Policy Document:	Attendance, CME, EHE, Flexi-Schooling and Distance Learning
School's Lead Member of Staff:	Head Teacher
Governors (monitoring):	Full Governors
Document Date:	April 2026 (update)
Document Version:	1.4
Governor Committee:	Full Governors
Committee Approval Date:	May 2026
Full Governors Ratification Date:	November 2022
Review Frequency:	2 Years
Date of next review:	May 2028
Publication Date:	May 2026
Chair of Governors Signature:	

Attendance, CME, EHE, Flexi-Schooling and Distance Learning Policy: 2026 Update

Summary of updates – April 2026

This document updates the Attendance, Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education, Flexi-Schooling and Distance Learning Policy (Version 1.31, November 2022, minor amendments February 2024).

The revisions are primarily clarificatory and procedural. The core principles, ethos and attendance expectations of the policy remain unchanged.

Key updates include:

- alignment with current pupil registration regulations and safeguarding guidance
- clarification of the independent school position in relation to local authority enforcement powers
- introduction of a staged First-Day Contact and escalation procedure
- addition of a structured Roles and Responsibilities section
- formalisation of attendance monitoring and reporting cycles
- clearer distinction between part-time timetables, flexi-schooling and distance learning arrangements
- removal of outdated references and correction of technical inconsistencies.
- clarification of thresholds for persistent and severe absence
- details about procedures to be followed when attendance falls below these thresholds.

These amendments strengthen procedural clarity, safeguarding assurance and governance oversight.

Governors have been notified of the amendments and approved the updated policy in March 2026.

Executive Summary

This policy sets out how the school fulfils its statutory duties in relation to pupil registration, attendance, safeguarding and removal from roll, while supporting parents in their primary legal responsibility to secure a suitable full-time education for their child.

The school affirms that regular attendance and punctuality are essential to pupils' academic progress, wellbeing and long-term life chances. Good attendance is understood not merely as regulatory compliance, but as part of the school's wider commitment to providing an efficient, suitable and full-time education consistent with its Christian ethos.

Legal framework

The policy reflects current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- the Education Act 1996
- the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (as amended)
- keeping Children Safe in Education
- children Missing Education statutory guidance
- current Department for Education attendance guidance.

As an independent school, we cooperate fully with Local Authorities where statutory thresholds are engaged, while recognising that enforcement powers such as School Attendance Orders rest with the Local Authority rather than the school.

Scope of the policy

The policy addresses:

- full-time school attendance and punctuality
- authorised and unauthorised absence
- first-day contact and escalation procedures
- prolonged absence and Children Missing Education
- elective Home Education
- flexi-schooling arrangements
- temporary part-time timetables
- distance learning arrangements
- removal from roll under Regulation 8.

The policy ensures clarity in distinguishing between these different educational pathways and the legal responsibilities attached to each.

Attendance expectations and culture

The school expects attendance of at least 95% across the academic year. Attendance and punctuality are promoted through:

- clear communication with parents
- termly attendance reporting
- early pastoral intervention
- supportive partnership with families
- removal of barriers to attendance where possible.

Attendance concerns are addressed proportionately and in collaboration with parents and pupils.

Roles and accountability

Attendance is a whole-school responsibility led by senior leadership and overseen by Governors:

- the Governing Body provides strategic oversight
- the Head Teacher retains overall accountability
- the Designated Attendance Lead (DAL) leads operational monitoring
- form Tutors provide first-line pastoral response
- heads of School provide cohort-level oversight and escalation
- the SENDCo and Designated Safeguarding Lead are involved where attendance concerns intersect with special educational needs or safeguarding risk
- administrative staff ensure accurate registration and timely first-day contact.

Clear lines of responsibility ensure both accountability and proportionality.

Monitoring and data analysis

Attendance and punctuality are monitored through a structured review cycle:

- weekly identification of emerging concerns at Form Tutor level and DAL
- half-termly cohort analysis by DAL
- whole-school review by the Head Teacher
- termly reporting to Governors, including analysis by cohort, sex, ethnicity, SEND and vulnerable pupils.

This ensures early identification of patterns and strategic oversight of trends.

Safeguarding integration

Attendance monitoring forms part of the school's safeguarding framework.

A staged First-Day Contact Procedure ensures:

- prompt follow-up of unexplained absence
- automatic escalation to senior leadership where contact cannot be made
- risk-based consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- proportionate response based on known vulnerabilities and context.

Not every unexplained absence constitutes a safeguarding incident; decisions are based on professional judgement and risk assessment.

Supporting pupils and families

Where attendance concerns arise, the school seeks to understand and address underlying causes. Possible responses include:

- pastoral support and parental meetings
- SEND assessment and reasonable adjustments
- early Help referral
- referral to specialist services
- temporary part-time timetables in exceptional circumstances
- flexi-schooling arrangements
- planned transition to elective home education.

The aim is always to secure suitable full-time education in the best interests of the child.

Removal from roll

Removal from the admission register occurs only in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations and, where required, in consultation with the relevant Local Authority. The school recognises that removal from roll carries safeguarding implications and will make reasonable enquiries before such decisions are taken.

Conclusion

This policy reflects the school's commitment to:

- upholding parental responsibility within a framework of partnership
- promoting high standards of attendance and punctuality
- ensuring legal compliance and safeguarding vigilance
- acting proportionately and compassionately
- providing clear leadership oversight and governance assurance.

The policy strengthens procedural clarity while preserving the school's ethos of collaborative engagement with families and a commitment to the flourishing of every child.

1. Overview

1.1 CFS is committed to the principle that all children should receive a **full-time education** which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. The primary responsibility for a child's education lies with his or her parents: this is not only a God-given 'parental mandate' but is also the legal position in the UK. CFS seeks to support parents to fulfil their responsibility for the education of their children in a variety of ways: for most, this will be through our provision of full-time education in school, but for some it will be through flexi-schooling or distance learning arrangements or by supporting the family move towards home education if that is what they choose.

1.2 We aim to encourage and assist all pupils receiving a full-time education at CFS to achieve **high levels of attendance and punctuality**. Poor school attendance, and/or regular late arrival, break the continuity of a child's learning and consequently limits their academic and social progress in school. The DfE has prioritised school attendance as a way of raising standards in education and ensuring that all pupils can fulfil their potential. The Department for Education identifies attendance of around 95% as a national benchmark; therefore our expectation for all pupils is to achieve at least 95% attendance over the course of a school year, with no unauthorised absences. This document sets out how we ensure that children and parents realise the importance of good attendance and punctuality, how we work with parents towards good levels of attendance and punctuality and what positive action we will take to address any poor attendance or punctuality

1.3 We recognise that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should **work in partnership** with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with school's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing and effective use of resources. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff but must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school. It will involve the support and oversight of the governing body and partnership with the local authority and other agencies.

1.4 This document also outlines the policy and procedures to enable CFS to comply with our responsibilities towards:

- children whose parents have decided to **educate them at home**
- children whose parents request a **flexi-school arrangement**.
- children who are not able for health or other reasons to physically attend school for extended periods of time and whose parents request a **distance learning** arrangement.

We aim to build positive relationships with families and provide a means to effectively protect the educational and safeguarding interests of children where vulnerabilities are identified.

1.5 This document references **children missing from education**, which is a key area of national and local concern. CFS seeks to cooperate with the local authorities and other relevant bodies to support their efforts to identify, trace and take action on behalf of children missing from education. We recognise the significant risks that such children face in terms of under-achievement, exploitation, radicalisation or other harms, and the damage done to their life chances by becoming NEET (not in education , employment or training).

