



DAYSPRING TRUST

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Reviewed September 2017

The Dayspring Trust aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian faith and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. We believe that our Christian values spring from the two great commandments, 'Love God and love your neighbour'. We seek to live this out through the power of the Holy Spirit. St Paul reminds us in Galatians 5.22-23 that the fruit of the Spirit is "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control". These are also underpinned by the Old Testament injunction to "Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God" Micah 6.8. These values rooted in the Christian Faith come as a package and we aim to embed them in the life of our academies in a worked out way. We recognise that at times we may highlight particular values to bring them into greater prominence within our academies and these are currently the five values of Forgiveness, Hope, Joy, Perseverance and Wisdom. We believe these values to be in accordance with British values springing from our Judeo-Christian roots. Collective worship will play a major and vital part in assisting with this process of embedding these values in the life of our academies.

The Multi Academy Trust Members and Directors are aware of their responsibilities in law and are committed to the provision of an excellent education within its academies in accordance with our Anglican foundation. This is embraced in our Dayspring Trust vision statement:

- **Forge a supportive and challenging family of academies**
- **Provide excellent education within a strong Christian community**
- **Resource our pupils for wise and generous living**

In addition, each academy also has its own distinctive mission statement, flowing out from the vision statement of the Dayspring Trust.

At Ian Ramsey CE Academy:

"Together to learn, to grow, to serve."

This is embodied in scripture:

'Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in various forms.' 1. Peter 4.10

At Venerable Bede CE Academy:

"Soar to the heights together"

This is embodied in scripture:

'But those who hope in the lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint'. Isaiah 40:31

This policy has been developed to take into consideration our ethos as well as local and national policy and guidance.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential. The Dayspring Trust believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent young adults. Regular attendance is a prerequisite for a good education where we can encourage and foster the development of God given potential. Missing school for the equivalent of one half day a week is shown to equate to one grade less than the target grade predicted. Securing this is therefore a high priority. By failing to attend school regularly pupils diminish the value of the education provided for them.

The Trust values all pupils and we will work with all families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour and SEN.

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure that their children receive full time education. Parents/Carers are responsible for their child's school attendance and punctuality. Schools are responsible for recording pupils' attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

Parents* are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time". *Definition of Parents – DFE Advice on School Attendance. A parent means:

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

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

Aim

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement and there is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent school attendance.

As a Trust, the attendance target for our academies is 96%.

Key Personnel

Headteacher The Headteacher is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances'. The Headteacher is Mr B.Janes or Mr D.Airey

SLT Link The SLT Link for attendance is Jane Cook at Ian Ramsey and Chris Roberts at Venerable Bede.

Attendance Officer The Attendance Officer is Sarah White at Ian Ramsey and Denise Bowman at Venerable Bede.

National Context

The 1996 Education Act (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a legal responsibility to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by 'regular' attendance at school or 'otherwise'. The 2008 Education and Skills Act (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

The duty on parents is to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or 'otherwise'. Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of 'otherwise' children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, i.e. – FE colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. (DFE guidance – March 2013)

Daily Procedures: Registration

Under the 2006 Education Regulations the school is legally required to register pupils twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8.40 and 9.00am and in the afternoon between 1.00-1.15pm. It is essential that all pupils are registered on both occasions.

School starts at 8.35am when all pupils should be in their form room in preparation for the register being taken at 8.40am. It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day. Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a pupil checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill

Pupils who are late will follow the punctuality procedure (Appendix 2)

Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the website which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school. If your child tells you that school is to be closed on a day not indicated on the school calendar, please check by telephoning the school.

Absence from school

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an offence if the child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' visit. Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school may request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the pupil is unwell: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Headteacher may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

The school may authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Headteacher or nominated SLT lead in advance to secure authorisation. The Headteacher may also authorise events where pupils are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. These are an offence by the parent. Such circumstances include:

- A pupil not attending school to go shopping for school clothes
- A pupil not attending school as it is their birthday or the birthday of a family member
- A pupil not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative
- A pupil not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member
- A pupil not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday
- A pupil not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings
- A pupil attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons

Responsibilities

Teachers will

- help pupils reintegrate/catch up on work when the pupil has been absent - this is particularly important when the absence has been for longer than two weeks.
- take accurate registers contacting the attendance officer if any pupil has not arrived to their lesson.

Tutors will

- complete registers accurately and promptly each morning and afternoon, returning them to the school office
- stress to parents/carers the need for a note following return from absence - and ensure note is received
- complete the register details by the end of the first week of the year and amend as necessary
- follow up all absences, informing the Head of Year immediately there is a concern
- ensure the Head of Year is aware of attendance/punctuality concerns
- look for patterns in irregular attendance and follow up also referring to the Heads of Year

The Attendance Officer will

- make first day of absence phone call if parents/carers have not contacted school with a reason for absence.
- advise the SLT link when registers are not being completed
- provide attendance and punctuality data to SLT / Heads of Year / Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) as required
- arrange meetings between parents and Governors when necessary
- ensure that accurate records of contact with parents concerning attendance are kept
- open EHA's where appropriate
- refer to other agencies as required
- send out letters

The Head of Year/Pastoral Manager will

- carry out random checks on school/lesson attendance
- check tutor group attendance and punctuality records following up where there are concerns
- celebrate good attendance and punctuality through rewards
- follow up attendance and punctuality issues which the tutor has not been able to successfully resolve
- ensure that accurate records of contact with parents concerning attendance and punctuality are kept

The Leadership Team attendance link will

- ensure that the current school attendance procedures are carried out
- regularly evaluate attendance procedures
- ensure attendance figures are maintained/evaluated
- ensure the prospectus / Home-School Agreement stress the importance of attendance to parents
- ensure that registers are completed by all staff

- ensure that there are opportunities for meeting with parents when there are attendance and punctuality issues that the Head of Year has been unable to resolve including meetings with the Academy Council sub-groups responsible for monitoring attendance.
- ensure that records of contact with parents concerning attendance are kept by Heads of Year and office staff
- ensure that continued non-attendance is followed up with court action by the local authority

Safeguarding

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, i.e. – female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation. This may be the case particularly if a parent/carer requests a leave of absence during term time.

In addition, if the school suspects that a pupil may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school, the Safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. – social care (CESC), police. The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

Children Missing from Education

The school recognizes that when a child goes missing from school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, i.e. – sexual abuse or exploitation. The school follows either the Stockton LSCB procedures “Policy and Procedures for Children Missing Education including Children at Risk of Missing Education” Aug 2015 or Sunderland LSCB. Under Regulation 8 of the Education Regulations Act (2006) the school will investigate enquiries into the location of pupils with 10 days continuous unauthorized absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time. A referral will be made to the Attendance and Exclusion Team officer using the “Children Missing from Education referral form”.

The school reserves the right, however, to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children’s Social Care, Police, Children’s Hub) if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents. Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the child is safe and well, including home visits by the Attendance Officer/ Pupil Support Officer. The school will contact relevant agencies after two days absence without confirmation from parents / carers if the child is subject to a ‘Child in Need’ plan or considered vulnerable in other ways.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, as outlined below;

- Pupils at risk of harm / neglect (school will follow standard Child Protection procedures for referrals to social care / police)
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families (school will inform local authority when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school).
- Families of Armed Forces (school will contact MOD Children’s Education Advisory Service for advice on making arrangements for continuity of education)

- Missing children / runaways (direct referral to Children's Services and Police)
- Children supervised in the Youth Justice system
- Children who cease to attend a school

When a pupil returns from a period of extended absence appropriate daily attendance checks will be carried out and their attendance, behaviour, emotional and physical well-being will be monitored closely by the safeguarding team in school. Parents / carers will be invited into school with the pupil to meet a member of the Pastoral team as part of the reintegration programme and relevant support will be offered to the pupil / family as necessary.

Reluctance to go to school

Sometimes pupils seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to the relevant Head of Year/Pastoral Manager.

Home Education

Under the DFE guidance on attendance (March 2013); 'Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school'. If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from the school, the child will be known as 'Electively Home-Educated'. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from the school will be required to confirm this in writing to the Headteacher (Mr Janes/ Mr Airey). The school will forward this letter to the Local Authority and the child will be removed from the Admission register. The Local Authority will then determine whether to accept this new arrangement or challenge it. However, parents are unable to withdraw their child from school if they are subject to a 'School Attendance Order'.

Children with Special Educational Needs statements (Education, Health and Care Plans) can be home educated. Where the statements sets out special educational provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. The local authority must review the child's statement / EHC Plan annually.

Leave of Absence in term time

During the autumn and spring terms of 2014/15, 37.5 million days were lost in the UK because of parents taking their child out of school during term time.

Under the DFE 'Advice on School Attendance' parents can no longer expect schools to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday for up to 10 school days per year. The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. For example, there may have been a bereavement in the family or other serious circumstances or the Headteacher may be aware that a family is under strain and in need of time together.

The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. From this perspective leave of absence in term time is no longer a parental right and will only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.

If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time we advise parents to send a letter into school outlining the reasons for and dates of the leave of absence. Parents may then be invited

into school to attend a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher to discuss the request and complete the necessary paperwork. During the meeting, a date will be agreed by which the pupil must return to school after the leave of absence.

It is important for parents / carers to note that the school will not authorise ANY leave of absence unless the school feels the circumstances are unavoidable.

Additionally, as previously outlined in the policy, the school reserves the right to either contact the parents / carers directly or make an immediate referral to social care or the police if the school feels a pupil is potentially at risk being taken out of school during term time. This is particularly relevant to concerns the school may have about sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and radicalisation.

The school also reserve the right to request parents/carers provide medical evidence if there is suspicion a pupil is away and leave has not been formally requested by parents. This is due to the high number of unauthorised term time holidays nationally at certain points of the year, i.e. – around school holidays.

The school will seek advice from the local authority if a pupil fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school and local authority have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the pupil.

This applies to leaves of absence that are both authorised and unauthorised by the school. As a result, the school may remove the pupil from roll under such circumstances. However, we will keep the pupil on roll if the family remain in contact with the school even though the pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date.

Persistent Absenteeism

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Pupils with attendance below 90% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised.

According to the DFE guidance (March 2013); 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority'. In addition, 'Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)'. See Appendix 2 for school based actions regarding declining attendance.

Rewards/Celebrations

- It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. All pupils who achieve 100% achievement for a ½ term register block receive an attendance certificate and/or positive points on Classcharts.
- There are £10 vouchers available for pupils gaining entrance to the 96+% attendance draw.
- In addition, Positive points are awarded for punctuality and attendance to school and to individual lessons. Parents will be informed if pupils arrive to lessons without a legitimate excuse by notifications through Class charts.

