



Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Ryecroft CE Middle School is committed to providing a supportive framework to pupils and their families where a shortfall in attendance has been identified to assist pupils to improve, reach and maintain the standard of attendance and punctuality expected. This policy outlines our procedures and ensures we adhere to the new 2024 National Framework and Working together to improve attendance guidance.

This policy was approved as follows:

Approver:	CEO	Date:	June 2024
Adopted:	LGB	Date:	TBC

I2E owner: HMJ

Version: V1.0

Review frequency: Annually

Next review date: September 2027

Status: Statutory

Document History

Version	Version Date	Author	Summary of Changes
V0.1 draft	06/06/24	Operations	Draft Attendance Policy written in consultation with VIA Education Welfare Officer
V1.0	11/06/24	Operations	Policy reviewed and approved by the CEO
V1.0	12/06/24	Operations	Sent out to schools
V2.0	03/11/25	Operations	Sent out to schools
V3.0	01/09/26	H Major	

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1. Introduction

At Innovate2Educate Partnership Trust our Schools are committed to working together to ensure all pupils receive the best education possible and to enable them to achieve to the best of their ability. For this to happen, pupils need to be in school to access valuable teaching and learning opportunities.

This policy aims to make clear what is expected of parents and pupils and to assure parents of our willingness to collaborate positively with them if problems arise.

The law on school attendance and right to 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 special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

2. Objectives

To raise the overall school attendance to be at least in line with national data and to improve attendance to above the national average.

- To reduce the number of persistent absentees.
- To promote a culture of punctuality and good attendance.
- To improve parental understanding of the school's expectations and for attendance and punctuality.
- To work with the Local Authority officers, to improve pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To closely monitor attendance and punctuality.

These will be achieved by:

- Analysing attendance data to identify trends and patterns.
- Use benchmarking against national averages to set realistic targets.
- Implement targeted interventions for pupils with low attendance.
- Regularly communicate with parents about attendance expectations.
- Provide clear information on the importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Encourage parental involvement in school activities.
- Foster a sense of belonging and community.
- Celebrate good attendance and punctuality.
- Educate students about the impact of attendance on their learning.
- Work closely with Local Authority officers to address attendance issues.
- Seek their support in implementing effective strategies.
- Adjust interventions as needed based on data and feedback.

3. Attendance Expectations

All pupils are expected to achieve a minimum of 97% attendance. Appendix 1 and 2: Attendance Posters, will be displayed in schools and shared with parents via Arbor, social media and transition and parents' evenings, to raise awareness of the impact of missed school days.

Lateness - Impact of lateness over a school year:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days absence

15 minutes late every day = 10 days absence

30 minutes late every day = 19 days absence

At Ryecroft CE Middle School we value achievement of every kind and believe that we all respond well to having high expectations placed upon us. These expectations cannot be met if students do not attend regularly or are persistently late. School seeks to be proactive when dealing with attendance issues, as students have the right to a quality education and to learn without disruption. Students also have the responsibility to be punctual to school/lessons and consistently demonstrate respect to staff and students in their lessons.

4. Parent/Carer and Pupil expectations

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Parents and Carers are required to contact the school each day their child is absent by 9am, where a reason for the absence must be provided. The nature of a pupil's absence enables the attendance team to determine the appropriate attendance code, in accordance with guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents and Carers should report their child's absence either via the **Arbor App** or by emailing the attendance team at **office@rms.i2e.org.uk**
- Parents and Carers should avoid allowing their child to take time off school for minor ailments, particularly those that would not typically prevent an adult from attending work, such as headaches, menstrual discomfort, sore throats, coughs, and colds.
- Ensure their children understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality, recognising the strong link between consistent school attendance and academic achievement. Regular attendance also supports the development of social, emotional, and mental health by fostering routine, building resilience, encouraging positive relationships, and promoting a sense of belonging within the school community.
- Avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.
- Ensure that their child arrives every day and on time to school, by 8.45am every morning.
- Not book family holidays during term time. The school reserves the right to request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice in such cases.
- Discuss any problems they may have at school and let their form teacher, pastoral lead or Assistant SENDCO know about anything serious or where you feel we can support them.

Family contact details:

To allow us to safeguard children, parents/carers must provide the school office with their current contact details and provide at least two, and preferably three, other contact numbers of trusted adults in case of emergency where possible.

Pupils are expected to:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly.
- Ensure they follow school policies and procedures.
- Ensure that they attend school on time.
- Have their attendance and punctuality acknowledged by the school.

5. Attendance Team – Contact details

Name	Role	Contact Information
Larisa Nixon	Attendance Officer	Tel: 01889 590394 Email: office@rms.i2e.org.uk
Tracey Evans & Sharon Oliver	Attendance Leads	
Jo Martin	Attendance Champion	

Pastoral Team

Name	Role	Contact Information
Alun Hughes	Pastoral/Behaviour Lead	a.hughes@i2e.org.uk
Sharon Oliver	Assistant SENDCO	s.oliver@i2e.org.uk
Sam Harris	SENDCO	sendco@rms.i2e.org.uk

6. Registration Procedures

School is obligated to maintain an attendance register. The register serves to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. In the event of absence, each half-day must be categorised by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Importantly, only the Attendance Officer, Attendance Champion or Headteacher has the authority to authorise absences; parental authorisation is not sufficient. Consequently, comprehensive information regarding the cause of each absence remains essential.

School opens at 8.30am and closes at 4.00pm

When completing the register, schools follow the DFE Working together to improve school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use (Chapters 7 & 8);

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84444/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

Morning registration.

Registers are open for 30 minutes from the start of the school day.

The morning register is taken at **8.50am**. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before **9.20am** are recorded as late – L code.

Registration closes at **9.20am**. Pupils arriving at school after this time are late as registration has closed, and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – U code.

If parents have not contacted the school on the morning of their child's first day of absence, the attendance officer will send a text message to the child's primary contact requesting the reason for the absence. Please respond promptly to any messages or enquiries regarding attendance. This process helps ensure that parents are aware when their child is not in school and can confirm their child's safety if needed.

Afternoon registration

The afternoon register is taken at **1:20pm**.

Late procedures

Parents and carers are requested to contact school either via the **Arbor App** or by emailing the attendance team at **office@rms.i2e.org.uk** and advise the pupil's name, class or form group and provide a reason for lateness with a time as to when to expect them to arrive.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and flagged during weekly attendance meetings led by the Senior Leadership and the attendance team. Where a pupil arrives after the official close of the register, 9:20am for the morning session a 'U' code (unauthorised absence due to lateness) may be recorded. Accumulating 10 'U' codes within a 10-week period may trigger statutory intervention, including the issuance of penalty notices and fines to parents or carers, in accordance with local authority enforcement procedures.

7. Home Visits for Unexplained Absence

A home visit is carried out when a pupil is absent **for three consecutive days** and the school cannot contact the parent/carer or has no satisfactory explanation. This is a safeguarding measure to confirm the pupil is safe and identify any support needs. Families should maintain regular communication to avoid unnecessary visits.

Prolonged Absence with Ongoing Contact

If parents/carers remain in regular contact during extended absence, a home visit may not be required. A visit will occur if new information raises safeguarding concerns or on the 6th day of an absence.

Immediate Home Visits for Safeguarding Concerns

If there is reason to believe a pupil may be at risk, a home visit will take place on the first day of absence.

Pupils on Section 19 Provision

Pupils educated off-site under Section 19 remain on roll, and the school retains safeguarding responsibility. Regular safe-and-well checks must be completed in line with school and local authority requirements.

8. Leave of Absence

The Department for Education (DfE) emphasises that consistent attendance throughout the 39 weeks of the school year is essential.

Holidays taken during term time, regardless of their purpose, are not regarded as 'exceptional circumstances' and following updates to the law and statutory guidance in August 2024, the latest DfE document, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, reaffirms that family holidays will not normally be authorised.

Leaves of absence are authorised by the **Attendance Team and Headteacher only** in very exceptional circumstances. These types of absences are distinct from term-time holidays and may include circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness, or important cultural or religious observances.

9. Non return from Leave of Absence

There may be occasions when a child does not return within the agreed period of authorised or unauthorised leave. In such cases, the school's standard absence procedures will be followed in the first instance.

If the parent or carer has informed the attendance officer that the child will not be returning as planned, the situation will be monitored and managed internally. A projected date of return should be provided, if it is known.

If the child has not returned to school within three days, no explanation for the absence has been given despite following the usual attendance procedures, our Senior team, will conduct a home visit to check on the child's wellbeing. The safeguarding team will also be notified and depending on the outcome of the home visit, a referral may be made to the local authority and/or police.

10. Legal Sanctions:

Both the school and the local authority have the right to impose fines on parents for their child's unauthorised absence from school. The decision to issue a penalty notice may be made by the headteacher, a local authority officer, or the police.

Any unauthorised absence could lead to a referral to the local authority, which may result in a penalty notice being issued in line with the *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance.

Within a 3-year rolling period:

First penalty notice: £160 (if paid within 28 days) or reduced to £80 (if paid within 21 days).

Second penalty notice: Flat rate of £160 (if paid within 28 days).

No Third Penalty Notice:

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the date of the first notice. If the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative actions (such as prosecution or other attendance legal interventions) will be considered.

In line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. **Two sessions are equivalent to one school day.** In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school, this will stipulate the support that has already been implemented and the ongoing support that is available to the parent and child to improve school attendance. The Notice to Improve will also detail the expected improvements that must be made over a set time frame to prevent the Penalty Notice from being issued. Further information on the National Framework can be found within Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024. The National Framework comes into effect on 19th August 2024. [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000000/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The school will notify the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations linked to support being provided or as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

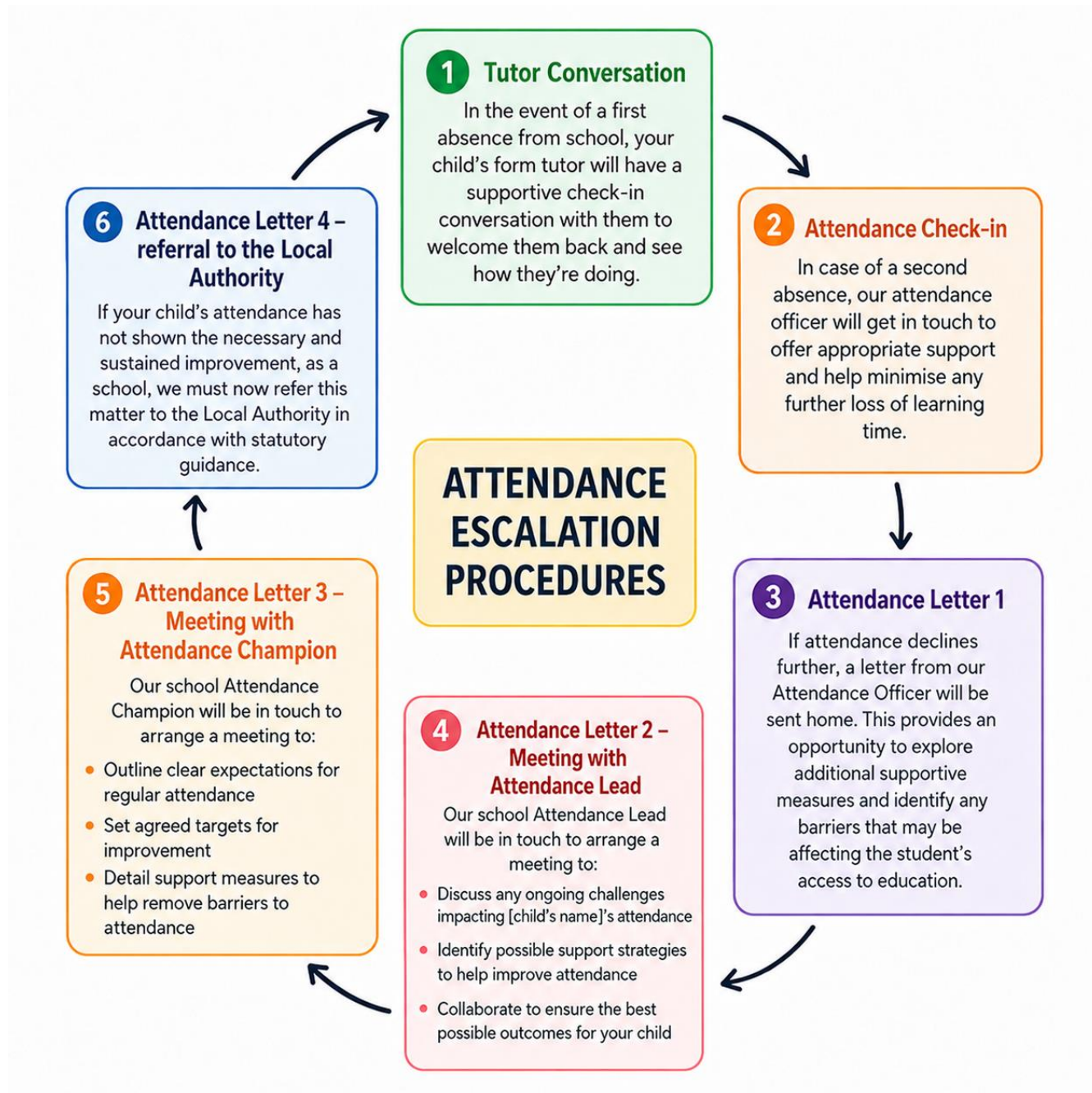
11. Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The school will review attendance data weekly to identify absence patterns, both for individual students and across the entire school, using an attendance tracker. Use of the tracker enables early intervention and the implementation of targeted support for students showing both emerging and ongoing attendance concerns.

Some of our best practices include:

- ✓ Every Friday, our Attendance Officer produces a statutory attendance report and updates the attendance tracker. The tracker monitors weekly rises and falls in attendance, allowing early intervention for students with emerging attendance concerns. Once updated, the tracker is emailed to all form tutors.
- ✓ Each Monday, form tutors will recognise students whose attendance has improved or remained steady over the previous week. Students will not be shown their own or their peers' attendance if it has declined compared to the prior week.

Attendance Escalation Procedures:



12. Children Missing in Education

Children who are absent from education are at a heightened risk of underachievement and may be vulnerable to harm, exploitation, radicalisation, serious violence, or becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training). Those already known to children's social care, such as children on a Child in Need or Child Protection plan, or those in local authority care, face additional risks and require particularly strong safeguarding measures.

Where a child has not returned to School for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from School without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days the school may remove the student from the admissions register if the following two conditions are met:

1. The school and local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries to try to locate the student, following the steps outlined below, but have failed to establish the child's whereabouts.
2. The school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the student is unable to attend due to sickness or other unavoidable causes.

Before taking a child off roll, the school will make reasonable enquiries with the local authority to ascertain the whereabouts of the child which could include:

- ✓ Contacting the parent, relatives, and neighbours, using known contact details.
- ✓ Checking with agencies known to be involved with family.
- ✓ Checking with the local authority and school from which the child moved originally if known.
- ✓ Checking with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved to.
- ✓ Checking with the local authority where the child lives, if different from the Academy's location.
- ✓ Making home visit(s), if appropriate. All home visits will be risk-assessed before being carried out.

The school will consult with the local authority CME officer throughout this process and provide documentation of all enquiries made. Only once all reasonable efforts are exhausted will removal from the admissions register be approved.

13. Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions/SEND

The school is firmly committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, with particular attention to those whose attendance may be affected by medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This commitment is underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015). These require schools to make reasonable adjustments, eliminate discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity for students with SEND and medical needs.

To ensure compliance and best practice, the school has implemented a comprehensive range of measures, including:

- **Individualised Support Planning:** Development and regular review of personalised healthcare plans, risk assessments, or attendance support plans for students with chronic medical conditions or SEND, in consultation with parents/carers and relevant professionals.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** In line with the Equality Act 2010, the school will discuss and agree reasonable adjustments with families on a case-by-case basis. These adjustments will be appropriate, proportionate, and designed to support the student's access to education while maintaining high expectations for attendance.
- **Access to In-School Support:** Students with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs can access support through the school's pastoral and wellbeing provisions, including mentoring, counselling, and targeted interventions.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 and local safeguarding arrangements, the school will work collaboratively with external agencies—including local SEND Hubs, Family Hubs, Early Help services, and health professionals—to ensure a coordinated approach to attendance and wellbeing.
- **Continuity of Learning:** Where absence is unavoidable due to medical or SEND-related circumstances, the school will liaise with parents/carers and external providers to ensure continuity of learning and appropriate reintegration support upon return.

The school maintains the expectation that all students should attend regularly and punctually. However, it recognises that for some students with SEND or medical needs, flexibility and understanding are essential. Each case will be considered individually to identify and address barriers to attendance through constructive partnership with families and professionals, in line with statutory duties and inclusive practice guidance.

14. Appointments:

The school asks that dental and medical appointments be scheduled outside of school hours, as absences can affect your child's attendance and, consequently, their attainment. If an appointment cannot be scheduled outside of the school day, students are expected to attend before or after the appointment whenever possible and must be signed in and out at the front office.

15. Rewarding good attendance

Each half term, we hold celebration assemblies to recognise the achievements of students. During this celebration, students with 100% attendance and those whose attendance has improved for three consecutive weeks will be celebrated. Every term half term children with improved attendance will be rewarded with breakfast with Head of School. Children with 100% attendance will also be awarded a lunch voucher.

16. Elective Home Education

If the school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home-educate their child, the school will contact the parent and discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this time the parent still wishes to home-educate their child, the school will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Although home education is the right of the parents the school have the right to disagree with home education.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home-educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Before deciding to home educate, parents are requested to contact the Staffordshire Local Authority Elective Home Education department. Elective home education - Home - Staffordshire County Council

17. Collaborative Approach with Local Partners

The school recognises that strong partnerships across local services are essential for supporting attendance and removing barriers. As such, the school will:

- Develop relationships and communication pathways with local authority early help services, social care, health providers, and police.
- Establish procedures for making referrals to appropriate services when additional support is needed for the student or family.
- Participate in multi-agency meetings to coordinate a holistic plan for students facing complex challenges.
- Work with partners to understand and address root causes like poverty, mental health, and community issues impacting attendance.
- Collaborate on truancy sweeps, home visits, or other engagement initiatives in the community.

18. Evaluating Effectiveness

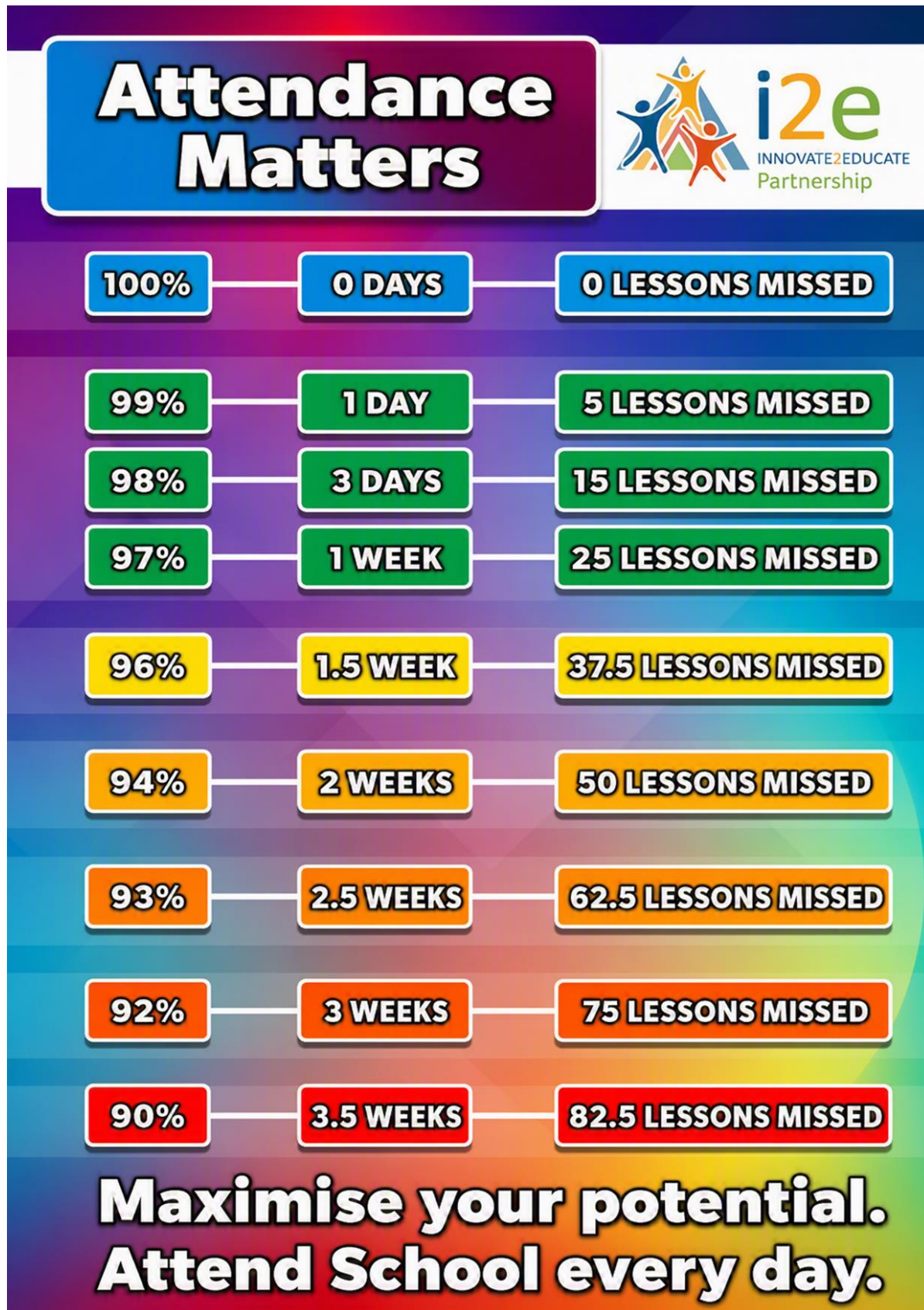
In addition to identifying areas for intervention, attendance data will be utilised to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies and initiatives aimed at improving attendance rates. This will involve:

- Comparing attendance metrics before and after implementation of new approaches
- Surveying students, parents, and staff on the perceived impact of attendance efforts
- Continuously refining and adapting strategies based on their measured outcomes

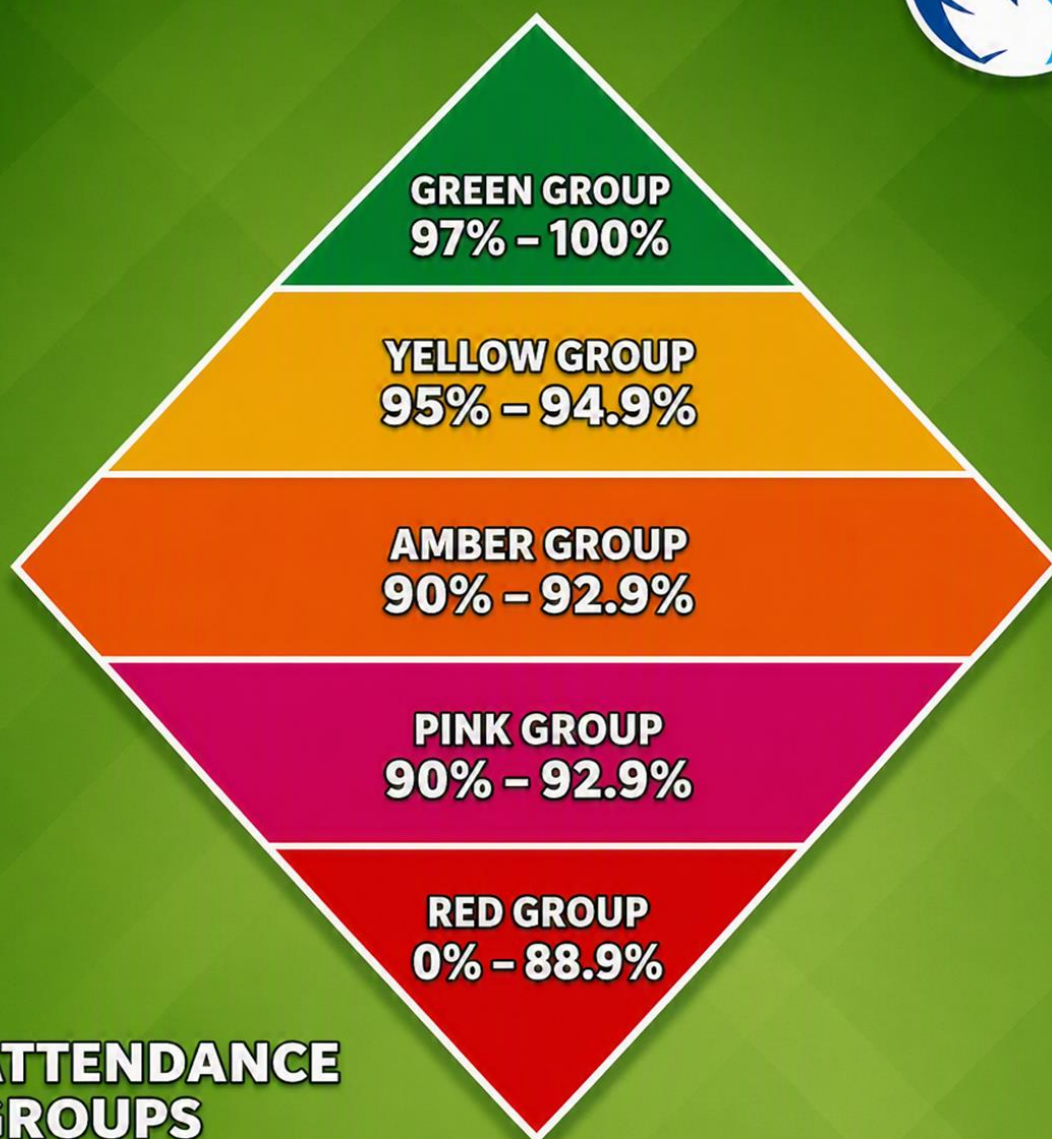
19. Reporting to Governors

To ensure transparency and accountability, the school leadership will provide regular attendance reports and updates to the governing board. These reports may include:

- Overall attendance figures for the school and breakdown by grade levels
- Progress towards annual attendance goals and targets
- Updates on the implementation and effectiveness of specific attendance initiatives
- Identification of persistent issues or areas requiring additional governance support



Ryecroft C.E. Middle School



ATTENDANCE GROUPS

GREEN	BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS
YELLOW	RISK OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT
AMBER	SERIOUS RISK OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT
PINK	SEVERE RISK OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT
RED	EXTREME RISK – PERSISTENT ABSENTEE

Appendix 3 – Should I keep my Child off school?



UK Health
Security
Agency



Should I keep my child off school?

Yes

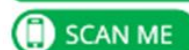
Until...

Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and Flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19.
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping Cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics

No

but make sure you let their school or nursery know about...

Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek



Advice and guidance

To find out more, search for health protection in schools or scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/minfec>.

Appendix 4 – Leave of absence request letter template – NOT authorised

Date: XXX

Dear XXX

Re: XXX

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request from: - XXX To XXX

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time.

The changes to the law are introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and will come into effect from 19 August 2024. This means that any unauthorised leave taken after this date, will be dealt with under the new Regulations.

Headteachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins and the leave is an exceptional circumstance.

A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

I have considered your application very carefully and understand the reason for your request, but unfortunately, I am unable to approve a leave of absence in this instance, as the circumstances are not exceptional.

Our key priority is to ensure that your child(ren) are as successful as possible, can reach their full potential and gain maximum benefits from their educational experience.

Therefore, if your child is away during this period, the absence must be recorded as a period of unauthorised leave – G code.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with (ADD LOCAL AUTHORITY) Code of Conduct and the "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance (effective 19th August 2024).

The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (Within 3 Years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will

be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Following the second offence **every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted** under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is **£1,000 per parent, per child**. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Third Offence (Within 3 years)

The third time a Penalty Notice is issued for leave in Term Time or irregular attendance, the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court, where fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be imposed.

Note: Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on Parents future DBS certificates as a 'Failure to safeguard a child's education'.

I hope that upon reflection you can support the school's decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks' school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs A Grattage

Executive Headteacher