

Milby Primary School

Attendance policy

2025 – 2026



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1. Statement of intent

Milby Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance. We are committed to:

- promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits;
- ensuring equality and fairness for all;
- intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils;
- building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance;
- working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies;
- ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise;
- ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils; and
- regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Attendance Champion is Mrs A Coates, and can be contacted via admin2631@welearn365.com

Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the Attendance Champion for queries or concerns about attendance.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints procedures policy
- Children missing from education policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Relational behaviour policy
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) statement

Legal regulations and local authority policy

- Parents/carers have a duty, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receives an efficient full-time education either by attendance at school or otherwise, and so share in the responsibility of ensuring good and regular attendance.
- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- There is no automatic right to any leave of absence. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.
- Milby Primary School is a referring school regarding Attendance. We refer to Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS - please see appendices for link) and we refer leave taken without authorisation to WAS. Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a fixed penalty. From autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate.
- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first.
- In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This may include prosecution.
- The payment must be paid directly to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice.

Our Policy now reflects latest DfE Guidance contained in Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason
- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education:

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school;
- promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies;
- arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role;
- working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals;
- ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation;
- handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints procedures policy;
- having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- ensuring there is a children missing education policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school;
- appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role;
- ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures; and
- ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too;
- ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently;
- modelling good attendance behaviour;
- using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated; and
- where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- the overall strategic approach to attendance in school;
- developing a clear vision for improving attendance;
- monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions;
- analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement;
- communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance;
- following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance; and
- informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- providing accurate and up-to-date contact details;
- providing the school with more than one emergency contact number;
- updating the school if their details change;
- the attendance of their children at school; and
- promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school; and
- arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

5. Attendance strategy and procedure

At Milby Primary School we:

EXPECT - Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR - Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND - When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

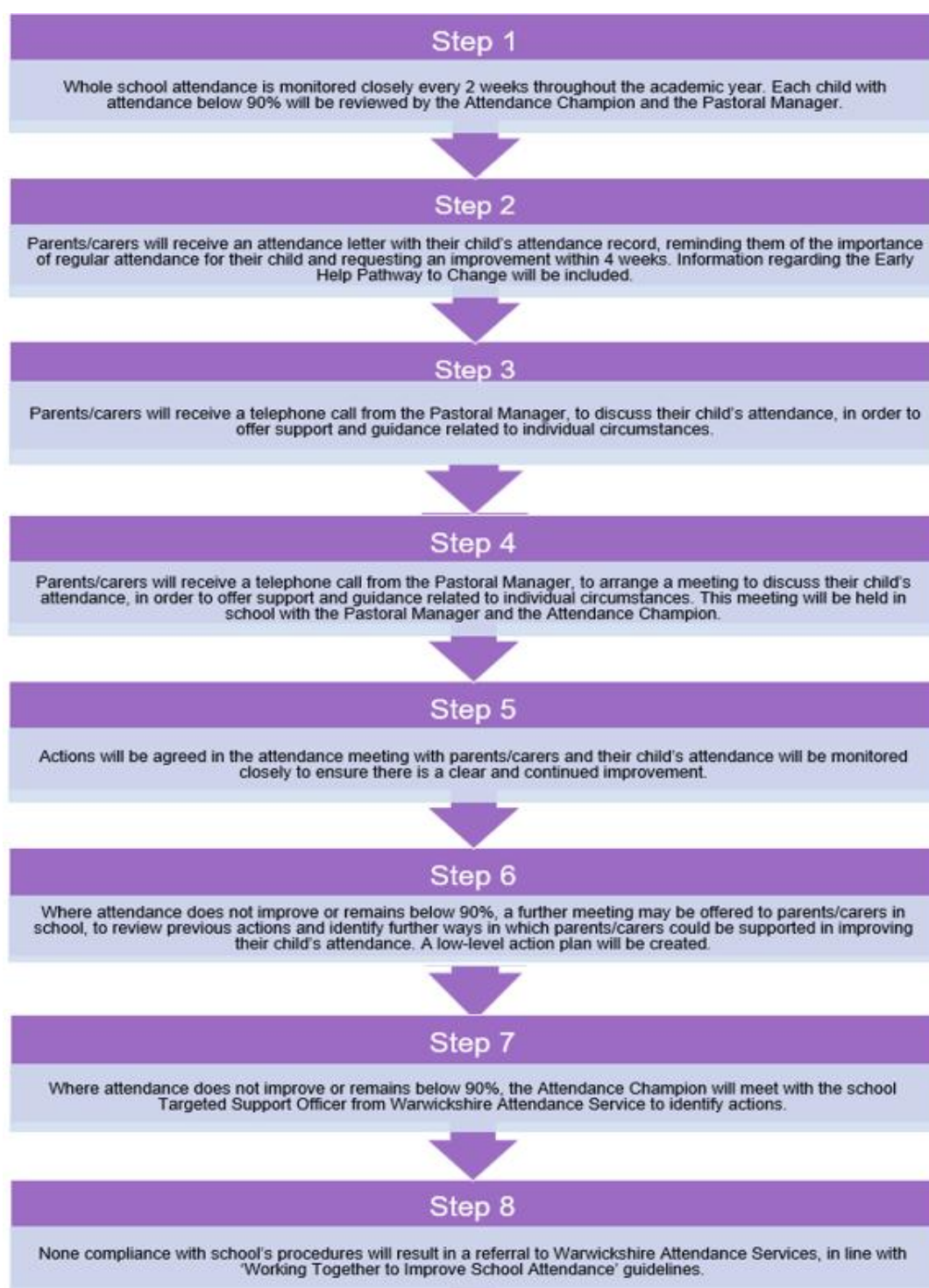
FACILITATE SUPPORT - Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an Early Help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT - Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through a parenting contract.

ENFORCE - Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

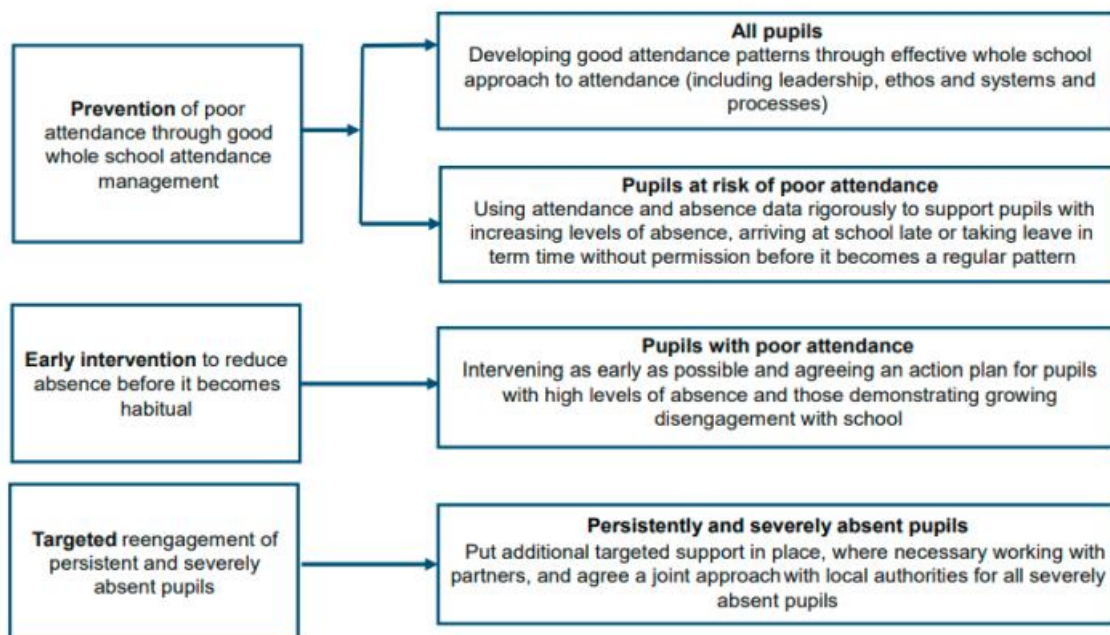
The attendance team follow a set procedure when dealing with absence and attendance. In certain circumstances this process may be adapted or accelerated in order to provide the right support in individual cases, or to protect the welfare of the child or family.

Milby Primary School's whole school attendance target is 97%



6. Categories of effective school attendance improvement and management

Categories of school attendance are broken down into 3 aspects: Prevention, Early intervention and Targeted support:



Children who find school difficult and have Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) will be supported by the schools Attendance Champion and SENDCo. The impact of EBSA on young people is far reaching. Outcomes for young people who display EBSA include poor academic attainment, reduced social opportunities and limited employment. The school will endeavour to develop an improved offer of support for those children and young people experiencing EBSA, with a focus on:

- Early identification and intervention.
- Working with parents and school staff as well as the young person.
- Working in a flexible manner paying attention to the individual case and function served by nonattendance
- Emphasising the need for rapid return to school alongside good support and, adaptations within the school environment making reasonable adjustment.

In some instances, parents/carers themselves might be living with mental health problems or experiencing wider vulnerabilities or challenging life circumstances. This may affect their ability to provide support and care, and so it is important to recognise the need for practical, whole-family support and/or early help support where necessary, in order to try to address the causes of poor attendance. For example, where applicable, the family's support worker might act as a convenor of any additional support offered and is a key party to join any conversations about a child's attendance.

7. Authorised and unauthorised Absences

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.
- School staff will recognise that there can be attendance challenges where a child has a social, emotional or mental health issue, particularly a severe issue for which the child is receiving clinical treatment. The Attendance Champion should work quickly to communicate this expectation to parents/carers and work together with them to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not make it an authorised absence.

Leave of Absence

- The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Expectations

- A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Permission for a Leave of Absence from a school may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an authorised person).
- Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.
- Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify the parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.
- It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Where applications for Leave of Absences are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an "unauthorised" absence. Where a leave of absence is requested but additional days take either prior to or after the request, they may be considered as part of the leave of absence.

- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).

- First Leave of Absence Offence: The amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Leave of Absence Offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice). A Penalty Notice will not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

For Reception and Years 1-6, the school day begins with registration at 8:40 am. Doors are open from 8:30 am. The register is taken promptly. If a child is not present when the register is taken, they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school later than 9:30 am they are given an unauthorised absence mark (U).

The afternoon session begins at 12.40pm for Reception, 1pm for Key Stage 1 and 1.15pm for Key Stage 2. Again, if a child arrives at school 30 minutes later than the register closing, they are given an unauthorised absence mark (U).

If a child is absent without notification

Where no notification has been received by 9:30 am, a text message/call will automatically be sent to the parents/carers via the School Office. If there is no response to the message and there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the school office, Pastoral Lead or Attendance Champion will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

The Pastoral Lead will provide a list of vulnerable children to the School Office, Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher, which will provide information in the order of priority i.e. Family member, Social Worker, Warwickshire Attendance Services. If a child is absent and the family are under Child Protection or on a Child in Need plan then the social worker allocated to the family will be contacted to report the absence, whether a reason is known or not.

Children who are missing in education (CME)

We have a legal duty to identify children who are missing in education (CME), taking action when necessary and ensuring children are receiving suitable education. This duty applies to all maintained school, academies, free school and independent schools. If a child is missing and whereabouts unknown, the school will follow the LA procedures. A home visit will be conducted, and a letter left at the property. School will contact Warwickshire Attendance Services, Warwickshire Front Door, if there are any siblings then school will make a call to their establishments. School will complete paperwork and contact Warwickshire County Council Child Missing in Education professionals before or on the 10th day of no contact and CME will take steps to locate the child.

Written Notification of absence

Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, for example, evidence of the appointment should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence via email to the admin office, or in writing to the school office.

8. Requests for exceptional leave of absence

If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made on the appropriate form, ideally at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the School Office. The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application. If the documentation indicates that a child is going to a country where FGM is practiced, then school may contact the emergency services on 101 and provide them with the details about the child. If the child is leaving the country the additional documentation detailed on the Exceptional Leave Request form must be provided.

9. Home Visits

If a parent does not communicate the reason for a child's absence on the third day of absence, a home visit will be made and a letter posted through the front door of the property. If there are any additional concerns around a family, this may be made sooner.

10. Long term absence through child's accident or illness

If a child is under the care of a hospital consultant and a consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

11. Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Warwickshire Attendance Services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

The Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.

12. Encouraging good attendance and rewards

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich and relevant curriculum.

Milby Primary School has a range of attendance initiatives to reward and highlight the importance of attendance in our school. As a school we will endeavour to be imaginative by having various initiatives and competitions to raise the profile of attendance with both children and parents, throughout the year.

Good attendance is promoted in the following ways:

- Certificates are presented to children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of each term, and for those with 97%+ they will receive a certificate of congratulations.
- Regular reminders are included on school newsletters to reinforce the importance of good attendance at school.
- Newsletters will report on school attendance levels and the year group and class with the highest attendance will be celebrated.
- Weekly attendance figures will be displayed clearly on our attendance board.

13. Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are set by the Head and agreed by the senior staff and Governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city. Our whole school attendance target is 97%.

14. Attendance Action Plans

In cases where a pupil's attendance continues to be below the school threshold, despite previous interventions, they may receive an Attendance Action Plan. This is tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the family, aiming to address barriers to attendance and facilitate the child's engagement in learning. This plan may involve personalised strategies, additional resources and/or the family, and ongoing monitoring to support the student in improving their attendance.

We believe that through collaborative efforts and targeted support, we can empower every student to achieve their full potential academically and personally. These will be reviewed on a four-weekly cycle by the Attendance Champion.

15. Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor and challenge overall attendance. The Governing Body will examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels. The attendance champion will produce termly reports to the Governing Body. The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years. Senior Leaders will monitor phase/ class and individual attendance weekly as part of the focus and drive to ensure all children attend school fully. This information will be disseminated to Pastoral Manager, those support staff specifically responsible for attendance and class teachers.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility at Milby. Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, as well as for taking action on day-to-day absences, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer- term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they

must report this to the Pastoral Manager, who will inform the Attendance Champion in order to identify the next steps.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Written on: 24th September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2027

Approved by: