DOWNSEND SCHOOL

Children Absent from Education, Children Missing Education, and Attendance Policy

Downsend School

September 2026

Registered in England & Wales - Cognita Schools Limited No. 02313425
Registered Office: Seebeck House, One Seebeck Place Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK5 8FR

COGNITA

THRIVE IN A RAPIDLY EVOLVING WORLD

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach taken to:

- Recording attendance information on a daily basis
- Recording information at the point a pupil joins/leaves the school
- Managing a situation when a pupil has unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence from education
- Working with authorities where there are safeguarding concerns linked to attendance, and
- Working with authorities where a child is identified as missing education

Scope

This policy applies to all children in the school, those in Early Years (including registered provision where offered).

Audience

It is important that staff, parents/carers, and pupils are familiar with this policy.

Content

1. Attendance
2. Children Absent from Education
3. Children Missing Education
4. Effective management of child absence and procedures
5. Safeguarding
6. Elective Home Education

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Attendance of Sponsored International students (Child Student and Student visas)

Appendix 2- Attendance Guidance for Parents/Carers

1. Attendance

Introduction

The word ‘child (ren)’ is used to represent pupils of the school.

This policy applies to all pupils, including those in Early Years.

Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Promoting consistent and high attendance (and punctuality) is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's day to day vision, values, ethos and culture, alongside positive behaviour.

Missing learning time through having unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence, and/or missing education completely, leaves children vulnerable to falling behind in their learning, and it is well known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement which reduce longer-term opportunity. Furthermore, poor school attendance can also impact on a child's social and emotional development.

Children absent from and/or missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, abuse and/or exploitation, including sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance at school is an important protective factor against wider harms, and the best opportunity for a child's needs to be identified and support provided.

Poor attendance is habitual; therefore, prevention and early intervention is crucial. Absence from education and/or missing education is a symptom, and improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare. Individual pupils' barriers to school attendance, however, often go far beyond the school gates. Persistent, prolonged and/or unexplained absence and/or missing education is almost always a symptom of wider issues in a pupil's life, and barriers to attendance are often specific to local contexts.

School attendance, therefore, cannot be seen in isolation. The foundation to good school attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive, plus a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child, beginning from the Early Years.

Monitoring and review arrangements

Our school has high expectations of attendance and considers good attendance to be that above 96%. Attendance rates are reported regularly to the Cognita Board. Proprietorial Governors report on pupil attendance, as well as any patterns or trends of persistent absence from school. Representatives of the Proprietor scrutinise Admissions and Attendance Registers for compliance and safeguarding purposes.

The legal framework

The Education Act 1996 specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school every day the school site is open. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs; either by regular school

attendance or home education. At all times, the schools will consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the Children Act 1989; 2004 and/ or considerations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Statutory Guidance

The school also adheres to the statutory guidance below and will work in a collaborative way with parents and external agencies, in accordance with the principles of the latest versions of:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Working Together to Improve Attendance
- Children Missing Education
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
- Elective Home Education – departmental guidance for local authorities

Statutory Regulations

The school is also required to have and maintain an Admissions Register (see Applications and Admissions Policy) and, in addition, an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the UK requires a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance.

- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2024)
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014)
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2024)
- Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2024)
- Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders (England) Regulations (2007)

The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 do **not** apply to independent schools (unless academies) therefore we are not legally required to share attendance data.

However, our local authority has requested to have our attendance data and this has been agreed, after confirmation from the Cognita DPO.

Information Sharing

Effective information sharing between parents/carers, schools, and local authorities is critical for ensuring that all children of compulsory age are safe and in receipt of a suitable education. With this in mind, and using the principles of the statutory guidance above, the school will share information as soon as possible should concerns arise, including the identification of children missing education (CME, see below).

Parent/carer(s) responsibilities are to:

- Encourage regular and sustained attendance for the child in their care, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities (s 7 Education Act 1996).
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence for the child in their care which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child in their care's absence before the start of the school day
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children in their care from school during term time.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence of the child in their care, including any safeguarding matter.
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers. Schools will make best efforts to secure a third contact number and evidence their efforts (see below).
- Update the school with any changes to circumstances/contacts, including changes to telephone numbers, so that the school can amend the child's MIS profile, and the Admissions Register as required (including rare circumstances where it is agreed that a child is dual - registered).
- Update the school with any changes to circumstances in relation to family contact/collection arrangements (separated/divorced parents) so that the school is aware of these and can support any court orders in place.
- Inform the school of the child's next educational setting and address/or how they are intending for their child to be suitably educated as soon as possible if they choose to end their parental contract, especially mid-year, so that the Admissions Register can be updated and the child taken off roll at their specified end date. The parents/carers must also supply the child's new address if this is changing.
- If the above information is not supplied, the school may need to seek advice from the local authority. This may include notifying the Child Missing Education team (or equivalent) where a child has been identified as not having a next educational setting, and the Elective Home Education team or equivalent) where children are leaving school to be home educated. In some circumstances, Children's Services may also be contacted where there are also safeguarding concerns about a child who is leaving the school (see below).

Leaving school early during the day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a known parent/carer for a specified reason, authorised by the Headteacher. If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent/carer is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they must sign out at the School Office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents/carers must notify the school in advance in writing and await authorisation by the Headteacher.

- Pupils are never allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by staff members (following written agreement by the Headteacher) to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture. No staff member must take a pupil off site on a one to one basis.

Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

- Schools, not parents/carers, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Headteacher. The Headteacher/nominated staff member in the their absence is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application: if Code C is used, the rationale must be recorded by the school). Authorised leave will not be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.
- We ask that parents/carers make immediate contact with the school prior to the start of the school day, and ongoing at agreed intervals when a child is going to be absent for ill health (mental or physical) reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and, importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness (see below). We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.
- An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher other nominated staff member in the their absence, in advance. The relevant Department of education code will be applied (see below).

Records

The school:

- Uses the DfE national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence (School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024) in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the Admissions and Attendance Registers for a period of six years after the date they were entered. These registers are legal records.
- Keeps accurate and efficient records (electronic) of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities. The school's Attendance Register, kept by means of a computer, is backed up in the form of an electronic copy at least once a month.
- Only authorised absences in exceptional circumstances according to government guidance using the relevant code (see above) - authorisation is to be undertaken by the Headteacher only.
- Holds at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil on their records, where possible, and where only two are provided, makes every effort to obtain a third (schools must document their efforts to obtain a third). The school will review these contacts regularly with

parents/carers to ensure they are correct. Note, the onus is on parents/carers to update the school of any changes in contact details in the best interests of their child.

- Regularly informs parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels, ensuring all parties are made aware of any concerns (unless they are not able to share this information due to court order restrictions/ and/or Children's Services /Police advice).

Oversight of Attendance

- All school staff will maintain a positive school culture where monitoring, promoting, and incentivising attendance is seen as **everyone's responsibility**; staff, child and parent/carer.

- The school has a nominated **Senior Attendance Champion** (a member of the leadership team) who has responsibility and oversight of attendance matters (supported by other colleagues where required).

Their name and contact details are:

- Little Downsend: James McCarthy-Mitchell (Head of Little Downsend), his contact details are james.mccarthy-mitchell@downsend.co.uk
- Downsend Junior, Senior and Sixth: Sally Johnston Downsend Junior Head. Her contact details are email – sally.johnston@downsend.co.uk tel: 01372 372197

The Senior Attendance Champion has a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.

They will:

- monitor attendance and punctuality patterns and trends on a weekly basis
- use this analysis to implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance such as targeted support for individual children, cohorts, year groups, and/or vulnerable children, as required, and to also provide regular attendance reports to relevant colleagues (DSL, SENCO, Heads of Year, class teachers) in order to facilitate discussions with pupils and their parents where required.
- consider half-termly, termly, and full year data identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance
- use the findings to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies
- benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement
- where required, devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- report on patterns of attendance at Governance Meetings to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils

- fulfil the schools' duties in regard to CME, in collaboration with the Head and DSL
- ensure that the correct DfE codes are consistently applied, with oversight from the Headteacher- clear notes must be made of the reasons given by parent/carers of any abscences

- In addition to the Senior Attendance Champion, on a day-to-day basis, parents/carers are able to gain information around attendance from their child's form tutor, head of year or Section Head.

  Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school work alongside and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

The school day to day:

- Provides parents/carers of children in their care with the timings of the school day and the calendar via the school website and any other usual method(s) such as the school newsletter, in advance.
- Ensures that teachers take a register at the beginning of the morning and at least once during the afternoon session;
  The A.M register opens at 8.30am. After 8.40am a student will be marked as late and will be recorded using the appropriate code and the length of time they are absent for. And reason At the end of the registration period if they have arrived they will be marked as absent.
  During PM registration the register will open at the start of the afternoon teaching session any pupil that is absent will be marked as so – if they arrive within the sessions they will be recorded as late and a note make of the amount of time and reason.
- Ensures that those taking the register mark all children who are not present by the designated time, taking account of absence notes
- Ensures that should any pupil arrives late for school, they sign in at the school office so that school systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times. Repeated lateness will be discussed with the child's parents/carers to listen and understand the barriers to arrival on time.
- Immediately follows up any unexpected/unexplained absence of a child who is on roll, and expected to be present, with a telephone call to the parent/carer(s); children who are vulnerable **must and will** be prioritised (safeguarding, medical, and learning needs). Children on sponsored visas are also a priority.
- If the child's absence continues during the day without explanation, further regular contact with the parent/carers will be made to ensure the safeguarding of the child. If the parents/carers do not respond after several attempts to contact them, then consideration may be given to contacting Children's Services and/or the Police for advice. If the parents/carers do respond to school contact with an explanation for their child's absence, but there are significant safeguarding concerns about their explanation, particularly where there

are existing safeguarding concerns, the school may initially seek the advice of the Regional Safeguarding Lead and/or Children's Services.

- If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made to the Police via 999 (followed by a referral to Children's Services). There must be no delay.

Vulnerable Pupils

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations and/or variable moods. The school is particularly mindful of pupils who may be absent from school due to mental or physical ill health conditions and/or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and will provide them with additional support (see below for Part-Time timetable).

It is important to note that these pupils are **still** expected to attend school regularly as this is a legal requirement - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future. The school will work alongside pupils and parent/carers to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance, by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions and/or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided adhering to the relevant government guidance.

For children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will alert the local authority who maintains the EHCP about any significant issues emerging over attendance of which it becomes aware, so that the local authority can consider whether needs continue to be adequately supported through the existing plan. Where needed, the school will work with the local authority to review and amend the child's EHCP to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified.

In cases of both long-term physical or mental ill health, school staff cannot and must not diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but they will work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for the pupil.

Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because their absence is complex or long term, in the best interests of the child, the schools will seek medical evidence, with the parents/carers consent to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions or arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Where the parents/carers do not consent to sharing medical evidence to support

their child's needs and fulfil their mandatory duties to send their child to school, consideration may be given to seeking the advice of the local authority.

Where the pupil has an allocated Social Worker, the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will keep them informed and involved in the above processes.

The school will:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the pupil's underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of the pupil who is struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act (2010) where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil, their parents/carers, and the local authority.
- Register the child using the absent using code I in situations where a child is unable to attend because of illness (only) (short term).
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school i.e. a part-time timetable would be appropriate, for example, for those pupils who have been out of school for a longer time due to being affected by mental health/physical health reason (see below for part-time timetable). The school can access the many EBSA tools and guidance documents available in these situations and seek the support from the Regional Safeguarding Lead where required
- In all situations, the school will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps

Part-Time Timetables for compulsory age children

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for the school to provide a **temporary** part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

Note: a part-time timetable using Code C2 **must only** be used for health reasons, not behaviour.

A part-time timetable must have:

- the written agreement of both the Headteacher and the parent/carers
- a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents/carers to ensure the plan is only in place for the shortest time necessary
- a proposed end date that takes into account the exceptional circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend school on site full-time. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process.
- In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term physical/mental health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period. Medical evidence will be needed, and external specialist intervention will need to be in place to support the child during this period (see above).

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the Headteacher has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (C2 for compulsory age pupils)..

2. Children Absent from Education

Often children can be persistently absent from school or have prolonged absences. Of course, there may be a satisfactory reason for their absence, most often medical, for why this is needed, for example, the child is having operations/treatments. In these situations, the school will offer work to be completed at home/involve the child with their class remotely on MS Teams, only where appropriate, and in collaboration with the parents/carers and children. The parents/carers will have a designated school contact for their child. No work must be sent home if this is thought to have the potential to place additional pressure on any child. Any arrangement will be short-term and reviewed regularly; the school may also request to have visibility of the child via MS Teams during this time and will always require this visibility when there are safeguarding concerns about the child.

However, on other occasions, the child is frequently absent but there does not appear to be an explanation or a satisfactory reason. This is different from a child being a 'child missing education' (as described below) but it is still a concern. Safeguarding procedures may be needed in these situations. For example, where visibility is not agreed by the parents/carers, or they fail to ensure visibility of their child at the agreed time, then consideration may be given to seeking advice from the local authority children's Social Care. For pupils who already have existing safeguarding concerns, and all cases where they have an allocated Social Worker, the local authority children's Social Care will always be informed of the pupil's absence.

As stated above, it is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school, but of most importance, frequent absences impact on a child's development across all domains, not purely cognitive. Schools must follow their **local authority guidance** in terms of the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without authorisation and/or 15 days' sickness absence (consecutive or not).

Each local authority may have different thresholds and criteria for making notifications. The guidance from the local authority where the child is mainly resident will be used.

.

3. Children Missing Education (CME)

CME are defined by the DfE as: 'children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school' (Children Missing Education 2025).

CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving home education that has been assessed by the local authority as being unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

CME are **not** children who:

- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school
- are receiving a suitable education otherwise than a school (for example, those who are home educated (EHE) or attending alternative provision which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have
- are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable

Children Missing Education (CME) are therefore different to those who are 'absent' from education.

Outcomes

More generally CME are at greater risk of underachieving and becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) later in life. They are also more likely to have poorer health outcomes.

Vulnerabilities

- CME are more likely to be of secondary school age, and when compared to the overall population more likely to be known to Social Care either being subject to a child protection plan or a looked after child plan.
- Whilst some families are settled, children of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller families can also be potentially at increased risk of missing education if they are moving regularly. Dual registration may be agreed by the local authority (only) for such situations.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children of new migrant families can also be at increased risk of CME due to their unsettled, often temporary housing situations, their potential for unrecorded arrivals, and sudden moves between local authorities.
- Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Should this situation arise for a pupil, the school will work collaboratively with the Youth Offending Team/Police/child's parents (or carers) to support the child's school attendance.
- Children of service personnel are likely to move more frequently, both in the UK and overseas, sometimes with short notice, and therefore are at some risk of becoming CME,

- Home educated children (see below) who are not known to the local authority as being home educated; parents not responding to local authority enquiries; or those who are not receiving suitable home education, could be at risk of being CME.

Risk

Some CME may be at greater risk of being victims of harm, exploitation (including sexual and criminal exploitation) and/or radicalisation. Research has also shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime.

Drivers

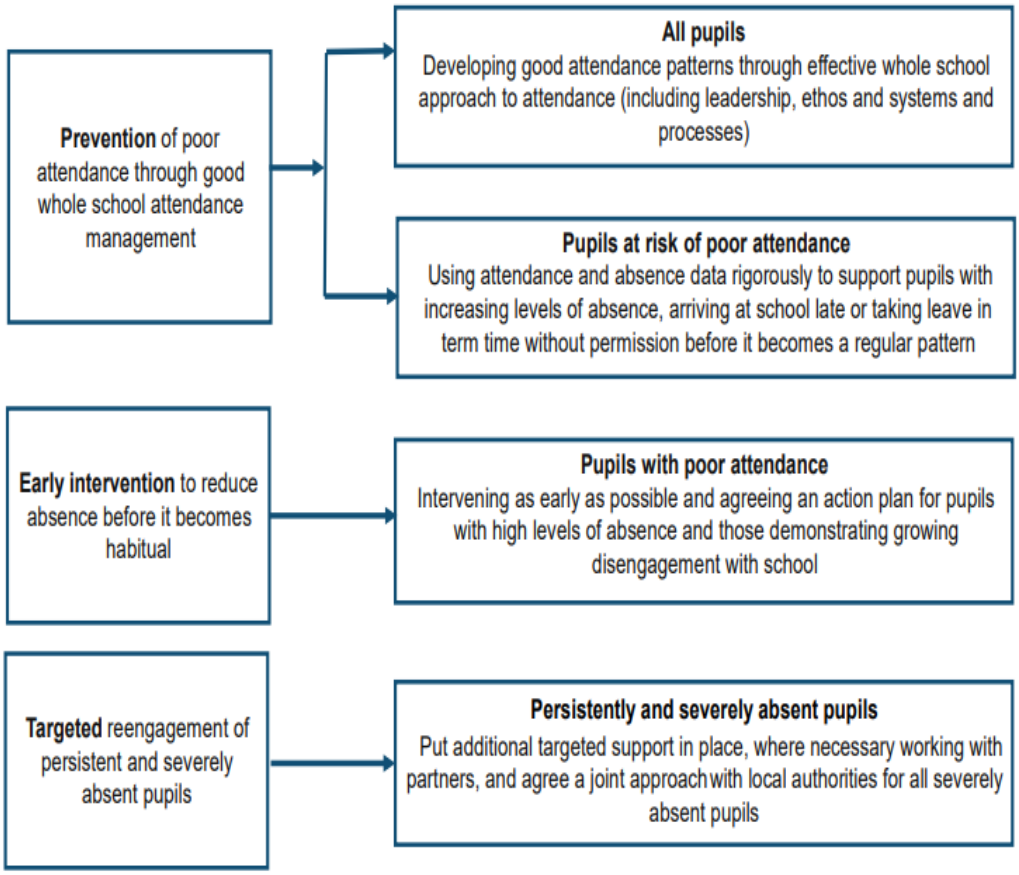
According to the DfE's aggregate data which has been gathered from 2022, there are a range of circumstances where a child may be a CME. Some of the main drivers of CME include, but are not limited to:

- Routine movement in and out of the country
- Awaiting school application outcomes
- Movement between local authority areas

If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action in the identifications and support of CME.

4. Effective management of child absence and procedures, including CME

Steps in regard to childfren being absent from education



Step 1- Prevention

The Senior Attendance Champion, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and all staff will work together to identify patterns/changes in all pupil's attendance at an early stage to prevent any further absence, including addressing unexplained, persistent, or prolonged absence (deemed as attendance below 90%). Schools must address all attendance concerns with both parents/carers and child as soon as challenges emerge

School staff will listen to children and their parents/carers to understand any 'in school' /external barriers to the child's good attendance, working jointly with families to remove those barriers wherever possible. They will agree actions and interventions, such as referrals to services or organisations that can support These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families. Where interventions are failing, all parties will work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach. If the attendance does not improve, then then next step will be taken.

Step 2- Early Intervention

Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which may require the school to work in tandem with the local authority Early Help and Family Help services. and other relevant partners. Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary assessment, as described in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The DSL and/or Senior Attendance Champion should seek advice from the Regional Safeguarding Lead where needed at this stage.

Step 3-Targeted Support

Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will continue to hold formal conversations with the parents/carers (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This meeting is likely to be led by the school's Senior Attendance Champion, the DSL, and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team (or equivalent) as this is best practice.

School Attendance Support Team (or equivalent)

All local authorities are expected to have a School Attendance Support Team (or equivalent) that works with all schools in its area, **including** independent schools. There is no requirement for a specific service delivery model or name, but each local authority is expected to provide four core functions outlined below free of charge to all schools:

- communication and advice
- targeted support meeting
- multi-disciplinary support
- legal intervention

In cases where a pupil lives in one local authority area and attends our school in another, the overarching principle is that both the local authority in whose area the pupil attends school (the 'School LA') **and** the local authority in whose area the pupil lives (the 'Home LA') work together to support the pupil and family. Assessing and putting in place any Early/Family Help or multi-agency family support plan in cases where local authority action is needed sits with the Home LA. Where schools are completing the single assessment or acting as the lead practitioner (but with local authority involvement) the school will need to work together with the Home LA.

These above meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences. If a particular form of support is refused or does not work initially, schools and partners are expected to provide further opportunities to engage in that support, try something else or ultimately take legal action if support is not appropriate.

Step 4 – Legal action by the local authority

The local authority may, in accordance with the regulations decide to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a Notice to Improve and/or penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
- Intensify support through statutory Children's Services involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents/carers where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

More information on the above can be found in the government guidance pages 47-61.

Reasonable enquires to locate a suspected child missing education

New pupils

If a new pupil fails to attend at the beginning of first day of the agreed or notified admissions date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Schools must monitor all pupils' attendance through their daily register.

Existing pupils

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days following an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the Admissions Register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is. See CME in Safeguarding section for more information about undertaking 'reasonable enquiries'.

The school will make a written record that they have completed these procedures on their safeguarding systems under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is.

In conducting these 'reasonable enquiries', the school and the school local authority are also expected to liaise with the home local authority and if, following those enquiries, the pupil's name is deleted from the school's register, the home local authority should investigate whether the child is a Child Missing Education.

Should/when the child be located, and their circumstances established, before their name is deleted from the Admission Register, both parties (school and local authority) must agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the child will attend the school again (even when a new school has not been secured).

Following a visit, parents wishing to register their child should first complete an Application Form and return/submit it online with a payment for the registration fee. The registration fee covers the cost of administering the registration procedure, including the waiting lists and is non-refundable. An application is an indication of interest and is not a guarantee of a place. The Application Form and details of the registration fee and how to pay the fee are available on the School website.

The School will respond to the parents by confirming that the applicant's name has been placed on the admission list for the relevant term and year. If the year group is fully subscribed, they will be placed on a waiting list. If this is a within-year application, the parents will be notified if there is a place for the applicant.

5. Safeguarding

Children Absent from Education

- Ensuring that attendance improvement is prioritised and strategies and action plans are put in place for pupils with persistent, prolonged and/or unexplained absence is crucial to safeguarding and improving pupils' overall welfare and outcomes in both the short and long term.
- The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of its pupils, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained, persistent, and/or prolonged absences (see above for visibility). Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions (including truanting) can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, and/or child sexual and/or child criminal exploitation.
- It is important that the school's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, neglect and/or exploitation and, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging, but also where children are already known to the local authority Children's Services and have an allocated Social Worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns about any child's absence, whether this be persistent, prolonged or unexplained, absence, the school will always talk to the child and parents/carers about their concerns, in order to understand the barriers to attendance as soon as problems begin to emerge (see above). They will also follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which includes notifying the the local authority attendance services, and also referring to Children's Services as appropriate (see above).

- As stated above, where children are absent and there are safeguarding concerns, the school will arrange to have twice weekly check-ins with the child via online methods e.g. MS Teams. The school has a duty to know where children are and have visibility of them. If the parent/s carers of the child do not agree to this request, or do not respond to any such request, consideration will be given to seeking advice from/making a referral to Children's Services.
- Where there are existing/potential safeguarding concerns around a child, and the parent/carer unexpectedly removes their child to home educate them, a referral to Children's Services must and will always be made (see above). For any pupil that has an existing allocated Social Worker, the latter will be updated.
- If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed whether this relates to a child's absence or not, the school will inform the Police.
- If there is reason to believe a child who is absent from school is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, whether there has been communication from parents/carers or not, a referral must and will be made to the local authority children's Social Care and the Police will be contacted.

  This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds (and medical evidence) to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

- For children on sponsored visas, please see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Appendix 1.
- The school will work in collaboration with external organisations and local authorities when school absence is a significant concern.
- Severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute **neglect**. In these situations, local authority Children's Services will be involved and make decisions around the child/family.

Children Missing Education

Where the school receives an in-year application, they must inform the local authority, including the outcome of the application, to ensure that the local authority is aware of any children who may not have a school place. Note; not all local authorities are requiring this notification- each school will check directly with their specific local authority and have written evidence.

When the whereabouts and circumstance of a child are unclear or unknown (and the child has been previously registered at the school) the school will do their own initial proactive work to locate a child at risk of becoming a CME before (and after) referring to the local authority to make enquiries, as far as reasonably possible, to identify the location of the CME, and any provision of education they are receiving.

This joint activity is called making 'reasonable enquiries', meaning that they should be proportionate to the situation (for example, where risk may be involved). Joint actions may include:

1. Making contact with the parent/carer's using known contact details
2. Checking with agencies known to be involved with the family
3. Checking with sibling's schools whether they have contact with the parents/carers (if applicable)
4. Where the child had previously moved or changed school, check with the local authority and school from which the child originally moved, if known
5. Checking with the local authority or school to which a child may have moved
6. Checking with the local authority for the area where the child lives, if different ot that of the school
7. Making contact with known relatives, if appropriate, using known contact details
8. Speaking to landlords if appropriate (private, social, or temporary housing providers)
9. Referring to databases within the local authority where possible (for example, admissions or Children's Services)
10. Establishing and following local information sharing arrangements (where needed) to access, and check data bases of external agencies (housing providers, health services, Police, refuge, youth justice services, and council tax)
11. Checking with national databases
12. Home visits- made by the local authority only
13. If it is thought that a child may have moved abroad, consideration may be given to contacting the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and/or Border Force.

Please note that schools will usually undertake points 1-7 during their initial proactive enquiries prior to/in collaboration with the local authority. If asked by the local authority to undertake any of points 8-13, the school must and will consult with the RSL before proceeding.

No home visits must or will be undertaken by the school unless agreed by the RSL and risk assessed, even when the local authority advises this.

The above list is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Cases will differ and additional enquiries to the above may be suggested.

These enquiries must continue until the local authority has informed the school that they have no further role.

If/or until the child cannot be located, the last known authority will keep the child's name on their CME list.

6. Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove their child from school from a certain date with a view to educating them at home, the school should first coordinate a meeting with parents/carers to explore why they are considering this option. Schools will explore keeping the child in school whilst respecting parental choice.

If the parent /carer still chooses to withdraw their child after the above meeting, the school must delete the child's name from the Admission Register on the date the child is no longer attending. The school will notify the local authority of the leaver, including (where appropriate) the local authority's Elective Home Education Team (or equivalent) (informing the parents that they have done this so that they can receive the necessary ongoing support).

However, where parents/carers orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated, but they do not put this in writing or provide an end date, this may trigger the school notifying the local authority CME department at the earliest opportunity. The local authority may wish to undertake its own informal enquiries and establish what education is being/planned to be provided.

Appendix 1

Attendance of Sponsored International students

(Child Student and Student visas

Cognita acts as a sponsor for international students who have Child Student and Student visas. The United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has a duty to ensure that all sponsors discharge their responsibility to act in accordance with the immigration rules. As a school, we are responsible for ensuring that these students are appropriately cared for and that any safeguarding concerns are addressed.

Knowledge of the sponsored student

Prior to any children sponsored by Cognita arriving at the school, it is important that the school's pastoral and safeguarding team, and other relevant staff (including the child's form tutor/class teacher, Head of Year, Head of Phase) have knowledge of the child's circumstances, including who has parental responsibility, the child's care arrangements, and contact details for the carer/Private Foster carer in the UK. The most senior member of the pastoral team, with support from the DSL, must have oversight of all international students sponsored by Cognita.

Responsibility for each sponsored student starts from the moment the Cognita International Recruitment Team assigns the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), i.e. before the student leaves their home country and enrolls at the school. The Headteacher, school admissions team, most senior member of the pastoral team and DSL should be aware of the child's travel arrangements to the UK.

Records of sponsored student information

At the very least, this should be the student's passport and their BRP (once this has been issued, after arriving in the UK). If the child is aged 4-11 years old, then they will be here with one of their parents under the Parent of a Child Student visa route. We should have the parent's passport and BRP too.

Other appendices we hold, depending on circumstances, may include:

- Appendix A: letter of consent from the parents/guardians for Cognita to sponsor their child
- Appendix B: letter of undertaking from intended carer (if the child isn't coming to the UK with one or both of their parents)
- Appendix C: letter of consent from parents/guardians to intended carer
- Appendix D: close relative care arrangements (if the child is going to live with a grandparent, brother, sister, stepparent, uncle (brother or half-brother of the child's parent) or aunt (sister or half-sister of the child's parent) who is aged 18 years or over and has UK Settled Status.
- Appendix K: travel confirmation form (detailing travel arrangements to the UK)

- Appendix P: genuine student English interview (conducted and completed by the Cognita International team)
- Appendix Q: student route finance declaration (confirming the family have sufficient funds to meet the UKVI requirement for sponsorship)
- Appendix S: Tuberculosis certificate declaration

Arrival to the UK

If the child fails to arrive as expected, the school should report this as a matter of urgency to the Cognita International Recruitment Team (IRT), who are responsible for updating UKVI if the child fails to enroll. Cognita are responsible from the moment the CAS is raised. The school needs to complete the enrolment checklist (Appendix F in the UKVI handbook) and upload it to the student's sponsor file on Teams.

Arrival to start school

If the student does not arrive when expected to start school, the school should notify the IRT immediately. If the student does not arrive within ten working days of the enrolment period, the IRT must report this to UKVI.

Once the child has arrived safely, the UKVI School Champion, in collaboration with the DSL, will aim to ensure that their needs are met, including pastoral need, and they will liaise with the child's parents and carers for the ongoing needs of the child.

Absences from school or pastoral concerns

With regards to safeguarding this potentially vulnerable group of students, any lack of engagement in study/social activities displayed by them, any absences, or failure to return to school after a holiday or break, should be escalated initially to the Regional Safeguarding Lead **on the day it occurs**. Therefore, schools must make notes of the child's planned travel dates and location/address of visit). The RSL will escalate the concerns to the Cognita International Recruitment Team as needed (but no later than 5 working days after the event); the latter is obliged to report the child to the UKVI if the child has ten consecutive unauthorised absences.

A formal meeting with the child's parent/guardians/carers must be arranged if a sponsored child's attendance falls lower than 92% and again if it falls below 82%. A record must be made of this meeting and saved in the child's folder in MS Teams, with agreed action points to improve the child's attendance. If a sponsored child's attendance falls below 80%, Cognita may be required to withdraw sponsorship of their visa and they will need to leave the UK. It is a requirement of the UK Visas & Immigration (part of the Home Office), that schools demonstrate how they track attendance of this group of potentially vulnerable children. The school must therefore collate evidence.

Changes in circumstances of the sponsored student

Schools should be proactive in determining whether there has been any change in a sponsored international student's circumstances. The school should liaise with the parent(s)/guardians of all sponsored international students every term to check whether:

- the student and their parent/guardian's address has changed; or
- the students' childcare arrangements have changed (e.g. moved from living with their parents to a private foster care arrangement).

Changes in circumstances must be reported immediately. These can include:

- a change in where a student studies;
- a change in the student's course;
- a change in a student's registered address;
- a change in whom the student lives with (e.g. from parent to private foster care); or
- any other circumstance that suggests that they are breaking the conditions of their permission to stay in the UK.

Templates are available in the UKVI handbook.

Appendix 2

Attendance Guidance for Parents

Introduction

Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

The legal framework

Legislation in the UK specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school every day.

The regulations require the school to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence.

Link between attendance and achievement

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

- Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve five A* to Cs including English and Maths;
- Of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve five A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths; and
- Of pupils who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve five A* to Cs including English and Maths.

Parent/carer(s) have responsibility to :

- Be fully aware of their legal responsibilities for ensuring the child in their care attends school every day
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for learning.
- Ensure that the school has at least 2 emergency contact numbers
- Provide clear reasons to the school for any absence which ensures the school can code the child's absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence before the start of the school day.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time as this can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, and only by the Headteacher.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence related to the child in their care, including any safeguarding matter.

- Adhere to any Part-Time Timetable and/or co-constructed reintegration plan where the child in their care has been absent from school for a longer period.

School has the responsibility to:

- Promote pupils' good attendance and reduce absence.
- Work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to.
- Act early with parents/cares and children to address patterns of absence by listening and understanding any barriers to attendance.
- Encourage parents/carers to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, using the appropriate DfE codes, including attendance at all after school and before school activities

Late arrival

If a pupil arrives late, they must sign in at the school office so that our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

Leaving school early during the day

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or their known parent/carer; or to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture. This must be authorised by the Headteacher.

If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent/carer is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they must sign out at the school office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents/carers must notify the school in advance in writing and provide evidence. This must be authorised by the Headteacher.

Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

Schools, not parents/carers, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Headteacher. The Headteacher in their absence is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave will not be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

We ask that parents/carers make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a medical note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteaher in advance.

Good attendance

Our school considers good attendance to be above 96%. The school will contact the parent/carer(s) of the child if there are emerging attendance concerns. If attendance does not improve, the school will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures (see policy).

Version control:

Ownership and consultation	
Document Sponsor	Director of Education (Europe and USA)
Document Author / Reviewer	Regional Safeguarding Lead –Europe and USA (RSL) RSL reviewed June 2024 RSL reviewed March 2025, July 2025, and Sept 2025 RSL reviewed June 2026
Consultation & Specialist Advice	
Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Spain	No
Italy	No
Greece	No
Switzerland	No
Austria	No
USA	No
Version control	
Current Review Date	September 2026
Next Review Date	September 2027
Related documentation	
Related documentation	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Applications and Admissions Policy