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## Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this Policy

| Abbreviation/Acronym | Meaning                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| DfE                  | Department for Education                 |
| SEND                 | Special Education Needs and Disabilities |
| HCP/EHCP             | Education Health Care Plan               |
| CPD                  | Continued Professional Development       |
| SLT                  | Senior Leadership Team                   |
| SENDCo               | Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator   |
| FHC                  | Family Help Conversation                 |
| ACM                  | Attendance Contract Meeting              |
| PA                   | Persistent Absence                       |
| SA                   | Severe Absence                           |
| EIPT                 | Educational Inclusion Partnership Team   |
| YOT                  | Youth Offending Team                     |

## Table of Changes

| Location    | Change         |
|-------------|----------------|
| 12.2        | Additions      |
| 16.2        | Additions      |
| 18.5        | Additions      |
| 19.3 – 19.6 | Additions      |
| 21.5 – 21.6 | Additions      |
| 23.1        | Amendments     |
| 25.2        | Additions      |
| 26          | Added section  |
| 27          | Added section  |
| Appendix 1  | Amendments     |
| Appendix 4  | Added appendix |

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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students,
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality to school and in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, including the National Framework for issuing penalty notices
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.



### 3. The Local Governing Board and Trust Board

The governing board/Trust Board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students 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 students, 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 students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students, but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students 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 students 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 students, 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



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- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

## 4. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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 students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notice referrals, where necessary, and/or authorising the Attendance Team to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents through all available channels

## 5. The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

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 with the Senior Attendance Officer
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with students, 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 students and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- Ensure CPD around attendance processes and procedures is delivered.
- Report regularly to the SLT, Trustees and the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the school strategy for improving attendance.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms J Pankhania and can be contacted via 01536 513063 or emailing [attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk](mailto:attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk)

## 6. The Senior Attendance Officer

The school senior attendance officer is responsible for:

- Supervision and delegation of attendance tasks to the Attendance officer including the First Day absence process, daily register audit, the accurate recording of all parent/carers communications on Arbor. Highlighting and record, in advance, students who attend college/work experience, trips, visits, medical appointments
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Ensure that attendance data is at national average or above using Arbor and the DFE Attendance Portal
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head of House, SENDCo, DSL, designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headteacher
- Advising the headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Co ordination of the list of students for attendance monitoring
- Highlight those students whose attendance is causing concern
- Prepare the annual absence returns and part-time timetables
- Assist the Attendance Lead to prepare analysis of attendance data
- Review and evaluate procedures to improve the best practice school attendance target
- Refer students to the missing in education team when necessary
- Submit referrals to local authority for assessment, support and possible prosecution
- Conduct home visits
- Attend and lead, where appropriate, meetings with parents/carers, students and external agencies regarding attendance related issues



- Hold Education Welfare spot checks independently, where necessary following safe practices.

The attendance officer is Mrs J Hilton and can be contacted via 01536 513063 or emailing [attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk](mailto:attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk)

## 7. Progress Leaders/Heads of House

It is the responsibility of the Progress Leader/ Head of House to:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high-profile reinforcing message in assemblies and form time activities
- Monitor and analysing year group attendance data and implementing actions and interventions
- Liaise with the Attendance Team over unauthorised absence and Attendance Early Help Plans
- Be aware of the overall school attendance target and take proactive steps for their year group to meet or exceed this target
- Support subject teachers, Form Tutors and Heads of Department in taking actions for lateness to lessons
- Support Form Tutors to hold 'return to school' conversations with members of their form
- Monitor and quality assure Form Tutor attendance support calls and emails
- Ensure parents/carers are informed where attendance is affecting progress in lessons
- Head of House leads and Senior attendance officer lead on Attendance Contract Meetings (ACM)
- Following phone calls home, notify the Child Protection Plan Lead, Senior Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or Social Worker (as appropriate) if a child on a Child Protection Plan is not in attendance. Where a student is known to have a Youth Offending Team (YOT) worker, the school will also notify that worker of any unexplained absences, in line with the DfE's statutory guidance.
- Accurate recording of all parent/carers communications on Arbor

## 8. Class Teachers/Form Tutors

8.1 Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Annex A), on Arbor at the start of the sessions. It is the responsibility of the form tutors to:

