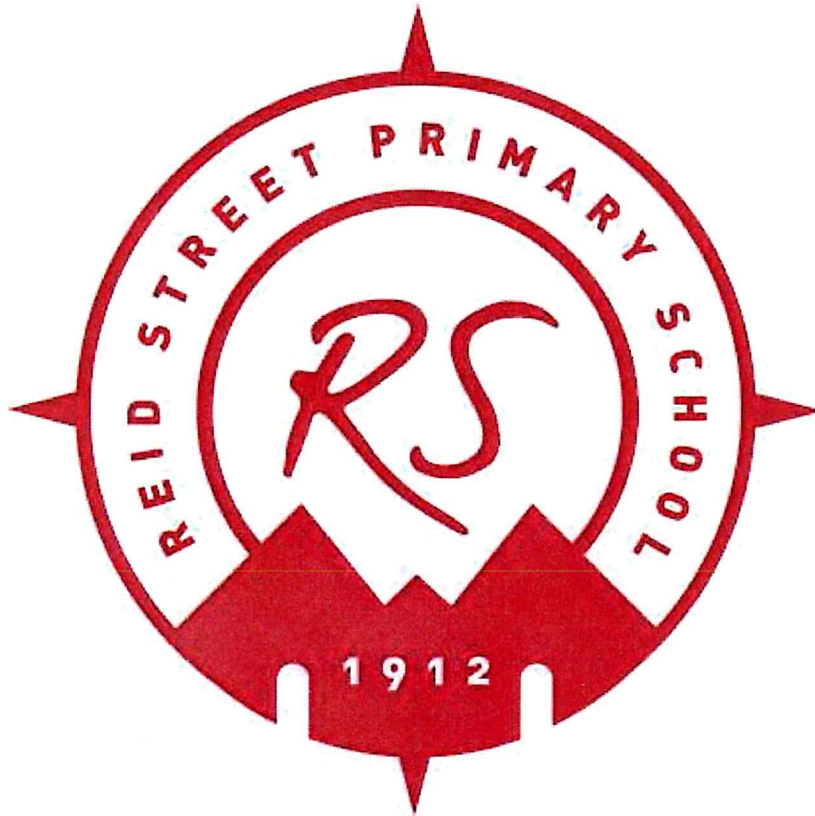


# Reid Street Primary School

## Attendance and Absence Policy



Date policy last reviewed:

Signed by:

[Signature]

Principal

Date:

23/10/2024

[Signature]

Chair of Governors

Date:

23/10/2024

## **Contents:**

### Statement of Intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Attendance expectations
5. Attendance register
6. Authorising parental absence requests
7. SEND- and health-related absence
8. Absence in exceptional circumstances
9. Truancy
10. Working with parents to improve attendance
11. Persistent Absence (PA) and Serve Absence (SA)
12. Legal intervention
13. Training of staff

### **Appendices**

- a) Attendance Monitoring Procedures

## Statement of Intent

**Reid Street Primary School** believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, anti-bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Attendance Champion is Joanne Davison and can be contacted via [admin@reidstreet.darlington.sch.uk](mailto:admin@reidstreet.darlington.sch.uk). Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

## Introduction

“Every child has the right to an education.” (Article 28 of the UN Convention on the rights of the child)

Good attendance and punctuality are important because:

- there is a direct link between poor attendance/punctuality and underachievement;
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines and schoolwork easier to cope with;
- pupils arriving late may cause disruption to the learning of others as well as their own; and
- it improves the life chances of pupils as they move through primary and secondary school and into adulthood.

Parents of compulsory school-aged children have a legal duty to ensure their child receives suitable education. Should a child fail to attend regularly then legal action may be taken against the parents under section 444 of the Education Act (1996).

The Law defines a parent as:

- 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).

It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the child, that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Attendance is one of our top priorities. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance. We aim to do this by:

- Promoting and celebrating good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to improve school attendance and support parents to meet their statutory obligation
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Providing an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school
- Monitoring and supporting children whose attendance is a cause for concern and working in partnership with pupils, parents, carers and other agencies (where necessary and appropriate) to resolve any difficulty. This includes regularly communicating attendance levels to all parents
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school on time to support punctuality
- Analysing attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice

## 1. Legal framework

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

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

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

## 2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

### **Absence:**

- Not attending the registered school for any reason

### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

### **Persistent absence (PA) Severe Absence (SA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason
- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

### **Missing education:**

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance champion role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the local authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

- Communicating with the local authority regarding any pupils who are absent from school for 15 days or more (consecutively or cumulatively) due to medical needs.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

## 4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

**Pupils will be expected to:**

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend every timetabled lesson.

At Reid Street we hold high expectations for attendance of all pupils in our school, regardless of age. What do we recognise as acceptable levels of attendance?

Nationally, it is expected that schools will be open to pupils for 190 days per school year.

The table highlights how attendance percentages relate to the number of days missed. Persistent Absentees and Severe Absentees show the urgency for improvement.

| Percentage    | Rating   | How many days missed per year? |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 100%          | Excellent  | 0                              |
| 98 – 99.9%    | Very Good  | 0.5 – 3.5 days                 |
| 96 – 97.9%    | Good   | 4 – 7.5 days                   |
| 92 – 95.9%    | Requires Improvement   | 8 or more days                 |
| 92%           | At risk of being a persistent absentee - Urgently requires improvement | 15 days – 18.5 days            |
| 51 - 90%      | Persistent Absentee<br>Urgently requires improvement                   | 19 days or more                |
| 50% and below | Severe Absentee<br>Urgently requires improvement                       | 95 days or more                |

## 5. Attendance register

The school uses SIMs electronic management information system to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

By law schools have to mark certain absences down on the school registers. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.

### From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 the following codes will be used:

| Code | Meaning  | Type                 |
|------|--|----------------------|
| /\   | Present at the school / morning \ afternoon  | Present Mark         |
| B    | Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework  | Present Mark         |
| C    | Authorised Circumstance (see next page for breakdown)  | Authorised Absence   |
| D    | Dual registered at another school<br>- Attending Alternative Provision at another school site -<br>Hospital education<br>- Education at a secure / residential site<br>- Off-site direction / managed move | Present Mark         |
| E    | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made  | Authorised Absence   |
| G    | Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school   | Unauthorised Absence |
| I    | Illness (not medical or dental appointment)  | Authorised Absence   |
| J1   | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution  | Authorised Absence   |
| K    | Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority Home Tutoring<br>- Approved Framework for Alternative Provision<br>- Blended Learning  | Present Mark         |
| L    | Late arrival before the registers have closed  | Present Mark         |
| M    | Attended a medical appointment   | Authorised Absence   |
| N    | Reason for absence not yet established   | Unauthorised Mark    |
| O    | Absent in other or unknown circumstances   | Unauthorised Absence |
| P    | Participating in a sporting activity   | Present Mark         |

|   |  |                        |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Q | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements   | Not expected to attend |
| R | Religious Observance   | Authorised Absence     |
| S | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school. | Authorised Absence     |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.            | Authorised Absence     |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed  | Unauthorised Absence   |
| V | Attending an Educational Trip or Visit   | Present Mark           |
| W | Attending Work Experience  | Present Mark           |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school  | Not expected to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)   | Not expected to attend |
| Z | Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register  | Not expected to attend |

| Code  | Meaning | Type |
|---|---------|------|
| <b>The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:</b> |         |      |

|    |   |                        |
|----|---|------------------------|
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available   | Not expected to attend |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel   | Not expected to attend |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes.  | Not expected to attend |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating.  | Not expected to attend |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.             | Not expected to attend |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. Contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.                                 | Not expected to attend |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent. | Not expected to attend |



**The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:**

|    |   |                    |
|----|---|--------------------|
| C  | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. | Authorised Absence |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.  | Authorised Absence |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.  | Authorised Absence |

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, and the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

**Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.**

## 6. Authorising Parental Absence Requests

### **Authorised or Unauthorised:**

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

### **This may include:**

Parents/carers/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e. condoned absence)

- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- Any other leaves of absence in term time which have not been agreed.

Parents/carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Principal and/or the Attendance Champion – the decision to grant or refuse the request will consider the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents/carers.

### **Leave of absence during term time:**

Reid Street School will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. All applications informing of a planned leave of absence must be made at least 10 school days in advance of the planned absence by emailing the office the dates and reasons. No holidays will be authorised during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

### **Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:**

- When a pupil is just starting the school year. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already of concern
- On the basis of SEND where parents and carers claim that the pupil would benefit from the reduced crowds during term time.

## Term time fines

### Key information and changes

1. Where a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks (1 day=2 sessions), this will be referred to the local authority who will consider issuing a penalty notice. This will include unauthorised holidays.
2. The first penalty notice is £80, per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. If the fine is paid between 21-28 days, it will be £160 per parent, per child.
3. If a second penalty is issued, this will be £160 per parent, per child.
4. Please note that parents can only be issued two fines in three years. If parents reach the threshold for a third fine within this period, the local authority may move to issue either a parenting order or prosecution. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Parents who require a clean criminal record as part of their employment checks should make note of this change to national guidance.
5. The statutory guidance makes clear that schools are unable to authorise term time leaves of absence (i.e. holidays) unless there are exceptional circumstances, **however this is very rarely the case**. It is the responsibility of parents to prove that circumstances are exceptional. Retrospective applications or holidays taken without an application will always be unauthorised and referred to the local authority for consideration of a penalty.

### Illness and healthcare appointments:

Parents/carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment and provide evidence of the appointment. The attendance champion is responsible for determining what constitutes as satisfactory evidence of a planned or emergency medical appointment.

### Performances and activities, including paid work:

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve providing work. Private teaching may be offered but these arrangements would need to be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day. The pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Principal to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Principal will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96% in mainstream settings or 93% in SEN settings. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Principal will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

**Religious observance:**

Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance. The school will only accept requests from parents/carers for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents/carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence:**

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purpose and the following conditions are satisfied, in line with Section 444(6) Education Act 1996

The child is of no fixed abode **and:**

- Parents are engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place, **and**
- The child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, **and**
- If the child has attained the age of six, that he or she has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

## 7. SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or Individual Healthcare plans that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Communicate with the local authority regarding any pupils who are absent from school for 15 days or more (consecutively or cumulatively) due to medical needs.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

### Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

School will refer to EBSA protocols when considering if a pupil fits the category of Emotionally Based School Avoidance. These instances are managed by the SENDCo and/or Designated Safeguarding Leads.

## 8. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

## 9. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Reid Street will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Principal in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance champion will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Attendance Champion will work with the principal and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

## 10. Persistent Absence (PA) / Severely Absent (SA)

Children who are registered at a school but regularly fail to turn up are officially referred to as being 'persistently' or 'severely' absent. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance drops below 90% and a 'severely absentee' is a pupil who misses more than 50% of possible school sessions at any point during the school year for whatever reason. Absence at both levels cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with interventions where necessary.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence, persistence absence and becoming severely absent such as:

- Children in need
- Children who are looked after (CLA)
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

Reid Street School will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have these high rates of absence and will work with the Local Authority and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 11. Legal intervention

The school is required to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority.

Parents may be issued with a Notice to Improve. Failure to improve attendance and where a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks (1 day equates to 2 sessions) may receive a fixed penalty notice which will be in line with the National Framework and local code of conduct.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Parents and carers should refer to *DFE: Working Together to Improve School Attendance* for further guidance regarding statutory expectations of attendance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Section 444a of the Education Act 1996 empowers designated Local Authorities the power to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school or alternative provision. These powers were extended by Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education (Penalty Notice England) Regulations 2007 to allow Penalty Notices to be issued to parents/carers/carers of pupils found in a public place, without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Local Authorities set out on their websites their Local Code of Conduct for school attendance.

Schools and the Local Authority will decide which parent(s) to involve in attendance legal intervention.

Please be aware that the proceeds from the fixed penalty fines DO NOT go to the school.

## 12. Monitoring and analysing absence

The Attendance Champion will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Attendance Champion will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly, and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance Champion will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. They will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

### 13. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and safeguarding refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

### 13. Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In preparing or amending this policy, the author has given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; that is, they have considered any potential impact on people who share certain protected characteristics. These protected characteristics are defined as: race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

## Appendix

### What is EBSA?

EBSA stands for Emotionally Based School Avoidance. It is a term used in reference to a group of children and young people who have difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, sometimes resulting in prolonged absences from school.

School avoidance can be seen as a form of coping strategy: a behaviour seen in pupils who, for whatever reason, are finding being in school difficult. The non-attendance may be conscious and planned, or it may be an instinctive response to a sense of threat (different presentations of EBSA could be viewed as either reflecting fight, flight or freeze patterns of behaviour).

For some, an avoidant strategy might be used to miss particular lessons, whilst others might resist attending altogether.

'Attendance resistance' can arise suddenly in response to a significant event, or it can be more insipid, developing slowly over time.

Reid Street has drawn from Darlington Educational Psychology Service *Emotionally Based School Avoidance: Good practice guidance for schools* to support understanding, assessment, and response. Designated Safeguarding leads and those with SENDCo responsibilities have formulated the protocols established below to identify and support pupils who are understood to fall into the category of EBSA.

### Process for identifying pupils who are Emotionally-Based School Avoidant

In the first instance, attendance champions or DSLs will identify pupils with declining absence. They will consider the following questions:

|   |
|---|
| Threshold considerations  |
| Is the pupil demonstrating new signs of distress along with decreased absence?  |
| Do parents demonstrate clear efforts to increase their child's attendance?  |
| Is there increased self-harm or low mood, along with decreased attendance?  |
| Have you observed or has the pupil vocalised pressures within the home that are negatively impacting on their attendance? This includes concerns of domestic violence or caring responsibilities. |
| Has the pupil demonstrated exam anxiety and/or negative attitudes towards education, along with decreased attendance?   |
| Has the pupil recently suffered significant bereavement and/or trauma?  |
| Has the pupil experienced any sudden life changes along with decreased attendance?  |
| Does the pupil take medication for anxiety?   |
| Are health professionals actively involved in supporting the pupil's mental health?   |

Whilst the above questions are not exhaustive, they are intended to guide the DSL and SLT to consider whether there are external factors that require a multi-agency response before implementing a school based (single agency) support plan.

## Analysis

The following structured conversation will take place with parents to understand more context around the pupil's presentation.

| <b>EBSA</b>                                     |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Parent / Carer Conversation Framework</b>    |   |
| <b>Developmental &amp; educational history</b>  | What was X like as a younger child? Tell me about X's experiences at school (nursery, primary, secondary, including transitions)  |
| <b>Strengths</b>                                | What do you notice X is good at? What does X enjoy doing? What are X's hopes for the future   |
| <b>Structures and changes within the family</b> | Who is in X's family? Who does X live with? Who is X most like / closest to? Have there been any changes or losses within the family during X's life? Are any likely in the future? Has anything very difficult happened to the family? Have any of X's siblings experienced EBSA?  |
| <b>Typical day</b>                              | What does a typical school day for X look like from waking up to going to bed? When X doesn't go to school what does the day look like? What is a typical day for other family members like when X is at school and when X isn't at school?   |
| <b>Relationships</b>                            | Does X seem to have any friends? Does s/he speak about any other children? Who does X get on with and not get on with? How does X respond to conflicts / difficulties with other children?  |
| <b>Presenting behaviour and feelings</b>        | How do you think X is feeling at the moment? When X is anxious / worried, what does that tend to look like? Can X tell you about how s/he feels? Has X spoken to you about what is difficult at school? What do you think X finds difficult about attending school? If other family members were here, what would they say? |
| <b>Exceptions</b>                               | Can you tell me about times when X is not experiencing feelings of anxiety / worry? Have you noticed times in the past when X seems to have been coping better? What has been different about these times? Have there been any times when things seem to have been going better for X?                                      |
| <b>Previous attempts to address the problem</b> | What approaches / strategies have helped in the past when things have been difficult? Are there any things that really haven't worked? What has been the most helpful thing that someone else has done to support you with X's attendance?  |

DSLs will work with pupils to complete the below push/pull factors analysis to understand barriers to attendance from the pupil's perspective



## Push and Pull Factors Sheet

Pupil: Year: Date:

| <b><i>Pull away from attending school</i></b><br>   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Are there <b>school factors</b> that currently pull the pupil away from attending school? | Are there <b>family factors</b> that currently pull the pupil away from attending school? | Are there <b>pupil factors</b> that currently pull the pupil away from attending school? |
|   |   |  |

| <b><i>Push towards attending school</i></b><br>  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Are there <b>school factors</b> that could 'push' the pupil towards attending school more often? | Are there <b>family factors</b> that could 'push' the pupil towards attending school more often? | Are there <b>pupil factors</b> that could 'push' the pupil towards attending school more often? |
|  |  |   |

**What can we do to reduce or remove the identified *pull* factors?**  
**What can we do to stabilise, increase, strengthen or extend the identified *push* factors?**

## Support for pupil

From analysis of both the pupil and parent perspectives, the DSL will implement a bespoke plan of no more than 6 weeks, aiming for full reintegration by the end of the period.

