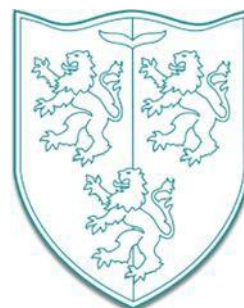


<b>Date of last review:</b>	Jan 2024	<b>Review period:</b>	1 year
<b>Date of next review:</b>	Jan 2025	<b>Owner:</b>	CEO



## ***Pembroke Park Primary School***

# ***Attendance Policy and Procedures***

*Enabling a world of freedom, opportunity and fulfilment*

History of Policy Changes:

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
January 2023	All	New document	Trust Board
21.01.24	1	Senior leader changed to Head	Headteacher
March 2024	6-7	Addition of Attendance affected by Mental Health Issues	Trust Board

## Key Personnel

Academy Leader: Toni Hayzen

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Toni Hayzen

Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance: Head Teacher

## Policy Aims

### *Expectations and responsibilities*

At all times we will:

- have high expectations for every pupil's attendance at school. 97% is the benchmark for 'good' attendance
- set expectations about attendance from the outset through the transition process
- understand that good attendance does not happen in isolation – there is an interrelationship between attendance and the quality of the school's curriculum, ethos, behaviour and inclusivity
- not stop pushing for whole-academy improvement once attendance reaches the national average
- see the process of securing good attendance for all pupils as an ongoing process, never something that is 'finished'

### *Work with pupils, parents and carers*

At all times we will:

- communicate high expectations clearly, strongly and consistently to parents and to pupils
- explain to parents and pupils why good attendance is important and how it helps pupils to achieve
- listen to parents carefully to find out why their children are not attending well enough so that we can work together in acting accordingly
- challenge parents who do not make sure that their children attend, but also offer support where needed
- have the right people in place to have these conversations with parents

### *Recording keeping*

At all times we will:

- ensure that attendance is always recorded accurately
- systematically analyse attendance information looking for patterns and trends
- use this analysis to target actions, both for individuals and at a whole-academy level

## Legal Framework

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Parents who condone absence without good reason should recognise that this is an offence in law and may result in legal action.

There is no entitlement in law to time off in term time (leave of absence). Magna Learning Partnership Academies will not authorise leave of absence in term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Whilst there is not a definitive list these are typically for the following reasons:

- Unavoidable medical appointments
- Close family bereavement
- Matters relating to a child's welfare

Individual cases will be addressed by the Academy Leader or Academy Attendance Lead. Should a parent need to apply for leave of absence they are required to apply directly to the Academy Leader, completing the Leave of Absence (LoA) Request Form which is available to download on the Academy website or from reception. A decision will be made in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Where a pupil has been absent and the academy has not been able to make contact to explain the absence within a 10 day period (5 days for a vulnerable pupil), the Missing Children Procedures will be actioned by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant agencies notified.

### Fixed Penalty Notices

A penalty notice is an alternative to being taken to court by the Local Authority. If a child has 10 or more sessions (am/pm) of unauthorised absence, the academy will inform the Education Welfare Service (EWS) who may issue a penalty notice for each child to each parent. Anyone who has day to day care of a child is considered a 'parent' and legally responsible for making sure the child attends school, this could be a step parent or a parent not living at the child's home address.

The penalty is £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days. The penalty is reduced to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days

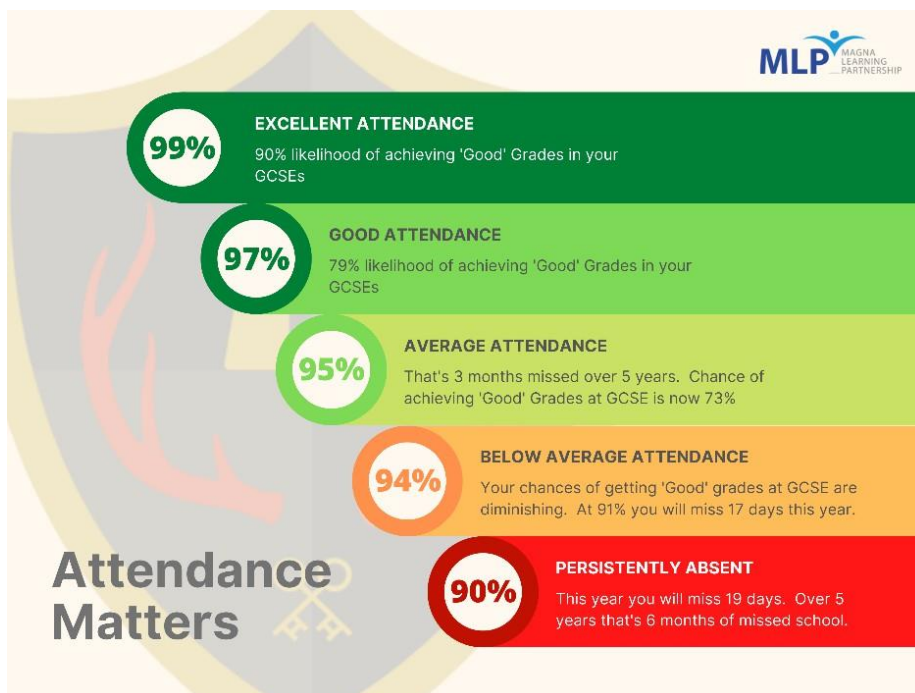
If a parent fails to pay the fine within 28 days, the Local Authority will have no option but to prosecute a parent in the Magistrates' Court. This could lead to a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child.

### Expectations and Responsibilities

95% attendance is the national average for pupils. 95% attendance equates to 9.5 days of missed school in an academic year of 190 days. A pupil with attendance below 90% is deemed persistently absent. This equates to 19 days of missed school in an academic year and approximately 6 months over 5 years.

- >99% 'Excellent attendance'
- >97% 'Good attendance'
- >95% 'Average attendance'

(Example secondary Attendance poster):



Attendance	Number of days absent	Approx. time missed in 5 years
99%	2 days	10 days
97%	6 days	2 months
95%	9.5 days	3 months
90%	19 days	6 months
85%	28.5 days	9 months
80%	38 days	1 year

### Attendance affected by Mental Health Issues

Schools should set and maintain high expectations for the attendance, engagement and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school. It is important to recognise that, in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten their anxiety about attending in future.

School staff will recognise that there can be attendance challenges where a child has a social, emotional or mental health issue, particularly a severe issue for which the child is receiving clinical treatment.

Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a 'broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school' (West Sussex EPS 2018). Terminology varies in the literature and it is recognised that there are tensions over the most suitable terminology. MLP academies have decided to use the term EBSA in preference to other terminology, e.g., 'School Phobia', 'School Refusal'. 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance' is used as this seems to be the most commonly used term. However, we recognise that often 'avoidance' is an emotional response to an aversive situation rather than a conscious choice.

We recognise that in addition to those pupils not attending for extended periods of time, there are many other pupils who experience an aversion to aspects of the school experience. For example, an aversion to attending specific lessons or feeling overwhelmed in busy environments.

Magna Learning Partnership academies are aware of the following factors and data demonstrating the prevalence of EBSA within our local communities:

- Implementation of reduced school timetables
- Parent/carer feedback Surveys
- Elective Home Education
- Requests for professional involvement

The MLP approach to supporting children and young people who experience EBSA is underpinned by the following principles associated with positive outcomes:

<b>Early Intervention</b>	<b>Working with parents/carers and staff as well as the pupil themselves</b>
<b>A focus on a rapid return to school alongside intervention, support and adaptations within the school and home environment</b>	<b>Working flexibly with a focus on understanding the function of the avoidance behaviour being shown by a pupil</b>

Factors associated with positive outcomes for successful reintegration (Baker and Bishop, 2015)

School staff should work quickly to communicate this expectation to parents/carers, and work together with them to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance.

Any associated anxiety about attending should be mitigated as much as possible by creating a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance (see effective practice examples).

These adjustments should be agreed by and regularly reviewed with all parties, including parents/carers. Any actions taken to support attendance are referred to as “reasonable adjustments”.

In developing a plan to support attendance through reasonable adjustments, school staff will need to take into account the individual circumstances of the child, being mindful of safeguarding responsibilities as set out in the Keeping children safe in education 2023 guidance.

### Transition to Secondary School

At the time of transition, the class teachers will identify individuals with patterns of attendance below 95%, and any pupil at or above this figure who required significant intervention by the primary

academy in achieving this attendance and share this information with the senior leader for attendance as well as the next class teacher prior to the start of the academic year.

The Attendance Lead will flag siblings in families with poor attendance histories. This 'watch' list will be monitored closely by the Academy leader.

### Empowering Young People

Realising the academy's strategic aims and objectives is a significant contributing factor in assuring high attendance without the need for intervention. It is our collective responsibility to realise these aims and objectives and in doing so demonstrating that securing 'good' attendance is a collective responsibility. Our ultimate aim is to achieve an attendance of 100%. Through the completion of regular stakeholder surveys, we will seek the views of our pupils and respond to this information. We want pupils to enjoy their education experience, make positive lifestyle choices and forge resilience when faced with challenges.

## Procedures – Guidance for all Staff

### Work with pupils, parents and carers

#### *The importance of communication and positive relationships*

The academy will ensure it communicates with both pupils and parents regularly and ‘strongly’ about the importance of ‘good’ attendance. This includes communications at least termly, through the reporting cycle and at parent events, through the pastoral programme, through rewards and through the academy website. For individual communications see response to pupil absence.

It is vital that all staff ‘notice absence’. *“I note you were absent yesterday”* is a common phrase we all must use. Do not allow pupils’ absence to go under the radar. For this communication to work well we must first build a positive relationship with the pupil and then ‘lift the lid’ to find out what are the barriers to good attendance.

In all communications, links will be made between attendance and how it enables pupils to achieve. There is compelling evidence that correlates good attendance to ‘at least’ good achievement and attainment.

In communicating with both pupils, parents and carers we will: ‘listen, understand, empathise and support – but not tolerate’. For this communication to work effectively, staff need to have built positive working relationships with parents, so that parents trust them. At the same time, these relationships need to be built on honesty, so that parents accept tough messages about attendance when they need to. It is vital that class teachers build these positive relationships with parents at the earliest opportunity.

### Why do some pupils attend better than others?

There are any number of reasons for non-attendance. They may include:

- parents did not have a good experience of school themselves and do not see the importance of attendance
- parents may be working shifts and there is no-one to get a pupil out of bed and ready
- attendance data is misunderstood by parents – while 90% may be good as a mark in a test, in attendance terms it means one day a fortnight being missed
- basic routines are not in place at home, leading to lateness, which can lead to non-attendance through missing the school bus
- parents cannot get their children to come to school, even though they understand the importance of attendance
- older siblings’ non-attendance is affecting their younger siblings – the whole family stops attending
- the pupil is a young carer
- there are financial barriers, for example parents being unable to afford transport to school, school uniform or sanitary products
- anxiety may be a factor
- they may dislike a teacher, subject or planned event
- they may be experiencing bullying

By asking the right questions and listening, sometimes problems can be solved easily.

The importance of ‘not letting up’ cannot be underestimated. Whilst this might ‘strain’ these relationships at times it is in the best interest of the pupil and the parent.

### Response to pupil absence – who is responsible?

In matters of attendance there is a hierarchy of people in place to provide information, challenge and support where needed. This hierarchy is illustrated below with responsibilities outlined at each stage. Overall responsibility sits with the Attendance Lead in the academy. They will work closely with the class teachers ensuring that staff fulfil their responsibilities regarding attendance.