- Be a positive role model
- Hold 'return to school' conversations with students in your form to offer support



- Call parents/carers of students who have missed cumulatively 8 school days (16 sessions) in an academic year to identify any reasons that need intervention, offer support and follow up on any issues
- Raise the profile of attendance by discussing attendance with your form group on a fortnightly basis
- Acknowledge and, where appropriate, reward good and/or improved attendance
- Monitor for patterns of absence and lateness and discuss concerns with students or refer more extreme concerns to the Progress Leader and Senior Attendance Officer if appropriate
- Challenge and sanction punctuality where appropriate
- Accurate recording of all parent/carer communications on Arbor

## 9. Administration Staff

9.1 It is the responsibility of the office staff to:

- Make day 1 absence call to parents/carers to confirm the reason for absence and record on the school Arbor system
- Take and record calls from parents/carers about absence and share with appropriate staff

## 10. Parents/Carers

10.1 Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

10.2 It is the responsibility of our parents/carers to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and every timetabled session on time
- Use the Arbor App to report their child's absence or call the schools 24 hour absence line to report their child's absence before 8.25am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and informed the school of any changes in personal data
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day



- Support the school's policy on attendance and punctuality and work with the school in respect of the support offered
- Take a positive interest in their child's educational progress and instill the value of education
- Encourage their child to have high aspirations and work with them to achieve these
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Form Tutor/Progress Leader/ Pastoral Link who can be contacted via the school reception 01536 513063 or emailing The Attendance Team at [attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk](mailto:attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk)

## 11. Students

It is the responsibility of our students to:

- Arrive at school on time each day
- Be punctual for every lesson
- Know or have a copy of their timetable
- Ensure they are in the correct uniform and with the correct equipment for their lessons
- Be prepared to catch up on work missed through absence as it will impact on academic progress
- Discuss, with the Form Tutor, any difficulties that arise that may affect attendance or punctuality

## 12. Recording Attendance

### 12.1 Attendance Register

12.1.1 We will keep an electronic attendance register on Arbor and place all students onto this register.

12.1.2 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024** whether every student 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

12.1.3 See Annex A for the DfE attendance codes. We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity where a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Where a student has been removed from their classroom and placed in the school's isolation or internal removal provision, they will continue to be marked as present in the attendance register for all relevant sessions, as they remain on the school site under staff supervision. This is distinct from absence and does not affect a student's attendance record.

12.1.4 We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

## 12.2 School Arrangements

12.2.1 The school day starts at 8.30am and finishes at 3.10pm

12.2.2 Students must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day

12.2.3 The register for the first session will be taken at the start of the session, at the same time for all registered students, and will be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes, closing at 9.00am.

12.2.4 The register for the second session will be taken at 12.25, at the same time for all registered students, and will be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes, closing at 12.55.

12.2.5 Wednesday alternative timetable: The school day starts at 8.30am and finishes at 2:35pm

## 13. Unplanned Absence

13.1 The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.25am, or as soon as practically possible, by:

- Using the Arbor App



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- Phone call: calling the 24 absence line: 01536 513063 and selecting option 1 to leave a message or
- Email: Main School – Year 7 – 11: [attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk](mailto:attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk) or, for 6th form students: [6thformattendance@southfieldsch.co.uk](mailto:6thformattendance@southfieldsch.co.uk)
- When leaving your message or sending your email please include:
  - Students' name
  - Students' form
  - Reason for absence, including type of illness
  - Details of any steps taken and, if you have any, medical evidence (appointment letters, copies of prescriptions etc)
  - Potential return date

13.2 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, or the student is on attendance monitoring such as an Attendance Contract Meetings (ACM)

13.3 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, copy of a prescription, copy of a medication packet with a prescription label, appointment card, appointment reminder text or other appropriate form of evidence

13.4 If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## 14. Planned Absence

14.1 Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorized as long as the student's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment

14.2 Should you need to withdraw your child from school to attend a medical or dental appointment please email [attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk](mailto:attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk) in advance of the appointment to enable us to authorise the absence

14.3 We encourage parents 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

14.4 Students are expected to attend school both before and after any medical appointment

14.5 The student's parent 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 termtime absences the school can authorise



## 15. Lateness and Punctuality

### 15.1 A student 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
- Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but those of others. Where patterns of lateness are identified, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the reasons and offer support
- Consequences for students who continue to be late may occur and could include behaviour points, detentions and the use of tracking reports
- Students who are persistently late could be added to the Punctuality Patrol list where school staff will visit the home early in the morning to encourage the student to attend school on time and take them to school in the minibus
- For health and safety reasons, it is important that the school knows who is in the building at any point in the day. Students arriving late (after 8:30am) should arrive at Lewis Road pedestrian gate and report to Student Reception to be signed in so that we can account for all students on school site
- Parents/carers of students who have not followed this procedure might find that an absence text is received as a result

## 16. Following Up Unexplained Absence

### 16.1 Where any student stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Southfield School follows up individual absences through the absence monitoring process
- Parents/carers are legally obliged to inform the school of the reason for their child's unexpected absence daily during the whole absence period
- The school absence message will be sent to parents/carers via Arbor if no contact has been made regarding the absence
- The Attendance Officer will provide a list of students for administration and pastoral staff to make daily phone calls
- Absence notes are collated and checked by a member of the attendance team
- All students that have an unexplained absence will be called on the first day of absence
- If a student is on a Child Protection Plan or has been identified by the Pastoral Team as being vulnerable, the school will call on the first and every subsequent day of absence
- All students who remain absent for a period of 3 days will receive a welfare check



- Students who remain absent for a period of 5 days will receive a welfare visit
- Form tutors will have a conversation with students returning to school following absence to establish if there are any further actions needed to support the student
- Students who are absent for 5 school days (10 sessions) in an academic year will as part of our support process automatically receive Wellbeing Letter 1 offering support in school
- Students who are absent for 8 school days (16 sessions) within an academic year will receive a wellbeing phone call and follow up email from their child's Form Tutor
- Students who are absent for 10 or more days (20 sessions) will receive an automatic wellbeing e-mail, offering a Family Help Conversation
- Students who are absent for 15 days (30 sessions) will, with their parents/carers be invited to attend an Attendance Contract Meeting (ACM) with the Head of House, Senior Attendance Officer, Senior Deputy Designated Lead, Pastoral Manager or external EIPT to ascertain the barriers to attendance and identify any further support that can be offered, including referral to other agencies
- Attendance targets are set at this meeting and will form part of the contract - See Annex B for information about the ACM process
- ACM target reviews will occur over a specified period. These meetings will take place with the Head of House or Senior Attendance Officer to monitor impact of support and set new targets which will be confirmed in writing
- If during the review period no improvement in attendance occurs, a final warning letter will be issued identifying no improvement and the case will then be referred to EIPT (Education Inclusion and Partnership Team)
- Failure to improve may result in a PN (Penalty Notice) being issued by NNC (North Northamptonshire Council)

## 16.2 Vulnerable Students

Southfield School maintains a Vulnerable Students List, which is regularly reviewed and updated by the Senior Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCo and relevant pastoral staff. Students may be added to this list for a range of reasons, including but not limited to: being subject to a Child Protection Plan, having an allocated Social Worker, being identified as a Child in Need, being a young carer, experiencing mental health difficulties that impact on attendance, having complex SEND needs, or being identified by school staff as at heightened risk for any reason.



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Where it appears that a student who is a young carer may need support with their caring responsibilities (or the student or their parent/carer requests this), the school will refer this to the local authority. The local authority must carry out a young carer's needs assessment under section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989.

Where a student on the Vulnerable Students List is absent from school, a telephone call will be made on the first day of absence and on every subsequent day of absence. Where contact cannot be made and/or there are concerns about the student's safety or wellbeing, a home visit will be conducted by an appropriate member of staff in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. All contact attempts and outcomes will be recorded on Arbor. Where appropriate, information will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the student's Social Worker, Youth Offending Team worker or other agencies involved in supporting the student.

## 17. Reporting to Parents

17.1 Parents/carers can monitor their children's attendance live using the Arbor app. For more information or assistance with the Arbor app please contact:

Enquires@southfieldsch.co.uk

17.2 Southfield School will also report student's attendance on both tracking and full reports throughout the year. Should parents/carers have any questions or concerns about their child's attendance outside of these periods they should initially contact their child's Form Tutor to discuss these

## 18. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

18.1 Approval for term-time absence

18.1.1 The headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings

18.1.2 The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances defined by the DfE These circumstances are:

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

18.2 A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for



- 18.3 Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours
- 18.4 As the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance, a leave of absence for a family holiday will not be authorised.
- 18.5 Each application for a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances will be considered individually, taking into account the specific facts and relevant background context behind the request. The school will not operate a blanket policy under which leave of absence is granted automatically in response to a particular type of circumstance or event.
- 18.6 Any request should be submitted at least 4 weeks before the absence using the leave of absence form on the school website
- 18.7 For an absence to be considered under exceptional circumstances the request must be accompanied by evidence
- 18.8 If a student is over compulsory school age (e.g. sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the student or a parent they normally live with.
- 18.9 Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):
- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
  - Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
  - Parent(s) 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 in advance, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
  - If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- 18.10 Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school



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- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

18.11 Examples of authorised and unauthorised absence include:

| <b>AUTHORISED</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>UNAUTHORISED</b><br>(unexplained or unjustified)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illness</li> <li>• emergency dental or medical appointments</li> <li>• 1 day of religious observance set by the religious body</li> <li>• Immediate family crisis</li> <li>• Attending an examination activity</li> <li>• Family bereavement</li> <li>• Interview or approved sporting event</li> <li>• Other exceptional absence requests</li> <li>• Circumstance approved by the Headteacher</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looking after a brother, sister or unwell family members</li> <li>• general trips or clubs: birthdays, concerts, shopping, matches etc.</li> <li>• truancy</li> <li>• persistent minor illnesses without the support of medical evidence</li> <li>• absence attributed to illness over an extended period of time without accompanying medical evidence</li> <li>• visits to relatives/ collecting relatives</li> <li>• holidays</li> <li>• moving house</li> <li>• absence awaiting contact from the school with regards to alleged bullying incidents or SEND assistance.</li> <li>• absence while awaiting school transfer (<i>note: where absence is due to the local authority failing to make access arrangements, Code Q should be applied; where there is another unavoidable reason, Code Y7 may be appropriate — staff should consult the Senior Attendance Officer before defaulting to an unauthorised code</i>)</li> </ul> |

18.12 Absence requests should be made in writing and emailed to the Senior Attendance Officer [Attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk](mailto:Attendance@southfieldsch.co.uk)

18.13 When making a written request:

- There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with school staff to discuss their request



- All requests for leave of absence must be in advance, in writing or email, setting out the days requested along with the expected date of return. The reasons for the request of leave during term time must be clearly stated
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences an email confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised. An email informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence will be sent to each parent.
- If following notification in writing of the decision not to authorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken, it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the student's register.
- If the trigger of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (i.e. 5 school days) **within a rolling period of 10 school weeks** is met, then the absences should be referred immediately to EIPT (Education Inclusion and Partnership Team) for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice. This will also apply where students have been taken on holiday.
- Until permission in writing is given any leave taken will be classed as unauthorised leave
- Southfield School cannot give retrospective approval.

## 19. Legal Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### 19.1 Penalty Notices

19.1.1 The 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 local authority issues a penalty notice, they will send out a copy of any penalty notice issued to the parents.

19.1.2 Before submitting an absence to the Local Authority for consideration regarding 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 any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate



- 19.1.3 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 student must not be present in a public place on that day).
- 19.1.4 Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence
- 19.1.5 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
- 19.1.6 If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days
- 19.1.7 If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days
- 19.1.8 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.

## 19.2 Notices to Improve

- 19.2.1 If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the local authority may issue a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
- 19.2.2 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 student attends school. They will include:
- Details of the student'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

### **19.3 Attendance Contracts**

19.3.1 Where informal support has not resulted in sufficient improvement, the Attendance and Pastoral Team may agree an Attendance Contract with a parent, working with NNC where appropriate. An Attendance Contract is a formal, written agreement setting out the support Southfield School and/or NNC will provide, and the improvement in attendance expected in return. Attendance Contracts are not punitive; they provide a clear, agreed alternative to prosecution. Any non-compliance with an Attendance Contract will be recorded on Arbor and may be used as evidence should further formal or legal intervention become necessary.

### **19.4 Education Supervision Orders**

19.4.1 Where an Attendance Contract has not been successful, or is not appropriate, the Senior Attendance Officer will refer the case to EIPT for consideration of an Education Supervision Order (ESO). An ESO places a duty on NNC to advise, help and direct the student and their parent(s) in order to secure the student's regular attendance, and is used as an alternative to prosecution. Southfield School will work in partnership with the supervisor appointed by NNC for the duration of any ESO.

### **19.5 Prosecution**

19.5.1 Where all other avenues of voluntary and formal support have been exhausted, or are not appropriate in the circumstances, NNC may prosecute a parent for failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school, in accordance with section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Only NNC, as the local authority, can bring a prosecution; Southfield School's role is to provide accurate attendance records and evidence of the support that has been offered to the family.

### **19.6 Parenting Orders**

19.6.1 Following a successful prosecution, the Magistrates' Court may also impose a Parenting Order on a parent, in addition to any fine or community order. A Parenting Order requires the parent to comply with support such as parenting or guidance sessions for up to 3 months, and is intended to help parents address the underlying causes of their child's non-attendance.



## 20. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

20.1 As a school Southfield recognises the importance of promoting positive behaviours. To promote, recognises and celebrate excellent and improve attendance Southfield School will utilise the following strategies:

- The school will prioritise attendance, setting high expectations for students and parents/carers, and fostering a culture where everyone feels able and motivated to attend and learn
- Time in tutor sessions for students to monitor their attendance with a Personal Attendance Tracker
- Promoting the importance of attendance in tutor time sessions and assemblies
- Celebrating excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual, form and year group attendance levels
- Rewarding individuals and groups for good or improving attendance
- Giving parents and carers information about the importance of good attendance and punctuality via our communications
- Reporting attendance levels to parents and carers via Arbor
- Contacting all parents listed on school admissions forms should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance
- Attendance will form part of the schools' rewards processes
- Attendance will form part of the calculations used to determine whether students are invited on the rewards trip at the end of each academic year

## 21. Supporting Students Who Are Absent or Returning to School

21.1 Where students have been absent due to complex barriers to attendance staff will work alongside families to understand the individual needs, support with the underlying issues alongside the local authority and other agencies to help reduce anxiety and ensure regular attendance at school.

21.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND needs where a student 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 student's needs, the school will inform and work alongside the local authority and other external agencies where further support is needed.

21.3 Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence may experience feelings of heightened anxiety, school staff will work alongside families in providing relevant pastoral support to students as attendance in school may serve to help with underlying issues.



21.4 In all cases of long-term absence school staff will provide relevant pastoral support with the aim of improving attendance, consider reasonable time-limited adjustments where appropriate and notify the local authority where a student has 15 consecutive school days absence during the current school year.

21.5 Where a student is not physically attending school, they will continue to be recorded as absent using the appropriate attendance code, even where they are accessing remote education. In line with the DfE's guidance on Providing Remote Education, remote education will only be used as a last resort, after the school has considered reasonable adjustments to enable the student to attend in person, and as part of a clear plan to support the student's return to full-time attendance in school.

21.6 Where a student has a disability, the school will consider adjustments to its practices and procedures to help meet their needs, including making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010. Any adjustments will be agreed with, and regularly reviewed with, the student and their parents/carers.

## 22. Attendance Monitoring

22.1 The school will monitor attendance and absence data including punctuality half termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level

22.2 The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely

22.3 Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school's absence national statistics releases. The underlying school level absence data is published alongside the national statistics

22.4 The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board

22.5 Southfield School uses Arbor to collect and store attendance data. The data collected on attendance may be used for a variety of purposes

## 23. Analysing Attendance

23.1 The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance. Cohorts considered will include (but are not limited to): boys and girls; year groups; students with special educational needs and/or disabilities; students with a social worker or



who are looked-after by the local authority; students who are young carers; students eligible for free school meals; and students from backgrounds, ethnicities, religions or beliefs that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers, and

- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- 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

## 24. Using Data to Improve Attendance

### 24.1 The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the students 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 to the class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including SLT, SENDCo, DSL and Pupil Premium lead).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place 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 student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate.
- Review the school's Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE), issued annually by the DfE, and use it to inform attendance improvement planning and target-setting, reporting progress against it to the Local Governing Body as part of regular attendance monitoring.

## 25. Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

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



25.2 Certain groups of students may face a greater risk of persistent or severe absence, including but not limited to: students with a social worker (including children in need and those subject to a child protection plan); looked-after children; young carers; students eligible for free school meals; students with SEND; students with long-term physical or mental health conditions; students who have experienced bullying and/or discrimination; and students from groups or backgrounds that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers. The school will pay particular attention to the attendance of these groups when analysing data (see section 23).

25.3 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 students 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 students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

## 26. Training of Staff

All staff will receive appropriate attendance training as part of their induction and the school's ongoing continued professional development (CPD) offer. As a minimum, this will cover: the importance of good attendance; the fact that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; the school's legal duties in relation to keeping registers; and Southfield School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners such as EIPT, children's social care and the Youth Offending Team.



Staff with a specific attendance function, including the Senior Attendance Officer, Progress Leaders/Heads of House and administration staff, will receive dedicated training relevant to their role. This will include how to interpret and analyse attendance data on Arbor, and how to support students and families to overcome commonly experienced barriers to attendance.

Staff will also be trained to understand that patterns of absence, including persistent and severe absence, may be an important safeguarding warning sign, and will know how to identify, record and report such concerns in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **27. Deletion of Names from the Admission Register**

Southfield School will only delete a student's name from the admission register where one of the specific grounds for deletion set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies. A student's name will not be removed from the register for any other reason, as doing so could constitute off-rolling.

Where a student transfers to another school, their name will be deleted from Southfield School's admission register once they have been entered on the new school's admission register, and the student's information will be transferred via the school-to-school (S2S) system. Where a student has no fixed abode and their family are moving away without a confirmed new school in place, their information will instead be transferred to the Lost Pupil Database via S2S once their name is deleted.

Where a student's name is deleted from the admission register, their name will also be deleted from the attendance register at the same time, and the Senior Attendance Officer will notify NNC as required, including where the student has an allocated Social Worker or Youth Offending Team worker.

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register; both registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered student, and of their attendance, at any given time.

## **28. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.



## 29. Links With Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Children Missing Education procedures
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE non-statutory guidance, February 2023)
- Suspensions and exclusions policy

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

| Code                                           | Definition                                                    | Scenario                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>L</b>                                       | Late arrival                                                  | Student arrives late before register has closed                                                                                          |
| <b>Attending a place other than the school</b> |                                                               |                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>K</b>                                       | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| <b>V</b>                                       | Attending an educational visit or trip                        | Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school                                                              |
| <b>P</b>                                       | Participating in a sporting activity                          | Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school                                                        |
| <b>W</b>                                       | Attending work experience                                     | Student is on an approved work experience placement                                                                                      |
| <b>B</b>                                       | Attending any other approved educational activity             | Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience                     |



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|                                  |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>D</b>                         | Dual registered                                                                     | Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered Code D is used only by whichever school the student is not scheduled to attend for that session, to indicate they are attending the other school at which they are also registered; this avoids the student's absence being double-counted. |
| <b>Absent – leave of absence</b> |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>C1</b>                        | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>M</b>                         | Medical/dental appointment                                                          | Student is at a medical or dental appointment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>J1</b>                        | Interview                                                                           | Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>S</b>                         | Study leave                                                                         | Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>X</b>                         | Not required to be in school                                                        | Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>C2</b>                        | Part-time timetable                                                                 | Student is not in school due to having a part- time timetable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>C</b>                         | Exceptional circumstances                                                           | Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|                                          |                                             |                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b> |                                             |                                                                                                                 |
| <b>T</b>                                 | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |



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|                                                                      |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>R</b>                                                             | Religious observance                        | Student is taking part in a day of religious observance                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>I</b>                                                             | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>E</b>                                                             | Suspended or excluded                       | Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b> |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Q</b>                                                             | Lack of access arrangements                 | Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school                                                                                             |
| <b>Y1</b>                                                            | Transport not available                     | Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available                                                                                     |
| <b>Y2</b>                                                            | Widespread disruption to travel             | Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency                                                                                                    |
| <b>Y3</b>                                                            | Part of school premises closed              | Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open                                                                                                        |
| <b>Y4</b>                                                            | Whole school site unexpectedly closed       | Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Y5</b>                                                            | Criminal justice detention                  | Student is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul> |
| <b>Y6</b>                                                            | Public health guidance or law               | Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Y7</b>                                                            | Any other unavoidable cause                 | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes                                                                                                                                                          |

| <b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>G</b>                             | Holiday not granted by the school | Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |



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|                             |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>N</b>                    | Reason for absence not yet established        | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes. Where the reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, the school will amend the entry to Code O. |
| <b>O</b>                    | 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                             |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrived in school after registration closed   | Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session                                                                                                       |
| <b>Administrative codes</b> |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Z</b>                    | Prospective student not on admission register | Student has not joined school yet but has been registered                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>#</b>                    | Planned whole-school closure                  | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays                                                                                                      |

## Appendix 2: Southfield School Guidelines For The Support Process

The school uses a range of supportive processes to identify and remove barriers to attendance, aiming to help every student attend regularly.

- Attendance and well-being call: Form tutor calls parents /carers to identify issues and agree actions to support improved attendance
- Attendance Contract Meeting (ACM): A formal school agreement used when earlier support plans have not worked or are unsuitable
- Family Help Conversation (FHC): A multi-agency assessment led by the local authority to access wider support for the family and student
- These processes are supportive, not punitive, and aim to work with families to improve attendance and access practical help
- All parents/carers are encouraged to be involved to ensure consistent and targeted support for the student
- Improving attendance supports academic progress, future opportunities, and is valued by employers and further education providers



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## **Appendix 3: Attendance and Absence Procedures**



## **Absence Follow up procedures - consecutive days**

### **Day 1 of Absence**

Parents/carers must report absence each day via the Arbor App. Admin Team contact home if no reason is provided.



### **Day 3 of Absence**

The Attendance Team call parents/carers to check student well-being. Home visit if no contact.  
Day 3 list shared with Form Tutor & Head of House for follow up or SG /Behaviour lead if appropriate.



### **Day 5 of Absence**

Attendance /Pastoral Team home visit  
Day 5 list shared with Form Tutor & Head of House for follow up or SG /Behaviour lead if appropriate.



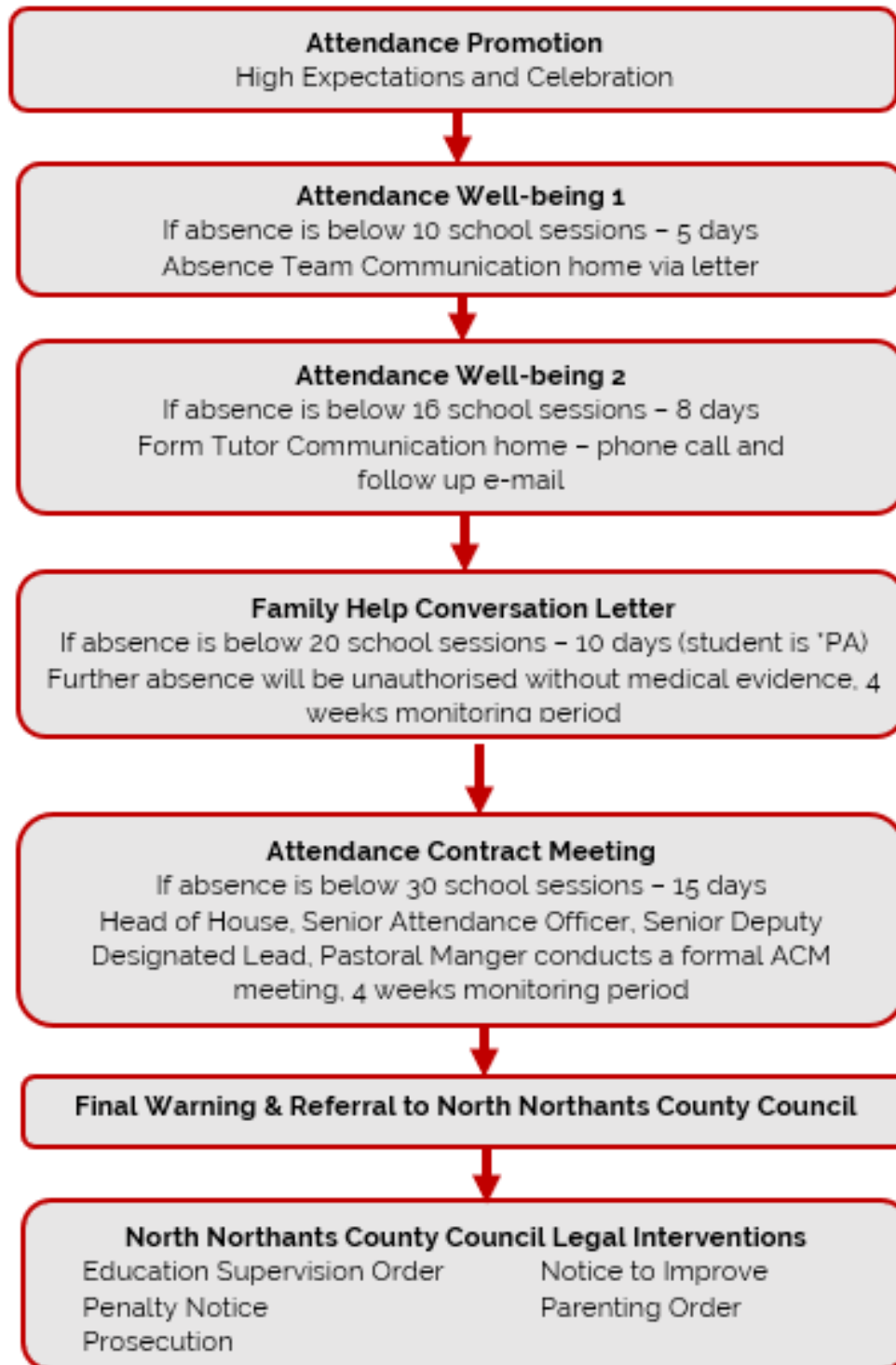
### **Day 5 to 10 of Absence**

Attendance Pastoral Team home visit  
Child Missing in Education referral

- **All communication is logged on Arbor**
- **Letters and e-mails templates used for consistency in Arbor**



## Attendance Monitoring – cumulative days





## Penalty Notice Fines

The headteacher will 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](#).

①

### First Offence

The first time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance: **£160 per parent per child**

\*Reduces to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days

②

### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance: **£160 per parent per child** \*no reduction

③

### Third Offence & Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed the case will be presented straight to the **Magistrates Court** the fines can be **up to £2500 per parent per child**. Cases found guilty can show up on parents future DBS certificates due to a failure to



Penalty notice fines will be considered when there has been **10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 Days) in a 10-week period**



## Appendix 4: Missing Student on the School Site Procedure

Southfield School follows a clear procedure where a student who is expected to be on site cannot be accounted for, so that any concern for their safety is acted on quickly and consistently.

- Any member of staff who cannot locate a student who is expected to be on site, or who is told by another student that a student may be missing, will report this to the Attendance Team immediately.
- The Attendance Team will check Arbor to confirm the student's expected timetable and registration for that session, and will radio or telephone relevant staff, to establish when and where the student was last seen.
- The DSL/DDSL's will be informed without delay and will coordinate the search of the school site and grounds, allocating staff to specific areas as required.
- If the student is found, they will be returned to their lesson or to a member of pastoral staff as appropriate.
- If the student cannot be located within a reasonable time, the DSL/DDSL's or Head of House will contact the student's parents/carers to establish whether the student has left the site or made contact with them.
- Where a student is confirmed to have left the site without authorisation, or their whereabouts and safety cannot be confirmed, the school will treat this as a safeguarding concern. The DSL/DDSL's will decide whether to contact the police.
- Where the student has an allocated Social Worker or Youth Offending Team (YOT) worker, the Senior Attendance Officer/DDSL's will also notify them as soon as reasonably possible.
- Once the student's safety and whereabouts have been confirmed, the Senior Attendance Officer will update the student's attendance record on Arbor with the correct code for that session, and the incident will be reviewed by DSL/DDSL's to identify whether any change to supervision arrangements is needed.