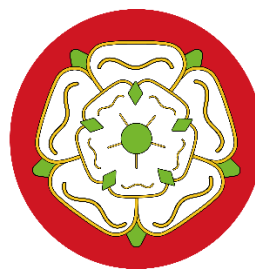


BLUE SKY FEDERATION

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY



THE BLUE SKY FEDERATION



Date of last review:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2029
Type of policy:	Non-Statutory
Frequency of review:	Every 3 years
Governor committee:	Governing Body

1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. The Blue Sky Federation takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils in line with the 1996 Education Act. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning and undermines educational progress, leading to underachievement's and attainment, impeding a child's ability to develop friendships.

2. 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 \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-federation culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) 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 Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the schools record attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

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

3.2 The executive headteacher

The executive headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at both schools
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary (details regarding the issuing of fixed penalty notices can be found in the Milton Keynes Council Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices)
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND,

including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior teacher responsible for attendance

The designated senior teacher (also known as the 'attendance lead') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the schools
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior teacher responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

The designated senior teacher responsible for attendance is Mrs Stuart and can be contacted via either school office.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Day to day monitoring of attendance
- Completing 'My Concern' for attendance issues of specific children
- Flagging up concerns about attendance and punctuality to the attendance lead
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, after agreement from the executive headteacher

- Directing staff to make first day calls for absence

The attendance officer for Summerfield is Mrs Carey, for Heelands it is Mrs Mahoney. Both can be contacted via email through their respective school offices

3.5 Class teachers

Attendance guidance for staff will be shared annually with all staff (Appendix H). Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using SIMS.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer, or Attendance Lead, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

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)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the appropriate school by **9AM** to report their child's absence on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide their school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- 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 Attendance Officer who can be contacted via the school office

Parents can support their child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Leaving home in good time to arrive at school punctually
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The school day is from 8.45am to 3:15pm at Summerfield. Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 09:15. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

The school day is 8.30am – 3.10pm at Heelands. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify their school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling their school office, by email or in person.

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

Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, or the absence is longer than 5 days, the school can refer the matter to the School Nursing Team or make contact with the child's GP, with parental permission, or request the parent provides evidence of each illness, as advised on the medical card (*Appendix C*).

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

4.3 Planned absence

All requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on a leave of absence form (*Appendix A*) obtained from their school office. Parents will be informed of the outcome of their request by letter (*Appendix B*).

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent notifies their school in advance of the appointment. This can be completed through their school office, where a record of the appointment etc should be shown

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

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Arriving late causes disruption to the school, teachers and pupils.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

On the 4th occasion that a child arrives late we will write to parents (*Appendix D*) and express our concerns. If it does not improve, parents will be invited to attend a meeting at their school with the attendance lead. Fixed penalty notices can be issued when a child has been recorded late on 6 occasions in a 12-week period. A firm line is taken on late arrivals.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency

contacts, the school may complete a home visit or request a welfare visit from the Police

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer from the LA
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: the school will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The executive 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](#). These circumstances are:

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

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

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.

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

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The executive headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 pupil'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, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil 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
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Examples of **unauthorised** absences

- shopping during school hours;
- special occasions, e.g. birthdays;
- no uniform, shoes, etc.;
- overslept;
- haircut;
- false illnesses;
- headlice;
- at home due to family illness;
- childcare difficulties;
- children arriving at school after the register has closed (Arriving after 09:15)
- family holidays
- routine dental appointments

5.2 Sanctions

The Blue Sky Federation will always seek to understand any potential barriers and work with families to improve attendance before sanctions are sought.

Our schools 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.

Penalty notices

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

If a child is on holiday for 3 or 4 days, a fine will not be issued (as 10 sessions or more need to be missed for a fine). However, the parent will be advised that any absences in the following 12 weeks must be authorised. If they reach 10 unauthorised sessions (with 6 or 8

being for holiday) then a fine will be issued, as the majority of the absences were for holiday. As such, evidence for illness will need to be provided during this period.

Notices to improve

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

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

They will include:

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At The Blue Sky Federation we promote attendance by:

- Offering a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
- Making sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expecting good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and making sure that pupils understand its importance.
- Conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Empowering all staff to take responsibility for attendance and to understand barriers to attendance.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement.
- Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- School Prospectus: information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the school prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

- Children starting in Early Years: Early Years staff liaise with pre-schools to discuss any attendance issues. At the new intake evening held for children about to enter our Foundation Stage, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being collected at the end of the day on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only child left in the building. This information is repeated by Early Years staff when they conduct their home visits prior to children starting school. Two members of staff conduct home visits.
- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- Best class attendance percentage each week announced in a assembly displayed on the attendance display board.
- 'Attendance Matters' (Appendix E) newsletter to parents once a term.
- Modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
 - treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The Blue Sky Federation will work closely with families to identify complex barriers and build a picture of what is happening on a case by case basis.

- Contact parents to discuss issues
- Used a stepped approach to support
- Arrange a meeting to create a plan of support for the child, ensuring regular review is built in
- Engage with Early Help or other support mechanisms to increase support step by step
- Consider the EBSA pathway where appropriate
- Take child views into consideration
- Consider part time timetables where appropriate and report this to the local authority

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

- As above for complex barriers but also offering mental health support where possible or making referrals to CAMHs.
- The school will support with home learning and home visits and instigate the MK policy for children who are too unwell to attend school (for either physical or mental health reasons).
- Regular check ins to ensure the child is safe and to maintain a relationship with school staff.

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

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

- The Attendance Lead will meet with parents to discuss a reintegration strategy and what would work best for the child.
- Create a timetable of reintegration (phased return) that builds gradually over time.
- Review progress regularly to check the child is resettling well.
- Support the child with their reintegration with a trusted adult where possible.
- Ensure there is a health care support plan if this is the reason for the absence

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The Attendance team looks at individual pupil attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. regularly and analyses individual data using the timeline below. This timeline can be accelerated for cases of severely poor attendance. The order of follow-up is usually in this order:

- Stage One Letter (*Appendix J*) which makes the parent/ carer aware of concerns over attendance.
- Stage Two phone call and follow up letter (*Appendix K*). This call is used to make the parent aware of the concerns over attendance, find out if there are any issues inside or outside school causing the issues, set a target for attendance for the next review and see what support needs to be in place to help this target be achieved. Medical card issued.
- Stage Three attendance interview where an attendance contract is drawn up (*Appendix L 1.2.3.4*).
- Notice to Improve letter sent
- Fixed Penalty Notice
- PACE interview with senior attendance officer from the Local Authority.

If attendance improves then a letter is sent to parents to inform them of the improvements and to congratulate the child. Attendance review flow charts will be followed at a review (*Appendix I*)

September	Write to all families whose children were classed as persistently absent (PA) for the year (<i>Appendix F</i>). Medical card included to be stamped by a doctor for every incidence of illness from September. Whole year attendance review
Second week after half term break	1 st attendance review
End November	Attendance Matters

Second week after Christmas break	2 nd attendance review
Beginning of January	Update of PA list to include Autumn PA data – PA letter to go out (<i>Appendix G</i>)
Second week after half term break	3 rd attendance review
Second week after Easter break	4 th attendance review
End of April	Update of PA list to include Spring PA data – PA letter to go out
Second week after half term break	5 th attendance review
Five weeks after half term break	Attendance challenge
July	Attendance Matters

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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

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

The school will 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.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The attendance lead will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils 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

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

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

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The attendance lead will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Use a stepped approach to improve attendance by supporting families

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 3 years by the executive headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy