

Attendance Policy

White Spire School



Last reviewed on: September 2026

Next review due by: September 2028

KEY CONTACTS in school/setting

Name	Role	Contact details
Headteacher	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Chair of governing body	Shanie Jamieson	01908 373266
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Out of hours contact for DSL	Safeguarding Team	safeguarding@whitespireschool.org.uk
Deputy DSL	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Other members of the safeguarding team (DSLs')	Sophie Lunnon Karen Richards Laura Halsey Katie Marlborough Gill Stock	01908 373266
Attendance Officer	Attendance Officer	01908 373266
Prevent lead	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Child sexual exploitation lead	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Child Looked After/ Previously Looked After	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Mental health lead	Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Designated governor for safeguarding	Tanya Stevens	01908 373266
Designated governor for mental health and well being	Tanya Stevens	01908 373266
Safer recruitment governor	Shanie Jamieson	01908 373266

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Children Missing in Education policy
- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School
- Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Criminal Exploitation policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working together to improve school attendance 2026

Aims

At White Spire School we work collaboratively in partnership with our families and are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

All research shows that a child's achievement is intrinsically linked to attendance. For a child to learn and fulfil their educational potential they must be present in school and lessons.

Legislation and guidance

- This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures and Working together to improve school attendance

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

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher

The headteacher 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher/ members of SLT
- Works with the headteacher/SLT to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Works with the Safeguarding to report children missing in education.

Form tutors

- Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Whilst working with the attendance officer, communicate any concerns to parents and next steps.

School office

School office will take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Parental Responsibility in ensuring good attendance

- Let the school know as soon as possible why their child is absent.
- Send a note when their child returns to school.
- Try to make appointments outside school time.

- Not allow their child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

Parental Responses when their child has poor attendance (less than 95%)

- Talk to their child to determine the reason.
- Talk to their child's Form Tutor at the school.
- They could contact the School attendance Officer, who will work with the child, parents and school to resolve the situation. (Number available from the School Office)

Further Action

- The school may refer the pupil to the School Attendance Officer (deputy head).
- Parents may be prosecuted.
- The school may refer the pupil to the targeted early help team or MASH.
- Pupils who are identified as needing a Child Protection plan/Child in Need plan will have their absences reported if the reason given for absence is not able to be authorised or if no reason is given.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

White Spire School will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first (close at 9.30am) session of each school day and once during the second session (closed by 1.30pm). The school will follow the attendance codes and mark pupils in accordance to these.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers 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.

Planned absence

Every case will be assessed individually. 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 by contacting the school office/note in school diary.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (within 30 minutes, after 9.25am, pupil is classed as late), using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Where patterns emerge, the school attendance office will in the first instance send a letter home, call parents/carers and then schedule a meeting if lateness does not improve.

When late, if accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then be sent to their classroom.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken.

Following up absence

Where we expect a child to attend White Spire School and they do not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by phone call from the school office on the same day.
- Following this with a referral to our attendance officer after 3 days of unexplained absence.
- It may be necessary to conduct a home visit to ascertain reasons for absence or if there are safeguarding concerns. **This contact is fed back to the school office to be recorded in the register.**
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary (DSL to be notified)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Reporting to parents

Pupil attendance is sent out on school reports.

Authorising Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. An absence can only be authorised for the following reasons:

- Genuine Illness of the student concerned, may require verification (Not off the parent or another family member);
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available/required
- For the purpose of religious observation;
- Family bereavements;
- Fixed term exclusion;
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

Unauthorised Absence (Every case must be assessed individually)

Absence will not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips;
- Holidays in term time;
- Minding the house or looking after siblings;
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation;
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified;
- School staff has cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid.
- No reason given;

Good Attendance

Good attendance is celebrated and recognised across the school. Pupils with good attendance are rewarded at the end of each term on a sliding scale from 95% to 100%. Parents and pupils receive "good attendance" letters thanking them for their support and congratulating them on their attendance. Pupils who have had 100% attendance will also receive certificates and vouchers for their efforts.

Absence

It is the school that authorises absence. Parents/carers provide a reason for children being absent from school. It is at the discretion of the school as to whether this reason is acceptable or not.

The school may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to each parent/carer who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school. This currently stands at £80 (for those who settle within 21 days) and £160 (for those who pay between 22 days and 28 days). The school works within the guidelines set out in the Milton Keynes School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. The Parent can also be referred to the Local Authority for action under section 4441A of the Education Act 1996 which can result in a fine up to £2,500 or 6 months in prison.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching and learning opportunities provided on the days they are away, but they are also less prepared for the lessons

building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement and disaffection which must be avoided.

Family Holidays during Term Time

We advise parents that White Spire School follows the guidance from the Local Authority which states that School Attendance is compulsory and the Department of Education stance that parents should be discouraged from taking holidays during term time.

If Parents/Carers take children out of school for a holiday, which results in the child missing 10 or more sessions, (5 school days) the school will refer this to the Local Authority who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, consideration of whether the child attends school regularly is no longer relevant. An FPN of £80 can be issued to each parent and is per child. If a fine remains unpaid after 28 days, then parents/carers may be prosecuted under S444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

(Milton Keynes Code of Conduct for The Issuing of Penalty Notices and Enforcement Policy)

Completing the Register

Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons.

- Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils & contribute to safeguarding of pupils.
- They are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- They may also contribute to pupil's end of term reports and to records of achievement.

Action	Person Responsible
Completed online registers	Form Tutor
Inform office of any changes. Google doc will show edit history of any changes.	Form Tutor

Staff are to also verbally advise the office of these changes.	
Input data onto SIMS - daily	Office Staff
Weekly attendance figures completed.	Attendance Officer (Deputy Head)
Maintain running totals of authorised and unauthorised absence.	Office Staff and Attendance Officer (Deputy Head)



Attendance Policy and Procedure

The attendance policy attached is the formal document for attendance as ratified by Governors; this should be read in conjunction with the procedure outlined below.

- 1st day absence - action by Office staff - phone call home to determine reason for absence, recorded on SIMS.
- The Attendance Officer produces fortnightly attendance reports, which highlight all students below 95%.
- Action is required for all these students unless indicated on the report

Students below 95% -

Orange on attendance report

- Discussion between Tutor & Attendance Officer to determine action.
- Phone call home - follow up with standard letter A if required, Record response/reasons for absence - Tutor/Attendance officer
- Further incidences of under 95% - phone call/Letter 1/2 if required. Record response/reasons for absence - Tutor/Attendance officer

Students below 90% -

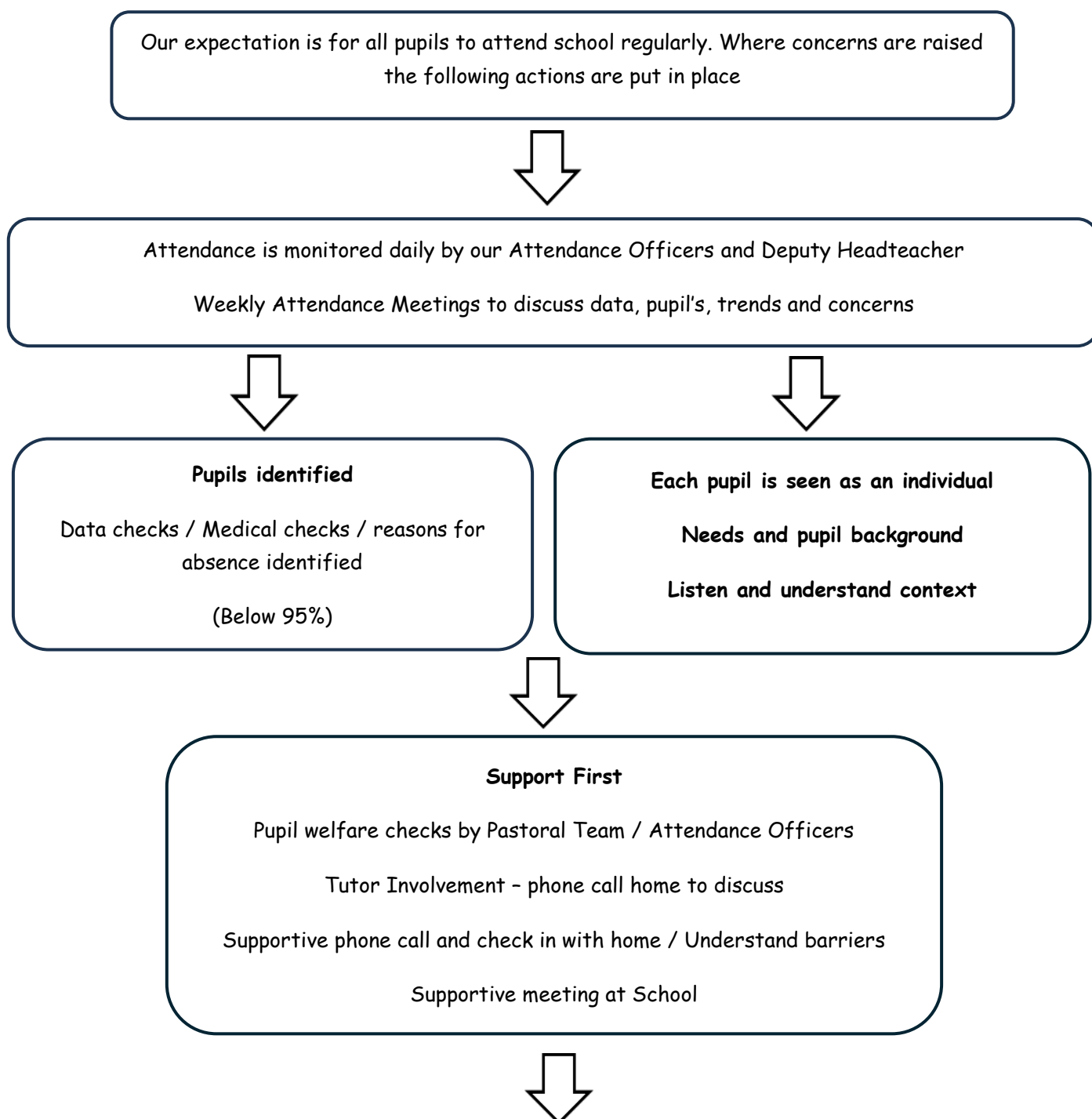
Red on attendance report

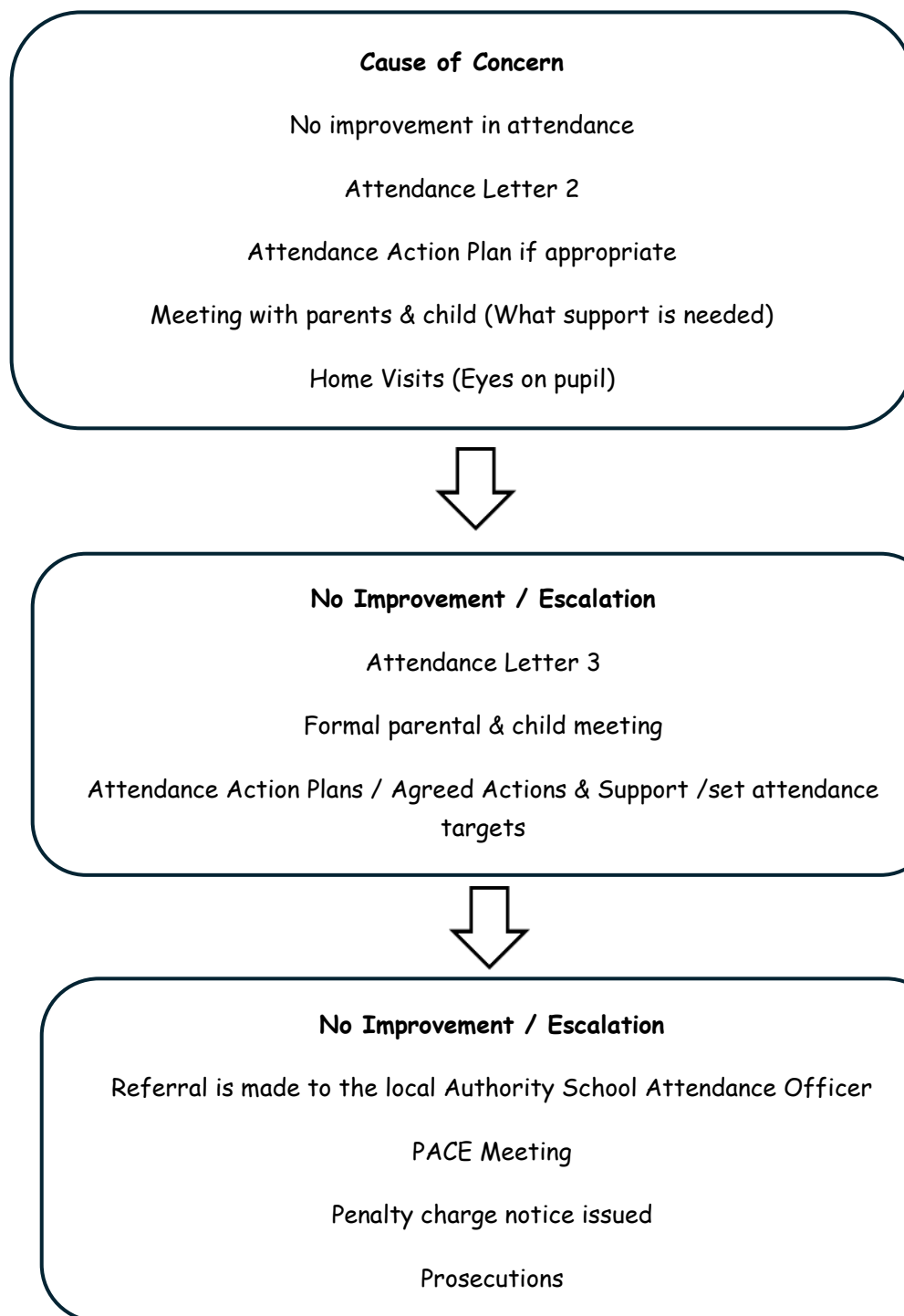
- Any student below 90% in first instance - will receive a phone call/letter from the Attendance Officer - Dependant on reason for absence
- Holiday - FPN letter - Attendance Officer
- Illness - Phone call/Letter & Medical Card - Attendance Officer
- If appropriate, parents will be invited to attend an Attendance Action Plan Meeting. Specific attendance targets, actions and support will be discussed with parents to support this attendance action plan.
- Unauthorised Absence - Letter 2/3/ Meeting - Attendance /Officer Deputy Head
- Under 85% - serious non-attenders - Following above interventions and no improvement - Letter 441A & Attendance Panel meeting MB/ADB

- Under 85% - following panel, & no improvement -Referral to LA SAO on LA Attendance referral checklist

Please see our attendance flow chart below for more information.

Attendance is everyone's business. We believe a shared, supportive approach will have the most impact on attendance.





Rewards for Attendance

End of Academic Year

100% for Whole Year - Celebration assembly - £15 voucher

95% for Whole Year - £10 voucher

End of each term

100% per term - School Certificate - £5 value

Appendix 1: 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
#	Planned whole school closure	school holidays
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site at an approved educational activity approved by the school that is not a sporting activity or work experience (must follow statutory guidance working together to improve school attendance 2024 page 79)
C	Leave of absence	Exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence-regulated performance or employment abroad	Undertaking employment during school hours
C2	Leave of absence	Part time timetable
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another approved setting where they are also registered
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
K	Alternate provision	Attending alternate provision provided by the LA
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
Q	Unable to attend-lack of access arrangement	Home-to-school travel not organised by the LA
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Parents travel for occupational purposes	Parents travel for trade/business
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	absent as timetable does not require them to be in
Y1	Unable to attend	Normal transport provided not available
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school premises closed
Y4	Unable to attend	Whole school closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend	In criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend	Public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause (affects pupil not parent)
Z	Pupil not on admission	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school