Attendance Policy

This policy has undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

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Other relevant documentation

Relevant legislation:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Relevant government guidance:

The main DfE guidance relevant to this policy is: Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Other directly relevant guidance includes:

- Share your daily school attendance data
- Providing remote education – guidance for schools
- Children missing education
- Elective home education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Suspension and Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Other directly relevant CLP policies:

- Suspension and Exclusions Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- First Aid and Managing Medical Conditions Policy

Wider support

Wider support is available, please see links below for more information:

- West Sussex website for resources to help Emotionally Based School Avoidance
- Dorset SENDIASS
- BCP SENDIASS
- (For Dorset schools) Dorset Education Advice Line

Throughout this policy, the term 'parent' means:

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

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy has due regard to the legislation and guidance as set out on the previous page. In particular, CLP schools' attendance work meets the DfE's requirements as set out in the publication: *Working together to improve school attendance*.

1.2 Regular attendance and punctuality and are crucial to a pupil's achievement at school and so improving attendance is everyone's business. Good attendance is celebrated within Coastal Learning Partnership's (CLP) values: serve, inspire and empower. CLP schools serve their families in ways that enable the best possible attendance for every pupil so that children are inspired by their education and empowered for their futures. All staff make school an enjoyable and purposeful place to be so that pupils want to attend school regularly in the first place.

1.3 Barriers to attending school can be wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school regularly. Schools will work collaboratively with families, building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place to remove attendance barriers. Schools will also work in close partnership with other agencies, including Local Authorities and Children's Social Care, to bring about the best possible support.

1.4 Schools' overall approach to maximising school attendance takes these six graduated stages:

1	**Expect**	High expectations that all children will attend well
2	**Monitor**	Monitor the attendance/punctuality of all pupils to spot problems early
3	**Listen / Understand**	Work with pupils and parents to understand any barriers to good attendance
4	**Facilitate support**	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents overcome the barriers outside of school
5	**Formalise support**	Formalise support where informal, voluntary approaches are not working
6	**Enforce**	If all else fails, enforce attendance through statutory intervention and prosecution

2. The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

2.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

2.2 Where parents have registered their child at school, they have a legal duty to make sure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

3. Attendance and safeguarding

3.1 The safeguarding of all pupils is crucial. School provides a protective environment for those who attend and are well placed to identify safeguarding issues early. Regular attendance is vital for this. Where a pupil's unauthorised absence continue to decline, despite appropriate support and provision in place, it may well constitute neglect. Schools will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and, where these exist, ensure that the appropriate referral is made to Children's Social Care in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. When a pupil is absent and no reason has been given for the absence, the school will prioritise the safety of these pupils.

4. Why regular attendance is so vital

4.1 There is a clear and proven link between attendance and progress at school. The pupils who make the most progress usually have higher rates of attendance. Pupils who miss a lot of school are at risk of falling behind their peers. They struggle to catch up as 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 children who fall into this pattern are likely to go on to underachieve at secondary school, too.

4.2 Friendships can be negatively affected by absence. It can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their peers.

4.3 For the most vulnerable pupils, regular school attendance helps keep them safe. School can be the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least one of the five years of study).

4.4 This table shows how absence quickly builds up to lost learning time:

Overall attendance level	Number of days lost each year	Impact on child's education
97%+	5 days or less	These children have every chance to make really strong progress at school.
95%	10 days	These children benefit from strong overall attendance and are well placed to make good progress at school. We aim for every child to have at 96% attendance overall.
90%	19 days	Children in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best
85%	29 days	Children in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; there is a real risk that this lower attendance will hinder children's progress. Absence below 90% is considered to be persistent absenteeism.
80%	38 days	Children in this group are missing a year of school over five years of education. They are not benefitting from their right to be educated. Parents / carers of young people in this group could be issued with a penalty notice.

5. Positively promoting strong attendance and punctuality

5.1 Promoting good attendance and punctuality is an integral part of the school's culture. Schools will visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life and the curriculum.

5.2 In addition to the core principle of staff working to make sure that school is an enjoyable place to be, this school uses the following strategies to positively promote and recognise good attendance:

- Weekly attendance cup – this is revealed during the Celebration Assembly each Friday afternoon. The HUGE trophy is proudly displayed in the winning class for the week.
- Termly attendance certificates for 100% attendance
- Raffle/prize draw at the end of each year for all children with 100% attendance.

6. Roles and responsibilities related to promoting strong pupil attendance

6.1 Securing good attendance is not the sole responsibility of any single member of staff or organisation. It must be a concerted effort across all staff, all of those with a governance responsibility, the local authority and other local partners including Children's Social Care.

Appendix A tells parents/carers how they can contact the school regarding absence or attendance concerns.

Appendix C provides an overview of roles and responsibilities.

6.1.1 Partnership Board

- Ensure that a policy is in place which reflects the latest government legislation, the requirements of the relevant local authority and best practice in maximising pupil attendance.
- Have an awareness of the Partnership's overall performance with respect to pupil attendance through interrogating regular reports to the Achievement Committee.
- Ensure that appropriate measures are in place to bring about improvement where an individual school's attendance levels are lower than they should be.

6.1.2 Local Governing Body

- Ensure that the school's procedures reflect the requirements of this policy.
- Be aware of the school's performance with respect to pupil attendance by interrogating regular reports from the Headteacher, at least termly.
- Where the school's attendance performance is identified as some cause for concern, in addition to the above, ensure an even closer understanding of the school's attendance work and improvement strategies through the appointment of an 'Attendance Local Governor' who can achieve deeper and more regular insights and report to the LGB.

6.1.3 Headteacher

- Be responsible for the school's performance with respect to pupil attendance.
- Ensure that that a senior leader within the school has oversight of attendance. This can be the Headteacher or delegated to another senior member of staff.
- Ensure that robust arrangements are in place to enable each child to benefit from the highest possible attendance level, ensuring barriers to strong attendance are overcome, as per the requirements of this policy.
- Ensure that adequate staffing arrangements are in place to achieve the requirements of this policy, including relevant training.
- Ensure that attendance data is recorded accurately in registers and shared daily with the DfE.
- Ensure that attendance information is shared as required by the DfE, including:
    - Notifying the LA when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times;
    - Providing the LA with the names/addresses of all pupils who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent (unauthorised) for a continuous period of ten school days;
    - Providing the LA with the names/addresses of all pupils recorded as ill and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively.
    - Informing a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

6.1.4 Attendance admin officer

- Maintain a close link with the school's senior leader with oversight of attendance.
- Ensure that registers are taken as required by legislation.
- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for attendance registration on days where the school's normal routine may be disrupted (for example off-site learning).
- In addition to the register, ensure that systematic records are maintained for all matters and correspondence related to attendance.

- Provide attendance information as requested by staff and external partners and certainly for the half termly attendance monitoring meetings.
- Make day to day attendance checks on those pupils whose attendance has been identified as requiring regular monitoring and flag concerns quickly.
- Ensure the school's arrangements for First Day Contact are robustly followed, always especially mindful of those children identified as 'vulnerable'.
- Be the school's main regular link with the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Team.

6.1.5 All staff

All staff have a duty to informally monitor the pupils' attendance and to report any concerns they may have. In this way, pupil attendance is being monitored at all times in line with safeguarding best practice.

6.1.6 The role of the Local Authority

Schools will work in close partnership with the relevant Local Authority and will not undertake those activities which are a Local Authority statutory duty. As a minimum, all Local Authorities are expected to:

- Track local attendance data. Use this information to work out which pupils and schools need the greatest support and so unblock area-wide barriers to attendance.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker
- Have a School Attendance Support Team to provide the following, at no cost to schools:
  - ✓ Communication and advice: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts.
  - ✓ Targeting Support Meetings: termly conversations with schools, using attendance data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
  - ✓ Multi-disciplinary support for families: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
  - ✓ Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

6.1.7 If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly a school at which they are registered, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs. Local Authorities may also issue penalty notices as an alternative to the prosecution of parents. Local Authorities are required to publish a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices. The code should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice. When requesting that the Local Authority issues a penalty notice, CLP schools will do so in consideration of the relevant code and this is summarised in appendix B.

6.1.8 Additionally, CLP schools within Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) are provided with direct support from that Local Authority in the form of a 'Navigator'. The amount of time given to each school through this role varies according to BCP's determined arrangements. However, in every case the purpose of the Navigator is to support schools in ensuring that pupils and their families are given the support that they need in order to attend well.

7. Parents/carers notifying the school of absence: 'first day contact'

7.1 Parents/carers are required to notify their child's school on the first day of their child's absence, detailing the pupil's name, class and nature of absence. If the absence is prolonged, there is an expectation that the parent will notify the school by 9am on each day of absence.

7.2 This is an important aspect of the schools' safeguarding procedures: if a child is not registered at school in the morning, then schools must satisfy themselves that the child is safe. It is therefore necessary for parents/carers to have contacted their child's school **by 9am at the latest**. This absence will then be recorded as authorised, provided that the reason for absence is significant and that there are no current concerns about the child's attendance.

7.3 Where a parent/carer does not notify the school of their child's absence, the school will follow this up as quickly as possible. Schools will use their knowledge of families to identify pupils who may be more vulnerable when absent and these families will be contacted first.

7.4 Process for following up on unexplained absence:

- **Using a text message, parents will be informed of their child's absence and asked to contact the school as soon as possible after 9am.**
- **If no contact is received by the school within around 30 minutes of this text message being sent, a phone call will be made to the primary contact detailed on the pupil's files.**
- **If there is no answer, contact will be attempted with other contacts detailed on the pupil's file.**
- **If no contact can be made, the school will take every reasonable step to satisfy themselves that the pupil is safe. This may include contacting sibling's schools, contacting Social Care / Early Help if a worker is involved with the family, making a home visit and, in some cases, informing the police.**
- **The school should be satisfied with every absent child's safety by 10am at the latest.**

7.5 The school will hold a record of pupils that they deem to be additionally vulnerable when not in school, which could include knowledge of mental health difficulties either for the pupil or their family, child protection concerns or medical needs.

8. Monitoring attendance of individual pupils and responding to attendance concerns.

8.1 All staff have a duty to informally monitor the children's attendance and to report any concerns that they may have about a pupil. In this way, pupil attendance is being monitored in the schools at all times. Concerns can then be triangulated with any other information held about the pupil such as child protection issues, mental health difficulties, SEND or caring responsibilities. Appropriate support can then be put in place.

8.2 Schools will follow formal procedures for the regular and systematic monitoring of pupil attendance, with particular emphasis on those who are classed as vulnerable. Attendance will be monitored formally for the purpose of providing effective support and interventions to improve attendance and punctuality for every individual, specific cohorts and the whole school.

8.3 Monitoring of attendance is a continual process and will be led by the senior leader with responsibility for attendance. Action may be triggered at any point where a concern is raised. However, typically the following process outlines how attendance is monitored:

- Formal monitoring will take place by all schools on a half termly basis through a meeting of the relevant senior leader with other staff who have a key attendance role.
- At each half term, consideration will be given to pupils according to the 'tiered response' outlined below.
- Agreed actions for pupils will be identified; where required, further advice will be taken such as from the School Attendance Support Team.

8.4 There is a tiered system to respond to low and/or falling attendance levels:

a) Attendance below 96%: A standard letter is typically sent to any parent/carer whose child's attendance has dropped below 96%. This letter is for information – it notifies the parent/carer of this attendance level and explains that the school will continue to monitor their child's attendance. (Where the cause for a pupil's attendance dropping below 96% is very specific and clearly known and evidenced to the school, the school may decide that such a letter is not required or appropriate. For example, where a pupil has had a known and confirmed medical issue and where this is the only substantial cause for the lower attendance. In such circumstances, the pupil's attendance will be closely monitored – a further reduction in attendance may prompt this initial letter, without the need to wait for the next formal half-termly review).

b) Attendance between 90% and 96%: The standard letter described above may be used again where a pupil's attendance sits around this level. This letter may be used twice in succession but it assumes that the school has engaged in other dialogue with the family in between, either through telephone conversations, informal school gate discussions or through less formal meetings. Attendance will not usually be allowed to remain at this level for too long before being treated as for attendance which is below 90%.

c) Attendance which is below 90%: Attendance at 90% equates to 19 days absence through a year and is considered to be **persistent absence**. In such circumstances, parents/carers will receive a specific letter which very clearly identifies that the attendance level is a significant cause for concern (except for in exceptional circumstances where the attendance may not a cause for concern such as known medical condition). Parents/carers are requested to attend a meeting to explore the reasons for their child's low attendance. The content of this meeting will be used to agree ways in which school/parents will together improve attendance and this will be recorded in writing. A review date will be agreed. Participants in that meeting will vary according to the circumstances but may often involve staff such as the senior leader for attendance, class teacher, SENCo and Pastoral Care Worker. The school may well engage the Local Authority. At this stage, schools should make it known – and confirm in writing - **that absences cannot be authorised without medical evidence unless there are exceptional reasons which render this inappropriate** (for example, a known medical condition); schools cannot routinely authorise absence where a child's attendance has reached this level of concern and this will be explored at the meeting.

d) Attendance which continues to decline from below 90%: Unless there are exceptional circumstances, schools will not be routinely authorising absences at this stage. If attendance is not showing reasonable improvement within four weeks of the last communication to parents/carers, then schools will take further action which will involve further meetings with the parents/carers. It is likely that a formal Parenting Contract will be required and external partners such as the Local Authority will be engaged if they haven't already.

e) Attendance which is 50% or lower. Particular focus will be given by everyone to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present. These 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. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

8.5 During the autumn term, schools may also take account of the end of previous year attendance picture when determining actions against the tiered response. For example, a child whose attendance has dropped below 96% as a result of a single period of approved absence and where the previous year's position was 96% or above, a school may judge that an attendance letter is not yet required and continue to monitor closely.

8.6 These figures expressed as % attendance levels are intended as a guide for the tiered response but they are not absolute and it will be necessary for school to exercise some judgement. Schools will also take other factors into account when deciding how to manage attendance. For example,

schools will consider patterns of attendance which may trigger concerns such as frequent broken weeks or repeated similar absence such as a pupil who is absent every Friday. Schools may decide to intervene whenever they have concerns, taking these guidelines into account. Schools will communicate with their Local Authority as appropriate at any stage if there is particular concern about a child's attendance.

8.7 Schools are provided with a support pack which includes template letters and proformas as required to support this tiered approach. Schools should amend these to meet their own requirements.

9. Notice to Improve and Penalty notices

9.1 Schools can request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice (PN) for persistent and severe absenteeism, including for taking unauthorised term-time leave.

9.2 The DfE provides national thresholds for the circumstances under which a PN should be considered by the school. These thresholds are set out in the DfE publication 'Working together to improve school attendance.' (para 176 to 185)

9.3 A Local Authority can consider issuing a 'Notice to Improve', as per the DfE guidance, to provide parents with a final opportunity to engage with support before the issuing of a PN.

9.4 Local Authorities are required to draw up, and publish on their website, a Local Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices. This code of conduct must also include details of the Notice to Improve process. Links to the Code of Conduct for Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council can be found on appendix B.

9.5 Only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. This first PN will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days); the second is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

9.6 A PN can be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence to occur.

9.7 Schools will ensure that parents are told in writing of the potential implication of low attendance and taking unauthorised term time leave.

10. Tracking and monitoring overall attendance performance

10.1 Towards the end of each half term, the school's senior leader with responsibility for attendance will review attendance performance including:

- % Absence overall (and % authorised / unauthorised)
- % of pupils defined as 'persistently absent'
- % days lost due to term time leave (and % of those authorised / unauthorised)
- In the above, comparisons between 'all' and key groups including: year groups, disadvantaged, SEND, assigned social worker, level of need 3 and 4 (as defined in safeguarding policy).
- Patterns of lateness

10.2 In this way, schools will formally track their attendance position within the year. They will also track their overall attendance patterns over a rolling three-year period.

10.3 This information will be reported by the Headteacher to the Local Governing body.

11. Requiring medical evidence

11.1 Schools cannot routinely authorise absence for pupils where there are attendance concerns. Before requiring parents/carers to provide medical evidence, parents/carers will have been notified in writing according to the tiered response. The requirement to provide medical evidence would typically be discussed with the parents/carers at an attendance improvement meeting.

11.2 Medical evidence may take many forms, depending upon the circumstances. Where a pupil has a specific medical condition which is clearly evidenced to the school (for example through an NHS paediatrician's letter), this can be taken as evidence for ongoing absences rather than requiring the parents/carers to provide evidence after every absence. However, if there are any doubts, the school will take advice from the Local Authority as it will be necessary to understand the level of attendance that could be reasonably expected with that particular condition. It may be necessary to request consent from the parent to discuss the child's health directly with the GP.

11.3 In cases where there is no confirmed underlying health condition, medical evidence can take whatever form the school deems as appropriate and might include: GP appointment card, prescription or even the school's direct observation. Either way, if a parent/carer is required to provide medical evidence, absences will not be authorised without such evidence.

12. Pupils with medical needs and/ or SEND

12.1 CLP understands that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. However, their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore our attendance ambition for these pupils are the same as they are for any other pupil. We are mindful of the unique barriers that these pupils may face and we are committed to putting support in place where necessary to help them access full time education.

12.2 Parents of pupils with medical needs and / or SEND who are struggling to attend school should contact the school as soon as they can in order for the school to understand the support required. This could include making reasonable adjustments or having individual healthcare plans. In some cases, advice and support may be sought from external partners such as health services. Our work with families in these instances is crucial to ensuring specific support approaches, including supporting home routines and encouraging external professionals to schedule appointments outside of the school day. For families suggesting part time attendance, please see the section on part-time timetables.

13. Appointments during the day

13.1 Parents must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parents must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for their own appointment, not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a family member can attend an appointment.

14. Managing lateness

14.1 Schools will actively discourage late arrivals and will be alert to any patterns of late arrival in order to start an early discussion with the family to provide appropriate support.

14.2 The following table shows how quickly lateness can cause lost learning time:

Minutes late per day	Number of school days lost
5	3.2
10	6.5
15	9.5
20	12.5
30	19

14.3 If a pupil arrives at school after the register has closed, they will be recorded as 'late' (L): this is not an unauthorised absence and the pupil is counted as present for the morning session. Lateness 30 minutes or more after the register has closed~~,~~ will be counted as an unauthorised absence (O~~U~~)

unless parents/carers provide the school with an acceptable reason. Specific timings at Queen's Park Infant Academy are as follows:

Register opens at 08.55am

Register closes at 09.05am

A late mark (L) is recorded if a child arrives between 09.06am and 09.29am.

An unauthorised absence mark (U) or (O) will be recorded for that sessions if a child arrives after 09.30am.

CLP schools will also contact parents/carers if a child regularly arrives at school late. Teachers and other staff who notice a problem with punctuality will consult with the Headteacher before communication is made with parents/carers regarding the matter.

Persistent lateness will be addressed according to the particular circumstances; it is likely that persistent lateness will have triggered the previous low attendance measures. Advice regarding persistent lateness may be sought from the Local Authority.

15. Leave of Absence during term time

15.1 Headteachers have no discretion to grant a leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the Headteacher has all the information in writing to be able to determine whether the request is truly exceptional.

15.2 In considering whether or not to authorise a request for leave of absence in term time, the Headteacher will look at each individual case. A request can only be authorised if the Headteacher considers that the circumstances are exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the Request for Leave of Absence form available from the school website/office. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances.

15.3 Only the parent/carer the child resides with can make an application for a leave of absence. In the case of separated parents, the other parent will be notified of the application (provided that this parent also retains parental responsibility) so that they have the opportunity to express an opinion which the Headteacher can take into account.

15.4 The following are examples of situations which could be considered as exceptional:

- Return of parent/carer from active service (forces)
- Death or terminal illness of a parent/carer, step-parent or sibling
- Young Carers
- Disability or respite leave
- Periods of obligatory religious observance
- Attendance at a wedding or christening of an immediate family member ('immediate' defined as parents and siblings)
- Other situations which might be considered as 'compassionate'

15.5 The following are examples of situations which would *not* typically be considered as exceptional:

- Family holiday / cheaper holiday dates
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time
- Attendance at a wedding or christening (unless it relates to immediate family)
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK
- Limitations on parents'/carers' leave entitlement or dates or parents'/carers' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays
- A family member going for medical treatment abroad which could be reasonably carried out in the UK
- Child's birthday

15.6 School will not typically authorise any leave during May and June due to statutory assessments.

15.7 Parents/carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity.

15.8 If a leave of absence is taken but the school has not been able to authorise the absence because the reasons are not considered 'exceptional', the school will request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice (PN) as appropriate according to the DfE thresholds. These DfE thresholds allow for a PN to be issued in circumstances where parents may be deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated unauthorised term time absence (such as for birthdays and other family events).

16. Absence for performance

16.1 The Headteacher may grant leave of absence for approved public performances provided that clear evidence is issued of the approved nature of this activity. The following will also be taken into account in reaching a decision:

- The nature and purpose of the performance;
- The frequency of absence requested and the likely impact on the child's education and progress; and
- The child's attendance record

16.2 Where licences are issued by the Local Authority, absences will be monitored to ensure that they comply with the permissions given in the licence. Where the licence specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the licence do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise leave of absence. Headteachers should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education. Any concerns will be communicated to the school attendance lead.

17. Off-site education, alternative provision or specialist provision

17.1 Where a child's needs are recognised by the school, and specialist resources not available in school are required, the allocated lead within the school may authorise absence for specific times when such tuition or therapy may be given outside of school. For pupils using alternative provision or off site education, the allocated lead will ensure that the provider's safeguarding arrangements are effective and that the quality of education for the pupil is good or better. All pupils placed in a more appropriate provision will have full time education and clearly defined outcomes agreed before the placement starts and attendance will be tracked by the provider and the school at which the pupil is on roll. Such pupils will be coded appropriately and, if in attendance at the agreed appropriate provision, will not be marked as absent. Stringent safeguarding checks will be carried out before and during the placement as well as checking safeguarding daily through a daily attendance phone call.

18. Part-time timetables

18.1 In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

18.2 Part-time tables will only be used according to the DfE guidance set out in Working together to improve school attendance (para 65 – 70).

18.3 In particular, that guidance sets out that a part-timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period

18.4 Any part-time timetable consideration must take careful account of any possible safeguarding risks. Where the pupil has a social worker, the school must keep the social worker informed and involved in the process.

18.5 If the pupil has an Education health and care plan, the school must discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority.

19. Children Missing in Education

19.1 CLP's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures' outlines the process to be followed if children are considered missing.

20. Informing parents of this policy

20.1 Schools within CLP will take all reasonable endeavours to ensure that parents and carers are aware of this policy. Parents and carers will be regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance as well as the implications of low attendance and of taking unauthorised absence.

20.2 This policy will be published on each school's website. All parents are sent a 'September Attendance Letter' within the first fortnight in each academic year which summarises attendance expectations including arrangements for requesting term time absence due to exceptional circumstances.

20.3 Furthermore, this school informs parents of its attendance expectations in the following ways:

20.4

- A trustwide letter at the beginning of the academic year.

- If a child's attendance falls below the expected 96% at any point of the year upon auditing, parents will receive a letter to inform them of the situation and invited in to meet with staff should the attendance continue to be a cause for concern once the first contact is made.

Appendix A: Contacting staff about attendance

The Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance is:	Doug Gubbins and Tracey Parkers
The attendance admin officers are:	Maddy Seraphin, Emma Coleman and Becky Purchase
To tell your school that your child is going to be absent, you should:	Please tell us by 9am at the latest. Telephone the school on 01202 673966 and leave a message giving your child's name and detailed reason for absence.
If a parent is concerned about their child's attendance, they should:	Speak with the child's teacher in the first instance. You can arrange that by speaking with your child's class teacher or the school office. If you have already done that and remain concerned, you can speak to Mr Gubbins. You can arrange that by contacting the school office on the number above.
Other key staff involved in supporting attendance are:	[for example] Aysha Donald, Deputy Head and SENCO Tracey Parker, Family Support Worker
If you wish to request a leave of absence for your child, you should:	Obtain the 'Request for Leave of Absence form' from the school website or office. Complete this form and give it to the school as early as possible before the requested absence is due to happen.

Appendix B: Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices.

Local Authorities are required to draw up, and publish on their website, a Local Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices. This code of conduct must also include details of the Notice to Improve process.

The Code of Conduct for Dorset Council can be accessed here.

The Code of Conduct for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council had not been published to their website at the time of this policy's determination.

Appendix C: Summary of roles and responsibilities

For ALL pupils:			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**Local Governors are expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
• Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. • Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). • Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. • Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	• Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. • Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. • Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. • Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. • Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance	• Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. • Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. • Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	• Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. • Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. • Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. • Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice

For pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (95-90% attendance):			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**Local Governors are expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	• Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. • Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. • Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. • If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	• Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	• Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. • Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. • If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

For persistently absent pupils (below 90% attendance):			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**Local Governors are expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: • Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. • Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. • Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. • Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. • Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.	• Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: • Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. • Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. • Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

For severely absent pupils (less than 50% attendance):			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**Local Governors are expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: • Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	• Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: • All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. • Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

For pupils with medical conditions and / or SEND with poor attendance (below 95%)			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**Local Governors are expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the support offered.	• Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. • Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. • Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. • Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	• Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	• Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. • Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

For pupils with a social worker:			
Parents / pupils are expected to:	**School is expected to:**	**Local Governors are expected to:**	**The Local Authority is expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the support offered.	• Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	• Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	• Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area. • Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children. • Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.