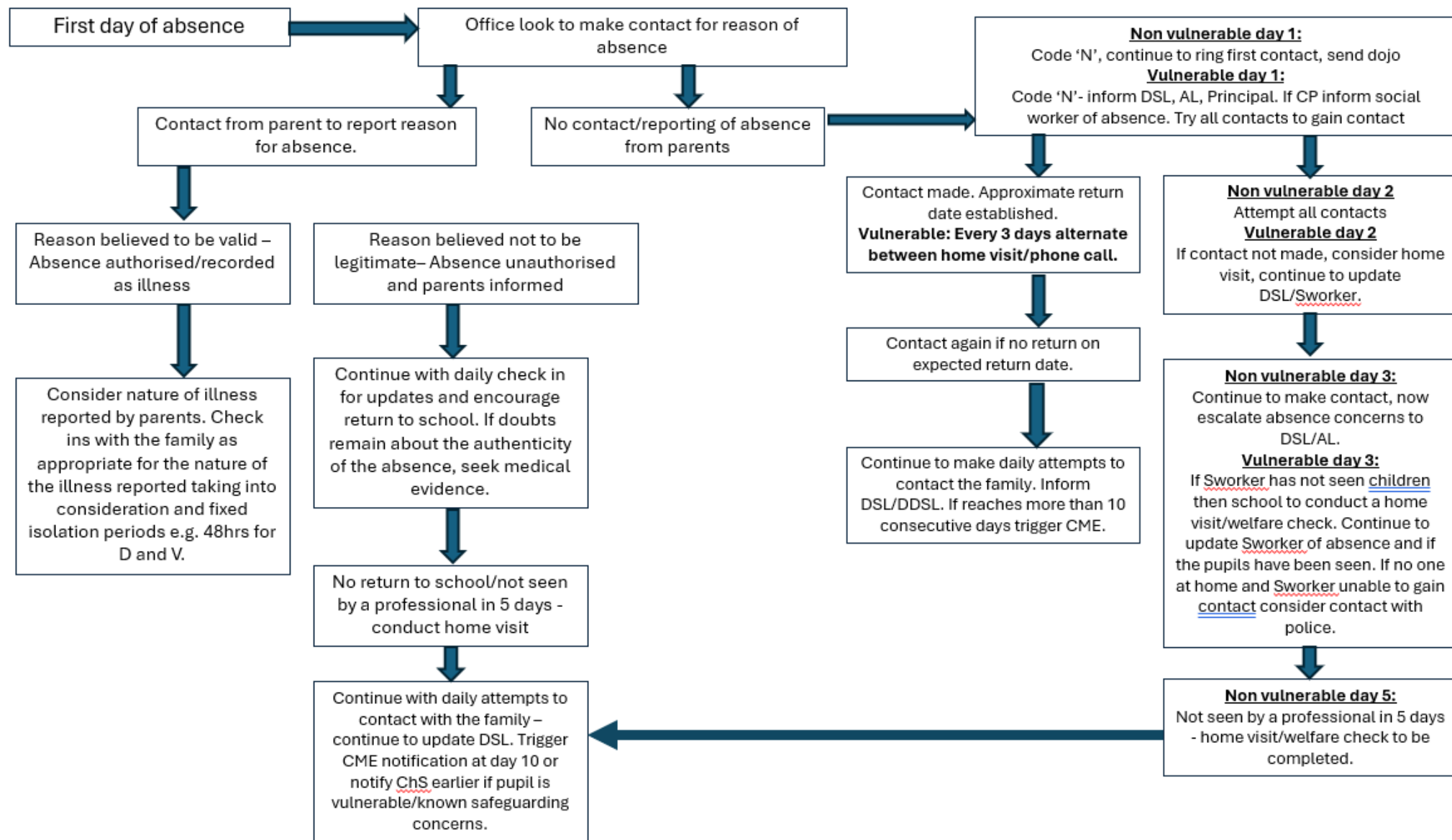## Appendix 1: Safeguarding responsibilities / Children who are absent from school

Students who are absent from school / education for prolonged periods and /or repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines. It is important our school response to 'persistently absent students' and 'children missing education' supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent students, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing in education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where students are already
known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The flow charts below demonstrate our schools process for how we ensure students identified as vulnerable children and non-vulnerable students are monitored and actioned:

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Day to day absence flow chart: Protocol for Office Staff

First day of absence → **Office look to make contact for reason of absence**

Office look to make contact for reason of absence →
- Contact from parent to report reason for absence.
- No contact/reporting of absence from parents

No contact/reporting of absence from parents →

Non vulnerable day 1:
Code 'N', continue to ring first contact, send dojo
Vulnerable day 1:
Code 'N'- inform DSL, AL, Principal. If CP inform social worker of absence. Try all contacts to gain contact

From Non vulnerable/Vulnerable day 1 →

Contact made. Approximate return date established.
Vulnerable: Every 3 days alternate between home visit/phone call.

↓

Contact again if no return on expected return date.

↓

Continue to make daily attempts to contact the family. Inform DSL/DDSL. If reaches more than 10 consecutive days trigger CME.

Non vulnerable day 2
Attempt all contacts
Vulnerable day 2
If contact not made, consider home visit, continue to update DSL/Sworker.

↓

Non vulnerable day 3:
Continue to make contact, now escalate absence concerns to DSL/AL.
Vulnerable day 3:
If Sworker has not seen children then school to conduct a home visit/welfare check. Continue to update Sworker of absence and if the pupils have been seen. If no one at home and Sworker unable to gain contact consider contact with police.

↓

Non vulnerable day 5:
Not seen by a professional in 5 days - home visit/welfare check to be completed.

Contact from parent to report reason for absence. →
- Reason believed to be valid – Absence authorised/recorded as illness
- Reason believed not to be legitimate– Absence unauthorised and parents informed

Reason believed to be valid – Absence authorised/recorded as illness
↓
Consider nature of illness reported by parents. Check ins with the family as appropriate for the nature of the illness reported taking into consideration and fixed isolation periods e.g. 48hrs for D and V.

Reason believed not to be legitimate– Absence unauthorised and parents informed
↓
Continue with daily check in for updates and encourage return to school. If doubts remain about the authenticity of the absence, seek medical evidence.
↓
No return to school/not seen by a professional in 5 days - conduct home visit
↓
Continue with daily attempts to contact with the family – continue to update DSL. Trigger CME notification at day 10 or notify ChS earlier if pupil is vulnerable/known safeguarding concerns.

(Non vulnerable day 5 → Continue with daily attempts to contact with the family...)

Appendix 2: Attendance team & Roles and Responsibilities

At Oak Hill all staff are fully aware that positive attendance and promoting
this is the responsibility of all staff. Although there are key staff who lead attendance drives and initiatives,
attendance is everyone's responsibility.

These Responsibilities include:

For all children we will:
☐ Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, students 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.

For children at risk of becoming persistently absent we will:
☐ 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.
☐ Should the absence continue and attendance becomes persistent, increase actions in order to meet those of a persistent absence child.

For persistently absent children we will:
☐ Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:
☐ 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.
☐ 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

For severely absent children we will:
☐ Continue support as for persistently absent children and:
☐ Agree a joint approach for all severely absent children with the Local Authority.

For cohorts of children with lower attendance than their peers we will:
☐ Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
☐ Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

For children with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance we will:
☐ 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 student'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.

For children with a social worker we will:
☐ Inform the student's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.
☐ Continue to provide any appropriate pastoral support to decrease attendance barriers and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments

The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy;
- Link governor for safeguarding oversees attendance. They are responsible for challenging and holding the Attendance Leader to account.

The Local authorities

The local authorities are responsible for:

- Offering opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice;
- Where there are out of school barriers, providing each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance;
- Taking an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Providing the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead;
- Working jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensuring 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, enforcing attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school;
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies;
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Work with the Attendance Officer to develop, apply, and review the school's Attendance Policy.
- Build strong relationships with parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns and find solutions
- Provide a clear and consistent vision for improving attendance across the school.
- Regularly review attendance processes and expectations to ensure they are effective.
- Work closely with the Attendance Officer to monitor attendance data and identify trends or concerns
- Create specific plans to tackle poor attendance (groups/individuals) based on data insights.
- Collaborate with key staff to design reintegration and support plans with pupils and families. When needed, work with outside organisations to support families facing complex challenges.
- Identify pupils and families needing extra help and coordinate with other staff to provide tailored interventions.
- Lead or support training and CPD for staff on attendance, aligned with school and trust priorities.

- Record parent interactions using school and trust systems.

Take responsibility for initiating legal actions, such as penalty notices, when attendance does not improve despite support.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance is Kate Thomas and can be contacted via 01527 528523 or by email office@oakhill.crst.org.uk

AHTS/groups leads such as PP and SEND

AHTS/groups leads are responsible for:

- Greet pupils warmly to foster a positive environment.
- Build strong relationships with pupils, staff, and parents.
- Provide clear and consistent messaging about the importance of attendance and possible actions
- Set and uphold high expectations and routines to support pupil well-being and engagement.
- Work/discuss with the Attendance Officer and Lead to identify pupils with concerning attendance (6-9 days absence)
- Following on from the class teacher, play a more pivotal role in supporting parents in overcoming attendance barriers to understand the root causes, Signposting to school-based support and working with other colleagues to support on individual attendance plans **– more bespoke targeted interventions**
- Liaise with external agencies where appropriate to support families where barriers to attendance are present
- Record parent interactions using school and trust systems.

School Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Work with the senior leader for attendance to apply the school's attendance policy in daily routines.
- Keep accurate daily attendance records for all pupils.
- Follow up on unexplained absences by contacting parents/carers and escalating concerns when needed.
- Manage absence procedures, including sending letters, arranging meetings, and working with external agencies including processes for EHE and CME.
- Communicate with pupils, parents, and staff to identify and resolve attendance issues.
- Organise and support meetings with families to support attendance improvement and monitor progress.
- Keep detailed records of all communications and actions taken regarding attendance.
- Help produce and analyse attendance data to support decision-making.
- Monitor attendance of vulnerable pupils and share findings with school leaders.
- Work with Attendance Lead to use data to plan next steps for improving attendance for individuals and groups.
- Remind parents of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school until age 16, and take action if needed.
- Conduct home visits to address serious attendance concerns.
- Take part in training and development to build skills and knowledge for the role.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Arbor. They are responsible for completing the registers twice per day:

Morning sessions

-Nursery – 8:30am

 Year R – 4 at 8.40am

Afternoon sessions -

Nursery – 12.15pm

Reception – 12.45pm

Years 1 and 2 –

1.00pm Years 3 and 4

– 1.15pm

In addition to this class teachers will be responsible for:

- Greet pupils warmly at the classroom door to foster a positive environment.
- Build strong relationships with pupils, staff, and parents.
- Provide clear and consistent messaging about the importance of attendance.
- Set and uphold high expectations and routines to support pupil well-being and engagement.
- Deliver an engaging curriculum that encourages regular attendance.
- Work/discuss with the Attendance Officer and Lead to identify pupils with concerning attendance (e.g., 3-day absences, PP, and previously PA pupils).
- Communicate attendance concerns to parents through appropriate channels (e.g., meetings, reports, conversations), highlighting the impact on learning and providing support OR seeking relevant staff for advice.
- Record parent interactions using school and trust systems.
- Engage positively in whole school training/initiatives related to attendance.

School office staff

School office staff are responsible for:

- Checking class dojo messages and communicating any message related to attendance to the Attendance officer;
- Continuing to make positive relationships with parents and carers when meeting and greeting;
- Continuing to support and act upon the school's attendance vision and ethos and communicating the importance of attendance with parents.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time;
- Call the school to report their child's absence at before the start of the day of the absence with reason for absence and each subsequent day of absence;
- Advise school of when they are expected to return;
- Provide the school with at least 3 **up to date** emergency contact number for their child;
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

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Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

In line with DfE guidance AM and PM registration periods will not be longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins or the length of the form time/first lesson in which the registration takes place.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day with classroom doors opening at 8.35am. Nursery doors open at 8:30am and 12:15pm
Registers are completed twice per
day: **Morning sessions -** Year R – 4 at
8.40am
                        Nursery –
8.30am **Afternoon sessions -**
Nursery - 12.15pm
Reception – 12.45pm
Years 1 and 2 –
1.00pm Years 3 and 4
– 1.15pm
The registers will form our AM and PM roll calls. The register will be kept open for 30 minutes, closing at 9.10am (Yrs R-4) and 9am for Nursery.

Our attendance officer will use the DfE attendance code to mark absent students appropriately. See main policy for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:
  • Whether the absence is authorised or not
  • The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
  • The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to
    attend due to exceptional circumstances
We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years
after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before the start of the day or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on 01527 528523.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily but will ask should school not be satisfied with the reason for the absence.
If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We ask for evidence of the

appointment to be provided in order for it to be authorised such as a letter, text message. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

To request a leave of absence parents / carers need to submit a written 'planned absence request form' detailing the reason for the request and hand it to the school office.
The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to appendix 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late (after 8.40am) must enter school via the main entrance informing the office admin staff of their arrival:
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Reasons for lateness are asked to be provided so that we are able to monitor and provide support for pupils and our families to reduce late arrivals at school.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call or Dojo message the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. It is our intention that contact will be made by 10am when an absence is unexplained.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call or Dojo message the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

See appendix 1 for the day-to-day absence flowchart.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents/carers should there be concerns about their child's attendance through letters, Class Dojo messages, text message, phone calls or meetings.

Attendance levels for the academic year, including authorised and unauthorised absences and lates will be shared with parents through pupil's annual reports. Teacher comments will identify to the extent absences have had on a pupils well being and academic progress.

Appendix 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

Leave of absence requests under exceptional circumstances

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principle's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable and exceptional within our school specific school context. Examples may include the attendance at a funeral and one off sporting events/performing arts competitions (with accompanying evidence of participation from relevant body).

All other Leave of Absence Requests

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Legal sanctions

The Local Authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Second and third offences can be issued, per parent and per child within the three years of the first offence. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission • Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. Fines will be capped at 2 within a 3 year period within additional legal sanctions such as an Education Supervision Order being considered. If a third offence within a 3 year period occurs, a penalty notice cannot be issued and the case will be presented straight to magistrates court.

Support for Attendance Issues
The School seeks to be proactive when dealing with attendance issues. We aim to provide high quality teaching and learning, curriculum flexibility, mentoring and multi-agency working. If a pupil's absence gives cause for concern, the school will meet with parents / carers and the pupil to discuss potential barriers and offer appropriate support if possible.

Strategies and Rewards for Promoting Attendance
Good attendance will be promoted through the following non-exhaustive list:

Tier 1
Tier 1 strategies are aimed at encouraging better attendance for all students and at preventing absenteeism before it affects achievement. These are strategies that are provided universally for all pupils including welcoming and positive environments, celebrating good and improved attendance and relationships from staff and a well-planned and effective curriculum that focuses on developing and supporting pupils social and emotional skills. Enhancing Social and Emotional skills will equip children to navigate challenging situations and cultivate positive relationships with both their peers and adults which in turn enhances pupils' academic performance but also nurtures a child's intrinsic motivation and eagerness to participate and attend school.

Tier 2
Tier 2 interventions recognise that some students face additional challenges and barriers to arriving at school on time, every day. These interventions are tailored to meet individual student needs and includes strategies for identifying and addressing specific obstacles. Interventions may include meet and greet groups, Emotional Regulation support or Superflex interventions, "Chill and Chat" check ins with key staff members, Parent Training and Support Programmes and use of appropriate early interventions to support families such as Supporting Families.

Tier 3
Tier 3 interventions provide intensive support to students missing the most school and where pupils are severely absent, often involving not just schools but other agencies and is often a multi-agency approach including Local Authority involvement. Pupils and families at this level are provided with a high level of support to support and expect a significant improvement in their child's attendance. Interventions or strategies may include use of behaviour and social and emotional analysis tools such as Boxall profile or 1:1 CBT based interventions on a personalised level alongside systems such as the ESBN pathway.

Our school recognises the benefits of good attendance through the following
strategies: •Engaging and challenging experiences in the classroom;
• Engaging experiences outside of the classroom;
• Awarding of the punctuality bears (KS1) and trophies (KS2) in assemblies to celebrate pupil punctuality; • Certificates;
• Celebration assemblies.

Parental/Carer support
We ask that parents/carers support us by:
• Not letting their son/daughter(s) take time off school for minor ailments;
• Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during holidays wherever possible;
• Not taking term time holidays;
• Ensuring that their son/daughter attends punctually every day;
• Ringing or emailing before the start of the school day on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the pupil will return. We ask that this procedure is repeated for any subsequent days' absence;

- Keeping us informed by telephone or letter on every subsequent day of absence after the first day;
- Letting us know if there is any on-going medical reason that prevents their son/daughter attending school.

Appendix 6: Protocol for Removing a Student from Roll and Elective Home Education (EHE)

This refers to the process of a child's name being officially taken off the school's register. It is typically due to continuous extended non-attendance, ceasing to attend the school e.g through Elective Home Education (EHE) in-year transfer or other circumstances. (See DfE Doc removal from roll The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)

At Oak Hill, whilst we appreciate and recognise parental preference and right, we do strongly discourage elective home education. We will have met parents and pupils several times where possible to discuss their needs.

In order to remove any child from school roll, the following processes must first happen.

Parent
- ☐ Supply school with a letter of intent
- ☐ Meet with Principal to discuss

School
- ☐ Letter received
- ☐ Letter acknowledged & Principal informed
- ☐ Parents contacted and if EHE is requested process must be explained & discouraged
- ☐ Meeting held with Parent
- ☐ Change of school / managed move discussed
- ☐ Mediation / restorative / work offered / adaptation
- ☐ EHE request granted and acknowledged in writing by Principal
- ☐ Provision map and evidence of discouragement attached
- ☐ Once the above criteria is completed the form 'Request to Remove Pupil for Roll' must be completed and submitted to the Local Authority.

Policy Links

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- ☐ Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

- ☐ Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

- ☐ Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- ☐ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016

  amendments) ☐ The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- ☐ School census guidance

- ☐ Keeping Children Safe in Education

- ☐ Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools