Pupil Attendance Policy

1. Principles

The City of Birmingham School (COBS) is committed to maximising the attendance of every pupil during their education. Attendance is inextricably linked to success in all aspects of school life and regular school attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit from the experiences which COBS offers them.

Regular school attendance is based on a strong and supportive partnership between the school, parents/carers, and other outside education providers and agencies.

Parents and Careers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children always attend school unless there is a genuine reason for them being unable to do this and that they have informed the school.

2. Aims

- To improve the overall attendance of children at COBS.
- To aim for the majority of pupils to achieve 96% attendance and to continue to improve towards the 100% attendance mark.
- To ensure all pupils arrive in school on time to maximise their educational opportunities.
- To improve the attendance of individual pupils placed on roll at COBS with a history of poor attendance.
- To reduce levels of Persistent Absence.
- To ensure accurate recording of attendance.
- To work closely with parents/carers in a supportive way in order to ensure maximum attendance.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including parents/carers, pupils, teachers and management board.
3. Legislative Framework

Parents/carers of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents/carers may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children receive education. Estranged parents/carers with whom the child has had regular contact may be prosecuted as well as the day-to-day carer. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. The term ‘parent’ also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children Act 1989 or who have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1999.
4. Expected Levels of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

At COBS we expect all Pupils to achieve attendance that is at least 96%.

- **Exellent. Accessing all learning opportunities**
  - 98-100%

- **Good. Very few learning opportunities missed**
  - 96-97%

- **Risk of Under achievement**
  - Up to 10 school days absent in an academic year
  - 94-95%

- **Risk of Under achievement**
  - Up to 15 school days absent in an academic year
  - 93-92%

- **Severe risk of underachievement**
  - Up to 19 school days absent in an academic year
  - 92-90%

- **Extreme risk of underachievement**
  - Pupil is persistently absent
  - Upwards of 22 school days absent in an academic year
  - 89% or below
5. Duties and responsibilities

Deputy Head Teacher of School:

- To oversee and monitor whole-school attendance and punctuality along with Heads of Centre on a weekly basis.
- To scrutinise absence and attendance data on a weekly basis ensuring that any deterioration in attendance for individual pupils and groups of pupils is responded, and concerns are escalated where there is no improvement.
- To report to SLT/LT and Management Committee.
- Liaison with outside agencies.
- To ensure attendance is a high priority and there is a consistent application of policy and procedure across all Centers.
- To introduce and oversee attendance initiatives, rewards and incentives.

Head of Centre

- Initial meeting with all new pupils and parents/carers and set up of attendance action plan.
- First day calling and absence process.
- Monitoring attendance and identifying any pupils whose attendance falls below the expected standard.
- Addressing emerging concerns through, meeting with parents/carers, telephone calls and standard letters.
- Completing three houses and offering early help to resolve attendance concerns.
- Record any actions in case notes.
- Identify where pastoral support is needed to improve attendance.
- Complete PA assessments half termly.
- Escalate cases to Fast track including SARMS meetings.
- Record any intervention on pupil case notes.

Family Support Worker

- Liaise with Heads of Centre and contribute to action plans to improve attendance.
- Undertake home visits, attendance meetings and early help procedures.
• Record any intervention on pupil case notes.

Data Officer

• Populate weekly attendance tracking sheet.
• Support Deputy Head Teacher with producing absence and attendance reports.
• Monitor accuracy of registers and register coding.

Teacher: To ensure electronic lesson registers are completed and in the case of an IT issue to complete a paper register. All registers must be completed during the start of each lesson.

Pupil: To attend regularly and punctually. To sign in if arriving in school late after the registers have closed.

Parent/Carer: To ensure that their children attend school regularly. To inform the school at the earliest possible time of the reason for and the expected length of any absence. To respond promptly to an absence call from the school. To ensure that no holidays are organised in term-time.

6. Procedures

6.1. New Pupils

Progress in attendance during a pupil’s time at COBS is essential, particularly for pupils who previously had poor attendance in mainstream school. All new pupils and parents will be required to attend an initial meeting with school. At this initial meeting attendance expectations will be discussed by the Head of Centre. Attendance information from the previous setting will be requested by the Head of Centre and be available for this meeting. Any concerns about historic attendance will be discussed and action plan agreed to secure improved attendance at COBS. This is to ensure that any potential barriers to attendance are understood and addressed. This may include discussions around:

• First day calling and absence process.
• Contact details and emergency contacts.
• Transport and travel arrangements.
• Individual timetables.
• SEN.
• Early help.
• Three Houses.
• Barriers to attendance.
• Promoters of attendance.

Appendix 1 Attendance Management Plan and Three Houses will be completed at this meeting and added to the pupil file/case notes.
The pupil’s previous attendance will be recorded on the School Attendance database by the Centre Admin as a baseline to measure and track improvement.

New Pupils will be given a start date at this meeting.

6.2 Absence

If a pupil is absent from school parents should contact the Centre on the first day of absence by 9.30am to inform the Centre of the reason for absence. Parents/carers are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30am registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents/carers and reason given.

Centre staff will telephone parents/carers to ascertain a reason for the pupil’s absence from school. Where there is no answer a text message will also be sent requesting contact. Telephone calls and text messages will be recorded in the pupil case notes.

If staff are concerned about a pupil’s absence or there is no response to text messages, they will follow the process detailed in Appendix 2. This includes further telephone calls to parents, telephone calls to other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check.

Centre staff should be alert to suspicious phone calls, signatures, handwriting, emerging patterns of non-attendance, inappropriate, inadequate or repeated reasons for absence.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance Guidance 2019)

It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school.

Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (KCSIE 2019) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides.

Illness:

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, earaches we would not expect pupils to be absent. However, when a parent/carer makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school they should follow the absence process.

It is a school’s decision whether to accept a reason for a pupil’s absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent/carers explanation of their child’s illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are
concerns about a pupil’s attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a pupil’s illness may be requested

School will challenge parent/carers statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a pupil’s attendance.

In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 92%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

Medical appointments

Parents/carers should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.

Parents/carers are required to provide a copy of the appointment letter or card prior to the day of the appointment. Absences will only be authorised when this information has been received.

Other reasons for absences

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion.

6.3 Punctuality

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of lateness the school will try to resolve the problem with pupil and parents/carers.

Due to possible legal action, after 20 ‘U’ codes the following procedures are put in place to resolve the problem:
• 5 U codes = a letter sent home.
• 10 U codes = a meeting with pupil (where age appropriate), parents/carers and Head of Centre
• 20 U codes = Head of Centre will instigate legal proceedings where appropriate using Fast track process.

6.4. Poor attendance and persistent absence

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers.

Poor attendance is investigated on a daily basis by the Head of Centre.

A letter of concern is sent to parents if attendance falls below 90% where appropriate state that all absences will be considered as unauthorised without proof of attendance at a medical establishment. It will also ask if there are any underlying medical reasons or emotional reasons (e.g. close family bereavement) accounting for the absences – support systems can then be put into place.

Further unauthorised absence will result in a meeting with Head of Centre, parent/carer and the pupil. The three houses will be completed if it hasn’t been previously. If the situation shows no improvement, the Head of Centre may instigate legal proceedings using the fast track process.

The City of Birmingham school work directly with Central School Attendance and Welfare Service (CSAWS) to improve attendance and punctuality of all pupils that have low attendance and/or poor punctuality.

6.5. Leave during Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

A ‘Leave in Term Time’ letter is sent to all parents/carers at the start of every academic year to inform them that the Headteacher is unable to authorise leave during term time except where there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must complete an ‘Exceptional Leave in Term Time Request Form’ if they are considering taking their child out of school for a period of leave.

Contact with parents/carers will be made via letters, phone calls and home visits as appropriate.
Any legal action required will be taken by the Education Legal Intervention Team.

7. Truancy

Any issues of truancy will be dealt with in accordance with the school Behaviour Policy. Parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns of the school.

8. Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the Headteacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Headteacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks.

The City of Birmingham School uses Progresso to electronically record registers.

The City of Birmingham School actively discourages late arrival, all Heads of Centre will be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation. Heads of Centre will regularly review punctuality of pupils and follow attendance and absence procedures to address emerging concerns, and put into place interventions where necessary. As a through age and authority wide provision COBS recognise that some pupils have a greater distance to travel, any issues relating to travel or barriers to attending on time are explored at the initial interview and appropriate risk assessments undertaken and support offered. As part of our strategy to be proactive in discouraging late arrival whilst promoting attendance, we have a clear policy that registers will close at 9.30am in all of our centres. A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate. COBS will use the fast track legal process where there is an accumulation of U codes.
School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categories absence (Appendix 5).

- Pupils present at the start of the morning session will be recorded as present using a / code.
- Pupils present at the start of the afternoon session will be recorded as present using a \ code.
- Pupils arriving late before registers closing will receive an L code, and those arriving after the register closes (9.30 am) a U code (or other appropriate absence code).
- All other pupils will be recorded as either absent (authorised or unauthorised ) or where attendance has been confirmed marked as in attendance at an Approved Educational Activity ( statistically present).

**Dual registered pupils**

Where pupils are on more than one school roll they will be marked as D code at the school they are not expected to attend, and the school where they are in attendance will mark as present/absent. FOR COBS pupils this scenario usually applies for pupils being reintegrated to mainstream settings. In this situation COBS will mark as D code for the agreed period whilst liaising with the school. Where pupils remain on roll at a home school but attend at COBS for a period, the home school will mark as D code, and COBS will follow the usual registration and absence procedures detailed in this policy.

**Alternative Education Providers**

A small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at COBS. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored on a daily basis and reflected on school registers. A pupil is only marked as present if the attendance at the Alternative Provider has been confirmed. COBS absence coding and procedures will be followed for any pupils absent at an Alternative Provider. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with the City of Birmingham School

**9. Reintegration of Long Term Absentees**

Pupils that find it difficult to attend or engage with school due to emotional/medical needs will be supported by one of the school’s HLTAs to try and re-engage the pupil back into education and ultimately back into school.

**10. Pupils Subject to Intensive Support Plan**

Occasionally pupils may need a review of their programme. A reduction in attendance will only be considered when all other strategies have been tried to maintain the pupil on full time attendance and where there are health and safety concerns resulting from the pupil’s behaviour. Programmes will be designed so that there is some attendance expected every
day. The required paperwork must be completed for the pupil and the programme reviewed regularly with the aim of returning the pupil to full time attendance as soon as possible. A home study programme will be available for the pupil and this will be monitored through regular phone calls to check on the child’s wellbeing, marking and setting of work, help and advice for parents/carers. The register must be coded C for the sessions when the pupil is not required to attend. ISP will never be used to address poor attendance.

11. Use of Attendance Data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about pupils from their previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Attendance is reviewed weekly, where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with the relevant school staff and partners.

Information regarding attendance concerns may also be shared with the Local Authority as part of statutory processes.

The Deputy Head teacher will analyse attendance data half termly for whole school and groups of pupils. This will be shared with school management board and used to inform the strategic plan to improve school attendance.

Attendance data will be produced and used to promote attendance through the school newsletter, website and rewards and incentives.

12. Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school’s procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the Local Authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. School must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the statutory guidance to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the Child Missing in Education Officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).
Appendix 1 Absence Management Plan New Pupils

Attendance Management Plan – City of Birmingham School

Date of Meeting: 
Pupil: 
Parent: 
EWO/School Key Worker:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information received from previous school</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance Percentage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unauthorised Percentage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Late Marks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Unauthorised Late Marks</td>
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Parent/carer Comments and Reasons Provided for Absences:

Pupil Comments:
Discussion with Head of Centre

- Including any Legal Action Discussion
- Three houses
- Early Help

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<tr>
<th>Actions Agreed:</th>
<th>By Who:</th>
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Attendance Target for Next Half Term

Target Percentage:

Period Covered:

Signed and Agreed:

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<tr>
<td>Pupil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/carer</td>
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<td>School</td>
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Copy added to pupil cases record.
Appendix 2: Absence Procedure

All late arrivals recorded in and details added to registers to complete the morning register by 9.30am

All messages regarding pupil absence entered into registers by 9.30am

First day absence report to identify any children absent and no reason given

Any children on 2\textsuperscript{nd}/3\textsuperscript{rd} day absence identified where no reason or inadequate reason

- First day call made for all children where reason unknown.
- Follow up text sent where no contact made.
- Vulnerable list children identified and Social worker/relevant lead professional notified
- All calls and contacts recorded in case notes.

Telephone calls made to other contacts/emergency contacts where unable to make contact by midday.

Recorded in case notes.

Home visits to be undertaken for vulnerable pupils or 3\textsuperscript{rd} day absence no contact.

Cases identified for discussion/referral to Attendance and Welfare Officer or police for safe and well check.
## PA Assessment Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil Name</th>
<th>Attendance %</th>
<th>Number Authorised Absence</th>
<th>Number Unauthorised Absences</th>
<th>Number of Late arrivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Actions taken to date:
- Three Houses completed Y/N
- Early Help Assessment Completed Y/N
- Attendance meeting Y/N

### Summary of Key Issues/Barriers to attendance/promoters of attendance

### Parental engagement:

### Pathway (Tick)
- Fast track
- Combination
- Pastoral

### Initial Action Plan (Complete for Combination and Pastoral pathways)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Intended Outcome</th>
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Date completed:  
Completed By:

1st Review
Evaluation of Impact

Pathway

Fast track  Combination  Pastoral

Action Plan

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Intended Outcome</th>
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Date completed:  Completed by:
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<td>\</td>
<td>Present (PM)</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Excluded (no alternative provision made)</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Family holiday (agreed)</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)</td>
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<td>J</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>Late (before registers closed)</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Medical/Dental appointments</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>No reason yet provided for absence</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
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<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Approved sporting activity</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Religious observance</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Study leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Traveller absence</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
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<td>U</td>
<td>Late (after registers closed)</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>Educational visit or trip</td>
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<td>#</td>
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