

CEDARS

Short Stay School

Policy Title	Attendance
Review Committee	Pupil Standards & Support
Date Approved	November 2024
Review Date	November 2025
Responsible for Day to Day Management	Headteacher

CEDARS

Attendance Policy Statement

Aims

To ensure all students attend school and are active learners that supports their academic achievement as well as their personal, social and behavioural development.

Rationale

For all CEDARS students to succeed with their academic, behavioral, social and pastoral progress, there must be a rigorous attendance strategy to promote the importance of high attendance and improve the individual and schools' attendance to meet government targets. Regular attendance enables teaching staff to monitor students' welfare, thus contributing to the safeguarding agenda.

This policy aims to explain how CEDARS aims to promote good attendance, and to outline practices and procedures that have been found to support our goal.

1. **Monitoring, Recording and Assessing Attendance:** Under the schools duty of care it is everyone's responsibility that comes into contact with students to ensure accurate registers are taken. There needs to be one person within CEDARS staff with an overview of all attendance issues and to act upon information shared by the whole school team. This member of staff needs to ensure information is shared with the appropriate staff and agencies and oversee all strategies used to support students and parents alike. The school needs to implement appropriate strategies including liaise with appropriate staff and agencies, regular communication with parents/guardians, implementing rewards or sanctions and devising plans to increase the child's attendance. The protocol of monitoring the attendance of the individual, cohort and school as a whole needs to ensure that progress is made from the time of admission.

AM register is taken during morning form time. PM registration is taken during period 4.

A fortnightly report will be given to each Home Liaison about the absence marks for their students.

In conjunction with the EWW, there will be a weekly report which will be updated/monitored with unauthorised absences and updated with the appropriate intervention and identify the caseload of students who fall into the persistent absence category.

A weekly attendance bulletin will be issued to staff via the office, which will present the schools headline figure in relation to attendance and where the student sits within our attendance boundaries, taking account of any adjusted timetables the students may have. Half-termly certificates for display are given to students who achieve the best attendance. Rewards will be given in conjunction with certificates. In addition, current intervention strategies will be outlined for all those students who are displaying attendance concerns.

There is a need for an overview of the current attendance situation. Meetings with admin responsible for Alternative Provision (AP) and Attendance will take place regularly and frequently. These meetings will consider and report upon attendance for our base students and AP students. It will also log information from the EWWs and APs and all short and long term plans for attendance and bespoke timetables.

2. **Students' perceptions and experience:** The students need to work within an environment of positive encouragement regarding the value of good attendance. To allow the students an opportunity to see firsthand the possibilities of having a high attendance. This could include experiences such engaging in the pathways program of colleges visiting CEDARS, going to visit colleges, college open days, educational visits or work experience placements.
3. **Support of the National Curriculum:** Students achievement is seriously affected by poor attendance. The National Curriculum is designed to be delivered in a way that offers good continuity and progression in students' learning. The primary aim of CEDARS is to enable students to improve their behaviour to eventually access mainstream schools, colleges or work based trainers; CEDARS endeavor to promote a culture of promoting attendance to better access the learning opportunities made available to them. This will mean developing a curriculum which meets the needs of the students. It will need to be a curriculum which is engaging and bespoke and tailored for each new cohort.

4. **Communication Agreement**: A commitment between parents/carers and CEDARS staff to liaise frequently to optimize support for the individual student. This communication must be shared amongst the entire school staff. It is vital that all staff share in the responsibility to keep communication lines open regarding attendance with parents/carers.

5. **Safe & Well Checks:** as part of the safeguarding agenda, if students are not seen by any professional within a period of ten school days, then a safe and well check is required. This would be in the form of a home visit coordinated by the SLT in conjunction with any outside agencies already engaged. If no answer to our calls and visits, then use of the Education Welfare Workers (EWW) and develop bespoke plans for target students/groups. If these procedures fail, then First Response must be called and PCSOs contacted to make enquiries.

6. **Home Liaison / Mentor:** An identified member of staff for parent/carer and student – to carry out contact with parents/carers and spend individual or “personal time” with their nominated students. It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure a whole school drive in promoting student attendance at school. This can be achieved through
 - Assembly
 - Form time
 - Ensuring a personalised learning provision for all students
 - Daily briefings

7. **I.B.P.:** A pupil’s Individual Behaviour Plan will target the attendance of a pupil where appropriate. Strategies and methods to promote attendance are discussed by staff at Staff Meetings/Pupil Reviews to produce a plan, which addresses issues of individual need. The designated Home Liaison /Mentor monitors the plan with both pupil and parents. Students are encouraged to be a part of the planning and review process.

8. **The role of The Local Authority:** CEDARS has an allocated Education Welfare Worker (EWW) whose job it is to support schools and parents to ensure that every child attends school regularly. EWWs can receive referrals and act upon enquiries from schools, parents, other agencies or members of the public when a student is not attending. Part of their role is to liaise with all other EWWs and LST workers working with CEDARS students across all of the LST districts.

Upon receipt of a referral the EWW will discuss the situation with school first, and will then call a school meeting or make a home visit, to try and establish why the child/young person is not attending school. It is the EWWs job to assist in the resolution of the problem by involving other agencies if necessary, and working with all parties to devise an action plan to support full-time attendance at school or any agreed alternative provision. The EWW will remain involved until this is achieved. They are also the lead on dealing with Penalty Notices for non-school attendance.

9. **Punctuality**

The school day starts at 9.00am. Register closes at 9.15am. Up to this point an L mark will be given which shows as present on the register.

If the student arrives after 9.15am, the mark changes to a U code; this is recorded in the school registers as an unauthorised absence.

Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. “U” means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive. This can lead to fixed penalty notice being issued under the current Staffordshire County Council protocol.

The school will encourage punctuality to school with the same efforts as is shown to attendance. The school will endeavour to ensure students are at school and on time using various strategies laid out in the attendance plan. The school will also make it clear to parents/carers that poor punctuality will also be brought to the attention of the LST team to ensure appropriate support is brought to bear in tackling this issue.

10. **Attendance Intervention**

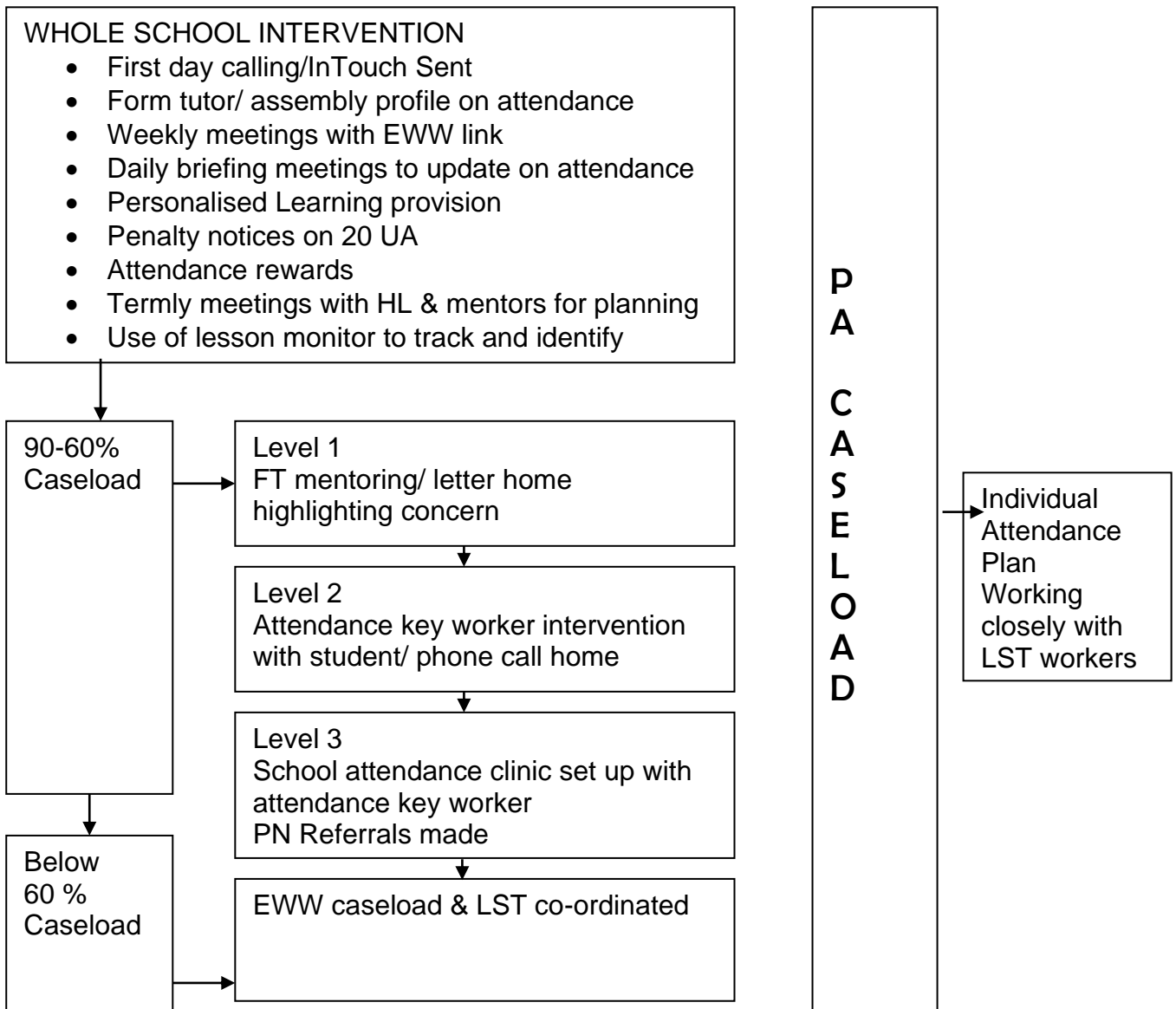
Promoting good attendance is a whole school responsibility. In addition clear thresholds have been established to trigger specific intervention and the key worker responsible.

The aim of 90%+ individual attendance (set out by the government) is aspirational and challenging. A series of targets are laid out in the **attendance plan** which will be reviewed on a termly basis.

Attendance caseloads for each threshold highlight the level of intervention and the impact this has had. The thresholds are

- 90-100% Home Liaison/Mentor & key worker
- Below 90% (Coordinated by EWW & key worker)

- PA students (Individual attendance plan produced with the key worker identified)



11. Attendance for learning

All attendance intervention is designed to support student learning. Achievement thermometers produced at the termly reviews will identify the student's attendance and colour code how that relates to their overall learning performance. This will generate planning meetings with the appropriate Home Liaisons (delete "and mentors") to drive attendance plans to develop strategies for the individual students.

In order to improve punctuality, the code of conduct now states that only 10 unauthorised lates (U Code) within a 12-week period are required before Cedars' can ask the Local Authority to begin statutory action to address persistent lateness.

12. Leave of absence

In conjunction with the new guidance from the DfE, CEDARS must adhere to stringent procedure regarding Leave of Absence. The new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. The totalling of holiday absences taken across the previous three terms, regardless of academic year, will trigger a penalty notice.

Any application for leave of absence during term time will only be considered by the head teacher in conjunction with key staff if there are exceptional circumstances that warrant granting leave. All requests for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must be made in writing to the head teacher who will consider each individual case. Only the head teacher can determine the number of school days a pupil can be absent from school if the leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted. Penalty notices can be issued if leave not authorized by the head teacher or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

Cedars' now only requires there to be a period (e.g. one day or more) of unauthorised leave (G Code) before the school can notify the Local Authority.

Legal Sanctions

Prosecution: Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 or be imprisoned for a period of up to 3 months.

13. Penalty Notices.

In conjunction with the Local Authority and Statutory Guidance, Penalty Notices may be served when a student's attendance meets the appropriate trigger points.

Local Authority Guidance to Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.²
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher.(e.g. family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Other conditions.

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year¹.

Attendance Protocols:

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices Sept 2017 and Attendance Protocols which detail the actions taken by the school to raise the profile of the importance of attendance as well as set out clear guidelines and actions which will result from a breach of the policy at any stage of the process.

14. Promotion of good attendance.

CEDARS employs a variety of positive influences for good attendance and punctuality. Rewards for students with good attendance are given weekly and half termly.

A good attendance postcard has been devised to be sent to parents of students whose attendance improves