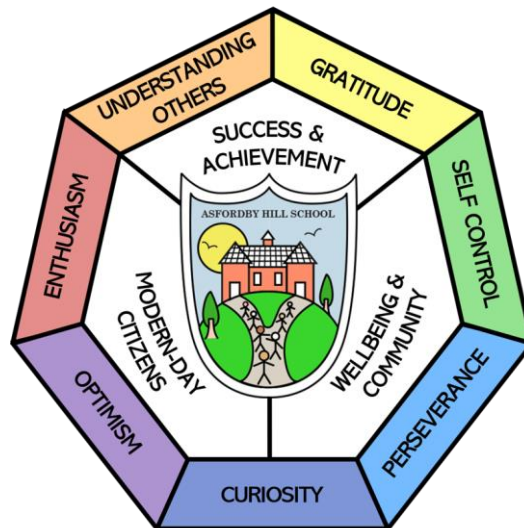


The Asfordby Hill School



Individual Value; Valuing Individuals

Pupil Attendance POLICY

This Policy Links With: Equal opportunities policy Mental Health Policy Safeguarding and Child protection	
Recommended:	
Statutory:	Y
Date Reviewed:	October 2023
Date of Next Review:	Spring 2025
Committee Responsible for Review:	QEHS
Date the QEHS agreed	21.11.23

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a **minimum** of 97.5% per child and overall as a school
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing/Emailing on the first morning of all absences, by 9:20am, with the reason and saying when the child will return
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls on the first day of absence and letters where required
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, web-site and school brochure
- Publish our attendance rate regularly to allow parents to see how near our 97.5% minimum target we are
- Publish your child's attendance rate on their annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance, for example; by holding meetings / sending letters with current attendance rates
- If we continue to have concerns, make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example if a child is ill, (whether that be physically or mentally), close family bereavement or a religious observance.

As an academy, we recognise EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) as 'a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to

emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school (West Sussex Educational Psychology Service, 2014; pg. 4). We aim to work closely with the family and the child in order for them to attend school regularly. (See Appendix 1 for the support we offer).

We realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically. We ask parents to complete the 'Exceptional Leave Form' to request absence during term time. These requests will be considered by the Head Teacher on an individual basis, in line with the policy.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
 - Going shopping or for a hair cut
 - Going for a family day out
 - Because it is your child's birthday
 - Sleeping in after a late night
 - Unapproved Holidays
 - Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- **The Education Welfare Officer may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has a number of unauthorised absences.**

Punctuality

Morning registration begins at 8:45 am. It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day. In many classes, practice of previously learnt skills is often set. If your child misses these vital sessions, their work their learning is seriously affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and are often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents. Arrival after the close of registration (9:00am) will be marked as unauthorised absence or as a 'U' for arrival after the register has closed.

We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time. Please let us know if you are going to be unavoidably detained.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the board of governors.

It is our policy:

- That the school does not allow leave of absence for holidays in term time, unless under exceptional circumstances. As stated above, this permission will be given by the Head Teacher in accordance with the school policy.
- If the school does not agree holiday leave, and you take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A *good* understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to High School, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known
- Let us know when you move
- Provide us with contact details for your child's new school so that important records may be transferred

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The Educational Welfare Officer aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

Register Codes

- / \ present in school
- B educated off site
- C other authorised circumstances (eg religious or high level sporting events)
- D dual registration
- E excluded
- G family holiday (not agreed)
- H family holiday (agreed)
- I illness
- L late (before register closes)
- M medical/dental appointments
- O unauthorised absence
- U late (after register closes)

Appendix 1

Asfordby Hill Primary School **Emotional School Based Avoidance (ESBA)**

What is ESBA?

A number of terms have been used to refer to students who do experience anxiety relating to school including: anxiety related non-attendance, school refusal behaviour (Kearney & Silverman, 2014). West Sussex Educational Psychology Service introduced the term 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance' referencing:

'A broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school (West Sussex Educational Psychology Service, 2014; pg. 4)

Outcomes for pupils with low attendance Children and young people who are absent from school for significant period of their education are considered disadvantaged; with of those who miss more than 50% of their education, only 3% achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE (DfE, 2011). There is also an increased risk of this group not being in education, training or employment in the long term (Attwood & Croll, 2015).

Laws and Guidance

Schools and on roll settings have a legal duty to safeguard children under the [keeping children safe in education](#) guidance. This safeguarding duty includes 'preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical development.'

There is also the [mental health and behaviour in school](#) guidance. This guidance states that the on-roll school setting should have a whole school approach to creating a safe calm environment where mental health problems are less likely to develop, recognise emerging issues as early as possible and help pupils to access support at an early opportunity.

They also have a legal duty under the [Children's and families Act 2014](#), to work with you to identify and support any special needs that your child may have, including SEHM needs.

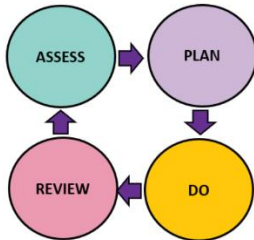
This means that if a child is struggling to attend school because of their SEND/SEMH needs, their school should be working to offer appropriate support or to further investigate your child's SEND if not enough is known about it.

They can also take advice from and make referrals to other external support service and teams. Asfordby Hill Primary School closely aligns with the recently issued (September 2022) DfE Guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) including the following key elements:

- Ensuring relevant staff have adequate training on attendance
- Early intervention
- Building strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them

- Multi-disciplinary support for families
- Work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

What do we do at Asfordby Hill?



As part of the graduated approach, found in the SEND Code of Practice, guidance, Asfordby Hill follows the assess, plan, do and review approach:

- **Assess**

Seek to gather information on the EBSA signs and risk factors. To look for potential reasons behind the avoidance behaviour, what the avoidance might be helping the young person.

Kearney and Silverman (1990), identified that school avoidance may serve functions such as avoiding uncomfortable feelings, avoiding stress, demands or pressures, to reduce separation anxiety from a care giver and/or to pursue reinforcement behaviours out of school.

- **Plan**

Bring together all the information gathered and use it to inform an action/ support plan.

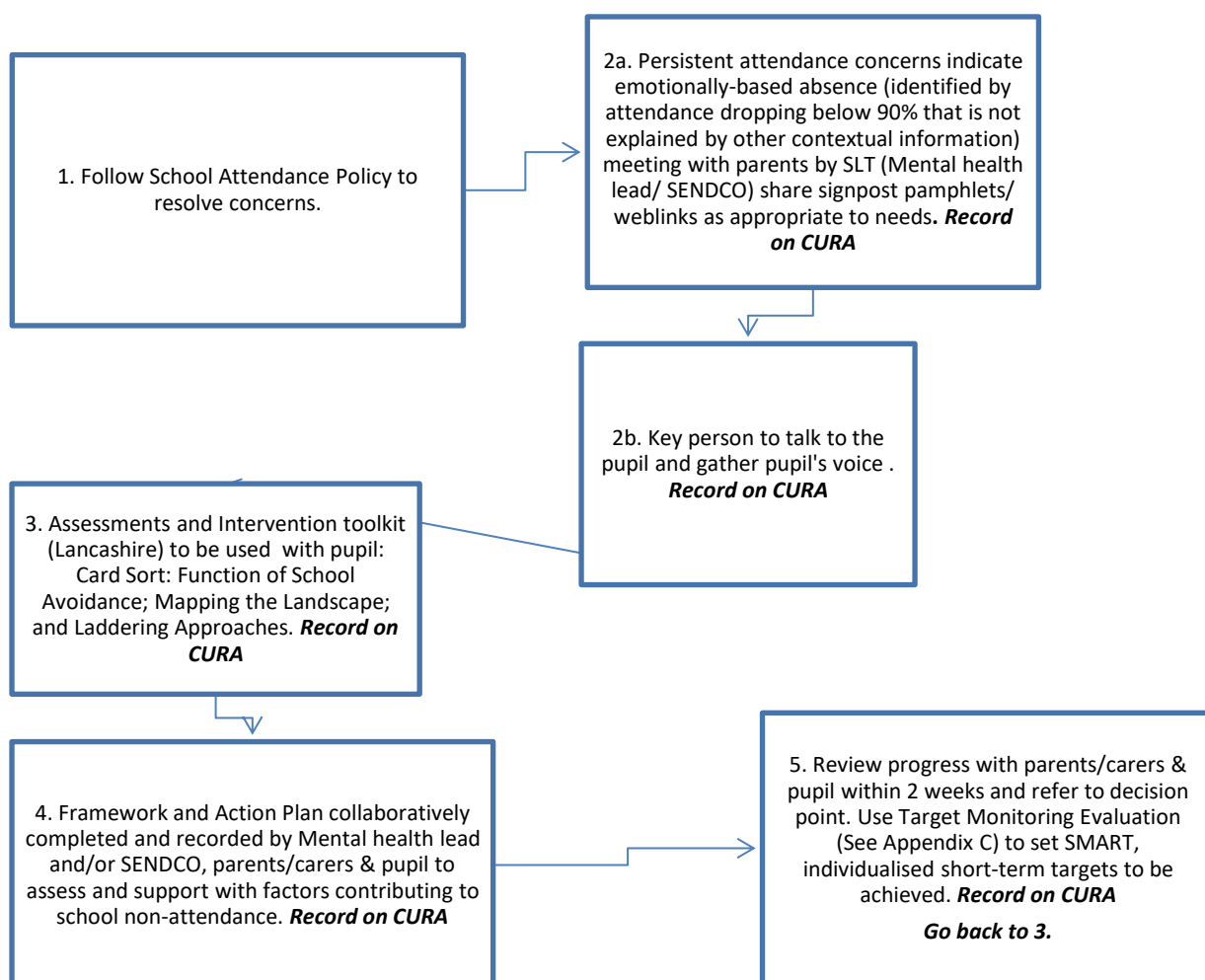
- **Do**

Put the agreed strategies and interventions in place.

- **Review**

Use assessment measures to monitor the progress interventions and adjust the plan for next steps.

Asfordby Hill Flow Chart for EBSA:



Planned Return

When developing an Action Plan to support the reintegration of a pupil to the educational setting, depending on the level of anxiety the pupil is displaying and the length of time they have been out of school, the following possibilities should be considered:

1. a return to school on a full timetable
2. implementation of a part time timetable with a gradual return
3. consultation with CAMHS and other agencies which may, if necessary, lead to a referral for out of school tuition as part of a reintegration plan.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education and parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. However, the DfE guidance on Working together to improve school attendance (2022) states that: in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

The advice is clear that a part-time timetable should not be considered a long-term solution but rather as part of a reintegration package of support. Any return to school plan should recognise that EBSA is unique to each pupil. There also needs to be recognition by those involved with the pupil that sometimes there is no ‘quick fix’ to EBSA. A flexible approach that incorporates the views of all involved and most importantly, the views of the young person, is required. Everyone, school staff and parents, need to share the expectation that the plan, once agreed, will work. For some young people, who are working on a gradual reintegration package, it can be helpful to put together a step-by-step plan that gradually, over time, exposes them to the situations that are anxiety provoking. This gives the individual some control over the plan and hopefully helps them to feel more confident as each step is achieved.

Signposts

- NHS- [Working with EBSA Video](#)
- Young minds- [information and advice about school refusal](#).
- IPSEA- [school refusal](#) advice.
- The [Not Fine in School](#) website.
- Mindmate- [website](#)
- Autism Education Trust- [school refusal](#) downloadable resource
- The [DFE school attendance](#) guidance.
- The [Coram legal](#) website.
- The [IPSEA](#) website.
- [School is not my enemy](#). A video made by made by researchers at the University of Ghent in Belgium, talking to young people who had struggled to attend.
- [Teach me](#). An animation created by a student at Met Film School.

Appendix C

Appendix C Target Monitoring Evaluation (TME) Guidance

1. This evaluation form (on the next page) is to be completed by school staff, ideally in collaboration with parents/ carers and/or the pupil. A date for review should be agreed within a 2-week period.
2. Up to 3 targets can be agreed. These should link directly to desired outcomes and intervention plans. These should be done in collaboration by the school with the pupil and family involved. These should therefore relate to goals that have been identified as important by families and young people, rather than determined by professionals. It is helpful for schools to adopt a collaborative approach to this and ask, ‘What needs to change?’ The initial target-setting activity and the review should be completed as part of the action planning process by a person who knows the family and young person well. It should be used in tandem with the ATTEND framework and resources provided in the Lancashire EBSA Guidance (Strategy & Toolkit).
3. The descriptor of the baseline level should be defined first. This should be a brief but detailed behavioural description of where the child is in relation to their achievement of this goal. The baseline descriptor is a rated on a scale from 1-10 to reflect the current level of the child, whereby the number is circled and marked with a B. This will usually be at the lower end of the scale (around 2 or 3).
4. Expected progress in each of the targets by the agreed review date is then described. The level of attainment expected by the review date (at the end of the intervention) is defined as a target and written in the space above the shaded box. The consultee is asked to allocate a rating in the

scale to indicate the expected level. This should be circled and marked with an E. This will be higher than the baseline, usually between 6 & 8, or lower if a smaller increase is expected.

5. At the review, a score is allocated for the level achieved, circled and marked with an A. A score above the expected level than (E) indicates more progress than expected, below this, less than expected.

Example: Target 1: John will attend school for one preferred lesson per day (i.e. PE, computers, construction) Descriptor of baseline level: John is not currently attending school but speaks to a member of staff on the phone once per week Baseline Level (prior to intervention): 2 Rating 1 2 3 4 5 6 E 7 8 9 10 Expected level (following intervention): 6-7 Descriptor of expected level: John is coming into school and meeting with his key adult for an hour per day (9-10am).

Child/Young Person:	Date target set:
People present:	Date of review:
EP:	School:

Target 1:

Rating:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Descriptor of baseline level:	
Descriptor of expected level:	
Descriptor of level achieved:	

Appendix D:

Card Sort: Function of School Avoidance This card sort activity, based on a School Refusal Assessment Scale developed by Kearney (2002), has been devised by Sheffield EPS as a tool to support staff to develop a greater understanding of a young person's school avoidance. The 24 statements are colour-coded by the function of behaviour identified by Kearney and Silverman (1990). By asking a pupil to sort the statements or by talking about each one, mentors may find that using the cards can support an understanding of the function of the school avoidance behaviour. Cards saved in EBSA on staff shared – SEN folder.

Appendix E: Social Environment Ladder – ladders saved in EBSA on staff shared – SEN folder.