

Attendance Strategy

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1 Introduction

This strategy applies to all pupils of compulsory school age at The Cavendish School.

The Cavendish School endeavours to provide a safe learning environment in which pupils can enjoy and achieve. We acknowledge the proven correlation between high level attendance and pupil outcomes. The Cavendish School's attendance strategy emphasises positive strategies and a range of interventions to ensure the highest levels of attendance. However, when normal school procedures do not result in good attendance, a range of further measures, including legal action, must be considered.

The Cavendish School aims to

- ∞ emphasise the importance, to all pupils, of maximum attendance at school as an essential pre-requisite for making full use of all educational opportunities and to maximise individual achievement.
- ∞ make explicit to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers and pupils) the school's expectations on attendance levels.
- ∞ promote a consistent approach across the School towards all matters relating to attendance.
- ∞ clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- ∞ communicate to all relevant parties the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised".
- ∞ Through the building of strong relationships with families, stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.
- ∞ Act early to address patterns of absence and to reduce absence including persistent and severely persistent absence.
- ∞ Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

1.1 Key Principles

- ∞ Pupils at The Cavendish School have the right to the best possible education.
- ∞ For pupils to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- ∞ Pupils' ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution may be jeopardised by poor attendance.
- ∞ Attendance and the high-quality safeguarding of pupils are directed related.

2 Requirements/ Legal Responsibilities

It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive a full-time education and this, except for those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance leads to pupils missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential; it also places children at risk and may result in their being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. We take attendance very seriously and do what we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils.

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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 [The governing body](#)

The governing board is responsible for:

- ∞ Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- ∞ Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- ∞ Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- ∞ Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- ∞ Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- ∞ Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ∞ Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- ∞ Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- ∞ Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- ∞ Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- ∞ Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- ∞ Holding the head of school to account for the implementation of this policy

Our link governor for attendance is Peter Allcock.

3.2 [The head of school](#)

The head of school 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
- ∞ Notifying the local authority for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

- ∞ Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- ∞ Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- ∞ Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- ∞ Implement (through self or delegation) attending meetings and calls to discuss attendance issues.

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Champion)

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- ∞ Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- ∞ Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- ∞ Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- ∞ Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- ∞ Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- ∞ Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- ∞ Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- ∞ Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- ∞ Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- ∞ Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Lisa Lincoln and can be contacted via [Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk](mailto>Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk)

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- ∞ Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- ∞ Supporting in the evaluation and monitoring of expectations and processes
- ∞ Having an oversight of data analysis
- ∞ Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- ∞ Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- ∞ Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- ∞ Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- ∞ Advising the head of school) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated member of staff who has the role of attendance officer is Fran Sandall and can be contacted via [Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk](mailto>Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk).

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information promptly to the school office via the SIMS registration system within the registration close deadline.

Registration timings are the same every day and are listed in the below timetable:

	Morning Registration	Afternoon Registration
Registers open	8.30 am	12.00pm
Late arrival before the register is closed	8.45am	12.15pm

Registers close	9.00am	12.30pm
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Class teachers under the direction of SLT will also be involved in delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

3.6 School administrators

School administration staff will:

- ∞ Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- ∞ Transfer calls from parents to the senior leadership in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 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 before 8:30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence (unless parent is asked to provide advice on when they are expected to return).
- ∞ Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- ∞ Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- ∞ Endeavour to keep to any attendance strategy plans and support agreed with the school.
- ∞ Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Lisa Lincoln via Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- ∞ Attend school every day on time
- ∞ Attend every timetabled session on time

4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- ∞ Present
- ∞ Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- ∞ Absent
- ∞ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- ∞ The original entry
- ∞ The amended entry
- ∞ The reason for the amendment
- ∞ The date on which the amendment was made
- ∞ The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 3 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- ∞ For pupils of compulsory school age, 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:30 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30 and will be kept open until 9am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12noon and will be kept open until 12:30pm.

4.2 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 by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school reception (see also Section 7).

Absence reporting procedure is by emailing as soon as you are aware of an absence to hello@tcs.tela.org.uk (you may receive a call back to discuss an absence further) or via telephone on 01223 200421.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the absence is longer than 5 days, or if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

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.

4.3 Planned absence for medical appointments

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.

A request for leave for an appointment should be made via reception on 01223 200421 or via email hello@tcs.tela.org.uk Evidence of an appointment should be provided.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please see section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- ∞ 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

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. If you experience any difficulties regarding your child's education, we would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this.

If a pupil is regularly late for school and arrives after registers are closed, this will mean that the absence will be unauthorised.

Where this is caused by local authority transport school will contact the START and transport teams to address this alongside the parents.

Where a pupil is consistently late after the register has closed, this will be managed via the absence policy.

Where a pupil is consistently late before registers close (Code L) this is monitored and where persistent then the class teacher will make contact with parents to ascertain what can be done to support attendance on time. Where this does not prove successful, it will be referred to the Attendance Champion.

4.5 [Following up unexplained absence](#)

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

- ∞ Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit or make contact with the police or social care.
- ∞ 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 the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation (or if absence exceeds 5 days) to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- ∞ If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 [Reporting to parents/carers](#)

The Cavendish School reports to parents on their child's attendance record termly alongside the Learner Portrait and within the end of year Learning Journey.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 [Approval for term-time absence](#)

The Head of School will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher can only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- ∞ Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- ∞ Attending an interview
- ∞ Study leave
- ∞ A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- ∞ Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Other valid reasons include

- ∞ a child is ill or receiving medical attention.
- ∞ days of religious observance, notified in advance.
- ∞ absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).
- ∞ 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.

There are other absences, such as approved sporting activities, that can be authorised, and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school; professional discretion will need to be used in these cases as to whether the absence can be authorised. The Head of School cannot authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If exceptional circumstances are being applied for an Absence request form (see Appendix 1) is to be completed and submitted to the School office online at [Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk](mailto>Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk) for approval **at least two weeks prior** to the absence.

Forms are available on the TCS website or from Hello@tcs.tela.org.uk .

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; **routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours.**

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

5.2 What is an acceptable attendance rate?

Attendance is a national priority; national data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high achievement and examination performance. In addition, all schools must submit data electronically every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by OFSTED.

The Cavendish School expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

The simple facts: Pupils attend school for **190** days each year

- ∞ At 96% attendance 73% of pupils achieve 5 9-5 grades at GCSEs including English and Maths, but even at 96% a pupil would have missed 38 lessons during their time at TCS.
- ∞ 17 days off school every year means that a pupil will probably obtain a whole grade lower in each exam than they are capable of achieving.
- ∞ 19 days off per school year means that a pupil has approximately 90% attendance. At 90% attendance, you will have missed 95 lessons in one year. 90% attendance throughout a pupil's time at The Cavendish School equates to a year absent. **Pupils with attendance below 90% are considered persistent absentees.**
- ∞ At 80%, attendance a pupil will have missed 38 days of school that academic year. This means that a pupil will probably be underachieving by two whole grades in each subject; only 35% of those with attendance between 80-90% will achieve 5 9-5 grades at GCSE including English and Maths.
- ∞ **Pupils with attendance of less than 50% are considered as severely persistently absent from school.**

Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period; what we look for are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the pupil is marked present on all ten sessions). Pupils should not have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern.

5.3 Unauthorised Absences

These are absences where:

- ∞ no email/telephone call or acceptable explanation is provided by parents/carers;
- ∞ the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

DFE guidelines state that the following activities will be classified as unauthorised;

- ∞ minding the house;
- ∞ caring for relatives;
- ∞ awaiting repair people;
- ∞ shopping;
- ∞ birthday or family celebration.

There are clearly some grey areas. The DFE guidelines look at the area of 'Special Occasions' and make clear that only truly exceptional occasions should be classified as authorised; for example, absence resulting from a pupil attending the wedding of a parent could be counted as authorised; a birthday treat to a theme park would not.

5.4 Persistent Lateness to School

If a pupil is regularly late for school and arrives after registers are closed, this will mean that the absence will be unauthorised. Where this is caused by local authority transport, school will contact the START and transport teams to address this alongside the parents.

5.5 [Legal sanctions](#)

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. These are defined by 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024).

5.5.1 [Penalty notices](#)

The Head of School (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- ∞ Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- ∞ Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- ∞ Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- ∞ Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

5.5.2 [Notices to improve](#)

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- ∞ Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- ∞ The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- ∞ Details of the support provided so far
- ∞ Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- ∞ A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- ∞ A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

- ∞ The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

5.5.3 Home/TCS Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents to:

- ∞ do all they can to ensure their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon college sessions; morning registration begins at 8:30am and afternoon registration is at the start at period 4 at 12:00pm.
- ∞ if your child is ill, notify the school on the each day of absence by 8:30am.
- ∞ get in touch at an early stage about any concerns you have about your child's mind-set towards school.

In return The Cavendish School will:

- ∞ monitor persistent late comers and action will be taken; parents can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late;
- ∞ contact home on Day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home;
- ∞ follow up promptly any concerns parents pass on to us that may be affecting your child's mind-set to, or feeling of wellbeing in school;
- ∞ involve the Assistant Headteachers, Attendance Officer, Attendance Champion, Deputy Head of School or Head of School to support pupils to re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances;
- ∞ regularly and consistently remind pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- ∞ acknowledge excellent or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

If you have any concerns or questions about your child's attendance or any letters you may have received, please email the Attendance Officer on hello@tcs.tela.org.uk and the Attendance Officer or member of the senior leadership team will endeavour to get back to you within 2 working days during term time. This process ensures that all enquiries are answered in the order received for fairness to all parents/carers.

6 Strategies for promoting attendance

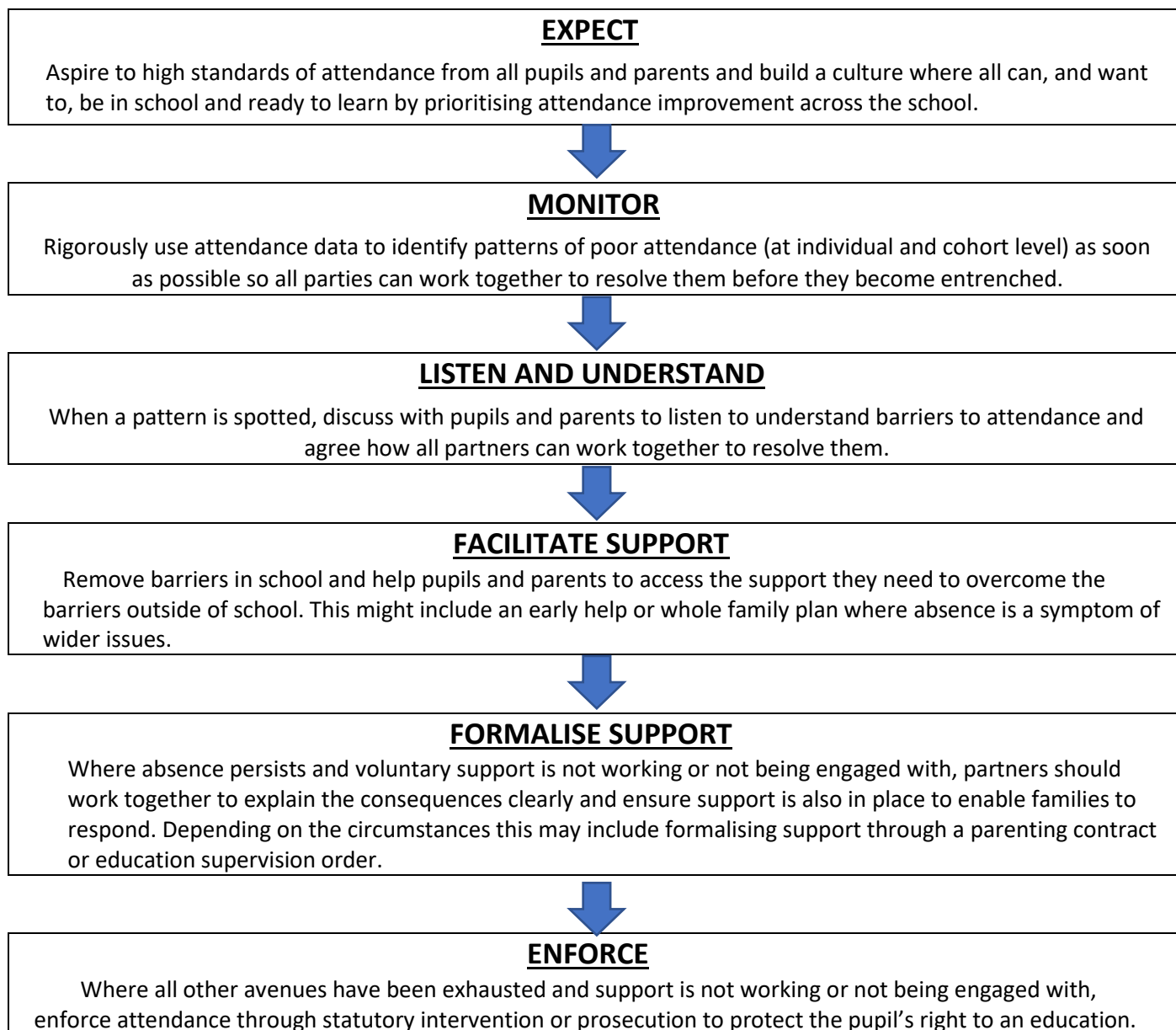
6.1 Culture for good attendance

Good attendance and the strive to achieve good patterns of attendance from the start of a pupil's journey is integral to our schools ethos and values. To emphasise its importance The Cavendish School offers the following:

- ∞ Reward points towards a scale of rewards that are person centred and take into account a pupil's individual medical needs.
- ∞ Celebrations in Tutor Time and Assemblies.
- ∞ Letters from the Headteacher for long term exceptional attendance and overcoming long term non-attendance will become part of the pupil's records and make a meaningful contribution to their reference for further education or the world of work.
- ∞ Links and learning to understand and generalise this skill in the wider world.
- ∞ School visuals and displays supporting the messaging of positive attendance patterns with achievement and strong mental wellbeing.
- ∞ Management of bullying and incidents are timely and include restorative work where appropriate, so that pupils are building positive culture of coming together in the school building.
- ∞ Understand that attendance in school is a continuous process and that we regular review attendance alongside pupil and parental voice to instil a sense of achievement and belonging within school.

6.2 [Working together](#)

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



6.3 [Attendance process and supports](#)

As a special school for pupils with Autism and co-occurring conditions such as anxiety, we understand that in order to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to have positive attendance, we need to have a clear process for support and management in line with a pupil's needs and both parent and pupil dignity.

The need for support to achieve good attendance can be a complex matter for our families, who may have had traumatic educational journeys before reaching us. TCS are sensitive to our families' needs and understand how this may feel to both pupils and parents. Any approaches are individualized considering a pupil's specific needs and are made without judgement or stigma.

Appendix 2 sets out the process for managing attendance at TCS.

6.4 [Part-timetables \(including integration\)](#)

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education.

In very exceptional circumstances, **and only** where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a

pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of an initial integration or re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

Therefore the following will apply to any part-time timetable requests for pupils attending TCS

- ∞ A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution.
- ∞ A part-time timetable (including management of schedule) can only be granted by the **Head of School** following a collaborative meeting with stakeholders.
- ∞ Any issue of a part-time timetable will include a pastoral support programme and interventions to move towards full time attendance (these may include referrals to other professionals and external partners).
- ∞ Any agreement will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision.
- ∞ There will be formal arrangements in place for regularly review with the pupil and their parents.
- ∞ In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

6.5 [Local Authority Attendance Officer](#)

The LA Attendance team is a statutory service and a legal requirement. Their involvement is triggered by an unacceptable level of:

- ∞ Unauthorised absence
- ∞ Persistent absence
- ∞ Lateness

At The Cavendish School the Attendance Officer and senior leadership team monitor attendance at a whole school level and specifically targets the pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that TCS's strategy and practice is compliant with the local authority's legal duties and processes. This includes ensuring that only the Head of School or Deputy CEO authorises legal action.

The Local Authority requires the following actions to be taken in response to lengths of absence recorded until the specified codes:

Attendance Codes/ Length of absence	Who to Notify
10 consecutive days of O codes	Complete Non School Attendance (NSA) online form (if location of pupil is unknown, complete Children Missing Education (CME) online referral form)
10 consecutive days of U codes	Complete NSA online form
10 Consecutive days of G codes	Complete online referral form for legal sanction (present code required first)
15 days of I codes – Primary school age	Complete SEND online form
15 days of I codes – Secondary school age	Discuss and share details of pupils who have met the threshold during fortnightly EIO meetings.

7 [Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school](#)

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school is required to inform the local authority.

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance, including those related to SEND

Where the Attendance Champion recognises that complex barriers to attendance exist, they will meet with parents to set up an Attendance Strategy Plan. This will involve an agreement as to actions that will be taken by parents, the school and the child respectively, including a consideration of support that the child may require in overcoming these barriers.

Where appropriate this will include input from other professionals involved with the pupil and/or their family, e.g. the local authority case work officer or social care. The meeting notes, with actions, will be recorded and saved with relevant information and actions being forwarded to appropriate staff to allow support to be actioned.

This could include, but is not limited to:

- ∞ In-house support; mental health support, pastoral mentor, peer buddy
- ∞ Identification of a helping hand of trusted adults
- ∞ Discussion of appropriate places for a pupil to go for regulation, break and/or lunch
- ∞ Suggestion to speak to a GP re: issues outside of school
- ∞ Supporting Medical Needs
- ∞ Referral to external support
- ∞ Reintegration timetable
- ∞ Support meetings in school
- ∞ Restorative meetings with peers to support friendship breakdowns.
- ∞ Meetings with Anti-Bullying Ambassadors / Safer Schools Officer
- ∞ Early Help referral

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

Where parents inform the school that mental or physical ill health is impacting on the pupil's attendance, the Attendance Champion will meet with parents to set up an Attendance Strategy Plan.

Where medical/health professionals are involved, this will include an initial Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting to take advice from all professionals involved on how the school should best approach the child's mental or physical health needs. Parents should be aware that school will not automatically have the relevant information about all medical/health professionals involved, and should take responsibility for providing the Attendance Champion with this information and assisting in inviting professionals to the meeting.

The Attendance Strategy Plan will involve an agreement as to actions that will be taken by parents, the school and the child respectively, including a consideration of support that the child may require in overcoming these barriers. The meeting notes, with actions, will be recorded and saved with relevant information and actions being forwarded to appropriate staff to allow support to be actioned.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When pupils are returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, either at The Cavendish School or where appropriate in a previous setting, the Attendance Champion or Head of School will meet with parents to set up a Reintegration Package.

Where appropriate, this will involve input from health/medical professionals and other professionals involved with the pupil and/or their family, e.g. the local authority case work officer or social care. This Reintegration Package may incorporate a Part Time Timetable and/or an Attendance Strategy Plan where appropriate.

8 Attendance monitoring

Attendance and punctuality at the Cavendish school is monitored on a weekly basis by the attendance team. Any pupils who demonstrate positive role models for good attendance, or for whom there is concern regarding attendance trends or levels, will be discussed at the fortnightly SLT (CASTE) meeting. Where attendance is severe (below 50%), the pupil will also be included within the agenda of weekly safeguarding meetings.

8.1 [Monitoring attendance](#)

The school will:

- ∞ Monitor attendance, punctuality and absence data weekly, fortnightly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- ∞ Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average for both mainstream and special schools, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 [Analysing attendance](#)

The school will:

- ∞ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts (this is included but not limited to disadvantaged, EAL or other identified identifiers) that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these (groups of) pupils and their families.
- ∞ Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- ∞ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- ∞ Look at behavioural communication patterns and safeguarding concerns in conjunction with absence patterns to understand the whole child and use this to develop strategies to address these patterns.

8.3 [Using data to improve attendance](#)

The school will:

- ∞ Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- ∞ Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below).
- ∞ Provide regular attendance reports where appropriate (such as declining attendance) to class teachers/tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- ∞ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- ∞ Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

8.4 [Reducing persistent and severe absence](#)

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- ∞ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- ∞ Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- ∞ Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- ∞ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- ∞ Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- ∞ Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.5, above).
- ∞ Provide multi-disciplinary support where appropriate.

Appendix 2 sets out the process for managing attendance at TCS.

8.5 [Safe and Well Checks](#)

Each school and education provision is required to have contact with pupils to ensure their safety and well-being, in person (whether face-to-face or virtually with visual contact).

If a pupil is absent for more than five consecutive days with the absence coded under O, I or U, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will arrange weekly Teams meetings or home visits (as appropriate) known as 'Safe and Well Checks' in order to meet the school's safeguarding duty.

9 [Monitoring arrangements](#)

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by Stephanie Smith – Head of School.

9.1 [Key Staff](#)

Stephanie Smith – Head of School (Senior Leadership Team (SLT))

Rebecca Armour – Deputy Head – (Senior Leadership Team (SLT))

Lisa Lincoln – Assistant Headteacher Attendance Champion (Senior Leadership Team (SLT))

Francesca Sandall – Attendance Officer

Tatiana Lopes Pondes – Attendance Administrator

Jake Allcock, Gemma Bussey-Dexter, Rehana Kauser and Rachel Dunn – Assistant Headteachers (Senior Leadership Team (SLT))

9.2 [A Final Word](#)

We feel that attendance levels are an indicator of how effective and caring a school is. Failure to attend can be an indication that all is not well with the student's wellbeing. Equally, consistent attendance is an essential pre-requisite for effective learning. TCS takes attendance seriously and put a lot of time and energy into getting our procedures as efficient and effective as possible. We urge you to give this matter the priority it deserves.

Appendix 1:

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)

To: *The Head of School, The Cavendish School*

I wish to apply to have an 'unavoidable' absence authorised, for:

Child's name Year Class

Date from date to (inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):

Address:

**Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider.
This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.**

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Office use only			☐ Absence authorised Code _____ ☐ Absence unauthorised
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance	
			Signed _____ Head of School

✂-----

This portion to be returned to parents/carers

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Student(s) name(s).....

Form/Year.....

☐ Absence authorised fromto (Inclusive)

☐ Absence unauthorised current attendance % as of/...../20.....

Signed(Head of School)

Date.....

NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

Appendix 1

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission **must** be sought in **advance**. Headteachers are no longer able to grant authorised absence during term for holidays. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactory up to the date covered by this request.

Warning: If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
School aged pupils in maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.	The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides
WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates. If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a £80* fine per parent for each child.	If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance. If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.

Appendix 1

Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons: ▪ Genuine illness ▪ Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible) ▪ Days of religious observance ▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces ▪ External examinations ▪ When Traveller children go on the road with their parents ▪ To allow for respite needs associated with a disability	Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised: ▪ Any type of shopping ▪ Looking after siblings or unwell parents ▪ Minding the house ▪ Birthdays ▪ Resting after a late night ▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
Please contact your child's head of school if you wish to discuss this issue. The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time. We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.	

* If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. The LA advises that this is likely to be prosecution via SJP (Single Justice Process). If the absence is for more than 21 days, prosecution sanction can be used without recourse to penalty notices (SJP).

If a holiday is taken unauthorised (ie G code) for 10days then the school must complete a referral to the local authority

Further information on taking holidays with children with Special Educational Needs:

<https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/special-educational-needs/help-and-advice/holiday-resorts-for-children-with-special-needs>

Appendix 2 – The Cavendish School Attendance Procedures for parents/carers

Improving attendance is a whole school initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole school approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. These are led by the Attendance team and Admissions Officer, who works with the tutors/class teachers to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole school level.

All support for our pupils includes reference to a pupils SEND and medical needs. The provision within a pupil's EHCP is there to ensure that barriers to learning are removed, thus all provision **MUST** be in place. Additional reasonable adjustments and provision will always be provided in order to ensure good attendance for all.

Level 1

Attendance **97% to 100%**

- ∞ Reward points towards a scale of rewards that are person centred and take into account a pupil's individual medical needs
- ∞ Celebrations in class time and Assemblies

Attendance Officer to ensure correct codes are used for student absence. (Appendix 3)

Level 2

Attendance **94% to 96.9%** or **2 separate unauthorised absences (4 sessions) in a ten week rolling timeslot**

Some concerns for progress/attainment

- ∞ Interventions include a call home to inform parents/carers of level of Attendance when clarifying attendance.
- ∞ Class teacher/Tutor to discuss attendance with pupil to ascertain any known barriers to attendance and agree strategies to improve it. These could be (but are not limited to, uniform, transport, anxiety, lunch time arrangements).
- ∞ Absence patterns are analysed by a member of SLT.
- ∞ Attendance will also be discussed at parent's evenings.

Level 3

Attendance **90% to 93.9%** or **Further unauthorised absence (7 sessions) in a ten week rolling timeslot**

Risk of under achievement

- ∞ Interventions include letter sent home to inform parents/carers of level of attendance.
- ∞ A phone call will be scheduled with the parents/carers and a member of SLT to discuss support available to parents/carers and pupil.
- ∞ Behaviour patterns alongside absence patterns analysed by a member of SLT.
- ∞ Pupil will be included within SLT attendance panel to monitor progression from interventions.
- ∞ Further absence may not be authorised without medical evidence from - GP/Hospital/Dentist (parents are informed of this in the letter).
- ∞ More intensive support provided by CCC will be offered. Information is found at [Parenting & family support - Cambridgeshire County Council](#).

Level 4

Attendance below **90%** or **Further unauthorised absence (10 sessions in rolling 10 weeks)**

Persistent Absence Severe risk of under achievement

- ∞ Interventions include formal Strategy Plan Letter sent home to inform parents/carers of level of attendance.

- ∞ A support meeting is held with the Attendance Champion to discuss the impact of strategies and interventions so far, guidance and further strategies/support as appropriate. This is recorded in the form of an Attendance Strategy Plan.
- ∞ Potential referral into internal therapy teams is considered as part of graduated response of support.
- ∞ Support is available from CCC, further information is found at [Parenting & family support - Cambridgeshire County Council](#).
- ∞ If attendance continues to drop to below 90% Penalty notices may be issued; further information at [Non-attendance and the law - Education: your rights and responsibilities - CCC](#).

Level 5

Attendance below 50%

Severe absence rates

- ∞ Interventions include a formal stage letter sent home to inform parents/carers of level of attendance.
- ∞ Local Authority case worker is notified and an emergency annual review maybe called.
- ∞ Referral to any external agencies within health and the local authority (such as Younited) for additional support where appropriate.
- ∞ ELA Notice To Improve meeting may be initiated dependent on context and engagement.
- ∞ A Multi-disciplinary meeting is held with all stakeholders to produce a comprehensive plan to re-engage and integrate the pupil to school.
- ∞ Support is available from CCC; further information is found at [Parenting & family support - Cambridgeshire County Council](#).
- ∞ If attendance continues to drop to below 50% Penalty notices may be issued, further information at [Non-attendance and the law - Education: your rights and responsibilities - CCC](#).

Level 6

Continued Attendance at **level 4 or 5 without improvement** and/or engagement.

Persistent Absence Extreme concern

- ∞ Interventions may include penalty notices and legal action; further information can be found at [Non-attendance and the law - Education: your rights and responsibilities - CCC](#).
- ∞ Parents/carers will be called to a Parent Contract Meeting with the Attendance Lead and Head of School to agree targets to improve the Pupil's attendance. If attendance continues to fall the case will be referred to the Local Authority for Penalty Notices to be issued or to a Local Authority Officer for a PACE interview to be arranged, this is held under caution and will not be held at TCS. The Cavendish School will ensure that it continues to work with and support the pupil and their parents/carers to ensure that the pupil's attendance rises to the expected level.
- ∞ Locality support will be offered if appropriate; information can be found at [Parenting & family support - Cambridgeshire County Council](#).

If you would like to discuss any issues around your child's attendance, please contact the class teacher/tutor in the first instance so that we can support you in achieving good attendance and punctuality.

Appendix 3: DfE Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention

		- Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or - Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays