Pelsall Village School
Every Child Every Chance Every Day

Attendance Policy
Reviewed by the Head teacher Sept 24.

1 Purpose

This policy follows the guidance in the Government publication of May 22 (published Sept 22) – Working together to improve school attendance.
Attendance and Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.
Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

This policy is aimed at supporting the school attendance at Pelsall Village School to be at least 95%.

Regular or at least good attendance supports a child's access to a good education, leading to academic progress and success. Non attendance at school can have a significant impact on the number of days of learning missed by a child as shown in the table below:

Attendance %	Actual number of days missed at school
99%	2 days out of 190
95%	10 days out of 190
90%**	19 days out of 190 (nearly 4 school weeks)
85%	29 days out of 190 (nearly a whole half term)
80%	38 days out of 190 (more than a half term)

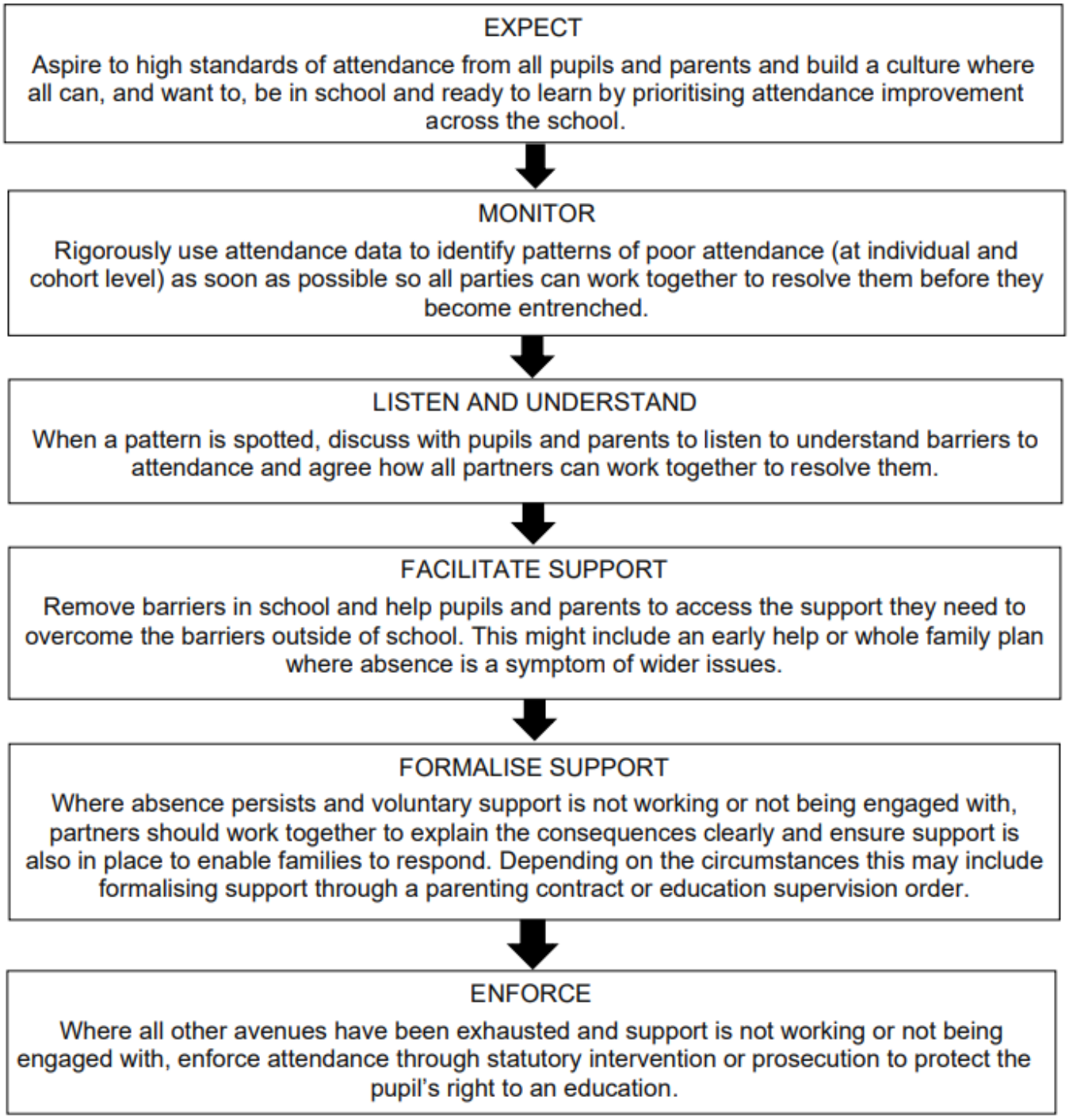
**** persistent absence – see point below.**

2. The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, 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 either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure 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. The Attendance Process

The Government guidance directs schools to follow a clear process in order to support and lead to improved school attendance. The flow chart below shows the process that will be used at Pelsall Village School:



This process is aimed at supporting a collaborative approach between the school and parents. School will be required to maintain clear communication and evidence of the support given as this will be required should the engagement of parents not improve and school reaches the 'ENFORCE' part of the process at which point the Local Authority will require evidence of the Attendance process.

As part of the process school will liaise with parents where attendance is identified as requiring improvement.

1. Parents contacted in relation to falling attendance and requiring improvement. This will be a phone call or face to face discussion from the school office staff when attendance falls below 95% - this will be formalised with Letter 1 (appendix 1)

2. Parents contacted and invited to an initial meeting with the Head teacher, Safeguarding lead and Education Welfare officer to discuss the attendance with a focus on supporting an improvement in future attendance – this will be formalised with Letter 2 (appendix 2)

3. Parents contacted for a further meeting with Head teacher, Safeguarding Lead and Educational Welfare officer to discuss the attendance further and implement agreed strategy to improve attendance – this will be formalised with Letter 3 (appendix 3). All absences will now be unauthorised until medical evidence is provided of the absence.

4. Where attendance does not improve following points 1, 2, and 3 then the Parents will be contacted to be informed that all absences will continue to be unauthorised until medical evidence is provided of the absence. Parents will also be informed that the matter will now be forwarded to the Education Welfare Service at the local authority from which point Legal Intervention may commence leading to a fixed penalty notice fine. This will be formalised with Letter 4 (appendix 4)

4. Recording Attendance.

School doors are open to children from 8:45am and children will be registered from this point onwards until 8:55am when registration ends. Children arriving after 8:55 will be recorded as late. Children arriving after 9:30 will be recorded as U code which is classed as an unauthorised absence (late after registers have closed).

The register is recorded on an Electrical system called SIMS and copies of children's attendance are shared with parents upon request or during attendance meetings.

A table of the attendance codes can be found in appendix 5.

5. School Absences

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The Parent/Guardian is asked to inform school on first day of absence. If no notification is received, the school office will contact the parent/guardian on the first day of absence, following written procedures.

When the child returns to school, a note may be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence. All information received, either in person, by telephone or in writing, is transferred to the SIMS system.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

We advise that when an absence is for a medical reason, some form of proof of this is provided by the parent. Doctor's appointment card, prescriptions or a dated receipt of goods to support your child's medical problem.

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence relates to children who have an attendance rate of 90% or less. However, through our scrutiny of attendance we are likely to identify possible persistent absences before this point as part of the attendance process (Point 3.)

6. Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, to request permission for authorised absence from the Head Teacher. Following guidance from the Department of Education, no holiday is authorised (once a child reaches the age of 5). The correct process is as follows:

1. Complete a request for leave of absence form from the school office.

2. The head teacher will review this in accordance with government legislation and subsequently reply to parents, usually in writing.

3. School will support and authorise some leave of absence requests:

    a. To take part in a recreational activity that is deemed to be a significantly high standard (e.g. a football match for an Academy team or Recognised Music Exam)
    b. If the request is an exceptional circumstance.

4. All other absence requests will be unauthorised and forwarded to the Education Welfare Officer and Local Authority – this may result in a fixed penalty notice incurring a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. If payment is not made within 21 days this will increase to £120 per parent per child.

7. Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school in consultation with parents/guardians will do all it can to send material home for school work. Where possible document evidence from the child's GP will be requested as evidence.

8. Poor punctuality

Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have a dramatic impact on the progress of your child. In Key Stage 1, schools very often start the day with the phonics or reading lessons. Missing 5 or 10 minutes of this lesson on a regular basis will prevent a child's progress in reading.

We expect all pupils to attend punctually in order to make the best use of their time in school. Late arrivals are recorded and members of staff or governors may request a verbal reason for being late. If more than five lates are recorded by one family, the head teacher will formally contact parents and request immediate improvement.

If there is no significant improvement in the punctuality, then the parents will be invited to a formal meeting with the head teacher and school governors. The aim of this meeting will be to agree how to move forward so that the child(ren) arrive at school at the correct time on a consistent basis.

9. Rewards for good attendance

Rewards are given for the best attending children; these are reviewed periodically by school and a consensus taken. This may be a prize, a certificate or a special event.

10. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. A named Governor will assume responsibility for Attendance and will liaise regularly with the Head Teacher to monitor the effectiveness of practice and policy. Parents will be regularly informed of attendance through the school newsletter.

The Senior Leadership Team will review attendance figures and procedures at least termly.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Appendices

Letter 1
Letter 2
Letter 3
Letter 4
Attendance Codes

Appendix 1

Attendance Letter 1

GB/SW/Attendance Concern Letter 1

To the parent/carer of:-

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Attendance Concern 1

We are concerned about (insert child's name) attendance. Our records show that (insert child's name) current attendance is (insert % attendance) up to (insert date). Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistent Absentee – this is when education is very likely to be negatively affected.

As you are aware we want parents' support to improve attendance, so if there are any issues please get into contact with me, as we may be able to help and discuss any issues you may be having with getting «chosen_forename» into school.

As a result of (insert child's name) poor attendance, we have to initiate our attendance monitoring procedures.

Please be aware that if this continues then we will have no other option but to pass this matter on to the Education Welfare Team who will invite you to an attendance meeting.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

Appendix 2

Attendance Letter 2

GB/SW/Attendance Concern Letter 2

To the parent/carer of:-

RE: Attendance Concern Letter 2

Dear Parent Carer

Following my previous letter sent on (enter date), we are disappointed to say that there has been no significant improvement in (insert child's name) attendance.

Our records show that (insert child's name) current attendance is (insert % attendance). Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistent Absentee – this is when education is very likely to be negatively affected by children not being in school.

It is important that children attend school regularly and on time. Here at Pelsall Village School, our best interests are to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly. Once again, we are giving you the opportunity to discuss any issues you may be facing with getting (insert child's name) into school.

The Education Welfare Service will contact you to invite you to an Attendance Meeting. Please get into contact with us if you cannot attend.

Should the child's attendance fall below 90% all future absences will need to be covered with medical evidence to be authorised.

Please be aware that if this continues then we will have no other option but to complete a Legal Intervention referral.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

Appendix 3

Attendance Letter 3

GB/SW/Attendance Concern Letter 3

To the parent/carer of:-

RE: Attendance Concern Letter 3

Dear Parent Carer

Following my previous letters sent on (enter date), we are disappointed to say that there has been no improvement in (insert child's name) attendance and therefore have no other option but to consider a Legal Intervention Referral.

Our records show that (insert child's name) current attendance is (insert % attendance). Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistent Absentee – this is when education is very likely to be negatively affected by children not being in school.

It is important that children attend school regularly and on time. Here at Pelsall Village School, our best interests are to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly. Once again, we are giving you the opportunity to discuss any issues you may be facing with getting (insert child's name) into school.

The Education Welfare Service will be inviting you to a second Attendance Meeting. Failure to attend this meeting and/or failure to improve attendance will result in a Legal Intervention referral being made. Please get into contact with us if you cannot attend.

Any future absences will need to be covered with medical evidence to be authorised.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

Appendix 4

Attendance Letter 4

GB/SW/Attendance Concern Letter 4

To the parent/carer of:-

RE: Attendance Concern Letter 4

Dear Parent Carer

Following my previous letters sent on (enter date) and the Attendance meetings held on (insert dates), we are disappointed to say that there has been no improvement in (insert child's name) attendance and therefore have no other option but to make a Legal Intervention Referral.

Our records show that (insert child's name) current attendance is (insert % attendance). Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistent Absentee – this is when education is very likely to be negatively affected by children not being in school.

It is important that children attend school regularly and on time. Here at Pelsall Village School, our best interests are to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly.

The Education Welfare Service will contact you in due course regarding this referral.

Any future absences will continue to require medical evidence for the absence to be authorised.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

Appendix 5

Attendance Codes

/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised absence
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational Visit or Trip
W	Work Experience
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school aged
-	All should attend – No mark recorded