2. Statutory framework and guidance

2.1 **Legislation and guidance**

This policy has been drawn up with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- *Education Act 1996* (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
- *Education Act 1996* (sections 434 (1) (3) (4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)
- *Education Act 1996* (section 436A added to by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- *Education and Inspections Act 2006* (section 4 and 38)
- *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*

- *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2013*
- *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016*
- *Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities*
- *Keeping children safe in education 2022*
- *Children missing from education: statutory guidance for local authorities 2016*
- *Working together to improve school attendance - August 2024 - GOV.UK*
- *Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024*

Where non-statutory guidance is referenced, it is used to inform good practice and does not impose additional duties beyond those that apply to independent schools

2.2 **Statutory principles**

This policy is underpinned by two key principles enshrined in statute law that:

1. **All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to an efficient, suitable and full-time education**
2. It is the **parents' legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives this education** either by providing it directly themselves or delegating the provision of their children's education to a school or equivalent organisation.
3. Where parents have chosen to delegate their responsibility to the school, the school is expected to take reasonable steps to promote regular attendance and to cooperate with the local authority where statutory thresholds are engaged.

2.3 **Legal rights and provisions**

2.3.1 Parents have a legal right to educate their children at home under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

> *The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –*
> - *To his age, ability and aptitude and*
> - *To any special educational needs, he/she may have,*
>
> *either by regular attendance at school **or otherwise**.*

This means that whilst parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full-time education, education in a school setting is not compulsory. **Parents may elect to educate their children at home** and withdraw them from school at any time to do so, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.

2.3.1.1 Compulsory school age begins on the next prescribed day following a child's fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31st December, 31st March and 31st August each year. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach the age of sixteen. Young people need to then comply with the Raising Participation Age (RPA) legislation, 2013, and remain in education or training up until the age of eighteen. A parent can opt to electively home educate their child up to the end of compulsory school age and may continue post 16 in order for their child to participate in education and training until the age of 18.

2.3.1.2 **Efficient and suitable education:** There is no definition in the Education Act 1996 of what constitutes either an 'efficient' or a 'suitable' education. Case law from 1986 broadly described 'efficient' as "an education that achieves what it sets out to achieve" and 'suitable' as one that "primarily equips a child for life within the community of which they are a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole as long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so".

See Appendix A for more information about different attendance models that can be used to provide a 'suitable education', including elective home education, flexi-schooling, temporary part-time timetable, distance learning

3. Roles and responsibilities

Clear lines of accountability ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties in relation to pupil registration, attendance, punctuality, safeguarding and removal from roll. Attendance and punctuality are whole-school responsibilities led by senior leadership and overseen by Governors.

3.1 Proprietor and Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for **statutory and regulatory oversight**, specifically ensuring:

- compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- that accurate attendance registers are maintained
- statutory duties relating to Children Missing Education (CME) are fulfilled
- attendance procedures align with safeguarding duties under Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version) and the Independent School Standards.

The Governing Body is also responsible for **strategic oversight**, which it achieves by:

- receiving termly reports on attendance and punctuality patterns
- scrutinising persistent absence (<90%)
- scrutinising safeguarding-linked absence through the vulnerable children's reporting mechanism
- holding the Head Teacher accountable for implementation of this policy.

The Governing Body does not manage individual attendance cases.

3.2 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for **attendance and punctuality** and remains accountable to Governors for:

- ensuring compliance with statutory attendance and pupil registration requirements
- taking reasonable steps to secure regular attendance of pupils on roll
- ensuring lawful use of authorised and unauthorised absence categories
- determining whether absences are authorised
- approving flexi-schooling and temporary part-time arrangements
- making decisions relating to removal from roll in accordance with Regulation 8
- ensuring cooperation with local authorities where required
- ensuring safeguarding duties are discharged where attendance concerns arise.

In line with non-statutory DfE guidance, the Head Teacher promotes a **culture** in which regular attendance and punctuality are expected and supported. Operational monitoring may be delegated, but accountability remains with the Head Teacher.

3.3 DAL– Attendance Champion

The DAL is the Attendance Lead and is responsible for operational oversight of attendance and punctuality. This includes:

- monitoring attendance and lateness data
- reviewing unexplained absence escalated by administrative staff
- identifying and tracking pupils with persistent absence (<90%) and severe absence (<50%)
- initiating early intervention where attendance or punctuality falls below school expectations
- coordinating meetings with parents to address barriers to attendance or punctuality
- escalating cases to the Head Teacher where statutory thresholds may be engaged
- liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENDCo where attendance concerns intersect with safeguarding risk or special educational needs
- overseeing reporting of persistent and severe absence to local authorities in line with locally agreed protocols
- coordinating multi-agency responses for pupils with severe absence
- overseeing first-day contact procedures
- receiving half-termly summaries from Heads of School
- identifying patterns of persistent absence (<90%) or repeated lateness

- preparing a half-termly whole-school attendance and punctuality overview identifying patterns and concerns
- developing or coordinating action plans at individual, cohort or whole-school level.

Each term, the DAL & Head Teacher will prepare a whole-school attendance report for Governors, including granular analysis across cohort, sex, ethnicity, SEND and vulnerable pupils, together with evaluation and proposed actions. Draft reports will be reviewed with Heads of School, the DSL and SENDCo at Senior Leadership Team meetings prior to submission to Governors.

In line with non-statutory DfE guidance, the Attendance Champiion ensures that responses to absence are proportionate and focused on removing barriers rather than solely on sanction.

3.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has responsibility for safeguarding oversight where attendance concerns may indicate risk. The DSL:

- reviews cases where prolonged or unexplained absence may indicate safeguarding risk
- is consulted in accordance with the First-Day Contact Procedure where escalation thresholds are met
- makes referrals to Children's Social Care or other agencies where safeguarding thresholds are reached
- works collaboratively with the Attendance Lead and SENDCo where absence may reflect vulnerability.

Routine lateness or low-level absence does not constitute a safeguarding incident unless risk indicators are present.

3.5 SENDCo

Where attendance or punctuality concerns may be linked to special educational needs or disability, the SENDCo:

- advises on whether underlying needs may be contributing to absence or lateness
- ensures reasonable adjustments are considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- contributes to planning reintegration or temporary arrangements where appropriate
- liaises with external professionals where required.

Prolonged absence does not automatically indicate SEND; however, SEND considerations will be explored where there are indicators that unmet need may be contributing to attendance difficulties.

3.6 Office manager and administrative staff

Administrative staff are responsible for the operational management of the attendance register. They:

- maintain the attendance register accurately and promptly
- apply attendance codes in accordance with statutory requirements
- initiate first-day contact where no reason for absence has been received
- escalate unexplained absence to the DAL and Head Teacher by the time specified in Appendix B
- record all contact attempts and actions taken
- make statutory notifications to the local authority where required.

Administrative staff do not make safeguarding risk assessments.

3.7 Form Tutors

Form Tutors provide the first pastoral response to emerging attendance and punctuality concerns.

Monitoring

Form Tutors will receive from administrative staff a weekly summary identifying pupils who:

- have cumulative attendance below 95% for the half-term; or
- have recorded more than two late arrivals within the half-term.

Form Tutors are expected to review this information promptly and remain alert to emerging patterns.

Initial response

Where a pupil meets either threshold, the Form Tutor will:

- make first contact with parents (or, in Upper School, speak directly with the pupil where appropriate)
- seek to understand the reasons for absence or lateness
- offer initial advice, encouragement and support
- reinforce the school's expectations regarding regular attendance and punctual arrival
- record the discussion and any agreed actions.

At this stage, the emphasis is supportive and preventative, with a view to removing barriers and securing improvement.

Escalation

If there is no improvement in the following week, the Form Tutor will:

- inform the Head of School of concern; and
- re-engage with the parent or pupil to reinforce agreed expectations and support.

If concerns persist for a further week, the matter will be formally escalated to the Head of School for direct involvement.

Form Tutors should remain attentive to possible underlying causes, including pastoral, curriculum or special educational needs factors, and refer concerns appropriately.

3.8 Heads of School

Heads of School provide cohort-level oversight and second-stage intervention in relation to attendance and punctuality.

Cohort monitoring and analysis

Administrative staff will provide half-termly attendance and punctuality data for each cohort. DAL with Heads of School will:

- analyse patterns and trends across their cohort
- identify pupils with persistent absence or repeated lateness
- pay particular attention to pupils with SEND and those identified as vulnerable
- consider patterns by cohort, sex, ethnicity, SEND status and vulnerability
- identify recurring patterns linked to particular days, subjects or curriculum activities where relevant.

DAL with the Heads of School will prepare a brief half-termly summary identifying key concerns and proposed actions. This will be submitted to the Head Teacher

Escalated parental engagement

Where concerns are escalated by a Form Tutor, the Head of School will:

- meet with parents and/or the pupil
- agree clear expectations and review timescales
- determine whether involvement of the SENDCo or DSL is appropriate
- monitor progress until improvement is secured.

Termly evaluation

Each term, Heads of School will prepare a narrative evaluation of attendance and punctuality within their cohort. This will include:

- analysis by cohort, sex, ethnicity, SEND and vulnerable pupils
- identification of emerging trends
- evaluation of interventions undertaken
- proposed next steps

3.9 Parents

Parents have the legal responsibility under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child receives an efficient, suitable and full-time education.

Where parents have delegated provision to the school, they must:

- ensure regular attendance and punctual arrival
- notify the school promptly of the reason for absence
- request leave of absence in advance wherever possible
- work collaboratively with the school to address barriers to attendance.

3.10 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend regularly and punctually
- engage positively with support offered
- take increasing responsibility for attendance as they mature.

4. Parental rights and responsibilities

4.1. ATTENDANCE

4.1.1 Parents have the **legal responsibility** to ensure that their child is receiving an efficient, full-time and suitable education. They may choose to delegate this responsibility to the school but retain the right to decide to educate their child 'otherwise'.

4.1.2 If a child is absent from long periods or otherwise 'missing from education', the Local Authority has a **statutory duty** under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996 to intervene by serving a notice in writing on the parent requiring him/her to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving a suitable full-time and efficient education. If evidence of a suitable education is not received, the Local Authority may then commence statutory action, including the issuing of a School Attendance Order (SAO), Penalty Notices and prosecutions.

4.1.3 If a child is registered at the school as a result of a **School Attendance Order,** before the child can be removed from the school's register and educated at home, the parent must obtain the permission of the local authority on the grounds that arrangements have been made for the child to receive suitable education otherwise than at school.

4.2 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

4.2.1 As a school, we have always supported parents who elect to home educate, recognising the biblical teaching that it is the duty and responsibility of parents to bring up and educate their children.

4.2.2 We recognise that parents may at different times decide that home education is more appropriate for their child and then at another time decide that a school-based education at CFS is the better option for their child. We seek to **work with parents** and support them in making the decision about what is the better option for their child at any given time.

4.2.3 Parents do not need to be qualified teachers to home educate and there is no requirement to teach the National Curriculum, match age-specific standards, observe schools' hours, days or terms, make detailed lesson plans, give formal lessons or reproduce school type peer group socialisation.

4.2.4 Parents can choose to engage **private tutors** or other adults to assist them in providing a suitable education, although there is no requirement to do so, and learning may take place in a variety of settings, not just the family home.

4.2.5 **Local authorities** have a duty under the Education Act 1996 to establish whether home educated children are receiving suitable full-time education and the DfE Guidance is clear that it would be sensible for parents to respond to enquiries**.**

4.2.6 Where the child is a **Looked After Child**, the Local Authority would not expect that home education would be suitable. If a parent or someone with parental responsibility for a Looked After Child decides to electively home education, the LA will seek advice from Social Care and from the Virtual School Head for Looked After Children before a decision is made about how best to secure a suitable full-time education for the child.

4.2.7 If a child is on either a **Child Protection (CPP) or Child in Need (CiN) Plan**, the Local Authority would not expect home education to be suitable. However, both the child's and the parent's views will be considered and advice sought from Social Care before any decision is made.

4.2.8 Under Sections 7 and 19 of the Education Act 1996, parents have the right to educate their children, including **children with SEND**, at home. Home education must be suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude and SEND.

4.2.9 Where a pupil already has an **Education Health Care plan**, the school is not obliged by law to seek Local Authority approval for a move to home education, as we are not a specialist

provision school. However, in practice we will liaise with the local authority in the event that the parent(s) of a child with an EHCP decide to electively home educate their child.

4.2.10 Parents have the right to **request an EHC assessment** and the **right to appeal** is available to all parents, including those who feel that the SEND support being provided by the school is insufficient to meet the child's needs.

4.2.11 Parents who are electively home educating may ask their local authority to carry out a **statutory assessment (or reassessment) of any special needs** their child may have and the LA must consider and respond within all statutory timescales. Local Authorities do not have a duty under Section 22 of the Children & Families Act 2014 to assess every home educated child to identify whether or not they have SEND.

4.2.12 Under SEND arrangements, and in line with DfE guidance, the LA will carry out **annual reviews** for all children with EHCPs, including those who are home educated. The annual review will decide whether the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and the child's SEND continue to be met. The local authority may name the type of school that would be suitable for the child, but state that the parents have made their own arrangements under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. The child and parents will be involved in this process and the plan will be amended to reflect parental choice. Parents will be invited to the review by the LA SEN officer, together with representatives from any other agencies for example, Health, Social Care that the LA deems appropriate and the LA SEN representative.

4.2.13 The LA will not assume that because the provision being made by parents is **different** from that which was being made or would have been made in school, that the provision is necessarily unsuitable. However, in some cases, the LA may conclude that elective home education does not meet the child's SEND and name an alternative educational setting.

4.2.14 If the LA decides to approve and/or maintain an EHCP, it would be expected that this would cease when the child reaches the end of compulsory school age.

4.2.15 If parents of a child currently attending CFS decide to electively home educate, the **parents must notify the Head Teacher in writing** that they are withdrawing their child in order to home educate. This is necessary to avoid any future misunderstanding about how they plan to fulfil their parental responsibilities and also, to facilitate access to advice and support. Parents do not have a legal obligation to inform the local authority themselves although they may choose to do so by emailing EHE@liverpool.gov.uk or contacting the team on 0151 233-3916.

4.3 FLEXI-SCHOOLING

4.3.1 Flexi-schooling is legal in the UK but it is not an automatic right - unlike full-time home education.

4.3.2 Although there are no explicit laws governing flexi-schooling, the DfE has provided guidance in Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities. The two key sections used to inform our policy are:

*Section 1.3 When a child is flexi-schooled, the parents must still ensure that the child receives a suitable **full-time education** but the element received at school must be taken into account in considering whether that duty is met, just as it should be when a child attends other settings on a part-time basis . . . . .*

Section 10.8 Schools are not obliged to accept such [flexi-schooling] arrangements if requested by parents. If they do, then time spent by children being educated at home should be authorised as absence in the usual way and marked in attendance registers accordingly. It is not appropriate to mark this time as 'approved off-site activity' as the school has no supervisory role in the child's education at such times and also has no responsibility for the welfare of the child while he or she is at home. . . . .

*Schools are **held to account through inspection for the performance of pupils,** and that will include any who attend the school as part of a programme of flexi-schooling."*

4.3.3 Parents must request and obtain **the Head Teacher's permission** for their child to remain on roll whilst being educated for some of the week at home. Flexi-schooling arrangements are entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher.

4.3.4 Some parents may request a flexi-school arrangement because they essentially wish to home educate but recognise that they cannot provide adequate **specialist subject teaching** or access to a suitable range of **social development activities**.

4.4 PART-TIME ATTENDANCE

There may be circumstances where parents request a part-time attendance arrangement for their child. This may be for physical or mental health reasons or as part of a strategy to encourage school attendance after a period of school-refusal. At all times the school will work in partnership with the parents and with relevant external agencies to decide if it is appropriate to make a temporary arrangement for a child to attend part-time for a specified period. Such arrangements are monitored and reviewed with the intention that the child be returned to full time attendance as soon as possible. See section 5.3 below for more information about temporary part-time attendance arrangements.

4.5 DISTANCE LEARNING

Parents may request the school to consider a distance learning provision for their child for medical or re-location reasons. Requests will be considered by the Head Teacher on a case-by-case basis. See section 5.4 for more information about Distance Learning arrangements.

5. School's rights and responsibilities

5.1 Attendance Register

5.1.1 We are required by law to have an attendance register. All pupils on the admission register must be placed on the attendance register.

5.1.2 We have a legal duty to take an Attendance Register every morning and afternoon. It should record whether each pupil is:

- present;
- absent;
- attending an approved educational activity outside school, including work experience or sporting and other activities[1];
- unable to attend due to "exceptional circumstances" such as the school site (or part of it) is closed due to an "unavoidable cause";
- taking authorised absence granted by the Head Teacher[2]
- late

5.1.3 Entries to the register should be made in ink and any amendments must show the original and amended entries, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name of the person making the amendment. A computerised register counts as 'being in ink'.

5.1.4 When the register is kept electronically, an additional back-up copy must be made either electronically or as a paper copy, not less than once a month. Paper registers and the backup/additional copies of the attendance register must be retained for three years after the end of the school year in question.

---

[1] The activity must be approved by the Head Teacher and supervised by a person approved by the Head Teacher. Before granting approval, the Head Teacher will undertake a risk assessment to assess the safety of the activity and the safeguarding provisions in place. Generally, parental supervision will be considered appropriate and adequate for pupils undertaking activities that are not inherently high risk. Where other adults are involved in the supervision of an activity, the Head Teacher will generally require evidence that the other adult(s) pose no safeguarding risk. This would normally involve the school conducting an enhanced DBS check where the adult is on the updating service or requesting to see their DBS certificate where they are not. For example, if a pupil goes off-site to undertake an on-line computing course at home because they have more advanced technology at home than can be provided in school, the Head Teacher will usually approve both the activity and the parental supervision. Where parents make a request for a pupil to go off-site for an additional activity, such as a music lesson that cannot be provided in school, the school will generally ask for evidence that the music teacher has an enhanced DBS certificate.

[2] There is no legal definition of what constitutes an "exceptional circumstance". Ultimately, this is for the Head Teacher to decide, as is the length of the leave of absence granted, and whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised. We note that this part of the attendance regulations only applies to maintained schools, giving us some measure of flexibility in how we respond to requests for absence. Where there is uncertainty about the appropriateness of granting leave of absence in a specific situation or whether it should be authorised or unauthorised, the Head Teacher will seek advice from the local authority.

5.2 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.2.1 The school has a responsibility to follow up absence in a timely manner to ascertain the reason for absence, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken, identify whether the absence is approved or not, and identify an appropriate code[3] to use when entering attendance on the school's digital register or management information system (which is used to upload data for the School Census).

5.2.2 The school is obliged by law to differentiate between **authorised and unauthorised absence**. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied about the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

5.2.3 A pupil's absence **must be authorised** if:

- they have been granted a leave of absence by the school
- they are unable to attend because they are sick or due to some other unavoidable cause;
- they are observing a religious holiday; or
- the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and no suitable arrangements have been made for their transport to / from the school.

5.2.4 The school has **discretion to authorise absence** in other exceptional circumstance, having regard to the pupil's welfare, safeguarding considerations and the school's duty to provide an efficient full-time education.At CFS we have always had a compassionate approach to **requests for time off** school, particularly for those whose extended family are overseas and in relation to family sickness or bereavement. We consider each request on its own merits, bearing in mind the family circumstances, the stage the child has reached in their educational career and the individual needs of the pupils, including welfare, safeguarding and educational concerns. There must be sufficient time for the pupil's teachers and Head of School to be consulted and a considered decision taken. Before granting an **extended leave of absence** , we may seek advice from the Local Authority (School Improvement Liverpool). It is for the Head Teacher to determine the length of authorised absence.

5.2.5 The school will not normally grant authorised absence for **holidays in term time**. Where holidays are taken without the Head Teacher's permission or where the request for leave of absence is made retrospectively or close to the intended period of absence, the pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

5.2.6 The school will be sympathetic to parent requests for leave of absence for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of **taking part in a performance** within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963. Leave of absence can only be granted if a local authority licence has been obtained. Where the licence specifies the dates that a pupil is to be away from school to perform, the Head Teacher will normally authorise those days. Where the terms of the licence do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence. In all cases, the school will take into account the impact of leave of absence on the pupil's education.

5.2.7 A pupil's absence will be **unauthorised** if:

- no reason is given for the pupil's absence; or
- the school is not satisfied with the reason(s) given for the absence; or
- a request for absence is submitted too late to be properly considered by the appropriate people in school.

5.2.8 **Study leave** is not normally granted until the day of the first GCSE exam for the Y11 cohort only and for the morning before a Y10 afternoon exam that falls on Tuesday - Friday. The school will endeavour to provide alternative to studying at home for pupils for whom unstructured and unsupervised study time would not be helpful.

5.3 Children Missing from Education and prolonged absence

This section has regard to the latest statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education which clarifies the school's safeguarding responsibilities to promote the welfare of children.

[3] There is no statutory requirement for an independent to use the DfE's standard set of codes in registers. However, we will use the standard set of codes, applied in a way that is consistent with independent school standards.

5.3.1 The school has a **safeguarding duty** to monitor prolonged absence (more than 10 consecutive days off school). Enquiries will be made by the school office, at the instigation of the pupil's Head of School, to establish the reason for continued absence beyond 10 school days and to ascertain the likely date of return. If the child is absent due to continued sickness, the school may ask for medical evidence. If there are other factors behind the pupil's continued absence, the school will liaise with parents to understand the cause of the pupil's absence and develop an action plan to get the child back into school.

5.3.2 The school has a statutory duty to cooperate with the local authority where a pupil meets the **Children Missing Education** criteria, including where unauthorised absence reaches ten consecutive school days.

5.3.3 If the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or another unavoidable cause and there are **continuing educational, welfare and safeguarding concerns**, the Head Teacher in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek a meeting with parents to discuss the situation. Staff will use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated. Generally, if the meeting with parents does not result in an action plan to ensure the child's return to full-time school, the school will escalate the matter by seeking advice from the relevant Local Authority attendance or welfare service. These procedures will come into play if the pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days.

5.3.4 Persistent absence and severe absence are addressed in Section 7.7. Where attendance concerns indicate that a pupil may not be receiving a suitable full-time education, the school will refer to the local authority in accordance with statutory guidance and local protocols.

5.3.5 If the **whereabouts of the child is not known**, the school will make reasonable enquiries to establish where they are, in line with statutory guidance relating to Children Missing from Education (Children Missing Education). For each pupil, the school holds three emergency contact numbers of responsible adults. If there is a welfare or safeguarding concern for a child missing from school and the parent with whom the child normally resides cannot be reached, the school will use the additional emergency contact numbers. Where a pupil has been identified as no longer at a known address and all efforts to locate them or do a home visit have failed, the case will be referred to the CME team. The school seeks information at the start of each year about any access arrangements to the pupil's home. Support can be requested using the CME Referral Form (downloadable).

5.3.6 If a child is reported to the local authority for non-attendance, enquiries will be made by the **Children Missing Education team** to establish whether the child is in receipt of other suitable education provision or is to be regarded as a Child Missing Education.

5.3.7 The **CME team** strive to:

- identify and locate all referred pupils.
- confirm educational provision is in place /is needed.
- facilitate a return to education where appropriate.
- work closely with local safeguarding forums and regional and national CME networks.

5.3.8 Children Missing Education should be reported using the **Liverpool Schools portal**: School Portal. The Christian Fellowship School account login details can be provided by the Office Manager

5.3.9 If the pupil cannot be found and remains absent after ten days of authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be **removed from the admission register** if the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. Any such decision will only be taken following consultation with the local authority Children Missing Education team and will not be made unilaterally by the school. See section 8

below for more information about removing pupils from the school admission register (school roll).

5.3.10 Children Missing Education relates specifically to children who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education elsewhere. They are not to be confused with children who are missing out on education either through poor attendance or truanting.

5.3.11 The School will make a **sickness return** to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

5.3.12 The School will seek to facilitate attendance by considering a **phased return** to school after a prolonged period of illness or the pupil has been affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.

5.4 Flexi-schooling Arrangements

5.4.1 Although there is no statutory guidance or case law on making flexi-schooling decisions, we aim to follow the **legal principles** of reasonableness (giving reasons for any decision), rationality (only having regard to relevant considerations) and procedural fairness (giving parents and the child an opportunity to express their views).

5.4.2 CFS will carefully consider any **requests for flexi-schooling** and will document any reasons for refusing a request to flexi-school. We will look sympathetically at requests for flexi-school arrangements where we are satisfied that parents/carers are able to work collaboratively with us to ensure that their children receive a full-time education, partly through attendance and partly at home. Flexi-schooling requests are likely to be granted where there is confidence that the child will receive a *suitable* and *full-time* education, shared between school and home. Flexi-schooling requests are likely to be refused when there is insufficient evidence that the child will receive a *suitable* and *full-time* education if s/he is not in school full-time.

5.4.3 When a child is flexi-schooled, the school will record the part of day/week that the pupil is not in school as an **authorised absence** - Code C. The child should not be marked as engaged in educational activities off-site as this certifies that the education is supervised and specific measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

5.4.4 Flexi-school arrangements will be agreed between the Head Teacher and the parent(s) and put **in writing**, specifying the responsibilities and duties of home and school in ensuring that the pupil receives a suitable, full-time education.

5.5 Part-time Attendance Arrangements

5.5.1 All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a **full-time education** so the school will only agree to part-time education arrangements in very exceptional circumstances. Such arrangements will be monitored regularly and reviewed at least once a term.

5.5.2 In line with DfE guidance School attendance guidance, p 19, the school recognises that "in very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary **part-time timetable** to meet a pupil's individual needs." This sort of arrangement might be when a pupil has a medical condition that prevents them from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is part of a re-integration package".

5.5.3 A part-time timetable will only be considered by the school **in consultation with other relevant professionals who are independent of the school** and on their expert advice, eg: the child's medical team or mental health therapist. The school will not be able to agree to a part-time flexi-schooling timetable unless this is advised by a relevant professional who is independent of the school, such as the child's medical team or mental health therapist.

5.5.4 A part-time timetable will be treated as a **short-term solution** in line with DfE guidelines and will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with an alternative educational arrangement.

5.5.5 A part-time attendance arrangement is **not** the same as flexi-schooling, as the pupil is not being educated at home for the part of the day when they are not in school.

5.5.6 In agreeing to a temporary part-time timetable, the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will record it as **authorised absence.**

5.5.7 When a temporary part-time timetable is agreed with the school, there will normally be **no reduction in the fees** as the extra work involved in managing a part-time timetable is considerable. However, the school will not normally charge for extra teaching and support services necessitated by the temporary part-time timetable - such as taking work round to a child's home.

5.6 Home Education

5.6.1 There is no legal requirement for parents to discuss **home education** with the school, but if a parent informs the school of their intention, the school will seek to respond positively and constructively. This is particularly important if it appears that the decision to home educate may be related to a dispute with the school for example, regarding attendance, academic performance, behaviour or alleged bullying. The school will invite the parents to discuss the decision and take appropriate steps to seek to resolve any issues. Parents' attendance at such a meeting is entirely voluntary.

5.6.2 We will not seek to persuade parents to educate their child at home as a means of **avoiding exclusion**.

5.6.3 For every new home-educating pupil, the Headteacher will make a return to the local authority using the **EHE1 referral form** giving the full name of the pupil, the address of the parent with whom the pupil normally resides and the reason (EHE) why their name is to be deleted from the admission register. A written request from the parent(s) to electively home educate must also be submitted. The pupil's name will not be deleted from the register until the local authority has been informed that the child will be electively home educated.

5.6.4 If the school has safeguarding concerns, we will not remove a child from the admissions register for Elective Home Education without **referring those safeguarding concerns to the local authority**, using the EHE1 referral form.

5.6.5 If the child is registered at the school as a result of a **School Attendance Order**, the school will ask the parent to obtain permission from the Local Authority before the child can be removed from the school's register and educated at home. The Local Authority will need to be satisfied that suitable arrangements have been made for the child to receive suitable education otherwise than at school.

5.6.6 Where parents choose elective home education, CFS will advise parents to undertake appropriate **safeguarding checks** on any settings that they use, as there may be no external assurance that these alternative settings comply with the basic safeguarding standards that are expected in schools - such as vetting of staff. We will recommend to parents who decide to home educate that they ensure that any tutors they employ are qualified and suitable, including undertaking a Disclosure & Barring (DBS) Service check.

5.6.7 We seek to support home educating parents by acting as an **exam centre** for children *where we have a relationship with the family*, particularly if they are former pupils who have been withdrawn for elective home education. Other home-educated children may occasionally be accepted as private candidates on a case-by-case basis. We will not advertise ourselves on exam board or other websites as offering a service to private candidates.

5.7 Distance Learning

5.7.1 Distance learning may become the **default learning mode** during periods of national emergency - eg a lockdown response to a pandemic. See our Whole School Remote Learning policy for more details about our responsibilities in such circumstances.

5.7.2 CFS will consider **requests from parent**s for a distance learning provision for an individual child, either by remote learning platforms or packs of educational materials. Each situation will be considered on its merits and the nature and scope of the teaching services provided

will be drawn up in a services contract. We will have regard to national guidance, for example about which categories of pupils should 'shield' in the event of a pandemic.

5.7.3 Pupils being taught remotely will **not generally be able to remain on roll**. This is because the school would not be able to fulfil its safeguarding and supervisory duties for pupils who are only seen remotely.

5.7.4 Pupils who are provided with distance learning services may be able to access on-site activities on request. They may also be able, on request, to participate in off-site activities such as trips. Our school insurance covers such children even though they are not on roll.

6. Analysing attendance and punctuality patterns

6.1 The school office records attendance and punctuality data using the Pupil Asset **MIS system**. The Office Manager uses the codes as set out in School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

6.2 As an independent school, there is not a legal requirement to share daily attendance data with the local authority. Any sharing of attendance information beyond statutory notifications is undertaken voluntarily and in the interests of safeguarding and pupil welfare. We actively collaborate with Liverpool Local Authority by informing the authority when a pupil is added to or removed from the admission register outside standard transition points, or when a pupil fails to attend regularly or is absent without authorization for ten consecutive days or is off sick for more than 15 consecutive or cumulative days.

6.3 As part of our collaboration with Liverpool Local Authority, we actively monitor attendance at a school leadership level. After the end of each term, a summary of the whole school attendance data is given to the Head Teacher and the Heads of Lower, Middle and Upper School for **analysis** in order to identify patterns and areas of concern. In conjunction with the SENDCo and Mental Health Lead, **strategies** for addressing areas of concern are developed.

6.4 The data analysis and proposed strategies are **reported to Governors** on a termly basis, together with a review of any previous actions to improve attendance and punctuality. School data is compared with national and, where available, local data.

6.5 *Persistent absence and severe absence*

A pupil is defined as persistently absent where their attendance falls below 90% over the academic year to date. Both authorised and unauthorised absence are included in this calculation.

A pupil is defined as severely absent where their attendance falls below 50% over a an academic year to date basis. Severe absence represents a significant risk to a pupil's education and safeguarding and requires immediate intervention.

6.6 *Local authority reporting arrangements*

While there is no statutory requirement for independent schools to routinely report all persistent absence cases, this school will notify the relevant local authority of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% in line with locally agreed safeguarding and attendance protocols. Cases of severe absence (below 50%) will be reported without delay.

7. Supporting good attendance and punctuality

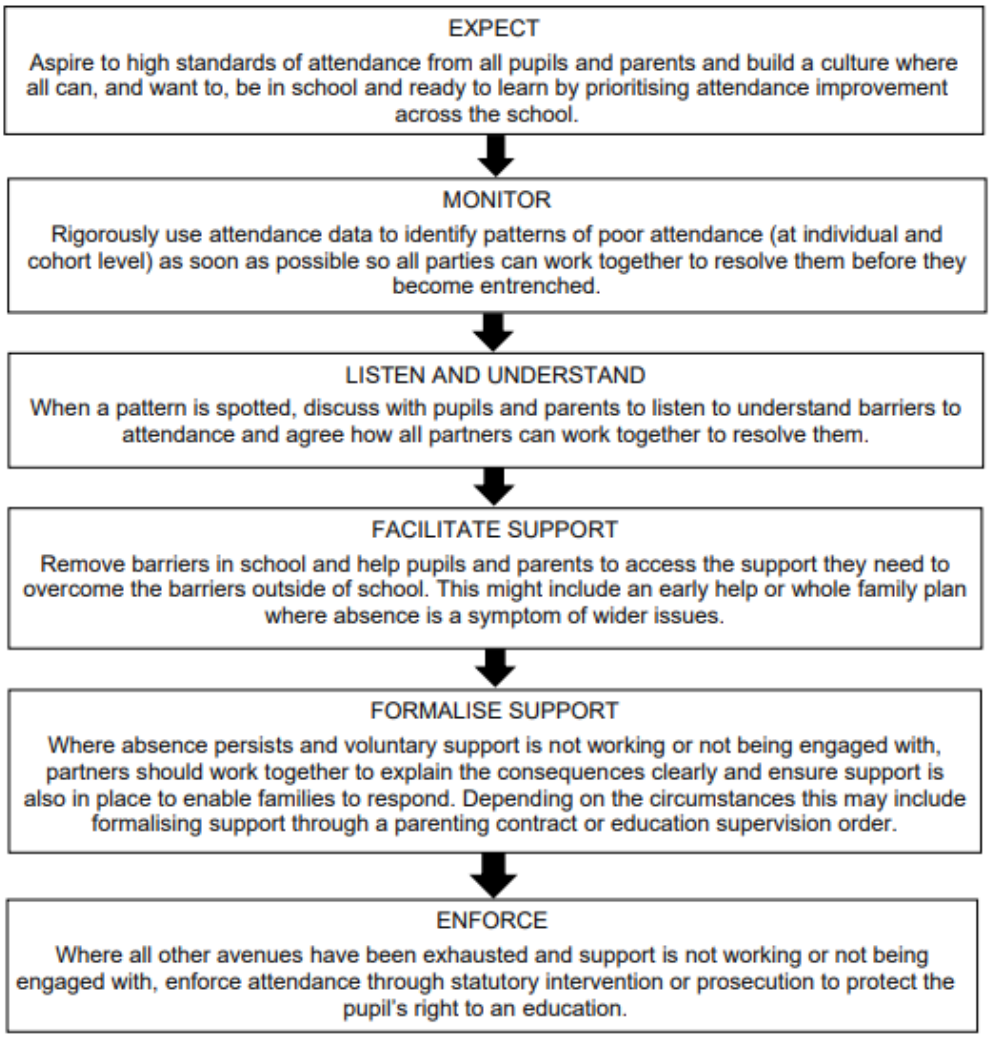
7.1 The school has a **statutory duty** to take reasonable steps to ensure that pupils on roll attend regularly. We also recognise that good attendance is necessary for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. [See Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK, paras 11 and 12 for more detail about the impact of poor attendance rates on pupils' achievements and at end of KS2 and KS4 and on their protection and wellbeing.]

7.2 CFS is committed to working with pupils and parents to **proactively manage and improve attendance**, removing barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. We do not see securing good attendance in isolation from our work on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral care, mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources. We work hard to maintain a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment such that all pupils will want to attend and in which they can learn and thrive.

7.3 We recognise that supporting good attendance is something that **many different people and organisations** contribute to: teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

7.4 In supporting good attendance, we draw on the basic principles set out in Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK, using them as a non-statutory framework adapted for the independent school context.

7.4.1 **Expect:** In common with schools nationally, we expect attendance to be at 95% or above. This expectation is communicated to parents regularly through the termly letter accompanying their child's attendance certificate and through parent bulletins and similar communications. We work in partnership with relevant Local Authorities and their associated safeguarding arrangements, including the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, to support good attendance and safeguard pupils. Where appropriate, this may include engagement with local authority attendance and welfare services or submission of a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) in any local authority area in which a pupil resides. We will work collaboratively with health services, CAMHS and other appropriate external professionals where attendance concerns are linked to welfare or safeguarding needs.



7.4.2 **Monitor:** The Office Manager supplies Heads of School and the Head Teacher with termly analysis of attendance and absence data. These are considered by each Head of School who discusses with class/form teachers any underlying issues that may be contributing to higher than expected absence at individual or cohort level. These insights will be brought to a termly discussion with the Head Teacher about attendance patterns in that part of the school. Sometimes this first level of investigation will conclude that there is a clear and justifiable

reason for the absence, eg. a bout of sickness or authorised absence in exceptional circumstances. These reasons would be noted against the child's data for the term. Where there is concern about persistent absence that does not appear to have a clear and justifiable reason, Heads of School will move to the next level of investigation.

7.4.3 **Listen and understand:** As a parent collaborative, we always aim to work with families in a collaborative way, so listening to the perspective of parents and older pupils is important to us. Heads of School will set up a meeting with parents (and where appropriate, older pupils) to discuss the reasons behind the persistent absence. The aim is to understand the barriers to attendance and agree how we can work together to surmount them. To this end, the school will discuss with parents the **options available** if their child is not thriving in school and is not attending school regularly.

Staff involved in such discussions may include the pupil's Head of School, the pupil's form teacher, the SENDCo if the pupil is on the ALPS register, the Mental Health Lead if there have been concerns about the pupil's mental/emotional wellbeing, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Head Teacher.

Options that may be considered include:

7.4.3.1 **A reduced timetable**

A curriculum reduction must still ensure that the pupil receives a full-time education and follows a broad and balanced curriculum. In practice, the **minimum curriculum requirement for a reduced timetable** would include English, Maths, Science, Bible/RS, Humanities, Physical Education and a design, technology or creative arts subject. In exceptional circumstances, for example, significant and long-term physical incapacity, the requirement for PE may be dropped.

In Middle and Upper School, we recognise that a **modern foreign language** can be a significant challenge for some pupils, especially if the pupil has considerable difficulties in English. We will therefore sometimes allow pupils to use French lessons for interventions, over-learning or (in Upper School) to independently learn an alternative language, including British Sign Language.

In Upper School, some pupils with additional needs are encouraged to reduce their **KS4 course to only seven subjects**. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider a further reduction to only five (including English Language, Maths, a Science subject, RS and one other). Pupils are encouraged to continue with double award Combined Science but we will sometimes allow pupils in Y10 to take just one science discipline through to GCSE - usually Biology.

The school will not reduce a pupil's timetable to the point where the pupil is no longer receiving a **full-time or broad and balanced education**, as we are accountable through our inspection body to the DfE to provide an efficient full-time education to each pupil on our roll. If parents request a reduced timetable, parents will be informed of the minimum curriculum requirements that are compatible with our statutory obligations.

7.4.3.2 **An alternative timetable**

Occasionally, pupils on the SEND register may have an alternative timetable because they are following a different educational pathway - eg P-Levels. When developing an alternative timetable, the principle of *full-time* and *broad and balanced* will be applied. The difference will be the level of academic attainment expected and the type of accreditation, not the length or breadth of curriculum opportunities.

7.4.3.3 **Education off-site**

Where it is deemed appropriate, the school facilitates day-release for pupils to attend an alternative educational establishment for a portion of the week (generally one day) at an **approved offsite educational setting**. We remain responsible for the pupil's education and welfare when attending such provision. Appropriate checks are made to ensure that the setting has satisfactory safeguarding and health & safety measures in place. The proposed course content is scrutinised to ensure that it is suited to the needs of the pupil and provides sufficient scope and challenge. We ensure that procedures are in place for the approved off-site setting to inform us in a timely manner if the pupil is absent or is late.

Parents are asked to contact both the school and the approved off-site educational setting if a pupil is going to be absent or late. See CFS procedure for safeguarding of AEPs 2022 for more details about the way we discharge this responsibility.

Where a pupil has an on-going physical or mental health condition, it may be appropriate for them to attend **a hospital school** for a period of time. During that time the pupil will remain on roll at CFS and we retain responsibility for their education. This will involve frequent liaison with the educational and medical professionals involved in the child's care. The child will not be removed from roll while attending hospital school unless this is agreed with parents and medical professionals.

7.4.3.4 **A time-limited reduced attendance arrangement**

See Section 5.5 above for detailed information.

7.4.3.5 **A flexi-schooling arrangement**

See section 5.4 for more information about flexi-schooling.

7.4.4 **Facilitate support**

7.4.4.1 **Referral for statutory assessment for an Education & Health Care plan**

If this has not already been done and despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEND of the child or young person, the child has not made expected progress, the school or parents should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

7.4.4.2 **SEND pupils without an EHCP**

Where a pupil has SEND that are not covered by an EHC plan, we will use **reasonable endeavours to make adjustments** to enable the pupil to stay on roll. However, as an independent school there are limits to what can be viewed as 'reasonable' in the eyes of the law (2010 Equality Act), including the financial capacity of the school to provide additional educational support. The school will advise parents if we determine that we are no longer able to meet their child's special educational needs. Parents may then choose home education or an alternative school.

7.4.4.3 **Family Help referral**

Another option to be considered is a Family Help referral to draw together information from various individuals, institutions and agencies who are involved with the child and their family. This may lead to a TAF (Team Around the Family) meeting between the child/young person, their family and the group of practitioners working with them. As a school, we value and support this collaborative approach as the most likely to result in positive outcomes for the child.

7.4.4.4 **Referral to specialist outside agencies**

If this has not already been done, the Head of School in liaison with the school Mental Health/Emotional Wellbeing Lead may recommend to parents that a referral be made to a suitable psychotherapist, counsellor, CAMHS, YPAS, or other appropriate organisation to address any emotional or mental health issues. If parents agree that this is an appropriate way forward, the Mental Health lead will make the referral and support parents through the process. Where the child is also on the ALPS register, this will be done in collaboration with the SENDCo, who has responsibility for the mental health and emotional wellbeing needs of children with SEND. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be involved as required to ensure that the child's safeguarding needs are met.

7.4.4.5 **Support for a planned move to elective home education** if the parent(s) are confident they have the capacity to provide a suitable, full-time education at home. (See Section 5.6 above for more information.) We will not seek to persuade parents to educate their child at home as a means of **avoiding exclusion**.

7.4.5 **Formalise support**

If the school determines that despite trying different strategies, the child's poor attendance means that they are not receiving a suitable full-time education, the school will, in the first instance, refer the situation to **Liverpool Attendance Head: Alison Cain: 0151 233 3938.** The local authority will then seek to work with the family to ensure that suitable educational provision is in place for the child. If the school considers the child with poor attendance or

who is truanting to be at risk, then contact will be made with MASH or - for urgent cases - the Police.

Any decision to remove a pupil from roll will be taken strictly in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and, where required, in consultation with the relevant Local Authority Fees will be payable up to the point of removal from roll. As a school we will not be involved in enforcement action, which rests with the local authority, but we will cooperate by providing attendance records and relevant information where lawfully requested

7.5 **Communicating with parents**

7.5.1 We send home **attendance certificates** for each child for each term of the school year with a covering letter explaining the importance of attendance and punctuality and the significance of the 95% absence threshold.

7.5.2 When responding to a situation where a child is failing to thrive in school and/or attendance is poor, the school will make clear to parents the **thresholds** that would indicate a move from one strategy to another, the **criteria** we will use to judge whether a strategy has been successful and the **alternative pathways** that are open to the family. The school will also indicate the relevant time scales for strategies to be tried and evaluated, so that parents are prepared for any movement to the next stage.

7.6 **Punctuality**

Persistent lateness can disrupt learning and may indicate underlying barriers to attendance. The school will address punctuality concerns proportionately and, where appropriate, in collaboration with the SENDCo and pastoral team.

7.6.1 It is the responsibility of the form tutor to note **patterns of lateness** by scrutinising the register. Where they notice a pattern of lateness in excess of two lates a week, they should have an **initial conversation** with the young person (in the case of secondary aged pupils) or the parents (in the case of primary aged pupils) to ascertain the reason for the persistent lateness. As with attendance, the school aims to work collaboratively with parents and older pupils to remove barriers to punctuality. These could involve looking at alternative means of transport to school or earlier public transport options.

7.6.2 If the issue does not resolve by the next week and the persistent lateness continues, the matter should be **referred to the Head of School**, who will instigate a meeting with parents (of either secondary or primary children). The importance of punctuality will be explained as practical arrangements for the day are often communicated during registration and important parts of our wider curriculum are delivered during assemblies. Parents will be reminded that part of the Parent - School agreement is getting their children to school on time. As with attendance, the school will seek to develop constructive solutions in collaboration with parents.

7.6.3 If the root cause of the problem is a failure on the part of a secondary aged pupil to behave responsibly in terms of bedtimes and getting up and ready in the morning, the Head of School may impose an **after-school detention.** These will be noted on the pupil's disciplinary record and may form part of any report that would be seen by future schools or employers.

7.7 **Persistent absence and severe absence**

7.7.1 *Principles:* The school recognises that persistent absence is an indicator of educational risk and that severe absence may indicate safeguarding concerns. Early intervention and partnership with parents are essential.

7.7.2 *Graduated response*

Stage 1 – Early concern (95%–92%) Monitoring by Form Tutor and informal parental contact.

Stage 2 – At risk of persistent absence (91.9%–90%)
Formal communication with parents and initiation of an Attendance Support Plan.

Stage 3 – Persistent absence (below 90%)
Escalation to senior leadership, formal parental meeting, and continued monitoring.
Notification to the local authority attendance service in line with local protocols.

Stage 4 – Severe absence (below 50%)
Immediate involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
Notification to the local authority without delay.
Consideration of referral to Children Missing Education, Family Help, or Children's Social Care.
Implementation of an intensive multi-agency support plan.

7.7.3 Authorised absence within persistent absence

Persistent absence will be addressed regardless of whether absence is authorised or unauthorised. The school must be satisfied that the pupil is receiving a suitable full-time education.

7.7.4 Non-engagement

Where parents do not engage, the school will escalate concerns through safeguarding procedures and involve the local authority as appropriate.

8. Removal from the school roll

8.1 All schools (including independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (see below).

1 8(1) (a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.

2 8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that s/he has been registered as a pupil at another school.

3 8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that s/he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which s/he is registered has given consent to the deletion.

4 8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that s/he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.

5 8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that s/he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which s/he is registered.

6 8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that:

i the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;

ii the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

iii The proprietor and the local authority have failed, after **jointly** making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.

We note that schools cannot unilaterally make the decision at point (iii). This MUST be done in consultation with the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team.

7 8(1)(g) - that s/he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither s/he nor her/his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

8 8(1)(h) - that s/he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and:

i at no time was her/his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);

ii the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

iii The proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after **jointly** making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.

We note that schools cannot unilaterally make the decision at point (iii). This MUST be done in consultation with the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team.

9 8(1)(i) - that s/he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.

10 8(1) (j) - that the pupil has died.

11 8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and:

i the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or:

ii The pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.

12 8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that s/he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.

We note that this clause enables independent schools to require a pupil to be removed from roll for a range of reasons, including failure to pay fees.

13 8(1)(m) - that s/he has been permanently excluded from the school.

14 8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that s/he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.

15 8(1)(o) where:

i the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy;

ii charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and

iii those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

8.2 The school's notification to the local authority must include:

- the full name of the pupil
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides
- at least one telephone number of the parent
- the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and
- the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Annex A).

9. Safeguarding

Information in this policy is intended to support normal school safeguarding practice. Any safeguarding concerns about a child should be referred to the Safeguarding Lead immediately.

10. Useful Contacts

Liverpool

Attendance Officer
Liverpool City Council Attendance Service (Alison Cain)
attendance@liverpool.gov.uk 0151 233 3916

Elective Home Education Officer Laraine.Spiteri@si.liverpool.gov.uk
Telephone: 0151 233 3916 Mobile 07540 642728
General Enquiries EHE@liverpool.gov.uk
Children Missing Education: CME@liverpool.gov.uk
Pupil Tracking Officer: Joanne McKenna 0151 225 0572 mobile: 07739 236 212
Caseworker: John Sorensen mobile: 07989 251 769

Knowsley

Knowsley Council Education Welfare Service
educationwelfare@knowsley.gov.uk
SAS.Duty@knowsley.gov.uk . 0151 443 5177

St Helens

St Helens Attendance Service
attendance@sthelens.gov.uk 01744 676789

Wirral

Wirral Attendance Service mikeclarke@wirral.gov.uk
schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk 0151 666 3433.

Further reading:

Liverpool City Council Elective Home Education Policy Dec 2020

elective-home-education-policy.pdf

APPENDIX A Definitions of different types of education

Elective Home Education
This term is used to describe a parent's decision to provide education for their children, who are of compulsory school age, at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to 'home tuition' and 'education other than at school' provided by the local authority (LA). Children educated at home are not registered (on roll) at any school or similar educational institution.

Flexi-Schooling
This term is used to describe an arrangement made between parents and the school whereby a child attends school for part of the week, and learns at home for the rest of the time.

Temporary part-time attendance arrangements
This term is used for a temporary, short-term arrangement for a pupil to attend on a part-time basis.

Distance learning
This is when a child is educated remotely for all or most of the time although his/her peers are attending school. This may be because the child has moved geographically without finding alternative local educational provision or because the child has health issues that make attendance at school medically unwise - for example they are clinically extremely vulnerable to a viral pathogen. The remote education could be conducted via online learning platforms where pupils receive instruction, submit work and receive feedback, or by the provision of educational materials to be used at home with parents with some teacher feedback and target setting.
For how we deal with situations where there is a government mandate to educate most pupils remotely, eg during a pandemic, see our policy on Remote Education.

APPENDIX B FIRST DAY CONTACT PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The school has a safeguarding responsibility to know where pupils are during school hours. Prompt follow-up of unexplained absence is therefore required. This procedure sets out the staged process for first-day contact and escalation where a pupil does not arrive at school and no prior notification has been received. Administrative staff do not make safeguarding risk assessments. Escalation decisions are made by senior leaders.

2. Initial first-day contact

2.1 If a pupil is absent and no prior notification has been received, the Office Manager or designated administrative staff will: Attempt to contact the primary parent contact by telephone as soon as reasonably practicable and normally by 10:00am. Make at least two attempts to reach the primary contact number. Send a text message or email requesting urgent contact where appropriate. Record all contact attempts.

2.2 If there is no response from the primary contact, all additional emergency contact numbers held on file will be telephoned.

2.3 Voicemail messages will be left where possible.

2.4. During this stage, the absence is treated as an unexplained absence and not as a safeguarding incident.

3. Automatic escalation to DAL/Head Teacher

3.1 If no contact has been made with any parent or emergency contact by 11:00am on the first day of absence, the matter will be escalated to the DAL/Head Teacher (Attendance Lead).

3.2 This escalation is automatic and does not depend on administrative staff forming a view about risk.

3.3 Administrative staff will provide the DAL / Head Teacher with: A summary of contact attempts made Any relevant information known to the school office.

4. DAL/Head Teacher review

4.1 Upon escalation, the DAL/ Head Teacher will: Review the pupil's attendance history Consider any known vulnerabilities or safeguarding indicators Consider whether the absence represents an unusual change in pattern; Decide whether continued contact attempts are appropriate; and Determine whether referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead is required.

4.2 Normal school operations will continue unless the DAL/ Head Teacher determines that the circumstances warrant immediate safeguarding action.

5. Referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

5.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be consulted without delay where: The pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan; There are known safeguarding or welfare concerns; The pupil is identified as vulnerable The absence represents a significant and unexplained change in pattern or The Head Teacher considers that the pupil's safety may be at risk.

5.2 The DSL will determine whether further action is required, which may include: Continued attempts to contact parents A welfare visit; Referral to Children's Social Care Referral to the Police in urgent circumstances.

6. Proportionality

6.1 Not every unexplained absence constitutes a safeguarding incident.

6.2 An inability to contact parents within a short time frame does not, of itself, constitute evidence that a pupil is at risk of harm.

6.3 The level of response will be proportionate to: The pupil's known risk profile Any safeguarding history; Contextual information available to the school.

6.4 Safeguarding decisions are made on the basis of professional judgement and risk assessment by senior leaders.

7. Recording

7.1 All contact attempts, decisions and actions taken will be recorded.
7.2 Where escalation is not considered necessary, the rationale will be documented.