

ROOTS

Attendance and Absence Policy

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Signed by:



Co-Headteacher

Date: 04/09/2025



Chair of Trustees

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Statement of intent

At Roots we hope to create a safe and nurturing environment where children and young people want to attend regularly.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend centre; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at the centre, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-centre approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting the benefit of regular attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with our mainstream partners, as well as other agencies. Keeping regular communication channels about our pupils's wellbeing and progress.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents, and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The Co-Headteachers are the main point of contact with matters arising around attendance..

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- **[New]** DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following centre policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relational Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

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

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the centre has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during centre time, for which the centre has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the centre has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off centre unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the centre day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

- Leaving centre for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of school across the year for any reason

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the centre.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the centre's ethos and policies.
- Working with the Co-Headteachers to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the centre's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Co-Headteachers are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the centre.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the centre's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Keeping in regular contact with our pupils mainstream school to update on well-being and attendance at Roots.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance at Roots.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the centre day.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the centre with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the centre if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at centre.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at centre.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at centre.

4. Attendance expectations

The centre has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend centre every day they are required to be at centre, for the full day if appropriate.
- Attend centre punctually.
- Attend each lesson.

The centre day will start at **9:30am**, ready to begin lessons at **10am**. Pupils will have a morning break, and a lunch break. If a pupil is doing afternoon sessions they start at **12pm** so will be encouraged to arrive at **11:45am**.

Registers will be taken at the start of the day and for each session start time. To track both attendance and engagement.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents/carers will be required to contact the Roots office via telephone ideally before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the centre by **10:30am** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend centre.

The centre will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Offer support and hope that the child is ok

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** centre days in a row, or more than **10** centre days in **one term**, the parents will be welcomed in for a meeting to discuss what support can be offered.

The centre will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, particularly if there is a safeguarding concern, Root's reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, close communication is kept with a pupil's mainstream school and the attendance officer, attendance will be reported on a weekly basis. The centre will inform the LA, on a **6-weekly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 centre days or more without authorisation.

6. Attendance register

Roots uses a manual registration document to keep attendance registers. They are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each day**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The centre will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- Y = Present in the morning
- Y = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the centre
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- [New] S = Study leave
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- N = Reason not yet provided
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- D = Dual registered at another educational establishment
- B = Off-site education activity

- J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- V = Educational visit or trip
- W = Work experience
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the centre has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the centre has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

[New] Pupils who are absent from Roots but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Co-Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Co-Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Co-Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the centre will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The centre will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the centre will expect parents to contact the headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Co-Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from centre. The centre is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of centre hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The centre will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from centre, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the centre's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the centre for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from centre to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a centre maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend centre if they were attending a centre maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** advance.

The centre will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The centre will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The centre may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The centre recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending centre difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the centre will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The centre will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the centre has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a concern about a pupil's mental health, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. Every effort will be made to thoroughly support our pupil's mental wellbeing.

The centre will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending centre may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending centre as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the centre will consider:

- Holding regular meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Implementing "TEAM PUPIL" in line with our Relational Behaviour Policy.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- SEBDA support through Dr Rob Long
- Interventions from My Happy Place.
- Flexibility around start times and finish times.
- Phased returns to centre where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Absence in exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the centre, LA or parent is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the centre census for statistical purposes.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from centre, during which the centre has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the centre during the day must sign out at the **centre** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Co-Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending centre.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance a conversation with home to inform that their child is not onsite at the centre.
- Then a conversation will follow with the pupil to try to establish the reasons why they might not want to attend – being curious around the wider context of the situation, being mindful of potential safeguarding concerns.
- If this happens again a meeting will be held together with their school representative and parents/carers – with the young person's well-being at the heart of the discussion and action plan.
- Advice will then be sort from the LA Attendance service if the young person becomes missing in education.

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the centre premises during the centre day unless they have permission from the centre. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at centre:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Co-Headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the centre premises as directed by the Co-Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All rooms inside Roots
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The Boxing Gym and Sports Hall
 - The basketball court
 - The centre grounds and park areas
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the centre premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents/carers of the pupil will be notified immediately.
- The centre will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The DSL will fill in a new incident on CPOMMS, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Co-Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, a restorative conversation will be conducted including parents and carers if necessary.

The Co-Headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the centre has effective procedures for managing absence, the Co-Headteachers work hard and proactively to;

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews within the centre and held by LA
- Establish robust interventions and support systems for families that are experiencing barriers to attendance.

The centre will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

13. Working with parents/carers to improve attendance

The centre will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of centre life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The centre will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Roots will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the centre has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

We are mindful of how some families find the conversations and narrative around attendance particularly hard. Especially if their child has had long periods not being able to attend school. The very reason for Roots being set up is to help and support our families – so it is important to note that all communication around attendance with our families comes from an empathetic, compassionate, non-judgmental, and supportive place.

If a child's reason for not wanting to attend is do with the environment inside the centre eg: bullying, staff conduct etc. A meeting with the parents/carers and Co-Headteachers will be arranged at the earliest opportunity.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The centre will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The centre will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend centre. These include:

- Offering more one to one support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent/carer to discuss and explore the reasons behind not wanting to attend. Is there missed SEND?
- Weekly check ins with parents/carers to establish stressors/calmers – things that might be helping or not helping.
- Consider external support from SEBDA/My Happy Place
- Opportunity to do some outdoor work with the dogs.

The centre will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the centre will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the centre's duty of care. The centre will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. Legal intervention

The centre will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the Co-Headteacher will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents/carers and a pupils mainstream school.
- Working with the LA to take the best course of action.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Co-Headteacher will be led by the mainstreams school's policy on attendance.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

Roots will monitor and analyse attendance data **regularly** to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The centre will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The centre cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Co-Headteacher will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Trust Board will regularly review attendance data held at Roots.

17. Training of staff

Roots recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on settings, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The centre's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The centre's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from centre could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Co-Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **July 2026**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

1. Attendance is accurately recorded every day and if a pupil is dual registered reported back on a weekly basis to the school.
2. Contact will be made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. Second day N codes will be sent to CH daily by staff. OS should contact home by telephone. Any N codes not established after a week will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
3. Pupil attendance drops below 95 percent – CH will speak to pupils to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the centre can help to improve their attendance. OS will make a phone call home, if applicable.
4. Pupil attendance drops below 93 percent – a meeting is arranged with parents/carers raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the centre target of 95 percent.
5. Roots arranges a meeting with the child's mainstream school if appropriate.
6. Pupil attendance drops below 90 percent – a letter will be sent home explaining that a pupil's absence is now being monitored. OS will contact parents. Attendance monitored for two weeks. If attendance has not improved, then parents will be required to attend a meeting in centre to create a support plan. If parents are unwilling to co-operate, or genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO) who will then carry out a home visit.
7. If attendance has not improved within the two-week monitoring period (likely to be close to 85 percent or below), or if attendance has fallen rapidly, parents will be invited to either: a centre attendance meeting with CH and EWO if appropriate, or a medical action planning meeting with the LA nurse, and SENCO. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance. This will be monitored over a further two-week period.
8. After the two-week monitoring period, if targets are met, a letter will be sent home from the leadership team to congratulate the pupil and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises – if targets are not met, the CH will make a referral to the EWO.
9. Education Welfare protocol will be followed and a parental contract will be drawn up – there will be a four week monitoring period. No improvements in this time will result in a final written warning. If there is still no further improvement following this, then a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

Key

CH – Co-Headteachers

OS – Office Staff

S- Staff members

Attendance Agreement Form

Pupil Attendance Agreement

I agree to attend centre and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100 percent. I will ensure that the centre is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the centre full details of my absence.

As a pupil of **Roots 4 Learning**, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to centre and lessons.
- Informing the centre of the reason for any absence.

Pupil name:	Date:
Form tutor name:	Date:

Parental Attendance Agreement

I understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to centre. I agree to send my child to centre every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When my child is absent from centre due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Parent name:	Date:
Form tutor name:	Date: