



Rawmarsh Community School A Sports College

# ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025/26

**RAWMARSH COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Monkwood Road, Rawmarsh, Rotherham, S62 7GA

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**HEADTEACHER:** Mr M Conlin



This Policy has been developed in conjunction with DfE and LA Guidance. It is written taking into account the principles set out in Working Together to Improve Whole School Attendance.

Reference to parent/carer throughout this document also includes any person who has parental responsibility or who cares for them.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

### **Aims and Principles of Good Attendance**

In line with DfE guidance, all schools are expected to appoint a Senior Attendance Champion who has strategic oversight of whole school attendance. The contact details of the schools Senior Attendance Champion are:

Name: Martin Tipper

Position: Assistant Headteacher

Contact Details: mtipper@rawmarsh.org

- Rawmarsh Community School is committed to maximising the achievement of all students. Improving attendance is everyone's business.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance and at school.
- The Department for Education states that 'Students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE summative examinations) have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment'
- As a result, there is a clear and unquestionable link between good attendance and educational achievement. Good attendance is an important consideration when applying for any Post-16 placement, whether at College, Careership or employment.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if students are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the school.
- Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging students to reach good attendance levels.
- Where absence is identified as a concern the school will work with parents/carers in a timely manner to support both the students and their family to improve attendance to school.
- School will always take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance through our WPT Attendance Pathway initiative.
- At each phase of intervention through the WPT Attendance Pathway the school will work with parents and carers to implement effective intervention to raise student attendance.

### **Statement of Expectations**

#### **What the school expects of our students:**

- The school day begins at 8:40 at which point all students are expected on site and in registration.
- At 8.45am registration is formally taken.
- The school day ends at 3.10pm following period 4.
- Students are expected to attend school every day where possible. Where a student cannot attend school we expect to be informed in a timely manner and prior to the start of the school day.
- The school day is as follows:

Period	Time
Start of the school day	8:40am
Registration	8:45am
Reading	9:00am

Period 1	9:20am
Period 2	10.35am
Break 1	11.50am
Period 3	12.20pm
Break 2	1.30pm
Period 4	2.00pm
Close of the school day	3.10pm

- The school registers close following the reading element that takes place during form tutor time. All students who arrive prior to 9.15am are marked present for the morning session.
- Any student who arrives to school after 9.15am will be coded U (late after the register has closed) which is an unauthorised absence.
- Students arriving after 9.15am will not receive their attendance mark for the morning session.
- All students are expected to arrive on time to all sessions within the school day and be ready to learn.
- All students who arrive late to school must report to the Attendance Office and sign in.
- Students who arrive late before the register has closed will be coded (L) and be directed to their form tutor who will discuss their lateness with them.
- All students who arrive late to school after the closing of the register must report to the Attendance Office and sign in. Students will be coded (U)
- All students are expected to inform their form tutor and/or the Attendance Office of any reason that will prevent them from attending school.

### **What the School Expects of Parents/carers**

The DFE guidance states that ‘where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance of school.’

In line with this guidance the school expects that all parents/carers will:

- Fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend school every day and on time.
- Ensure that they contact the school every day that their child is unable to attend
- Ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day [full uniform, equipment, completed homework etc.]
- Contact the form tutor, Heads of Key Stage, Non-Teaching Assistant Heads of Year or the attendance team in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Inform the Attendance Office and seek authorisation for any forthcoming Leave of Absence requests or appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day.
- Ensure the continuity of their child’s education by not taking holidays during term time.
- When reporting a child’s absence, parents should contact the school confirming the child’s name, why they are not in school and when they will be back in school. This can be reported via:
  - 01709 710672 – choosing option 1 to speak to the attendance team
  - 01709 512290 – attendance hotline
  - Email: rcs-attendanceteam@rawmarsh.org

### **Involvement of Parents/Carers**

It is vitally important that parents are actively engaged in promoting good attendance.

- Information will be sent home via; Progress Reports, School's own leaflets and letters which set out and reinforce the importance of regular school attendance. Information can also be accessed through online Parental Gateway.
- The school will react positively to any parental concerns. Parents will be encouraged to make contact with school to discuss any issues impacting on their children's attendance.

### **Key Contacts for Parents:**

The first port of call for all parents is a student's form tutor. At Rawmarsh Community School all email addresses include the first letter of a member of staff's forename, their surname, followed by @rawmarsh.org. For example if a student's form tutor was Mark Conlin the email would be mconlin@rawmarsh.org

The following are the additional key contacts for parents in relation to whole school attendance.

- **Attendance Hotline:** 01709 710672 Ext -1 or 01709 512290
- **Reception:** 01709 710672
- Headteacher: Mark Conlin (mconlin@rawmarsh.org)
- Assistant Headteacher (attendance): Martin Tipper (mtipper@rawmarsh.org)
- Head of Year (attendance): Annie Forshaw ([aforshaw@rawmarsh.org](mailto:aforshaw@rawmarsh.org))
- Attendance Manager: Kira Clark ([kclark@rawmarsh.org](mailto:kclark@rawmarsh.org)) / Sharon Oliver (soliver@rawmarsh.org)
- Attendance Officer: Sharon Oliver (soliver@rawmarsh.org) / Louise Mallon (lmallon@rawmarsh.org)
- Education Welfare Officer: Chelsey Coles (ccoles@rawmarsh.org)
- Curriculum Support Lead: Hayley Mayfield (hmayfield@rawmarsh.org)

### **What parents and carers should expect of the school:**

All staff are required to adhere to and reinforce the school's attendance policy at all times and create a culture of positivity around attendance where students can flourish

### **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body supports the school in its efforts to raise attendance. To facilitate this role they will receive attendance information through the Headteacher's reports. Parents, staff and students will be made aware of this Policy and reminded periodically of its contents.

### **Senior Leader with Designated Responsibility for Attendance:**

The Senior Leader with designated responsibility for attendance will ensure the implementation of the whole school action plan

The specific responsibilities of the Senior Leader with responsibility for Attendance include:

- Whole school vision for attendance underpinned by high expectation and core values
- Leading on the creation of a culture of good attendance in the school
- Contribution to the whole school attendance policy working in collaboration with WPT
- Creation and review of the whole school attendance plan for improving whole school attendance and reducing persistent and severe absenteeism
- Presenting to the Headteacher on Attendance Panels
- Responsibility for registration procedures throughout school
- Interrogation of the impact of all attendance driven interventions
- Lead on persistent and severe absence tracking

- Delegation of key pupil groups for intervention as identified through the persistent and severe absence tracker
- Reporting on attendance to SLT and Governors
- Identifying students for, and leading on, attendance driven 'Team Around the Child Meetings'
- Representative at WPT attendance meetings
- Lead on the 100% Club and attendance specific whole school rewards
- Mentoring of students with poor attendance as identified through the Attendance Band analysis
- Contribute to Attendance Summit Meetings
- Strategic lead for first day contact procedures

### **Middle Leader - Head of Year for Attendance**

- Interrogation of whole school attendance bands as directed by the Assistant Headteacher
- Interrogation of the persistent and severe absence tracker as directed by the Assistant Headteacher
- Interrogation of whole school attendance data as directed by the Assistant Headteacher
- Strategic lead for punctuality and whole school punctuality action plan
- Implementation of the whole school punctuality action plan
- Ensuring attendance is a key feature within the pastoral curriculum
- Mentoring of students with poor attendance as identified through the Attendance Band analysis
- Leading on the celebration of attendance in assemblies and in form time
- Contacting the parents of each member of their allocated cohort weekly to ensure excellent attendance
- Leading a 'microform' where attendance is an issue in a particular year group.
- Contributing to Team around the Child meetings where appropriate
- Ensure all students within the 100% Club receive their rewards for each half term

### **Attendance Manager**

The Attendance Manager is responsible for leading on the administration of attendance procedures within the school. They are responsible for liaising with all stakeholders to ensure that attendance procedures are effective and for directing other members of the attendance team. Their sole responsibility is to improve whole school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism.

The specific responsibilities of the attendance manager include:

- Work with specific families to develop attendance support plans which identify, and mitigate against, barriers to attendance
- Collection of data for attendance and punctuality bands
- Lead on and delegate responsibilities for first day contact procedures
- Ensure the students identified through the persistent absentee tracker are targeted for daily phone calls as a priority
- Monitoring of the N codes and ensure these are cleared daily
- Liaise with external agencies and safeguarding
- Lead on all CME issues, in partnership with the DSL
- Produce attendance reports for form tutors and SLT on a weekly basis
- Liaise with the LA and the Headteacher regarding EHE requests
- Lead on all aspects of persistent and severe absence, including legal routes and fixed penalty notices
- Participate in attendance panels
- Attend and contribute to Team around the Child meetings

### **Attendance Officer**

Attendance Officers will support the Attendance Manager in leading the Attendance Team. They will deputise for the Attendance Manager in their absence and must have the skills and attributes to be able to drive whole school attendance.

The specific responsibilities of the attendance officer include:

- Support the Attendance Manager with first day contact procedures
- Support the Attendance Manager with registration procedures including closing of registers at 9.15am
- Ensure all classroom registers are completed and log daily points of failure to liaise with the Attendance Manager and Senior Leaders within school
- Lead on clearing of code N
- Lead on whole school punctuality monitoring including late to lesson
- Monitor absence triggers for letters
- Monitoring and intervention for punctuality, including late to lesson
- Lead on the distribution of attendance letters including FPN pathway as directed by the Attendance Manager
  
- Support the Attendance Manager in regard to whole school attendance displays, social media and rewards

### **Attendance Administrators (Attendance Call Centre)**

Whole school administrative staff (Admin Level 2 and Level 3) may be deployed as Attendance Administrators depending upon the need of each individual school. They are the first port of call for communication regarding first and second absence for all students. They will work as directed by the Attendance Manager.

The specific responsibilities of the attendance triage team include:

- Lead on first day contact procedures as directed by the Attendance Manager for students first and second absences
- Ensure that registration procedures are effective and consistent including closing of registers no later than 9.15
- Ensure all N codes during registration are cleared in a timely manner

### **Education Welfare Officer**

The EWO is responsible for tracking, monitoring and intervention for students who are severely and persistently absent to school. They will prioritise home visits to families where the attendance of the child is 90%, below 90% or in danger of falling below 90%. They have an additional responsibility for tracking and monitoring the attendance of severely absent students; those with an attendance of below 50%. This is a key role for the liaison between external agencies and the school.

The specific responsibilities of the EWO include:

- Leading on the home visits strategy
- Making first day phone calls for designated cohorts of students
- Undertaking daily home visits for identified students
- Completing the home visit tracker daily
- Liaising with external agencies
- Participating in team around a child meetings

### **Class Teacher**

Registers taken by class teachers form an overall picture of attendance and ensure we are aware of the location of all students in school. It is a very important document with regards to registration

and safeguarding. The class teacher must ensure that attendance to lessons is as high as possible.

The specific responsibilities of a class teacher include:

- Completing an accurate, verbal, register within the first ten minutes of the lesson
- Ensure the register is refreshed prior to taking. This will update the register with the most up to date information including existing codes.
- Inform the attendance team and Key Stage Team of any suspicious absence immediately. (Students who have been marked present earlier in the day but absent from lesson)
- Amend the register quickly in the case of late arrivals
- Notice when students have returned from absence and welcome them back into lessons positively
- Do not question prior absence during a lesson or in front of other students

### **Form Tutor**

The form tutor is a key pastoral role within the school. Form tutors are responsible for a specific group of students who they will meet at the beginning of each day. They are responsible for ensuring that students are reviewing their attendance and attendance targets weekly, through specific form time activities. They are the first point of contact for parents/carers.

The specific responsibilities of a form tutor include:

- Celebration of excellent attendance.
- Individual mentoring of students with poor attendance
- Maintaining the form group display which includes attendance target summaries
- Discussing attendance with parents, including to congratulate those with excellent attendance
- Discuss attendance at parent engagement evenings
- Challenge poor punctuality from the previous day

### **Attendance Protocol – The School's Day to Day Processes:**

- Students are expected on school site from 8.40 am and are registered in tutor groups at 8:45am. Lessons begin at 9:20am where students are registered by classroom teachers. The times for the sessions are stated early in this documentation.
- Afternoon registration takes place at 12:20.
- The school will adopt the following non-negotiable procedures in relation to the daily monitoring of absence:
  - Voicemail and email procedures will begin promptly at 8:00am. The Attendance Team will decide upon any necessary follow up phone calls
  - Absence calls will be directed straight to the Attendance Team
  - The Attendance Team will make proactive phone calls to parents/carers of students who are at risk of persistent absenteeism or severe absence
  - First Day contact procedures will commence following form tutor registration and consequent (N) codes
  - The Attendance Call Centre will contact home for all recorded absences in Form Tutor time
  - The Attendance Office will contact home for all recorded absences in Form Tutor for students who are at risk of persistent absenteeism
  - Following Form Tutor Time all parents/carers will receive an automated text message requesting they contact the school as their child is absent from registration
  - Following Period 1 registration at 9.20 a manual text message is sent to all parents/carers of students who are still unaccounted for
  - Phone calls will be ongoing during the text message initiative
  - Following Period 1 registration the procedure for liaising with parents is non-negotiable.

- Parents will receive a phone call, follow up text message if no response, a follow up phone call and a home visit if the school feels one is necessary.
- All students late to school will be registered as (L)
- All students that are in school after 9:20 are registered as (U) and classed as unauthorised absent for the morning session based on guidance
- Students who are at risk of persistent absent have their attendance monitored daily by the Head of Year for Attendance and the Assistant Headteacher with overall responsibility for attendance
- All (N) codes must be cleared by the end of each lesson and no N codes should remain at the school day and no later than 3:20pm
- Attendance data is available each day and can be communicated through school via the attendance office. All schools will receive attendance data as requested.
- The Attendance Officer is responsible for communicating attendance through the attendance office at each feeder school.

#### **Attendance Protocol – The School’s Day to Day Processes Following Contact from Parents:**

- Where parents or carers have contacted school in order to explain their child’s absence the Attendance Team may still make contact regarding the child’s wellbeing and possible length of absence.
- In the event of long term absence, the school will adhere to the following procedure:
  - Day 1 – 5 – the school will continue to liaise with parents regarding absence. It is likely that on day 3 of absence the attendance team will phone home following on from parental contact explaining absence. This will be in order to enquire about the child’s wellbeing and their likely return to school.
  - Day 6 – following 5 school days of absence, and a corresponding weekend, the Attendance Team will complete a home visit in order to complete a safe and well check.

#### **Attendance Protocol – The School’s Day to Day Processes Following No Contact or Communication with Parents:**

- Where parents or carers have not contacted school in order to explain their child’s absence the Attendance Team will make contact regarding the child’s wellbeing daily.
- This contact will be a phone call in the first instance. Where the school has been unable to make contact over the phone a safe and well text message will be sent requesting contact from parents or carers.
- Where no contact has been established with parents and carers, the school will adhere to the following procedure:
  - Day 1 – phone call attempted and, where no contact, a safe and well text sent
  - Day 2 – phone call attempted and, where no contact, a safe and well text sent
  - Day 3 – phone call attempted and, where no contact, a safe and well text sent. If the school has still not had contact from parents a home visit will be completed in order to complete a safe and well check.

Our attendance team will routinely make home visits on a daily basis as a core part of their work. This is a very important part of their work in order to enquire about the wellbeing of students who are unaccounted for and to work with parents in order to transition the student back to school.

#### **What Parents and Students Can Expect of the School**

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance

- Contact with parents in a timely manner when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason. The Wickersley Partnership Trust Pathway initiative prompts discussions and meetings around attendance following 3 days of absence within a 6-week period. More information in regards to this can be found on the school website
- The school will act promptly in response to any problems notified
- Close liaison with Early Help to assist and support parents and students where needed
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through regular reports home
- The Attendance Office will record all attendance related incoming messages from parents
- School and year group attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The school will respond to any areas of concern identified.

### **Rewards and Incentivising Attendance**

It is important for schools to acknowledge, incentivise and reward good attendance. More detail in relation to rewards can be seen on the school website but the following approach to rewards and recognition are in place:

- Awards Assemblies that recognise 100% attendance across an academic year
- GCSE presentation evenings that recognise 100% attendance
- The 100 Club Reward Scheme – 100% attendance badges
- Half termly most improved attendance award. Certificates may be awarded to students with high attendance rates and significantly improved attendance
- At the end of the year, certificates & 100% Attendance Badges may be awarded to all those with 100% attendance
- The Head of Year for Attendance will run a range of end of term awards in which attendance is a key contributing factor
- Verbal praise from form tutor time
- Targeted incentives that are thematic throughout the year
- Whole school praise culture
- Gold, Silver, Bronze Award credit systems operate in which attendance and punctuality are accredited.

### **Reintegration into School After Absence**

- The school will endeavour to support students returning to school after a long period of absence.
- School staff and Early Help, will liaise closely on this issue and employ appropriate reintegration strategies, incorporating 'Intervention Mentors', 'Pastoral Support Programmes', 'Individual Education Plans'.
- Looked After Children (LAC) will be supported following significant disruption to their education by implementing a Personal Education Plan. Students could be referred to the Education Support Team for LAC for support with reintegration, where appropriate.
- The school operates a positive reintegration after absence. Form Tutors will welcome all students back to school after any absence.

## **How the school uses data to target improvements in attendance and persistent absenteeism:**

The school tracks and monitors attendance data on a daily, weekly, monthly and half termly basis through the following:

- OFSTED data dashboard to show three year trends in regards to whole school attendance and persistent absenteeism
- Persistent Absence Tracker that is updated daily for ongoing intervention
- Monitoring and intervening with students who are severely absent to school
- Attendance Bands initiative to identify patterns in absence
- The Wickersley Partnership Trust Pathways that identify when a student hits an absence trigger in order to support parents/carers in improving a students attendance

The longer absence goes unchallenged the more likely it is to become embedded within a student's approach to education. The school operates waves of intervention that are graduated to ensure we support our families in improving student attention. Once a trigger has been identified through the WPT Attendance monitoring pathways, waves of intervention will be agreed through Attendance Support Plans and Attendance Panels.

**The following waves of intervention include, but are not limited to:**

<b>Wave 1 Intervention</b>
<b>Lead: Attendance Manager</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Daily meet and greet procedure</li><li>2. Morning check in with identified member of staff</li><li>3. Positive reintegration culture</li><li>4. Late Gate Initiative</li><li>5. Friendship restorative meetings where appropriate</li><li>6. Extra-curricular initiative and signposting</li><li>7. Break time initiatives</li></ol>
<b>Wave 2 Intervention</b>
<b>Lead: Head of Year Attendance</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Adjusted start times</li><li>2. Key Worker Mentor</li><li>3. Breakfast Club Initiative</li><li>4. Attendance Report</li><li>5. Golden Ticket Initiative</li><li>6. Targeted Tutor</li><li>7. Circle of Friends</li><li>8. Curriculum Support Referral</li><li>9. Year half move</li><li>10. Change of tutor</li><li>11. Timeout Pass</li><li>12. Hub Intervention</li><li>13. Timetable RAG</li><li>14. Micro-form intervention</li><li>15. Incentive League</li></ol>
<b>Wave 3 Interventions</b>
<b>Lead: Senior Leader with Responsibility for Attendance</b>

1. Family Support Team Referral
2. EBSA referral
3. GP referral (parent led)
4. Sensory Safe Space
5. Learning Mentor Referral
6. Adjusted Timetable
7. Parenting Programme
8. Parent Workshop
9. Early Help Assessment and subsequent referral
10. Signs of Safety Planning
11. Focussed Interventions:
  - . SEAL
    - a. SEMH
    - b. EPQ
2. Mini-bus initiative
3. Curriculum Support Interventions:
  - . SEMH workshops
    - a. Resilience workshops
    - b. Anxiety workshops
    - c. Mindfulness workshops
    - d. Zones of Regulation
    - e. SNAP profiling
2. Internal Respite

#### **Wave 4 Interventions**

#### **Lead: Headteacher and Governing Body**

1. Period 0 or Period 5
2. Part Time Timetable
3. MASH referral (neglect)
4. Home Tuition
5. Hospital Home referral
6. Arran Hill Referral
7. Alternative Provision:
  - . Thrive
    - a. Unity
    - b. Haxley (TGA)
    - c. Hackbury (TGA)
    - d. Past Ways
    - e. Jade
2. Education Psychologist referral
3. Education Health and Care Plan
4. External Respite
5. Managed Move
6. Offsite Direction

#### **Inclusive Waves (Possible at all levels)**

#### **Lead: Key Worker**

1. Weekly text message home for students being monitored (100% attendance)
2. Formal review
3. Attendance contract with agreed interventions
4. Young Carers Support if identified
5. Behaviour Modification where appropriate (for example sleep deprivation)

6. Sleep Clinic referral or School Nurse where appropriate
7. School Pledge contracts
8. School uniform bank referral where appropriate
9. Period poverty referral where appropriate
10. Home visit incentive where appropriate

**The school’s strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence:**

Any student who is identified as persistent or severely absent from school will be identified through the WPT attendance pathway detailed above in order to intervene and support students.

At Rawmarsh Community School we identify, half termly, those students who are categorised as:

- Persistent absent – with an attendance of 90% or below
- Severely absence – with an attendance of 50% or below

For all students who have been identified as persistent or severely absent the school will act in line with DFE guidance detailed in Working Together to Improve Whole School Attendance by:

- Ensuring that they understand the individual needs of the student and their family
- Working in partnership with the student and their family to put in-school support in place
- Working with the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed and available
- Working with families and other agencies to ensure the regular attendance of every student
- Facilitating pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance
- Considering reasonable adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of students who are struggling to attend school
- Regularly reviewing any adjustments that have been agreed with students and their families
- Ensuring pastoral care is joined up where needed
- Formalising support in partnership with the Local Authority in line with their Code of Conduct.
- Information in regards to additional support and the Local Authority Code of Conduct can be found at <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/education-2/school-attendance#:~:text=The%20School%20Attendance%20Matters%20Pathway%20requires%20school%20to%20offer%20support,Pathway%20has%20been%20followed%20appropriately.>

**Fixed Penalty Notices:**

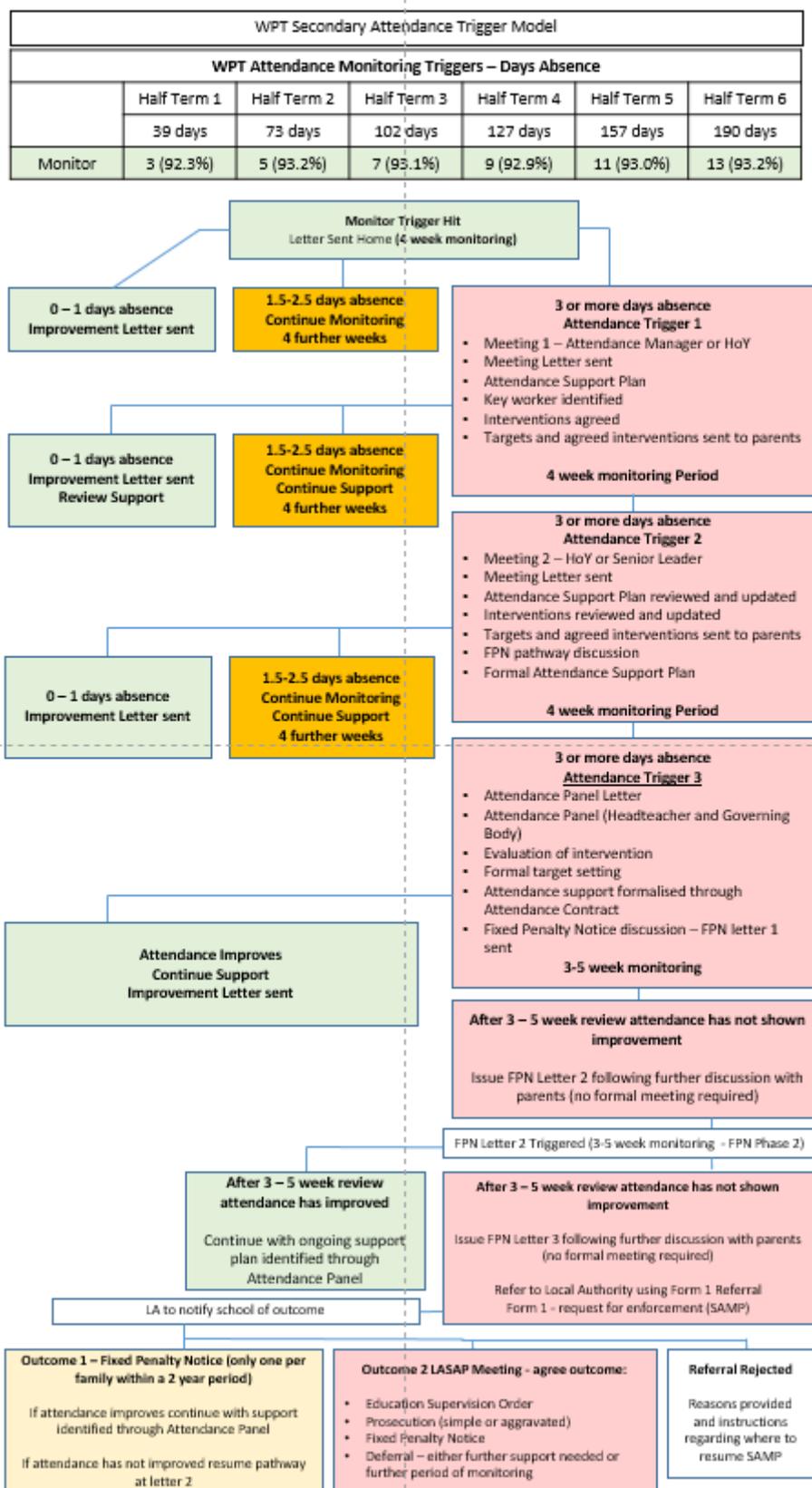
At Rawmarsh Community School we monitor all absences. Early intervention is a significant factor in limiting student absence and ultimately improving student attendance. As a school we ensure that a rigorous attendance monitoring and family support system works in partnership with our parents in their statutory duty of ensuring their children attend school regularly. This system will add an additional layer of support before the Fixed Penalty Notice pathway directed by the Department for Education and the Local Authority.

Our attendance monitoring system implements 4 phases of intervention prior to pursuing the Fixed Penalty Notice Pathway. This can be seen below.

Monitoring	Level of absence	Intervention
Phase 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 days’ absence between September and October or,</li> <li>● 5 days’ absence between September and December or,</li> </ul>	Attendance Monitoring

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 days' absence between September and February or,</li> <li>• 9 days' absence between September and April or,</li> <li>• 11 days' absence between September and May or,</li> <li>• 13 days absence between September and July</li> </ul>	
Phase 1	3 or more days absence over a 4 week period	Attendance Manager or Head of Year for Attendance  Informal Attendance Support Plan
Phase 2	3 or more further days absence over a 4 week period	Meeting with Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher  Formal Attendance Support Plan
Phase 3	3 or more further days absence over a 4 week period	Formal Attendance Panel with Headteacher and Governing Body  Fixed Penalty Notice Pathway

The school will follow the processes outlined below prior to pursuing the FPN process in partnership with the Local Authority.



**Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority (Including Holidays in Term Time)**

## **Holidays in Term Time**

The school requests that parents do not arrange family holidays during term time. The school will not agree to an absence for a holiday in term time in line with legal frameworks. The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances that mean your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply, in advance, by writing to the headteacher explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting leave of absence.

If the school refuses a request for leave of absence and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted in the child's record.

You may also receive a penalty notice for the period of absence.

Please note: all absences on the last day of term will be unauthorised unless we have medical evidence. This will count towards the Fixed Penalty Notice process.

## **Working Together to Improve Whole School Attendance states that:**

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority's school Attendance Support Team should liaise with school and the early help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention in line with chapter 5 to formalise support and/or enforce attendance. All local authorities are therefore expected to:

- Understand and make use of formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders and use them fairly and consistently.
- Set out clearly for pupils, parents, and schools when and how attendance legal intervention will be used where voluntary support is not appropriate, or where absence was not for legitimate reasons and support has not been engaged with and/or been successful.
- Secure effective joint working between the School Attendance Support Team and statutory children's social care services to work together where there are safeguarding concerns or absence becomes severe. This should include building attendance expectations into children in need and child protection plans where appropriate or considering developing a plan as an intensification of support where formalised attendance support (such as an education supervision order) is no longer sufficient or has not been effective.
- Issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices in line with the National Framework where absence was unauthorised and support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).
- Take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate.

In regards to the new National Fine Thresholds schools and Local Authorities will have to consider a fixed penalty notice if a student misses 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks. However, this is a decision that the school will take on an individual basis.

However, the school and Local Authorities retain the discretion to issue one before a threshold is met.

In Rotherham a Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority to avoid duplicate notices. This ensures consistent and equitable application of policy, protects school-home relationships and allows alignment with other enforcement sanctions and statutory interventions.

Fixed Penalty Notices will only be issued for offences where the Local Authority is willing and able to prosecute and that are agreed at either the Local Authority School Attendance Panel (LASAP) or the FPN panel.

The Local Authority will ensure that the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices will be closely monitored to ensure that recipients pay the relevant fine. In instances where the penalty is not paid within the appropriate period, the Local Authority will prosecute.

- A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The Local Authority will receive requests to issue Fixed Penalty Notices from schools and requests will be screened to ensure adequate evidence of support and intervention, as required by the pathway, is submitted

### **Rotherham Metropolitan Council explain the following on their website in regards to school attendance**

“The Local Authority takes poor school attendance very seriously, and enforcement action will be taken if a child’s attendance does not improve, or if a child has an unauthorised leave of absence in term time. School’s will follow the School Attendance Matters Pathway and refer to the Local Authority for enforcement action to take place. “

Enforcement action can be one of the following:

- A Fixed Penalty Notice is £80 per parent, per child. This increases to £160 if not paid within 21 days. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid, then it will be referred to the Magistrates Court. There is no right of appeal once a Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued according to the Code of Conduct.
- An Education Supervision Order is a court order made in the Family Court, which gives the Local Authority a supervisory role over a child’s education. When an Education Supervision Order is made, the child’s parents are legally required to comply with any directions the court makes under the Education Supervision Order. If parents do not comply with the Education Supervision Order they can be prosecuted.
- A referral to the Magistrates Court for prosecution. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500, an order to do unpaid work or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- In some cases, it may also be necessary to refer to Children’s Social Care.

All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence. Further information in regards to the Local Authority Fixed Penalty Notice Pathway can be found here:

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3098/code-of-conduct-september-2022>