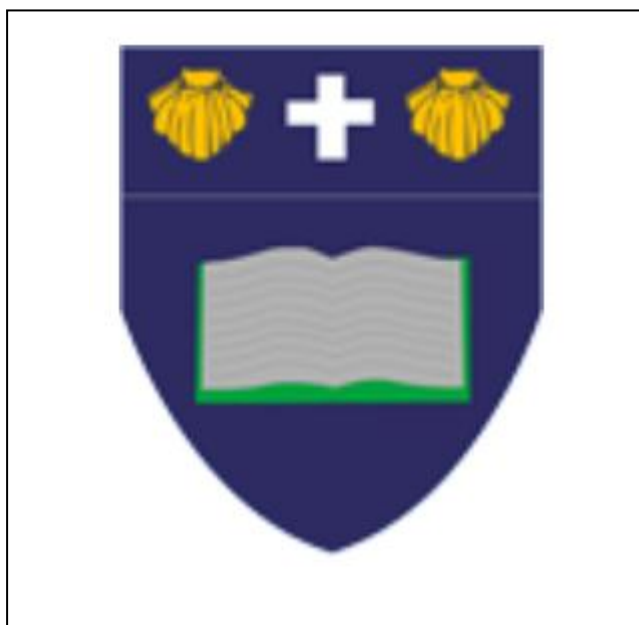


Westleigh Methodist Primary School Attendance Policy



Written by:	Epworth Education Trust
Personalised by	L. Boardman
Date agreed:	Autumn 2025
Next Review Date:	Autumn 2026
Chairs Signature	S. Pilkington

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Reason for Change
September 2023	Lisa Draper	1	Completion Revision of Trust policy
September 2024	Lisa Draper & Amy Burkes	2	In response to National updates: Edits: rationale (1), responsibilities (3), information around the role of 'Attendance Champion' – who is a member of school's SLT, local authority designated attendance support worker (3.1) unauthorised absence reasons (4.1) coordination with other schools where siblings attend (4.3.1) support for cohorts (4.3) (4.4) dates on tables updated to 24-25 Appendix 2 – LOA to include National Threshold information Appendix 4 – Attendance Contract to include specific review date within 3-12 months and a statement of agreement from both parent and school Appendix 6 – 2024 Update Working Together to Improve School Attendance and 2024 Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance Additions: penalty notices (6.1) Appendix 5 – Attendance Matters poster for parent /carers
August 2025	Amy Burkes	3	Updated to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements of the 2025 Early Years Statutory Framework. p.5 DfE data updated to most recent research. P 6. Paragraph directing EYFS parents to 'EYFS Attendance Policy' p.10 Inserted paragraph on how EYFS attendance is reported. p.12 Inserted paragraph on requirement for school to hold details of at least 2 emergency contacts p.14 inserted paragraph to direct EYFS parents to EYFS Attendance Policy to find out how attendance is supported. Appendix 6 – updated to most recent DfE research link

Our Vision

We are a loving, inclusive family, rooted in our Christian Values and nurturing ethos. We provide a positive learning environment where all children can achieve their full potential.



Our Mission

Westleigh Methodist is a family in which everything we do is built upon our Christian values and ethos. We endeavour to create a place where everyone feels happy, nurtured, safe and valued. We will foster a sense of high-self-esteem, love of learning and enquiring minds. We aim to equip pupils to become good citizens with high aspirations and an understanding of the part they play in our society. Our creative and exciting curriculum will lead to achievement for all and children reaching their full potential and becoming life-long learners.

Safeguarding Statement

At the Westleigh Methodist Primary School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

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Section 1: Rationale

Statement of Intent

Epworth Education Trust, and Westleigh Methodist School, are united in their belief that regular school attendance is essential for all pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. Excellent attendance is linked to increased emotional resilience, confidence, and the ability to reach full potential, enabling every child to make a positive contribution to their community and beyond.

We believe that children must 'Attend to Achieve' - excellent attendance has a direct impact on attainment. The most recent Department for Education (DfE) study, '*The Link Between Attendance and Attainment in an Assessment Year*', published in March 2025, provides clear evidence of the impact of attendance on academic achievement in primary schools. It found that Year 6 pupils with 95–100% attendance are around 30% more likely to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to those with 90–95% attendance. Missing as few as 10 school days over the course of the year can significantly reduce a child's chance of reaching their full potential.. {see Appendix 5}

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education. The parental role in ensuring children attend school daily is key, and as such, we expect parents to fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure their child has good time keeping and attendance. **This means your child must attend, on time, 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 school. When children cannot attend school, we expect parents to report the absence as soon as possible and no later than 8:50am which is when registration closes.

Epworth Education Trust recognise that there can be diverse and complex barriers to accessing education. Westleigh Methodist Primary School is committed to building trusting relationships with families to ensure these barriers are identified, and removed, in a timely manner by securing the right support at the right time.

Attendance figures for each child will be reported to parents each term. This will become more regular if your child's attendance is concerning. The attendance of the whole school, as well as the attendance of particular demographic groups will reported to and monitored by the Local Advisory Board for Westleigh Methodist Primary School as well as the Epworth Education Trust.

We intend, with the support of this policy, to increase overall attendance percentages, reduce authorised absences and minimise lateness and unauthorised absences.

Early Years settings

This Attendance Policy outlines the expectations and procedures for reporting and monitoring pupil attendance including within our EYFS provision. It complies with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 2025 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

This policy aims to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and educational engagement of all pupils by promoting regular attendance and prompt follow-up of absences. Specific attendance expectations for children in Nursery and Reception are also detailed separately in the school's '**EYFS Attendance Policy**', which can be found on the website and will be shared with parents/carers when their child begins EYFS provision.

Section 2: The Epworth Approach

Epworth Education Trust adopts the '**5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice**' framework {Appendix 1}, modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare. The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all children can, but most importantly want to, attend school, flourish and succeed. This approach ensures schools within the Epworth Education Trust prioritise building effective relationships with children, and families, so that timely support, advice and guidance can be provided. Westleigh Methodist Primary School is proud to have an ethos where good attendance is the norm, and every child aims for excellent attendance. We demonstrate, through awards, that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.

Positive health and emotional well-being are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. The '**5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice**' framework promotes, and supports, a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all children.

Each one of the five foundations is supported by 5 Key Performance Indicators. These are used to ensure our school can embed the Foundations framework and understand the strategic direction regarding attendance improvement. Each year, the schools within Epworth Education Trust will self-assess against this criterion to understand what works well and identify what they need to do to be even better.

All schools within the Epworth Education Trust recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.

Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities

All schools within the Epworth Education Trust follow government guidance regarding the roles and responsibilities for school attendance. These are:

Parents will:

- Ensure their child attends every day that the school is open except when a statutory reason applies

- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child is unexpectedly absent. (See [section 4.2.2 reporting absence](#)).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances (see [section 6](#)).
- Book medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- When required, work in partnership with school and any relevant outside agencies to understand and support any barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with any support offered

School will:

- Have an 'Attendance Champion'. This is a senior leader in the school who is responsible for attendance. The champion is expected to:
 - Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
 - Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling attendance
 - Have a strong grasp of absence data
 - Regularly monitor and evaluate progress

To support this work, school will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.
- If required, due to a pupil's absence being at risk of being persistent or severe, take an active part in multi-agency efforts with the Local Authority, other schools in the area and other partners and take the lead role when best placed to do so.

Trustees and Local Advisory Boards will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement by supporting the school to prioritise attendance.
- Recognise the importance of attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Work together with leaders to set a whole school culture of excellent attendance
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus support on the pupils, families and cohorts who need it most.
- Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.

3.1 Key Staff at Westleigh Methodist Primary School:

Key Staff for the implementation of this policy:

Louise Boardman – Headteacher

Sam Sumner – Pastoral Manager

Key Staff for the implementation of systems and processes:

Gayle Clayworth – Office

Sally Robinson – Office

Local Authority Attendance Officer:

Nicola Shackleton

Section 4: Systems and Processes

Section 4.1 Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day and again for the afternoon session. On each occasion each pupil will receive a mark related to whether they are present in school, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. Schools within the Epworth Education Trust will use the guidance provided by the government to determine which category a pupil's absence falls into.

EYFS Attendance (2025 EYFS Statutory Framework)

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (including nursery, reception, and pre-school provision) must be registered daily. For children attending part-time in nursery, attendance must be recorded for the specific sessions they are due to attend. The definition of persistent absence also applies in EYFS and is defined as missing 10% or more of sessions. Parents are expected to ensure their child attends regularly, even if their child is not of compulsory school age, in line with the Trust's commitment to promoting a positive culture of attendance.

Absence marks

Authorised absence means that one of a specific set of circumstances applies:

- Leave of absence granted by the school in exceptional circumstances (see section 6)
- Excluded where no alternative provision is made.
- Illness that would prevent your child from attending school – school **MUST** be informed of the type of illness.

- Medical or dental appointments that are not routine and cannot be booked around the school day. Evidence must be shown.
- Religious observance informed of in advance where permission is granted via completion of a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form {Appendix 2}
- A child attends a sporting, musical, art or religious activity/exam, with prior permission from the school via completion of a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form {Appendix 2}

Unauthorised absence is where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised or where the reasons for a pupil's absence has not been provided or cannot be verified. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Leave of absence in term time without authorisation i.e. holidays. The Department for Education **does not** consider a need or desire for a holiday to be an exceptional circumstance.
- Where no reason for absence is established.
- Unsatisfactory explanation e.g., a child's/family member's birthday, overslept, confusion with term dates, sibling is ill, pet is ill.
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease/illness.
- Where no medical evidence has been provided for medical and dental appointments.
- Vague or non-specific illnesses or extended periods of illness where medical advice has not been sought

Section 4.2 Day to Day Processes

Section 4.2.1 Lateness / Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the school day. If your child is late they can miss learning time and vital information, causing disruption to the lessons and others. Being late can also cause distress to your child and affect their mental health and wellbeing - they could feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. It is important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that children need to develop whilst they are young.

Doors open for children at **8.50am** and lessons begin at **9.00am** - all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time**. Pupils who arrive between **9.00am** and **9.30am** will receive a late mark. Late marks are unauthorised and will count as an absence (unless school authorised the lateness in advance, for example, with evidence of a medical appointment). Lateness will be added to your child's record of attendance.

Dismissal is at

- 12 noon and 3pm for Nursery prompt
- 3.20pm for Reception
- 3.30pm for Year 1 – 6

If you are going to be late to collect your child, you should contact the school office as soon as possible. This ensures your child's wellbeing is protected and they are aware of the circumstances of non-collection.

Section 4.2.2 Reporting absence

A child not attending school or the EYFS setting is considered a safeguarding matter so information about the cause of an absence is always required. Registers are live, legal documents and therefore the government recommend that amendments are not made at a later date/time. For this reason, it is paramount that school is contacted **before** an absence begins.

To report an absence, a telephone message stipulating the **precise** reason for the absence and the anticipated return date must be left on the absence line of the school office on **01942 702967 before registration is taken at 9.00am** on the first day of absence. Where a proposed date of return is not given, the same procedure must be followed on every subsequent day of absence.

Children who have had an illness where sickness and/or diarrhoea was prevalent must remain at home and not return to school for 48 hours after their last bout of sickness/diarrhoea, in line with NHS guidance.

Sending a message on Dojo or email is **not** an acceptable way to report an absence as these cannot always be viewed in a timely manner.

Section 4.2.3 Unexplained absences procedure from day 1

If school have not heard from you regarding your child's absence you may be contacted in the following ways:

- Phone call before 10am to understand the reason for no contact, the reason for absence and when the pupil will return
- Home visit when contact is not made / there is a pattern of absence / it is part of a strategy listed in the Attendance Support Map (section 4.4) / an absence is ongoing or persistent

All schools have a statutory safeguarding duty, which includes investigating all unexplained absences this also applies for children who attend the school's EYFS settings (including nurseries).

If a pupil's absence is unexplained or prolonged without adequate explanation, the school will follow up promptly.

Where relevant, school will inform others of your child's absence, such as:

- Other parent/person with parental responsibility
- Emergency contacts
- Other school where a sibling attends
- Social worker
- Social Care
- Police

Where concerns arise about the pupil's wellbeing, appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed without delay.

Emergency Contact Details

In accordance with this policy and the updated EYFS Statutory Framework, the school requires parents/carers to provide at least two current emergency contact details upon admission. This information must be submitted via the new starter form. These contacts will be used to reach families promptly in the event of an unexplained or extended absence, or other emergencies. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to keep these contact details up to date.

Section 4.3 Monitoring Attendance

Attendance data will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends (such as frequent absences on specific days or repeated unexplained absences) to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance, punctuality and attainment. This process also includes children in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The school applies professional judgement to determine if absences are 'prolonged' or raise safeguarding concerns, considering individual child vulnerability and family circumstances.

Attendance will be monitored weekly and a log completed of all phone calls and home visits made due to unexplained or long absences. This log will also include dates that any warning letters or penalty notices were sent. Weekly attendance meetings will be held within the Pastoral Team to understand the progress the school is making when supporting individuals or groups and to begin targeted interventions for those children being monitored/deemed 'at risk of PA'. The team will also speak to these individuals, to gain insight into why their attendance has slipped. The team may meet with teachers to devise specific, individual or cohort-level strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.

The Pastoral Team will also use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. They will work with other schools in the local area, authority, and within Epworth Education Trust to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance. Support for these cohorts will be prioritised by the local authority.

The Pastoral Team will meet with the Headteacher regularly to share agreed actions for those children of concern and update on progress with Attendance Contracts, Early Helps and Education Supervision Orders. The Headteacher will also monitor attendance data and the attendance log to ensure this policy is implemented in a timely manner. During these meetings, the Headteacher will review any Leave Requests and instruct the Pastoral Team of their decision, who will respond to parents. The impact of whole-school attendance efforts will be discussed, assessed and reviewed.

It is the responsibility of trustees and the local advisory board to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance and regular reports will be presented to these bodies. Weekly reports will benchmark attendance data against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement. These partners will therefore

examine closely the information provided for them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as can be.

Section 4.3.1 Persistent Absence

Epworth Education Trust aims to eliminate Persistent Absenteeism from all its schools, so that children can flourish and succeed. 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). {see Appendix 5}

A child is classed as Persistently Absent if they miss 10% of school. This equates to 19, or more, missed days during the academic year - which is the equivalent of 1 day of absence, or more, a fortnight across a full school year.

As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. Westleigh Methodist Primary School is committed to working with families to prevent children becoming Persistently Absent, to protect their right to a full-time education. The Attendance Support Map (section 4.4) provides details about the support we offer.

Section 4.4 Attendance Support Map.

Early Years Support

Regular attendance in the Early Years is crucial for a child's development, wellbeing, and establishing a stable routine. When absences are repeated or unexplained, it can raise safeguarding concerns and may signal that additional support is needed.

In line with the 2025 EYFS Framework, we actively follow up on all absences and work closely with families to address any challenges. For full details on the steps taken when a child is absent without notice or for an extended period, please refer to **the 'EYFS Attendance Policy'**.

Please be aware that frequent or extended absences could put your child's nursery place at risk

Attendance Support Map

The Epworth Education Trust recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. The Attendance Support Map ensures that time is given to listen to and understand these difficulties so the child's right to education can be delivered and barriers removed. The Attendance Support Map identifies the six levels of support parents can expect, as well as clarity over attendance expectations and consequences. There are exceptions to this support map, such as for children with a medical condition.

Attendance Support Category	Reason	Attendance Percentage (Year to date)
Expect	Excellent Attendance	98% - 100%
Monitor	Satisfactory Attendance	94% - 97.9%
Listen and Understand	Poor Attendance	92% - 93.9%
Facilitate Support	Critical Attendance	90% - 91.9%
Formalise Support	Unacceptable Attendance	80% - 89.9%
Enforce	Extremely Unacceptable Attendance	<80%

EXPECT (98%-100%) Excellent Attendance		
Autumn 25-26 (71 pupil days) Attended at least 70 days (absent for 1 day)	Spring 25-26 (126 pupil days) Attended at least 124 days (absent for 2 days)	Summer 25-26 (190 pupil days) Attended at least 187 days (absent for 3 days)
Pupils and parents aspire to high standards of attendance, leading to better prospects in the future where pupils reach their potential. Westleigh Methodist Primary School is a place where everyone belongs and all can, and want to, attend, flourish and succeed. This positive culture is celebrated by: - Winning class shared in Celebration Praise each Thursday and shared with families on the newsletter. - A new whole school display following our new attendance incentive called 'Attend Like a Hero'. Here Every day Every day On time - Attend Like a Hero posters displayed in each classroom 2 children who have attended 100% in that week will be celebrated in the newsletter. They dress up as a superhero and have their photograph on the display board and in the newsletter. - The class with the highest attendance percentage win Attendance Ted. Again this is shared on the newsletter and awarded in Celebration Praise.    - Termly awards for children who have attended 100% across that one term. Autumn – Chocolate Party Spring – Extra playtime and lollies Summer – Disco in the hall		

MONITOR (94% - 97.9%)		
Satisfactory Attendance (Initial Concerns)		
Autumn 25-26 (71 pupil days) Attended at least 70 days (absent for 1 day)	Spring 25-26 (126 pupil days) Attended at least 124 days (absent for 2 days)	Summer 25-26 (190 pupil days) Attended at least 187 days (absent for 3 days)
The Headteacher and pastoral manager rigorously uses attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance and speaks with pupils and/or parents to resolve them. A Risk of PA warning letter {Appendix 3} is sent to parents, informing them their child will be at risk of becoming PA if a specified number of days are further missed including at which point an Attendance Contract Meeting will be opened. This letter leads with individual data about the pupil's absences, including a lesson break down. Early intervention is considered as a preventative measure, especially if there is a pattern (same days missed, persistent lateness impacting attendance, mental health needs).		

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND (92% - 93.9%)		
Poor Attendance (High risk of Persistent Absenteeism)		
Autumn 25-26 (71 pupil days) Attended at least 70 days (absent for 1 day)	Spring 25-26 (126 pupil days) Attended at least 124 days (absent for 2 days)	Summer 25-26 (190 pupil days) Attended at least 187 days (absent for 3 days)
The pastoral manager meet with parents to open an Attendance Contract {Appendix 4} establishing the barriers to attendance the family may be experiencing. Staff will discuss with parents / carers the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, including social and emotional health as well as their legal responsibility. Days missed will be framed as number of lessons missed, to challenge the assumption that a day is not much. Formal guidelines such as NHS are shared to give confidence and clarity to parents around attending school with mild illnesses. School will inform parents their child will become PA if a specified number of days are further missed. The child's teacher will discuss strategies with the child before the parental meeting so the child's and teacher's views can be discussed. Personalised incentives are offered. Contracts are reviewed, in person, or over the phone, at least every two weeks where the parents' and class teacher's views are shared. Contracts are closed when attendance reaches National Expectation of 96% and an award is given to the child for their improvement. If there is non-compliance with the contract or no improvement is made, school will deem the contract no longer useful and an alternative course of action decided on (such as an Early Help). <i>If a child falls into this category due to an unauthorised holiday which is not consistent of usual patterns of attendance, then the family will not be asked to open an Attendance Contract. However, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be served if more than 10 sessions are unauthorised in a 10 week period (sessions do not need to be consecutive)</i>		
FACILITATE SUPPORT (90% - 91.9%)		
Critical Attendance (Critical risk of Persistent Absenteeism)		
Autumn 25-26 (71 pupil days) Attended at least 70 days (absent for 1 day)	Spring 25-26 (126 pupil days) Attended at least 124 days (absent for 2 days)	Summer 25-26 (190 pupil days) Attended at least 187 days (absent for 3 days)
The pastoral manager with parents to establish why the Attendance Contract was unsuccessful and the likelihood that wider/alternative support is required. An Early Help Assessment is completed together with parents so a Team around the child can be formed. Internal support is continued, and added to, in collaboration with the child. External support begins for the family to overcome barriers outside of school, through relevant external agencies (where school absence is a symptom of a wider issue). School think creatively and compassionately to do all they can on a school level. Informal reviews take place at least		

weekly, either in person or over the phone, with formal multi-agency reviews taking place when required. Early Helps may close when attendance moves to above 93% but these may be replaced by Attendance Contracts if the parent feels this useful to prevent habitual poor attendance from resurfacing. Additional academic and pastoral support given to the child to bridge gaps in learning and belonging.

If a child falls into this category due to an unauthorised holiday which is not consistent of usual patterns of attendance, then the family will not be asked to open an Early Help. However, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be served if more than 10 sessions are unauthorised in a 10 week period (sessions do not need to be consecutive)

FORMALISE SUPPORT (80% - 89.9%)		
Unacceptable Attendance (Persistent Absenteeism)		
Autumn 25-26 (71 pupil days) Attended at least 70 days (absent for 1 day)	Spring 25-26 (126 pupil days) Attended at least 124 days (absent for 2 days)	Summer 25-26 (190 pupil days) Attended at least 187 days (absent for 3 days)
The Headteacher and pastoral manager will work closely with the Local Authority Attendance Team and the Inclusion Service as voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with. All support, and offers of support, from all agencies/ team around the child to be reviewed and adapted/added to. The Attendance Team will explain the consequences clearly to the family and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. Families must understand that once 19 days are missed, the child will be Persistently Absent for the remainder of the year and the aim now is to prevent any further absences, at all. Additional academic and pastoral support is given to the child to bridge gaps in learning and belonging. Home visits become a regular occurrence on days the child is absent, especially if reporting absence procedures have not been followed. An Education Supervision Order (ESO) is used to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution therefore making the order would be beneficial for the child and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the DSL will decide if an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, the local authority will fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution.		

ENFORCE (<80%)		
Extremely Unacceptable Attendance (Risk of Severe Absenteeism <50%)		
Autumn 25-26 (71 pupil days) Attended at least 70 days (absent for 1 day)	Spring 25-26 (126 pupil days) Attended at least 124 days (absent for 2 days)	Summer 25-26 (190 pupil days) Attended at least 187 days (absent for 3 days)
All avenues have now been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, despite the consequences being clear to parents. The school will apply for a School Attendance Order, and if parents fail to comply, they may be prosecuted. As a last resort, the school will submit all evidence for statutory enforcement or prosecution under section 444/4441(a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness in the Magistrates Court if required. This is simply to protect the child's right to education. The school's primary purpose continues to be to work with the family to improve attendance and the school will continue to act professionally and compassionately to support the whole family in achieving this. Home visits continue to be a regular occurrence on days the child is absent, especially if reporting absence procedures have not been followed. If the school feel the child's welfare is at risk, or whereabouts are unknown, they will report to children's social care without delay. In some circumstances, the school may identify the child as CME (see Section 4.5)		

Section 4.5 Children Missing in Education

A Child Missing from Education (CME) is a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not receiving a full time or suitable education. If a child has ceased to attend school, it is school's responsibility to make every effort to establish the child's whereabouts.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days without authorisation, and home visits have been unsuccessful in locating the child, the school and the local authority have a responsibility to jointly make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. School will complete and send a Children Missing in Education Referral Form and Checklist to the Local Authority.

The Local Authority has a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to identify and act promptly so these children can be returned to education. On receipt of the Children Missing in Education form, the assigned officer at the Local Authority will carry out further investigations by information sharing with other agencies (children's social care, health, housing, police).

Section 4.5.1 Change of Address

Where a family moves house within or out of the borough, it is paramount the moving date and the new address is shared with school. The child will remain on Westleigh Methodist Primary School's roll until the new school confirms directly with us that the child has started. Until this time, it is expected that the child/ren will still attend Westleigh Methodist Primary School. If your child does not attend for 10 days and contact is unsuccessful, a Children Missing in Education form will be sent to the Local Authority.

Section 5 – Children with Medical conditions

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 (SEND). Their right to education is the same as any other child and therefore the attendance ambition for these children is also the same. In order to achieve this, additional support may be needed to help them access full-time education.

- Making reasonable adjustments
- Putting together an individual Health Care Plan
- Consider additional support or training from external partners (including the Local Authority or Health Services)
- Developing joined up pastoral care to consider return to school agreements.
- Considering additional support provided by the local authority.
- Providing additional academic and/or pastoral support
- School will follow government guidance on Mental Health affecting a pupil's attendance {*appendix 5*}

Section 5.1 Transition following long term absence or illness

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of a child's learning.

During any long-term absence, Westleigh Methodist Primary School will:

- Maintain contact with the child/ family via calls, home visits and class Dojo.
- Carefully plan the transition back to school, ensuring your child feels welcome and regains a sense of belonging.

- Ensure the child once again feels safe in school and if they experience any concerns, they will have an appointed member of staff to work with.
- The Class Teacher and/or Teaching Assistant will support a child when returning to class and help them with any work they may have missed.
- Provide additional academic and/or pastoral support to bridge gaps in learning and belonging.

Section 6 Leave of Absence

The Department for Education states that parents have no entitlement to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any application for leave of absence {Appendix 2} must only be made in exceptional circumstances and must be made by completing a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form (available from the school office) for the headteacher's attention, in advance of the leave.

If your application is denied and your child is still absent, parents may be fined by means of a Penalty Notice or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court by the Local Authority.

Section 6.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school.

From August 2024, the threshold for an Education Penalty Notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. A session is linked to a morning or afternoon, therefore there are two sessions per school day. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions do not need to be consecutive. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, 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:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is

met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Arrangements for coordination between the local authority and neighbouring local authorities are in place for checking the attendance of pupils who have moved home or school during the previous 3 years to ensure the correct notice is issued.

The payment of Education Penalty Notices is paid directly to the local authority. If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority will decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. Any revenues collected through the system is ringfenced for attendance support within the local authority – monies collected do not come to school.

This policy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure it remains current and effective.

Appendix 1: 5 Foundations

5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice	
 Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate	The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness
 Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes	The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.
 Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development	The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.

 Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention	Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.
 Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management	Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Request



Request for Leave of Absence during term time.

All schools can grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances at their discretion. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. The Department for Education does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance and therefore these will not be authorised.

National Framework for Penalty Notices:

It is important that parents understand that unauthorised absence may result in an Education Penalty Notice being served. In some circumstances, this may lead to prosecution by the Local Authority. The threshold for an Education Penalty Notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. There are two sessions per day. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions do not need to be consecutive. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child of paid within 21 days

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised attendance within the 10-week period, the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days

The third time an offence is committed within the 10-week period, a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Please consider this information carefully before requesting leave. If you still want to request leave, remember it is your statutory responsibility to inform school of the whereabouts of your child / children during term time and the information overleaf must be completed to fulfil this responsibility.

Child / Children's name/s and year groups	
1 st day of absence:	
Return to school date	
Total number of school days missed	
Reason for absence (including holiday destination if relevant)	
Please attach any relevant evidence that will help school to make an informed decision.	

Parental Declaration:

I understand the thresholds of absence within the National Framework and that if my application for leave is denied and my child is still absent, both parents may receive an Education Penalty Notice or other enforcement action if these thresholds are met.

Name (please print)

Signed: Parent/Carer.....

Date.....

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:

Received by..... Date..... Code.....

Has the parent / carer been informed that this absence will/ will not be authorised? Y/ N

How has the parent / carer been informed? Email / Phone call / face to face

Parents / carers informed by.....

Appendix 3: Risk of PA (Monitor)



Date:

RE: Child's Name DOB:

Dear PARENTS NAME _____

Current attendance:

Nutgrove School Attendance Target - 98%

In accordance with Nutgrove Methodist Schools' Attendance Policy, we closely monitor all children's attendance and punctuality and keep parents / carers informed of this.

When a child's attendance is 90% or below, the government consider the child as 'persistently absent'. Epworth Education Trust aims to eliminate Persistent Absenteeism from all its schools, so that children can flourish and succeed. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms/poor habits that continue through adulthood and therefore we believe strongly that children must 'Attend to Achieve'.

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance is currently _____ and we have initial concerns regarding the possibility of persistent absenteeism.

As a school we strive to ensure all our pupils receive good quality education. Please support us in maintaining high standards of education and attendance by ensuring your child attends school every day that the school is open, except in a small number of circumstances.

So far this school year, your child has been absent for _____ school days. This is equivalent to _____ lessons. The more lessons missed, the harder it is for children to catch up with what other children have learned. As well as affecting academic outcomes, this affects social and emotional wellbeing due to a lack of connectedness and belonging. If your child misses _____ more school days between now and the end of this term, they will be considered "persistently absent." However, if they begin to attend every day the school is open, their attendance will increase to by the end of this term.

While we appreciate children may be occasionally unwell, we encourage you to return your child to school as soon as they are fit, as everyday counts!

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and if there is no improvement, we will contact you again to invite you to an attendance meeting in school. This meeting will enable us to 'Listen and Understand' in line with our attendance policy and open an Attendance Contract. Please contact Mrs Chamberlain (Attendance Officer) at Nutgrove Primary School and Mrs Garton EWO if you would like to discuss the contents of this letter or would like to discuss any barriers to attendance you feel you need support with.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 4: Attendance Contract (Listen and Understand)

Name of Child:		Year Group:	
Class Teacher:		Date of Meeting:	

Attendance Percentage to date:

Total possible number of sessions (half days) to date		Total number of sessions remaining to the end of term:	
Total number of sessions missed:		Attendance Percentage by the end of final review period (insert date between 3-12 months) if all future sessions attended, on time:	
Total number of sessions late:		Attendance Percentage by the end of year if all <u>future</u> sessions attended, on time:	

Pupil voice:

Key Barriers <i>(To be completed by class staff with the child prior to meeting)</i>	
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Actions:

Parent / Carer:	<i>Parent statement agreeing to comply with the requirements and time frame</i>
School:	<i>School statement agreeing to provide support to the parent/s to meet the requirements</i>
Any other comments / Concerns raised:	
Other Agency involved: (and permission to share this contract with them)	

Actions agreed by:

Name – please print	Role/agency/relationship	Please sign

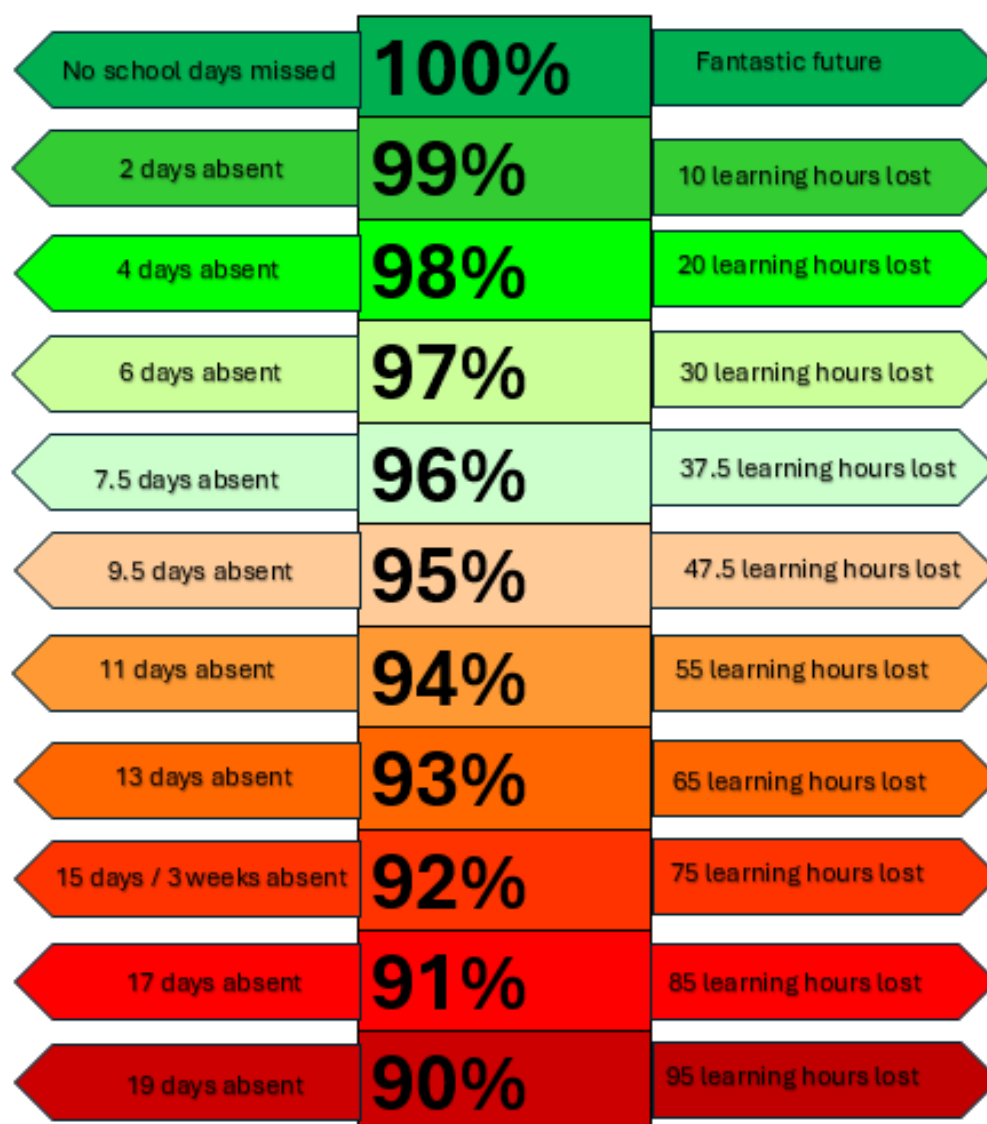
Appendix 5: Attendance Matters - Poster for parent/carers

Attendance Matter



Achievement is directly linked to attendance.

Children with high levels of attendance make better progress and achieve better in examinations. Where a child does not attend school, they miss out on significant hours of learning opportunities (broadly calculated as 5 hours for every two sessions missed) which are unlikely to be covered again.



Appendix 6: Sources / Statistics

Statistics: Absence and Attendance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/link-between-attendance-and-attainment>

The Law on School Attendance: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Mental Health issues affecting Attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools>