

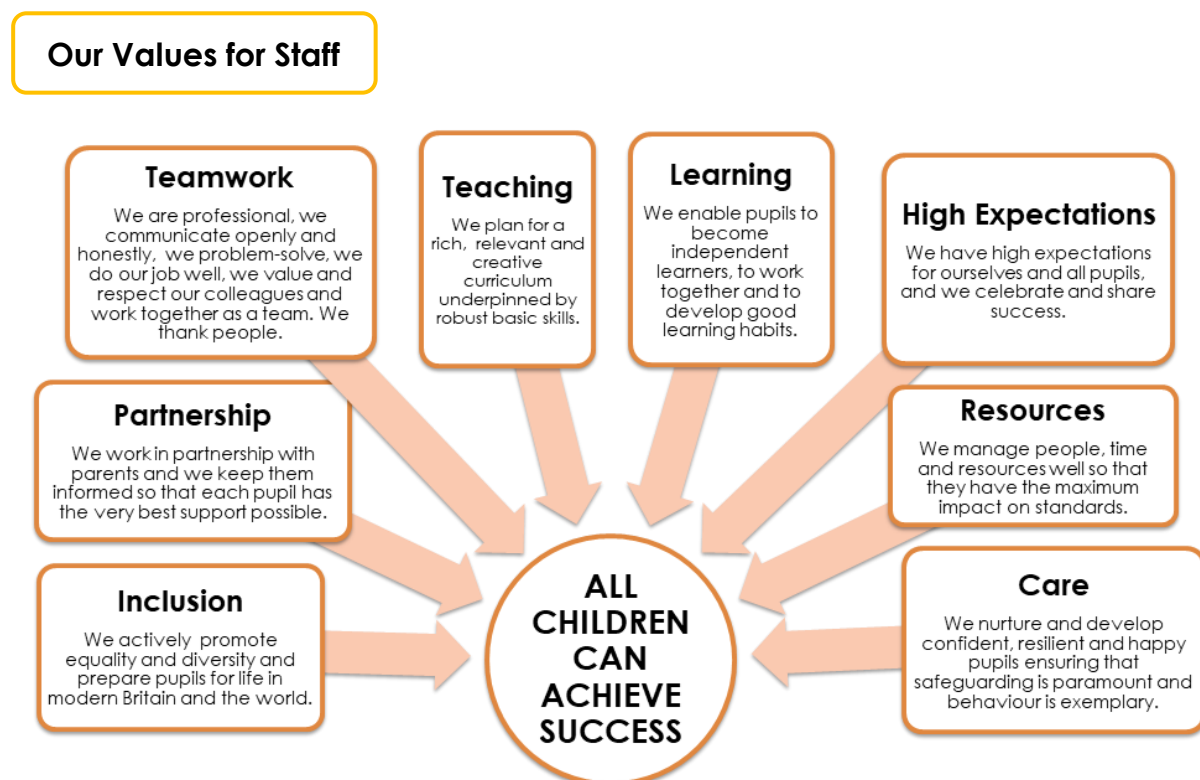
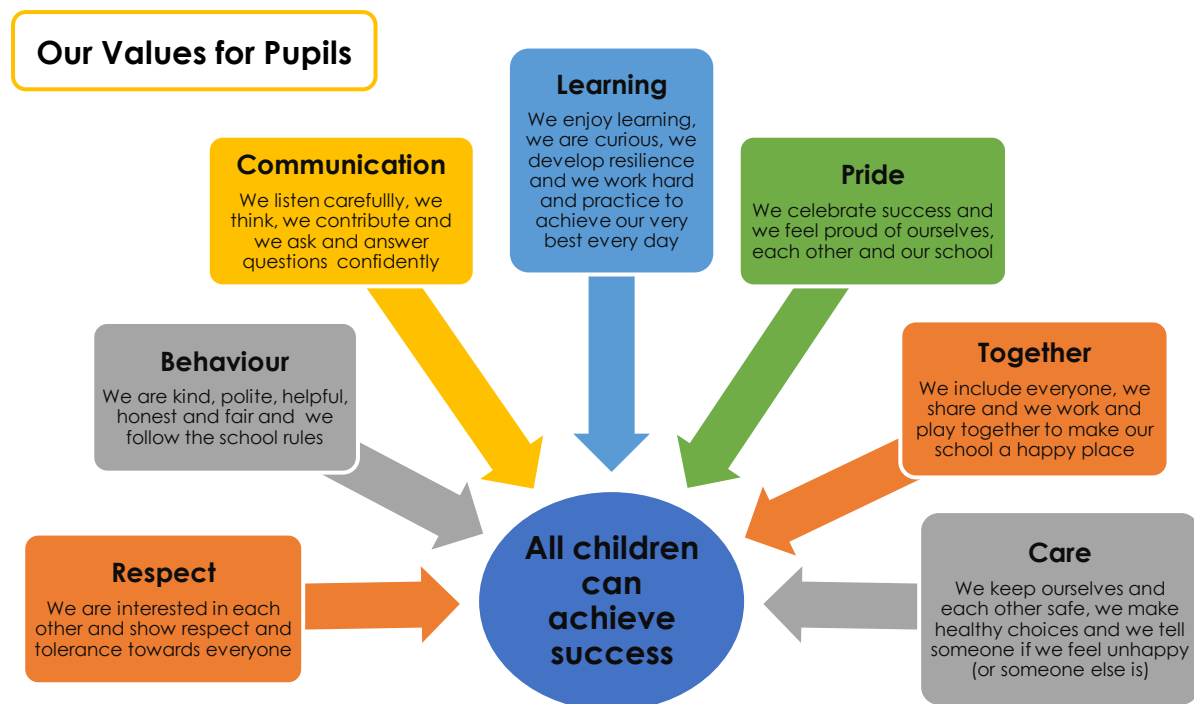


Woolmore
Primary School

Attendance Policy 2022

Our School Values

It is vital that all adults who work at Woolmore read, understand, and can demonstrate full commitment to our School Values. We have three layers: for pupils, for staff and for leaders and governors.



Aims

We aspire to a high standard of attendance from all pupils and parents and to work Together to build a culture where all can and all want to be in school and Ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
 - S.7: "Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable— (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."
 - S.444: "Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.
- **Working Together to Improve Attendance September 2022**
- **Public Sector Equality Duty** - The public sector equality duty (PSED) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
- The Equality Act 2010 **legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.**

The Importance of school attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. Barriers to accessing education can be complex and often specific to individual pupils and families. We understand that the foundation of securing good attendance is that we provide a calm, orderly and safe and supportive environment where all pupils can achieve success.

Our work is to acknowledge the specific barriers for individual children and families and to work at removing those barriers by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Our practise must include efforts in all areas; curriculum, behaviour, bullying, SEND, pastoral and mental health and well-being and effective use of resources and pupil premium. It is not the sole preserve of a single member of staff but a concerned effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, our governing body, the LA and other local partners.

Expectations of our Governing Body

Our governing body understand that improving attendance requires constant focus and effective whole school approaches require ongoing support, guidance and challenge. Our governing body has a responsibility to;

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the our ethos and policies. Ensure there are high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils and parents. Recognise that attendance should be prioritised in wider improvement strategies such as raising attainment, behaviour, SEND, well-being and safeguarding. This may include having a link governor that focuses on attendance.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectation and statutory duties. Work with the SLT to ensure our attendance management processes are delivered effectively and consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring we engage with and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team BASS and wider local partners and services.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and hep school leaders focus improvements efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most. Repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of our school's processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupil's experiences and barriers to attendance evolve.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance. Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of a particular pupils.

The Law on School Attendance and a Right to a Full-Time Education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any SEND needs they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education and attend every day that the school is open except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill or being given permission for an absence from the school.

Pupils with the highest attainment at the end of KS 2 and KS 4 have higher rates of attendance over the Key Stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2 pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7% compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. At KS4 pupils not achieving grade 9-4 in English and Maths and an overall absence rate of 8.8% compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4.

We understand that for our most vulnerable pupils' regular attendance is also an important protective factor. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime; 90% of young offenders had been persistently absent.

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance requires us to work collaborative with families. We work alongside families and other partner agencies to:

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

MONITOR: Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance at individual and cohort level and work together to resolve them.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND: When patterns are identified, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers and agree how we work together to solve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT: Help pupils and parents access the support they need to

FORMALISE SUPPORT: Where absence persists and voluntary support is not being engaged with partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. This may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE: Where all other avenue have been exhausted and support is not working we would enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Building a culture of good attendance

At Woolmore we recognise that good attendance is a learned behaviour and expect all of our children to develop good patterns of behaviour from the outset. In building a culture of good attendance we:

- Work to ensure good attendance alongside good behaviour are a central part of our vision, values, ethos and day to day life
- Recognise the interplay between good attendance and wider school improvement efforts building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, SEND support, supporting pupils with medical conditions, safeguarding, wellbeing and support for disadvantaged students
- Ensure that our SLT see attendance as a priority and identify a senior leader with overall responsibility for improving attendance in school. Responsibilities include working with the head teacher and other senior leaders and the attendance team to ensure we have a clear vision for improvement, evaluation and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis and communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Make sure all staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents
- Make sure attendance support is appropriately resourced, including attendance support staff who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders and our LA AWA
- Ensure high expectations for attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicated them regularly through a variety of channels. In doing so we help parents understand what is expected from them and why attendance is so important to their child's attainment, well-being and wider development. It also includes clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This includes displays, assemblies or in registration periods. This can also be used sensitively and without discrimination to include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class and individual level
- Recognise that attendance is never solved and requires a continuous process of regular review, updating and strategies
- Recognise that children missing in education (CME) can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

Expectations for Pupils

- Pupils start to be ready for learning from 8:50. The registers are closed by 9:00.

Expectations for Parents

- Parents are expected to ensure their children arrive punctually between 8:50 and 9:00. The school gates close at 9:00 and every pupil arriving after this time will need to go through the main reception where their name is noted down, reason for lateness and a late slip given. The last slip is to be handed to their teacher who then knows they will be added to the register. This ensures each register is accurate.

Start and close of school day

- 8:00 Breakfast Club opens
- 8:50 External school gates are opened by the HT and SLT. Key staff are expected in the playground to meet and greet our children. Bagels are also available in the playground for those that need / would like them.
- 8:50 Children begin to enter class and get ready for their day of learning
- 9:00 Registers close. Admission after 9:00 is through the office where our late children will be given a late slip.
- Afternoon registers are taken at the following times:
 - Early Years and Foundations Stage: 13:00
 - Years 1, 2, and 3: 12:50
 - Years 4, 5, and 6: 13:55

Name and contact details of senior leader responsible for strategic approach to attendance.

- Hannah Williams – Deputy Head Teacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead / Inclusion Lead
- Sonia Rawlings – Local Authority Attendance Officer from the Behaviour and Attendance Support Service (BASS)

Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis and for more detailed support on attendance.

- First port of call is the main school office: 0207 987 2778. Our Reception Team will be able to answer queries and questions and ensure information regarding absence is correctly responded to and appropriately recorded.
- Attendance Officer: Lois Sykes. Lois is responsible for data input and the necessary preparation for data sharing and analysis on a daily basis. Lois

will also be part of a team of staff who make the necessary daily follow up calls.

- Family Support Team (FST): Susan Sibley-Mason and Lorraine Palache. Susan and Lorraine work alongside the Attendance Officer in making the follow up calls and carrying out the important work of building relationships with families to remove barriers to good attendance. *Building strong relationships with our families, listening to understand barriers and working to remove them is integral to the work of all staff but particularly the FST. Our school values are at the heart of our work around attendance. We treat all pupils and parents with dignity and all staff are expected to model respectful relationships and to work to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. When we communicate with our parents we discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider well-being and challenge parental misconceptions about what good attendance looks like. We consider who is the best placed person in the school to work with and support the family and wherever possible we aim to keep that person consistent.*

Our processes for managing attendance

We follow up any absences to;

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the appropriate safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not – considering all circumstances and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's management information system which is used to download data for the school census.

A note on Nursery attendance

Nursery is non-statutory schooling. However, we expect high levels of attendance for nursery children as we believe that this not only gives them an excellent start to their education but also fosters good habits. It is very difficult for children to settle if they are not attending regularly. We aim to work closely with parents to ensure Nursery attendance is reflective of the expectations for the rest of the school.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Requesting leaves of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence

- We ask parents to call the school on the morning of their absence before registration to let us know if their child is going to be absent. This allows us to select the correct code for the absence before the day begins.

Term Time Leave (TTL)

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. We define '*exceptional circumstances*' as circumstances beyond the control of the carers which the head teacher deems necessary and, where it is in the child's best interest to attend. We consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

How we promote and incentivise good attendance

- Our Attendance Policy is easily accessible to leaders, staff, pupils and parents. We publish it on the website and ensure it is shared with parents should alongside any initial information when pupils join the school. All parents and carers are reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when its updated.
- Attendance is cited on our School Improvement Plan as a whole school priority.
- High Expectations lies at the heart of our values for staff.
- Being Ready for learning is one of our three school rules. Punctuality is a key part of being Ready.
- We work together to ensure messages to families from all staff are consistent with our expectations.
- Attendance data is analysed at a cohort and individual pupil level on a daily basis and shared with SLT. Phase leaders are enabled to notice patterns of attendance across their cohort and within certain classes.

- Vulnerable groups are identified and prioritised for follow up by the Attendance Team – working closely and continuously with the DSL.
- Quality Communication between the Attendance Team and our AWA is expected to ensure timely action is taken when children do not return to school.
- Attendance expectations are shared with parents during admissions meetings and welcome meetings.
- We make sure our policy is accessible to all parents via our school website.
- Children take part in a daily count of their class – encouraging them to respectfully notice and celebrate when they are doing well as a class.
- We use assemblies as a time to celebrate improvements in attendance and teach children the importance of working hard to achieve it. We work to evoke a Team approach where we can.
- Where children are old enough we involve them in discussions about their attendance – alongside their parents.
- We hold 100% attendance days where all who attend receive a small wrist band.
- As a school we constantly craft and refine our approach to attendance – evaluating what we do and the impact it is having.

Using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most

We understand that poor attendance is habitual so prevention and early intervention is crucial. The key to this is regular data analysis to identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or cohorts that need it. IN addition to this we look at historic and emerging patterns across the school which enables us to develop strategies to address them. We monitor and analyse attendance weekly attendance trends and deliver interventions in a targeted way to pupils and families. We go beyond headline attendance percentages and look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including punctuality) across the school to help us achieve our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Data Analysis

- By Whole School Headline
 - At cohort level; By phase - EYFS, KS1, KS2
 - At cohort level; By Class
 - At cohort and pupil level; Children who are subject to a CIN or CP Plan
 - At pupil level; Historically Vulnerable Children
 - At pupil level; LAC / PLAC
 - At cohort and pupil level; Children with an EHCP
 - At cohort and pupil level; Children on the SEND register
- This analysis enables us to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers which enables and informs discussions between pupils, families, teachers and leaders.

- We are able to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Our analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data enables us to identify trends. We look for patterns of certain codes, days of good and poor attendance.
- We monitor the impact of school wide attendance efforts and use the findings to inform future approaches.
- We are also able to provide data and reports to the governing body in supporting our challenging our approach.

Our strategy for reducing persistent absence *(including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority)*

We believe in giving every child in our care the best educational opportunities in order for them to be happy and successful citizens. Attending school on time every day is very important for the following reasons:

- For pupils to build on prior learning and not have gaps in their learning
 - For pupils to feel that they are fully included and have access to all areas of learning
 - For pupils to develop strong friendships and good relationships
 - For pupils to develop good habits which will stand them in good stead in the future
 - It is the legal responsibility for a child's parent/carer to ensure that they attend school on time, every day and ultimately
 - For all our pupils to achieve success.
- At the beginning of the year we use historical data to develop an At Risk register where children who are at risk of PA are identified.
 - Our Family Support Team (FST) carrying out the important work of building *strong and sincere relationships with our families, listening to understand barriers and working to remove them is integral to the work of all staff but particularly the FST. Where we identify that a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming persistent or problematic we draw upon these relationships when making a plan in collaboration with the family.*
 - *In the first instant we support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. If the barriers are outside of school's control we work together with all partners to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. This may involve agreeing actions or interventions to address them. It may include referrals to organisations that can provide support. These actions would be regularly discusses and reviewed together with pupils and families. All meetings are recorded so they can be used as a frame of reference and a tool to support accountability.*
 - *Where absence intensifies so does our support. This often requires us to work in tandem with the LA and other relevant partners. For some situations an EHA is the most appropriate response. Where engagement in support is proving*

challenging we hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where appropriate). This meeting is lead by the senior leader responsible for attendance and the LA point of contact. These meetings explain the consequences of persistent and sever absence to the pupil and family and the potential need to legal intervention in the future, but also provide an opportunity to listen and understand the barriers to attendance and explain again the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

Tower Hamlets Attendance and Welfare Service

Criteria for Referral to the Attendance and Welfare Service

- **10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence**
- **5 sessions of unauthorised absence in a five-week period (primary)**
- **15 late marks L in a five-week period**
- **15 sessions of authorised absence in a five-week period with no medical certificate received**
- **Pupils whose parents have notified the school in writing that they are educating the child at home**
- Where attendance is a concern the DSL should refer any child who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan in accordance with the contents of the Plan or may contact the Child Protection Advice Line
- Failure to return to school following a fixed term exclusion
- Failure to attend alternative provision after the fifth day of an exclusion
- Pupils known to have returned from extended leave where an application for re-admission has not been received
-
- *Where voluntary support has not been effective and has not engaged with we work with the local authority to put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order. We may also consider issuing a FPN where support would not appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents behaviour. Intensifying support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50%). Prosecuting parent where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate – see Working Together to Improve Attendance 2022 (Section 5).*
- Our approach with parents always accounts for the specific needs of pupils and their families who have particular barriers to attendance. We consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

We aim to be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and will talk to pupils and parents to understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet individual pupil's specific needs.

We understand that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. This can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. We understand their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for all our pupils. We are mindful of these specific barriers and are ready to put additional support in place to help all children access their full-time educational entitlement. This could include;

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. Making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. We would always consider additional support from external partners including the local authority and or health services and in discussion with parents decide which is the most appropriate.
- We work with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- We work to establish strategies to remove in-school barriers these pupils face, including support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and at lunchtimes.
- Where appropriate we ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate – for example those affected by anxiety about school attendance, or those who are starting a new school following a permanent exclusion.
- We ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups in Targeted Support Meetings with the LA so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.
- We understand that pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. In this instance we follow guidance in the document *Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School*.

Reporting to Parents

Attendance is reported to parents annually on their child's report. Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at parent meetings. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools.

