



Mousehold Infant School and Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Signed:  on behalf of Trustees

Date: 25.6.2021

Mousehold Infant and Nursery School Attendance Policy

Legal Framework
Definitions
Roles and Responsibilities
Categorising Absence and Attendance
Leave of absence
Medical appointments and absence due to illness
Pupil absence for the purposes of Religious Observance
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils
Unauthorised absence
Attendance Protocols
Register keeping and recording
Late arrival at school
Expected absence procedure for parents
Attendance procedure and reward system
Support Systems
Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions
Reduced timetables
Deletions from the Register
Related Policies
Statutory Framework
Appendices
Appendix 1: Department for Education Attendance and Absence Codes
Appendix 2: Fixed penalty notice whole school warning letter
Appendix 3: Example leave of absence request form
Addendum: Arrangements for Attendance during Covid-19
Appendix 4: Version Control Log

1. Introduction/Aim

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.

1.2 At Mousehold Infant and Nursery School (MIANS) we believe that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. We value the attendance of all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

1.3 Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils and Trustees to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences;
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

1.4 We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.2 The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- and, act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

3. Definitions

3.1 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or
- Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)¹

3.2 For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Regular attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

An “authorised absence” as:

- 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 or unavoidable cause

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- 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
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

¹ See [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), and the Addendum to this policy which outline the changes made to regulations governing school attendance registers in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19), which come into effect from 24 August 2020 for use throughout the 2020 to 2021 school year.

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

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

“Parent” as

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

4. Roles and Responsibilities

At MIANS, we believe that improved school attendance is a responsibility shared by Trustees, school staff, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Name	Contact details
Attendance Lead	Ian Tolson	deputymousehold@istnorfolk.co.uk 01603 427012
Named Trustee for Attendance	Sue Brockhouse	c/o office@istnorfolk.co.uk 01603 516164

The Trustees of Inclusive Schools Trust will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents;
- Annually review and monitor the implementation of this policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- Identify a member of the Trust Board to lead on attendance matters;
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with;
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year.
- Monitor the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Trust Board meetings and Progress Boards;
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time;
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager in each school to lead on attendance;
- Ensure that each school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The Senior Management Team at MIANS will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;

- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers;
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues;
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with;
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource;
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time;
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Trustees and on a half-termly basis to the lead Trustee for attendance; this is done through School on a Page at Progress Board Meetings;
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented;
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions;
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families;
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated;
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at MIANS will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents;
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation;
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner;
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions;
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The Parent Support Advisor (PSA) at MIANS will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The Senior Leadership team and the PSA at MIANS will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data;

- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant staff members;
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance;
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
- Managing individual pupil casework files;
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of a Family Support Plan (FSP) and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract;
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from school without contact from parents;
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes;
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

MIANS requests that parents will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school;
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment;
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible;
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours;
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their school work or home and family life;
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance;
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home;
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance;
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

5. Categorising Absence and Attendance

5.1 The table at Appendix 1 of this policy outlines the national codes which enable all schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and comply with the regulations and Department for Education advice². When marking our registers, we will apply these codes to accurately record and report attendance.

5.2 Leave of Absence

² ['School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities', DfE \(August 2020\)](#)

5.2.1 Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances).

All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

5.2.2 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances.' Leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This may only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher who **will** respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

5.2.3 Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher and it will be marked as unauthorised. We will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

5.2.4 A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken
- A longer period is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.

5.2.5 When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

5.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

5.3.1 Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must follow the individual school signing-out procedure. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

5.3.2 In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of

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

5.3.3 Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.³

5.3.4 Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and Norfolk County Council policies via the [Medical Needs Service](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

5.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

MIANS acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

5.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. There are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. Schools and Local Authorities can make a big difference to their life chances through:

- Clear high expectation of all pupils, regardless of their background
- An inclusive culture that welcomes all communities
- Strong engagement from parents

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In

³ This is in accordance with the NSCP [Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited](#)

these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to MIANS (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. MIANS will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended MIANS in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at MIANS will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

5.6 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

6. Attendance Protocols

6.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The school register is taken electronically at 9am and the appropriate codes are recorded. If the child is not in school when the register is taken, the office will record their mark, including the number of minutes that they are late or their reason for absence. All attendance information is stored on Pupil Asset.

6.2 Late Arrival at School

At MIANS, all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at **8.50am**. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at **9.00am**. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before **9.30am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at **9.30am**. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after

the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

6.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at **9.30am** and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission

In certain circumstances the School may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance and advice
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through [Children Missing Education procedures](#)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

6.4 Attendance Procedure and Reward System

- The top attending classes in KS1 and EYFS at the end of each week are presented with an Attendance Certificate in the whole school assembly, which are displayed prominently on or around the classroom door they also get to have Top cat (EYFS) or Top Dog (KS1) in their class for the following week. This certificate is for both attendance and punctuality. This is also reported in the school newsletter.
- The school presents pupils with 100% attendance certificates at the end of each half-term and they are put in a prize draw for attendance, where two prizes are

handed out in the whole school assembly.

- Pupils who have 100% attendance across the year receive a prize for attendance and punctuality in the end of year whole school assembly.
- The individual attendance herringbone reports are discussed at the teacher/parent meeting at the end of each term. These show the attendance for that term and any late arrivals and these are discussed and the importance of good attendance re-iterated.
- An individual herringbone attendance report is sent parents at the end of the year with the pupils' school report. These show the attendance percentage for the year.
- 100% - 97% - Great attendance. The school target for 2020-2021 is 97%.
- 96% - 90% - Parents could receive a letter making you aware of the child's attendance. We may ask you for medical evidence to support any illness absences
- Under 90% - All pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% will be contacted by the Deputy Head teacher and where needed will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. We will ask for medical evidence to support any illness absences.

At MIANS we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

6.5 Support Systems

At MIANS we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Parent Support advisor
- Supporting emotional literacy with weekly Benjamin Foundation sessions
- Use of Mental Health Champions
- Friendship groups
- 1 to 1 mentoring
- Reward systems
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Attendance meetings
- Parenting contracts
- Liaising with the school attendance officer
- Engaging the support of other agencies

In order to plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance.

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

6.6 Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

6.7 Reduced timetables

All schools, academies and free schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement one for a time-limited period to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used a part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil. In line with Norfolk County Council [guidance](#), we will notify the Attendance Team of all reduced timetable as soon as a plan has been agreed.

7. Deletions from the Register

7.1 At MIANS we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At MIANS we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

7.2 We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

7.3 If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above. We will also inform Norfolk County Council's Services to Home Educators Team by completing a referral form.

NB: Please delete or amend as applicable - the exception to the above is if the child is on the roll of a special school. In this case, permission for parents to home educate must be given by the local authority.

7.4 MIANS will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

8. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding incorporating child protection
- medical
- admissions
- anti-bullying (part of our Behaviour Policy)
- special educational needs policy and information report.
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards

9. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DfE (August 2020)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE (September 2020)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE (2018)

10. Appendices

10.1 The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

The template letters sent to parents who need support with attendance are attached in Appendix 4

Appendix 1: Department for Education Attendance & Absence Codes

Absence and Attendance Codes

Present at School

/\ Registration code /\ : present in school / = am \ =pm

- L** Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity

- B** Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
- D** Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.
- J** At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment. This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.
- P** Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
- V** Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.
- W** Work experience. Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school

- C** Leave of absence authorised by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
- E** Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.
- H** Holiday authorised by the school. Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.
- I** Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
- M** Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- R** Religious observance. Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
- S** Study leave. Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.
- T** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

- G** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the

child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

- N** Reason for absence not yet provided. Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).
- O** Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
- U** Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

- X** Not required to be in school. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.
- For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this policy addendum for further information, including advice on the application of code X in circumstances related to coronavirus.
- Y** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
 - The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
 - A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because the pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).
- Z** Pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- #** Planned whole or partial school closure. This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Appendix 2: Fixed penalty notice whole school warning letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

Date:

Attendance at school and legal intervention

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Mousehold Infant and Nursery School our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, '*Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. **The application must be made in advance** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. **A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion***'.

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the Headteacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the Headteacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last 6 school weeks.

The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at Mousehold Infant and Nursery School who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the notice. The fixed penalty notice is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,
Headteacher

Appendix 3: Example leave of absence request form



Appendix 3: Example leave of absence request form

Name of School: _____

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Please note: taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress

Full name of child(ren) _____

Address _____

Leave requested from _____ to _____

Total number of school days _____

Reason for application: _____

I/we have read the information on the reverse of this application and would like to formally request the leave of absence as shown.

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) _____

Date: _____

The Headteacher will consider your request for leave of absence following government guidelines and the following points

1. The child's previous attendance history
2. The child's stage of education.
3. The time of year (SATS or exams).
4. Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave from their employer.

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been agreed/not agreed.

Signature of Headteacher _____

Please note: Retain the original signed and completed forms in school records and ensure a copy is returned to the parent/carers of the student to confirm authorisation.

Leave of absence during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the schools Headteacher. Schools should not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT's.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence; however some schools may choose to do this.

The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making a booking. Your child's school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the leave is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.

Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are falling in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 21 days, this increases to £120 payable per parent/carer per child within 28 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

*(Academic year =school year from September to July)

11. Addendum: Arrangements for Attendance during Covid-19

11.1 As set out in the full opening guidance, the DfE expects schools to work with families and the Local Authority to secure regular school attendance for all pupils in September 2020 in line with statutory requirements.

From the start of the Autumn Term 2020 pupils' attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

11.2 At MIANS we recognise and are mindful of the impact that Covid-19 will have had on our pupils and their wider family and community. We will therefore be taking a balanced approach when dealing with attendance matters and will work closely with the Local Authority's Attendance Team.

11.3 By working closely with the LA's Attendance Team, we will try to ensure a consistent approach to managing attendance concerns. We are committed to supporting our pupils and their families to secure a positive return to regular attendance for all our pupils. We believe that the key to facilitating good school attendance is:

- clear communication with our families
- where concerns arise, early intervention and targeted support plans based on individual pupil needs
- use of appropriate statutory tools to ensure school attendance where appropriate

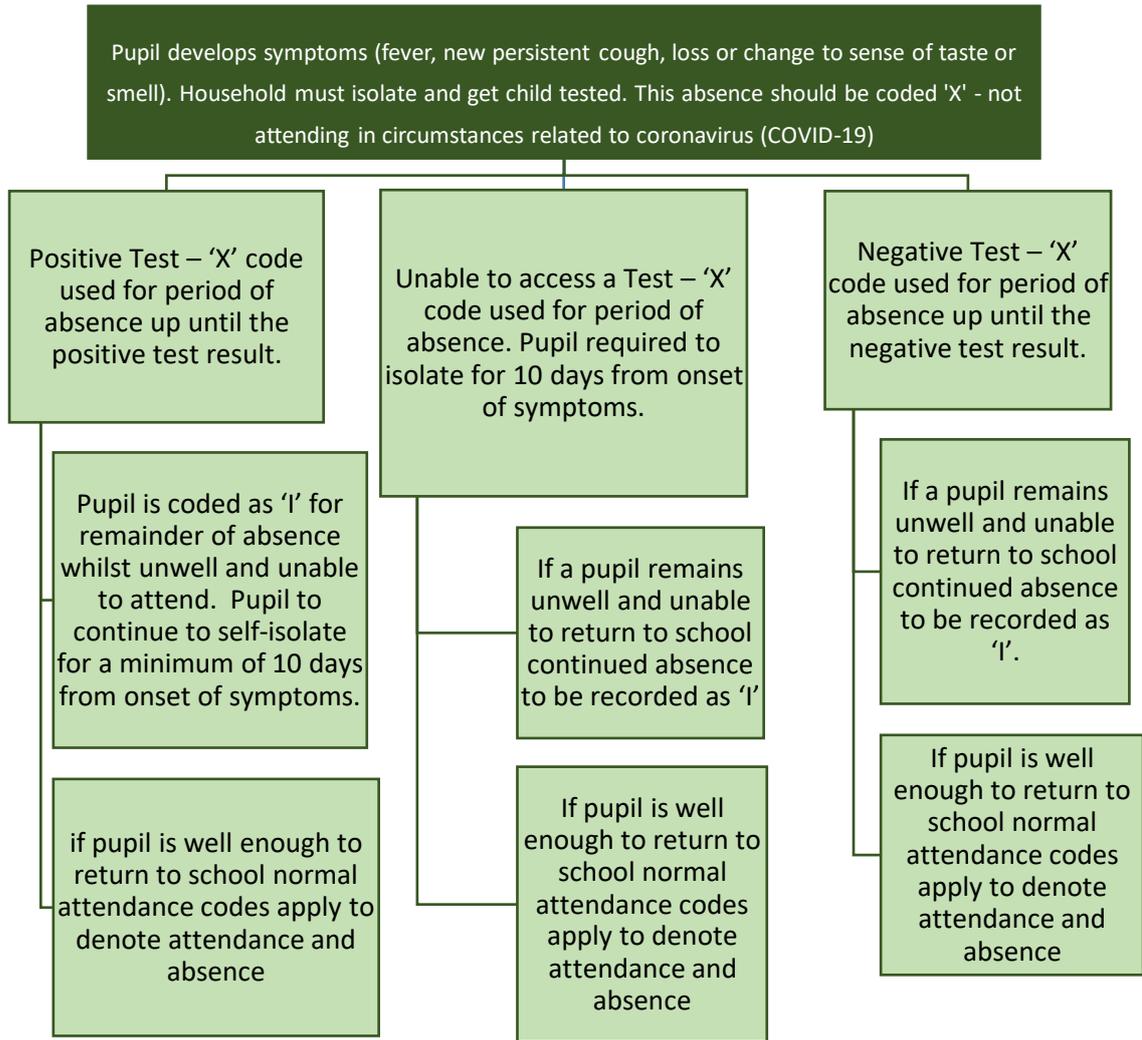
11.4 Recording absence related to Covid-19 during academic year 2020 to 2021

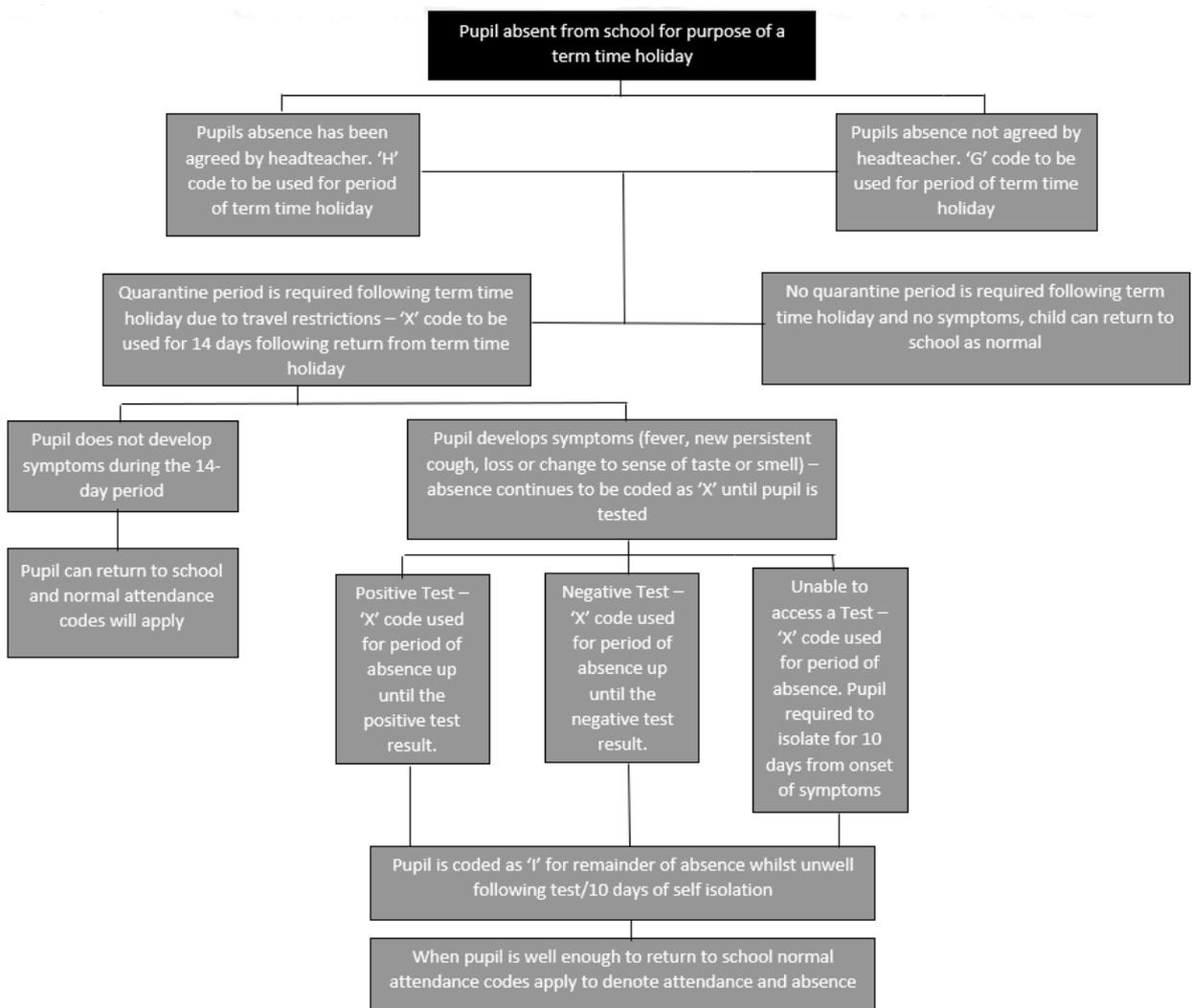
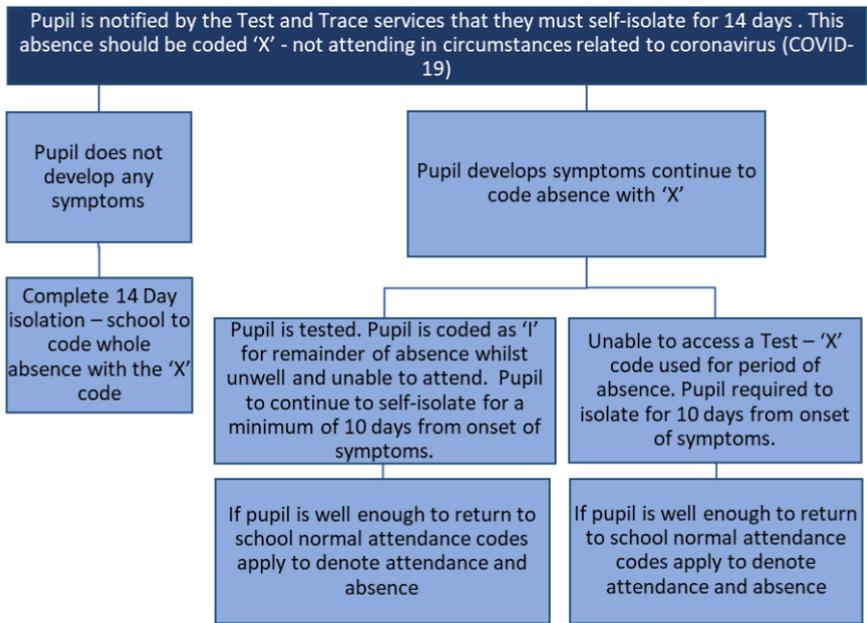
Although school attendance is compulsory from the start of the autumn term, there will be some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to Covid-19. Parents will not be penalised for a child's absence that is related to Covid-19.

The table below shows the national codes which all schools are required to use to record and monitor attendance and absence when absence is related to Covid-19:

Code	Reason
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• absence accrued when pupils are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (Covid-19)• If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register• Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

I Absence accrued following a positive test should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.





11.5 Self-Isolation

We ask that all parents and carers follow the Government guidance '[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' if their child and/or someone in the household develops symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. In all cases of self-isolation, parents must inform the school immediately about the outcome of a test. In line with Department for Education guidance, we will not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

11.6 Continuity of learning

MIANS have provision in place to ensure children can still learn remotely if isolating. Full details are outlined in the 'Remote and Home Learning' Policy available on the school's website.

Appendix 4: Version Control Log

Date of Change	All	
May 2021	All	New policy created