Intervention		Responsibility
Level 0	Attendance Admin and record keeping	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To ensure registers are completed accurately, pupils coded accordingly. Reasons for absence given.</li> <li>2. To contact home on the first day of absence First Day Contact</li> </ol>
Level 1	Class Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To build positive relationship with pupils and their parents/carers</li> <li>2. To monitor attendance and punctuality for all members of the class</li> <li>3. To contact home if absence is unexplained or is beginning to show a pattern</li> <li>4. To make pupils and parents aware of the importance of maintaining ‘excellent attendance’</li> <li>5. To liaise with the Senior Leader regarding any attendance concerns (Level 2)</li> </ol>
Level 2	Attendance link	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote a strong attendance ethos within the academy.</li> <li>2. Seek to unlock any barriers to ‘excellent’ attendance working with class teachers.</li> <li>3. Intervention with pupils between 85%-95% and not improving following actions. School Attendance Meeting to be initiated.</li> </ol> <p>Ensuring:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Regular contact with home regarding attendance concerns</li> <li>5. Meeting with pupils and their parents for a School Attendance Meeting where attendance does not improve, to establish an Attendance Contract, or where there have been two or more days of unexplained absence in a term. A clear message must be given around expectations, making the links between attendance and achievement.</li> </ol>
Level 3	Attendance link	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrating improved attendance</li> <li>2. Referring to the EWS as appropriate.</li> </ol>
Level 4	SLT link	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide strategic planning for attendance</li> <li>2. Ensure regular attendance communications with stakeholders</li> <li>3. Systematically analyse attendance information looking for patterns and trends</li> </ol>



		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Use this analysis to target their actions, both for individuals and at a whole-academy level</li> <li>5. Monitor the fulfilment of roles with regards to attendance</li> <li>6. Provide fortnightly attendance updates to the Academy Leader</li> <li>7. Respond to Leave of Absence requests</li> <li>8. Meet with Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and refer pupils for Fixed Penalty notices as appropriate</li> </ol>
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### Flow Chart Response to Absence

<p><b>First Day Contact (Admin)</b> Parents contacted via phone as soon as child is absent without the academy being advised of the reason. Request details regarding absence. (<i>Recording unwell/ill is not sufficient</i>)</p>
<p><b>Absence falls below 97% (Class Teacher)</b> Class teacher to consider pupil circumstances and discuss with parent. What has been the pupils' (siblings of) attendance history? Is it a 'one-off'? Use Appendix 1.0 – How attendance improves over time. Target set Attendance letters sent as appropriate</p>
<p><b>School Attendance Meetings (SAMs)</b> If a student's attendance continues to fall and the school has not authorised the absence then a School Attendance Meetings will be held by school with the parents and student. A review period of typically 2-3 weeks will be set. Students will be expected to attend for 100% of the review period. If there is further unauthorised absence in this review period then a School Attendance Review Meeting will be arranged.</p>
<p><b>School Attendance Review Meeting</b> At this meeting an additional period of monitoring will be set, and any additional concerns will be discussed. If attendance concerns remain at the end of this review period then the school can refer to the Education Welfare Service.</p>
<p><b>Refer to Educational Welfare Service (EWS)</b> The Education Welfare Officer will then contact parents to arrange a Local Authority Attendance Meeting.</p>

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** It is important to recognise improvements in attendance. Use praise or reward when no further action is required.

### Registers

Attendance registers are legal documents and the accurate completion of registers is a contractual obligation. Registers must be completed electronically at the beginning of each session by the teacher. Staff must ensure that the appropriate mark is recorded against each pupil. No gaps should be left on the register. If a reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established, then the member of staff must report the absence immediately.

Registers are monitored throughout the day by the administration team and anomalies investigated. The Main Office will ensure that accurate registers are printed at 9.30 am. and will be available in the event of a fire. These will be passed to the appropriate Fire Officer at the assembly point, to carry out an immediate head count.

## Punctuality

Punctuality of the academy day is really important and this will also be monitored by the class teachers and Attendance Lead. This will also be reported to the parents and will be monitored closely.

## Record keeping and information sharing

Registers are an official document, which are coded accurately and checked regularly to ensure consistency.

There is a weekly attendance focus where both individual and group attendance is highlighted.

The Attendance Lead provides weekly attendance update to the senior leadership team with both vulnerable grouping breakdowns and assessments of persistent absentee attendance for that week. All of this is underpinned by the regular use of FFT Attendance tracker.

**LATENESS**  
How much time can you lose?  
In one school year  
**5 MINUTES**  
late each day  
**=3 days off**

In one school year  
**1 MINUTE**  
late to each lesson  
**=3 days off**

The infographic features a red background with white and yellow text. It includes an illustration of a hand holding a stopwatch. The text is arranged in two sections, each with a circular graphic containing an equals sign and the number 3, followed by 'days off'.

## School Attendance Meetings (SAMs)

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% or they have an unexplained absence of more than 2 days in a term, School Attendance Meetings will be held by the Attendance Lead. Parents and carers will be invited in to discuss and agree an attendance contract. There must be a clear focus on the importance of attendance and agreement by all parties that attendance will improve and that any barriers to this will be removed by either home or academy as necessary.

Pupils will be expected to attend for 100% of the review period. If this does not happen, then a School Attendance Review meeting will be held. If the pupil does attend for 100%, then the meeting will be held either in person or virtually to praise and congratulate the pupil.

## Appendix 1: How attendance improves over time

We know absences can be for more than 1 day per absence. The following table can be used to help explain how attendance for pupils improves over time. A pupil with a long absence in Term 1 (say 5 days) can still achieve 'good' attendance by Term 6 should no further absences occur.

Days Absent	End of Term 1	End of Term 2	End of Term 3	End of Term 4	End of Term 5	End of Term 6
0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1	97.1	98.6	99.0	99.2	99.4	99.5
2	94.3	97.1	98.0	98.5	98.8	98.9
3	91.4	95.7	97.0	97.7	98.1	98.4
4	88.6	94.3	96.0	96.9	97.5	97.9
5	85.7	92.9	95.0	96.2	96.9	97.4
6	82.9	91.4	94.0	95.4	96.3	96.8
7	80.0	90.0	93.0	94.6	95.6	96.3
8	77.1	88.6	92.0	93.8	95.0	95.8
9	74.3	87.1	91.0	93.1	94.4	95.3
10	71.4	85.7	90.0	92.3	93.8	94.7
11	68.6	84.3	89.0	91.5	93.1	94.2
12	65.7	82.9	88.0	90.8	92.5	93.7
13	62.9	81.4	87.0	90.0	91.9	93.2
14	60.0	80.0	86.0	89.2	91.3	92.6
15	57.1	78.6	85.0	88.5	90.6	92.1
16	54.3	77.1	84.0	87.7	90.0	91.6
17	51.4	75.7	83.0	86.9	89.4	91.1
18	48.6	74.3	82.0	86.2	88.8	90.5
19	45.7	72.9	81.0	85.4	88.1	90.0

 Persistent Absent

## Appendix 2: Communication with pupils, parents and carers<sup>1</sup>

### Why does school attendance matter?

Missing a few days of school here and there may not seem a big deal, but research shows that it can have a significant impact on pupils' learning. Pupils who miss a substantial amount of school fall behind their peers, and struggle to catch up. Most of the work they miss is never made up, which can lead to big gaps in their learning.

Poor attendance often starts at primary school, and pupils who fall into this pattern are likely to underachieve at secondary school. Pupils who miss between 10 and 20% of school (that's 19 to 38 days per year) stand only a 35% chance of achieving good outcomes, compared to 73% of those who miss fewer than 5% of school days.

Friendships can be affected by persistent absence, too: it can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their classmates.

### What counts as 'good' attendance?

The Government doesn't set specific attendance targets, but academies are expected to set their own.

**An attendance rate of 97% is considered good** at MLP academies; this allows for pupils to miss 5 days across the academic year. Persistent absence (PA) is defined as an attendance rate of 90% or below. That's at least 19 missed school days.

Attendance	Number of days absent	Approx. time missed in 5 years
99%	2 days	10 days
97%	6 days	2 months
95%	9.5 days	3 months
90%	19 days	6 months
85%	28.5 days	9 months
80%	38 days	1 year

### Factors to support good attendance

#### *Building good routines*

Having consistent good attendance helps pupils develop a positive view of school and the importance of attendance. Routines can help families with the busyness of the mornings during the school week. Set an early bedtime to ensure rest for the school day. Follow a night time routine:

- Set a consistent alarm, leaving extra time for unexpected delays
- Lay out clothing and supplies for the next day
- Place school bag and shoes near the door
- Have a back-up plan in case of transportation challenges

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theschoolrun.com/parents-guide-school-attendance>

### *The importance of sleep*

There are any number of studies show that pupils with better sleep patterns and sleep routines attend better and achieve better in school. Building good routines and 'bedtimes' is crucial.

### *Arrival – The importance of punctuality: (timings personalised to the individual academy)*

The school day starts at 8.50am. We expect all pupils to arrive by 8:40am.

## What happens if a pupil is late for school?

Pupils who arrive after 9.00am are deemed late and must report to Reception where a member of staff will record the lateness.

## What happens if a pupil arrives after 9.20am?

The am. register will be closed at 9.20am and an unauthorised absence mark will be recorded for the morning session.

## What absences can be authorised?

The Department for Education (DfE) states that you can only allow your child to miss school if they are ill, or if you have advance permission from the Academy Leader. The following types of absence will be marked as authorised:

- Leave of absence authorised by the Academy Leader (such as time off due to bereavement).
- Illness: you must notify your child's school on the morning of their first day of absence.
- Medical or dental appointments, although you should try to arrange these outside school hours if possible.
- Religious observance but only if absence is requested in advance
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence when the family is travelling for occupational purposes.
- Offsite educational activities: this could include music, dance or drama exams, or participation in a sporting event. Approval is at the Academy Leader's discretion.

## What absences are not authorised?

Certain types of absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the Academy Leader. Time off for holidays is always unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice may be sought.

- Absences where the parents haven't given the academy a reason are also recorded as unauthorised.
- If your child is late to school and the registers have closed (after 9.20am), they will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session, even if they turn up later in the day.

## What happens if your child's absence is not authorised?

As a parent, it's your responsibility to make sure your child is at school, unless they have a long-term health problem. If your child doesn't go to school and you haven't contacted the school, you'll be contacted by the school to find out why they're absent.

If your child's attendance continues to fall you will be contacted firstly by your child's class teacher, then by The Academy's Attendance Lead. If your child is persistently absent, you will then be contacted by the Wiltshire Council Local Education Welfare Officer. They will discuss your child's attendance with you, and help you come up with a plan to make sure they get to school. The emphasis will be on providing support to help you improve your child's attendance. At all times we will 'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but not tolerate'.

You may be asked to sign an attendance contract: a voluntary written agreement stating that you will work with the academy to improve your child's attendance.

Ultimately, if your child continues to miss school, legal action can be taken. Consequences include a parenting order compelling you to do what the court says to improve your child's attendance; a fine of £60, rising to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days; and prosecution, which could lead to a community service order, a fine of up to £2,500, or a custodial sentence of up to three months.

### What to do if your child is ill?

If your child is too ill to go to school, you must provide a **detailed** reason for their absence. You can provide this information on the phone or by email. If the academy disputes the authenticity of their illness, they could ask you for medical evidence such as a doctor's note, an appointment card or a copy of their prescription.

Some pupils miss long or recurrent periods of school due to health issues. In this case, the Local Authority is responsible for them getting a suitable education. This could include home tutoring or a hospital school or teaching service.

### How long should your child stay off school with an illness?

The NHS gives the following advice on how long pupils should stay off school if they are unwell.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

As a general rule, your child should return to school when they feel well enough to do so.

### What is my child suffering with Mental Health difficulties?

As an academy we will always support our pupils and are very aware that some pupils can struggle to get into school for a variety of reasons, including their mental health. Not being in school can exacerbate anxiety and add to a pupils' struggles.

In most cases a calm approach at home and in school and a consistent routine help those pupils to feel settled and more positive about school. Sometimes pupils need a tough but loving message to get them into school. Once they are through the doors we will support them in whatever way they need.

We also work with external professionals to ensure that every one of our pupils can achieve and we have an expectation that all of them can attend well and be successful.

With everyone working together, pupils invariably feel more successful and their attendance improves.