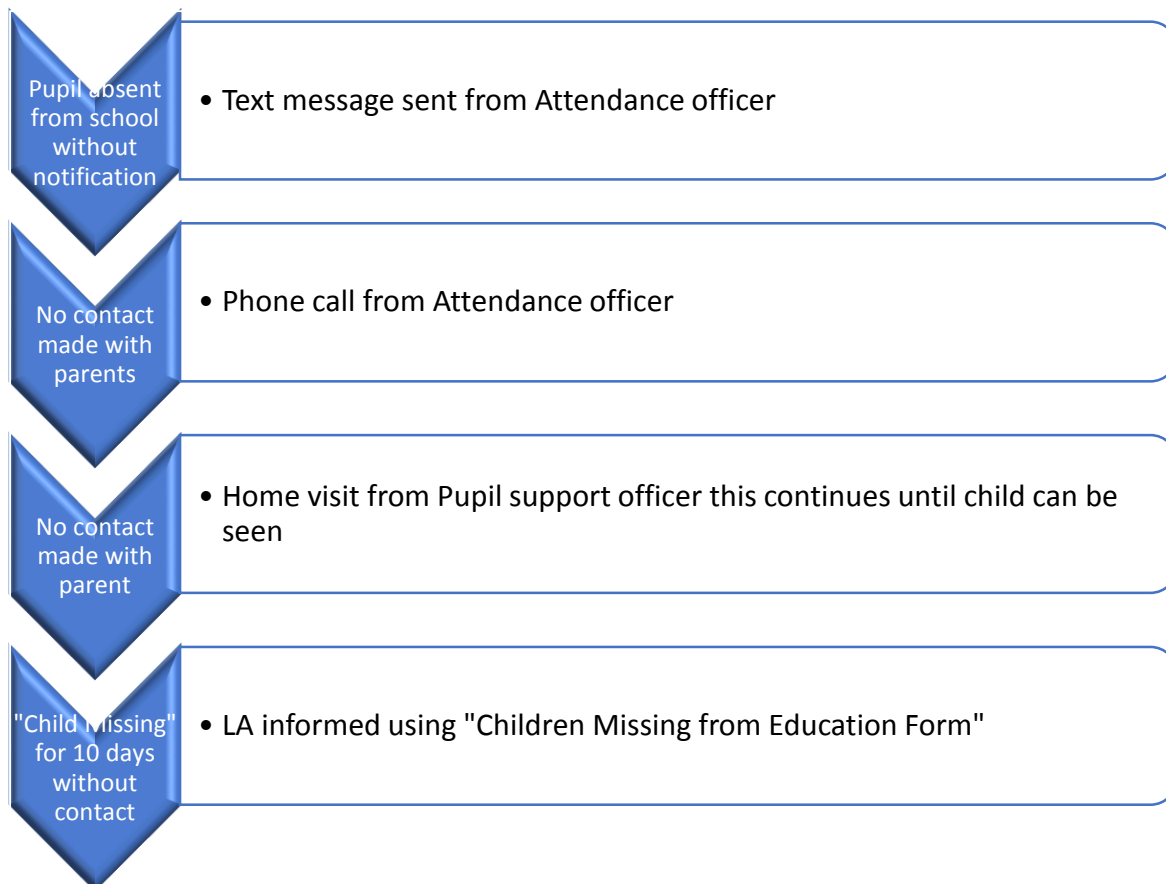
Appendix 1: (From DFE School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities November 2016)

(Add attendance codes table)

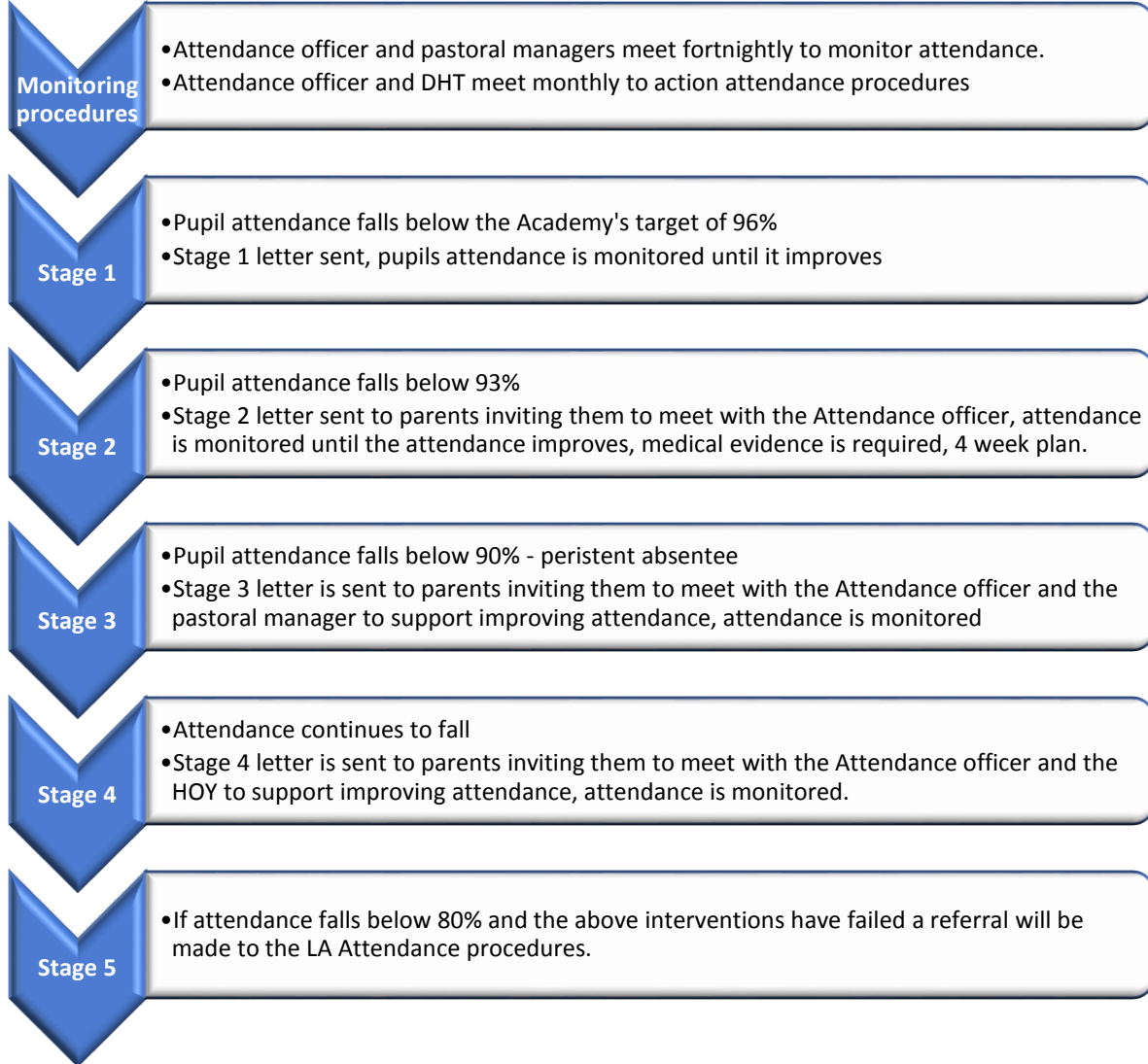
Appendix 2: Punctuality

Pupils arriving into form after the 8.40 bell has sounded will be marked present but late. Punctuality is an essential skill for life and therefore lateness without a legitimate reason will be sanctioned. Pupils arriving after the 8.40am bell will gain a 30-minute same day after school detention, pupils arriving after 9.00am will gain a 60-minute after school same day detention. Parents will be notified via text message.

Appendix 3: First day procedures



Appendix 4: Attendance procedure stages



Appendix 5: Improving attendance –

What parents can do:

1. Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously this is not always possible but in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that they can complete most of their timetable before leaving.
2. Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school. Try to make sure they have an alarm clock that is reliable. Make sure that they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Bags, books and other equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
3. Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
4. Check with the school's Attendance officer if you have any concerns about whether your child is present in school. Our Attendance officers are Sarah White (Ian Ramsey CE Academy) and Denise Bowman (Venerable Bede CE Academy).
5. Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances please contact the Headteacher and decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
6. Encourage your child to come to school even if they are feeling slightly unwell. Many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and the school will contact you if it becomes necessary.
7. Talk positively about going to school – "What was good about school today?" "Did anything funny happen?"
8. Monitor your child's internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
9. Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact your Child's Tutor or Pastoral Manager before the concerns escalate.

What School does:

1. Mark the registers in accordance with the law, every lesson.
2. Informs any parents / carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
3. Maintains records and monitors attendance of pupils on a regular basis.
4. Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the school can authorise absence.
5. Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and / or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
6. Provides access to staff with whom attendance related issues can be discussed.

7. Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the pupil / family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
8. Provides re – integration support for pupils returning from absence.
9. Uses rewards and sanctions, where necessary, to encourage pupils to arrive on time for school.
10. Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards