letters must be:

- Printed on official school headed paper;
- Dated;
- Sent to ALL adults holding parental responsibility for the individual;
- Where parents have different residences:
 - separately addressed letters should be sent,
 - the letters should make clear who else has received a copy of the correspondence;
- Written specifically about the target pupil, including individual attendance data;
- Offer the opportunity for any of the addressed parents to make contact / visit school to discuss their daughter's absence.
- Letters written to the parents/carers of persistently absent students must state that legal action will be considered if absences continue. The text used should also make clear the consequence of the action, e.g. the size of the fine.

4.24 Attendance Partners

Students with concerning attendance are supported through our Attendance Partners programme. A student may be supported by an Attendance Partner due to historic or current attendance issues. Attendance Partners are linked to specific students on a termly basis. Throughout this period, they will work closely with both their partnered student and their families to improve attendance.

Attendance partners will:

- Meet with their partners regularly to promote good attendance,
- Reward and celebrate improvements in attendance,
- Make daily contact with parents when their linked student is absent,
- Support the completion of Absence Checklists,
- Work closely with the individual / their parents to identify and tackle barriers to attendance,
- Where appropriate, they will make referrals to in-school services, such as our counselling or school nurse services.

4.25 Pastoral Support

Where attendance meetings with form tutors, HoY or Attendance Partners identify serious or ongoing barriers to regular attendance, staff members will liaise with appropriate pastoral staff (SLT Pastoral, SENCO, Safeguarding Team, Family Support Worker) to ensure the maximum level of support is available.

Support may involve the creation of an attendance related ‘provision’, such as a bespoke timetable reflecting the individual’s specific needs (e.g. temporary access to the Haven to support wellbeing, or a reduced timetable during post-operation recovery).

Additional support may include the completion of Early Help Assessments (EHA) / Plans (EHP) to access support from external services. For example, family help through Lancashire’s ‘Triple P’ parenting course, or access to well-being services, such as the Butterfly Project.

4.26 AIW Procedures

When a pupil’s attendance falls close to 90% - the government’s Persistently Absent threshold, our Attendance Improvement Worker (AIW) will start to monitor the individual’s attendance. Persistently absent students are proven to significantly underachieve in school and often experience other problems, including social exclusion and wellbeing issues.

SLT/AIW will review the causes of absence prior to taking any action. In some cases, e.g. students with SEND or medical conditions, there may be a valid explanation for the higher rate of absence. In these cases, the AIW will liaise with the appropriate staff member, e.g. the SENCO or School Nurse to agree a bespoke response.

If a student’s attendance falls below the 90% persistent absence threshold, the AIW will write to parents to ensure they are aware of their daughter’s high level of absence. This letter will clearly state that the school will use legal intervention if the identified pupil’s attendance rate fails to improve.

If the student’s attendance rate continues to deteriorate the AIW will take a number of actions to improve attendance. Typical actions will include formal meetings in school, the setting up of parenting contracts, requests to attend a Governor’s or Headteacher’s attendance panel, and the use of home visits / police welfare checks to ascertain the individual’s circumstances when not in school.

In cases where school related anxiety is identified as a significant barrier to school attendance, the AIW will support the individual through our EBSA 1-2-1 programme, designed to identify and address absence triggers. This scheme aims to enhance feelings of safety, security and belonging.

In cases where the attendance of a persistently absent student continues to decline, or fails to show the expected improvement, a school actioned monitoring period will be established. Monitoring periods extend over 4 school weeks. Any further unauthorised absence during this timeframe will result in the school applying to the Court Office for a legal intervention.

If a student’s absence fails to improve after the issuing of a Penalty Notice, or in cases of rapid attendance decline, the school will liaise with the Court Office and where appropriate will support the initiation of Prosecution proceedings.

Penwortham Girls’ High School is reluctant to initiate legal proceeding against parents. Legal measures are only ever used as a last resort once in-school interventions have failed to deliver the required improvement in attendance. However, school attendance is a statutory obligation under the Education Act 1996, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Schools Bill 2023. As such, where absence is likely to prevent the young person from fulfilling their potential, and where parents have not engaged with school as expected, we are required by law to consult with the court office to consider the use of legal measures, including penalty notices and prosecutions.

4.27 Governor / Headteacher Attendance Panels

The school holds termly attendance panels. These are led by either a member of the school's governing body or the Headteacher. These panels give parents the opportunity to help school to understand the specific issues which are leading to their daughter's absence. At these panel meetings, school will explain the wide range of support measures (both pastoral and academic) available in school for pupils struggling with attendance, such as access to our Inclusion facility. Through discussion, a Parenting Contract will be agreed (or reviewed if already in place), and attendance targets for the next half term agreed.

4.28 Home Visits

In cases where the exact location of an individual pupil has been impossible to ascertain, or where the school has safeguarding concerns (e.g. it is unclear if the absent pupil is being appropriately supervised), the school will complete a home visit. In cases where nobody appears to be at home, a letter notifying parents that a home visit has been completed will be posted. Parents are expected to contact school immediately upon receipt of the home visit letter to explain the young person's whereabouts.

4.29 Welfare Checks

In cases where home visits have been unable to ascertain the location of the individual or where safeguarding concerns exist, school will request that the police carry out a welfare check. Repeat checks will be requested until the school is satisfied that the pupil is safe and appropriately supervised.

4.3 Local Authority Submissions

Students who have a continuous period of unauthorised absence of 10 days or more will be reported to Lancashire County Council. In cases where we believe the individual is at home, a notification will be made to the 'Children Missing Out on Education' (CMOE) team. Where the exact location of the individual is unknown, a referral will be made the 'Children Missing from Education' team (CME). Submission to either CMOE or CME teams to be recorded on CPOMS.

5.0 Safeguarding / Child Protection Concerns

Where attendance interventions identify safeguarding concerns, these will be recorded on CPOMS and the DSL will be notified. The DSL may seek to work with the attendance team to provide any necessary support.

Where a student has a social worker (Child in Need / Child Protection Plan), the DSL will work with social services to tackle attendance barriers. Ensuring the student attends school and isn't educationally disadvantaged by their personal circumstances should be a key priority of all support plans.

NB: In cases where safeguarding concerns have been identified, attendance procedures should continue in line with the processes outlined in this policy, unless requested otherwise by the DSL. In these cases, it is often of the upmost importance that the pupil attends school as research shows that children who regularly miss education are more likely to suffer from safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation, particularly county lines.

6.0 Leave of Absence

Leaves of absence are only authorised in exceptional circumstances. In accordance with government and LA guidelines, **the school does not authorise holidays or family visits**. Factors which are considered when deciding whether a leave of absence should be authorised are:

- The stage of a pupil's education and current progress;
- The pupil's attendance and punctuality record;
- The length and timing of the absence requested;
- The special reason(s) supporting the request;
- Previous requests for absence.

Parents who wish to apply for a leave of absence must complete the official request form. This form can be collected from reception or completed via the school's website. Completed forms should be returned to the school's Attendance Officer as early as possible, ideally at least 3 months prior to the proposed absence.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice. NB: In some cases, part of a requested leave of absence may be authorised due to exceptional circumstance, with the remainder of the requested absence being unauthorised. In this situation, the pupil's parents will still be fined if the unauthorised period exceeds the 10 sessions (5 days) threshold.

In line with Lancashire County Council procedure, when a request for leave is rejected and the proposed period of absence, if taken, would result in the issuing of a penalty notice, the school is required to notify the local authority who will send a 'warning letter' to the pupil's parents. A penalty notice request will only be submitted to the court office if the pupil is absent as originally proposed, or if the period of absence is extended. If a request for absence is made with insufficient time for a county warning letter to be actioned (usually two school weeks in advance of the first day of absence) school will write directly to parents stating that the absence has been unauthorised and that completing the trip as outlined will result in a penalty notice.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed. Absent pupils who can't be contacted and/or who are known or suspected to be out of region (or have left the country) will be registered as 'Missing from Education' (CME) with the Local Authority. This can result in the pupil being removed from the school's roll. The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (i-iii) of the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

6.1 Externally Arranged Educational Visits

Each year school receives a relatively large number of requests for absence for students to attend externally arranged events such as dance competitions, gymnastic training camps, acting auditions and netball tournaments.

If parents wish their daughter's to be granted leave of absence to attend these events, the event leader must provide an official communication which covers:

- The event leader – name and position.
- The dates and times they expect the student to be absent from school
- The venue where the event is being hosted
- The transport arrangements for accessing the event
- An outline of the activities to be completed and their value to the individual
- If appropriate (e.g. for adventure related activities), a risk assessment written by either the event organiser or site manager.

Where the above information is provided in advance of the absence, school will reflect on the event's potential benefits, the likely opportunity cost of missing time at school, and the individual's past attendance record before making a judgement. If authorised the event will be recorded as an educational visit rather than an absence.

NB: If the above information isn't provided in full in advance, or the absence taken doesn't reflect the event described in the letter, the absence will be unauthorised.

NB: If the pupil has low attendance, the request is likely to be rejected.

7.0 Tracking of Attendance Data

Attendance data distributed to Pastoral Leadership on a **daily** basis:

- Our Attendance Officer circulates a daily absence list to all pastoral leaders. Students of concern (e.g. no contact from parents, pattern of absence (e.g. Fridays), or the duration of absence) are highlighted.
- Absence of vulnerable students and those supported by an Attendance Partner / AIW is emailed to the relevant staff daily before 10.30.

Attendance data added on a **weekly** basis to the Governors Dashboard:

- Weekly and Year to Date (YTD) attendance figures for whole school, year groups, PP and SEND cohorts;
- Supplemented with national data from the FFT Attendance Dashboard and fortnightly DfE releases.

Attendance data included on the SharePoint Attendance Tracker – updated **half termly**:

- Individual half termly and YTD attendance percentages
- Cohort averages
- Reasons for significant absence (e.g. hospital stay, infection, holiday)
- Record of interventions implemented (intervention and date).

Attendance data included in the **termly** HoY Report.

- Summary of year group level data;
- Priority students causing concern;
- Reflections on interventions completed;
- Action Plan for upcoming term.

A full Attendance Review is completed **three times a year** for the Governor's Curriculum Committee. This report includes:

- Whole school attendance and trend tracking;
- Reasons for absence - compared with previous years;
- Year group attendance breakdowns and trend tracking;
- Punctuality reports – overall and year group specific;
- Subgroup analysis (Ethnicity and SEN breakdowns);
- Pupil Premium data – whole school and year group;
- Persistent absence data and trend tracking;
- Review of school data against national (FFT) and regional (DfE) data;
- Severely absent data and trend tracking;
- An assessment of the current attendance situation;
- A summary of recent attendance / punctuality related policy / procedural developments;
- An outline of school interventions; including legal interventions, and an evaluation of their impact.

This policy has been agreed by the Governing Body	DATE
Reviewed - Curriculum	October 2015
Reviewed - Curriculum	January 2017
Reviewed – Curriculum	January 2018
Reviewed - Curriculum	January 2019
Reviewed - Curriculum	September 2019
Reviewed - Curriculum	September 2020
Reviewed - Curriculum	October 2021
Reviewed - Curriculum	October 2022
Reviewed – Curriculum	October 2023

Appendix:

Daily procedure for absent students without parental contact:

