

Attendance Policy 2023/24

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Statement of Intent

LeAF Studio believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

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

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, 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 and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- 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 other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 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 school's attendance officer is Megan Hawkins and can be contacted via attendance@leafstudio.co.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

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 (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children with Health Needs who cannot Attend School Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the Trust.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the Trust's ethos and policies.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- 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 Trust's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school'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.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- 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 school day.

The Vice Principal (Inclusion) supported by the attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- 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.

Parents are responsible for:

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

Pupils are responsible for:

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

Introduction

Here at LeAF Studio we believe it is of vital importance that our students have good attendance at school. This is a successful school, and all students play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve of their best. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at LeAF Studio, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment¹. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at LeAF Studio is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from LeAF Studio without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at LeAF Studio this policy sets out:

- **Section 1**
The practical procedures to be followed at LeAF Studio in relation to attendance.
- **Section 2**
The measures in place at LeAF Studio to promote regular attendance by its registered pupils.
- **Section 3**
The responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.
- **Section 4**
The action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly.

¹ [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

Section 1: Practical Procedures

This section sets out the practical procedures to be followed at LeAF Studio in relation to attendance are as follows:

- The attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leaves of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence.
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis (such as a form tutor / class teacher, attendance officer, admin team etc) and for more detailed support on attendance (such as a head of year, pastoral lead or family liaison officer etc).
- The school's day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence.

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and child protection duties as set out KCSIE.

The Admissions Register (or "school roll")

- As an school, we are responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every pupil along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.
- We also hold emergency contact numbers for each pupil. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to make contact with a responsible adult should the need arise.
- A pupil's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances.

The Attendance Register

- The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

Punctuality and Regular Attendance

- The School day starts at 8:35am and finishes at 3:15pm.

Lateness

- Students are expected to arrive by 8:35am. Students that are late are required to sign in at reception. Where a student arrives between 8:35am and 8:45am, when AM Tutor ends, a behaviour point will be issued. Students that arrive 8:45am will receive a referral. If a valid reason for lateness is provided by the parent by 1:15pm then these sanctions will be not be issued.
- Morning registers are closed at 9.30am and any student arriving after this point will not get their AM registration mark and will be marked as absent.

Absence

- Parents² must contact the school when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done as follows: 01202 578886 ext 1 or attendance@leafstudio.co.uk with the following details:
 - full name of pupil.
 - pupil's Year group or Form.
 - Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child.
 - Reason for absence.
- Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9am on the day of the absence, the school will within 1 hour contact the parents on the same day to understand the reason for the absence.
- Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent (including foster parents and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding **why** the absence has occurred, and **when** the pupil will return.
- The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained.
- Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please follow the procedures below: complete an absence request form which must be signed by all relevant staff members, detailed on the form and then handed into reception.

² Throughout this document, the terms 'parent' and 'parents' are interchangeable and apply equally to 'parents and carers' and includes foster parents and social workers where relevant.

Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance

This section sets out the measures in place at LeAF Studio to **promote** regular attendance by its registered pupils.

- How the school is **promoting** and **incentivising** good attendance.
- The school's strategy for using **data** to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- The school's strategy for **reducing persistent and severe absence**, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.
- The point at which **Fixed Penalty Notices** for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

Promoting and incentivising

The school will:

- Treat all pupils and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Attendance is an integral part of our APB system, which means that only students who meet our expectations in terms of attendance are allowed to take part in training, fixtures, competitions and shows (unless there are extenuating circumstances agreed with SLT).

Data Strategy

The school understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial. We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:

- both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils and/ or pupil cohorts that need it.
- look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.
- The school will typically carry out the following analysis:
 - Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some children on certain days;
 - Patterns of attendance within sessions, to ensure that all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons.
 - Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of pupils and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance
 - Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional and national data.
- We will use this analysis to identify pupils who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those students and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to school leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).

Absence reduction strategy

- We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for specific groups of students.
- Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body.
- As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (see paragraph 30).

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

- The School recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil.
- That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:
 - Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
 - Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
 - Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, the school will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see the School's SEN policy for further details on SEN support.
 - Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers pupils may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
 - Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.
 - Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at Trust and Academy Advisory Committee meetings and in Targeted Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.
- 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. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see the school's policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school for further information.

- In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents; and talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

Part-time timetables

- All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Please note that a part-time timetable cannot be used as a reasonable adjustment for SEND, unless this is on a temporary basis and as advised by an external agency e.g., Educational Psychologist.
- A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (minimum fortnightly) with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable.

Section 3: Particular Responsibilities

This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is Tim Clark 01202 578886 ext 218 tim.clark@leafstudio.co.uk
- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on "day 1" will fall to Megan Hawkins, Attendance Officer
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will fall to Megan Hawkins, Attendance Officer
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are Megan Hawkins, Attendance Officer 01202 578886 ext 1 attendance@leafstudio.co.uk
- More detailed support on attendance can be requested from the relevant Head of Year or form tutor.

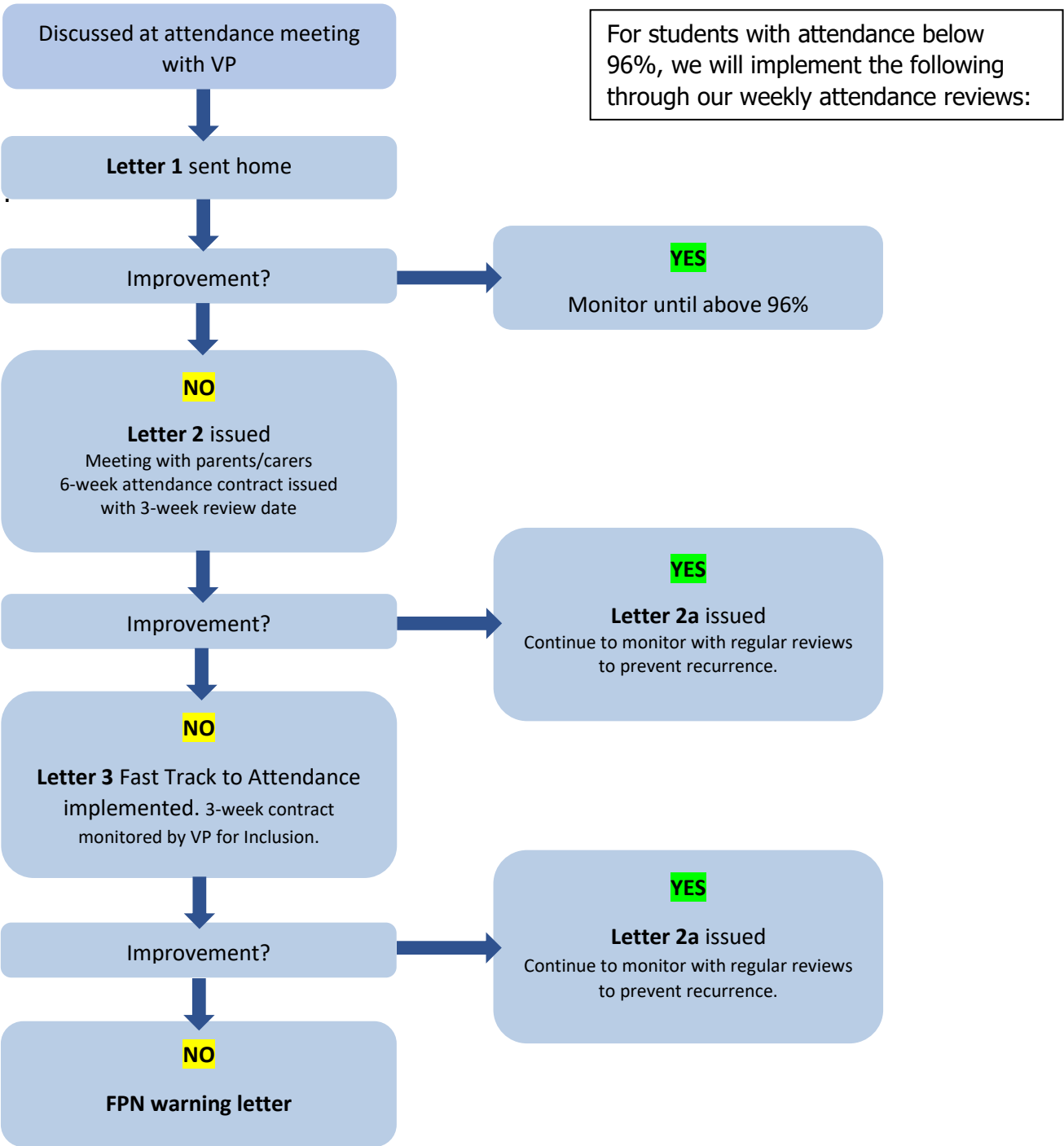
Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly

This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend the school regularly.

- Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family. Wherever possible, we will keep this person consistent.
- Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, the school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.
- In the first instance, the school will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with pupils and families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support, including the BCP School Inclusion Team. Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners, as follows:
 - If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
 - Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
 - Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.
 - Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
 - Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
 - Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour. This may be as a result of an unauthorised holiday or as a result of failing an attendance contract with the school.
 - Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.
- In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the school will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.
 - The specific flow chart detailing the stages of the school's attendance actions is listed below in Section 5.

Section 5: LeAF Studio Attendance Strategy and Actions



LeAF Studio Post 16 Attendance Appendix

At any point through our Attendance Monitoring at LeAF Studio Sixth Form and our Sixth Form Partners, students may lose technical training and opportunities. Students may also be directed to attend Sixth Form full-time. Students may also lose the privilege to leave their education site.

Daily attendance reporting and tracking occurs through the Head of Sixth Form, Attendance Officer, Specialism Leads, Pastoral, Reception and Senior Leaders. Students and parents are contacted with every absence.

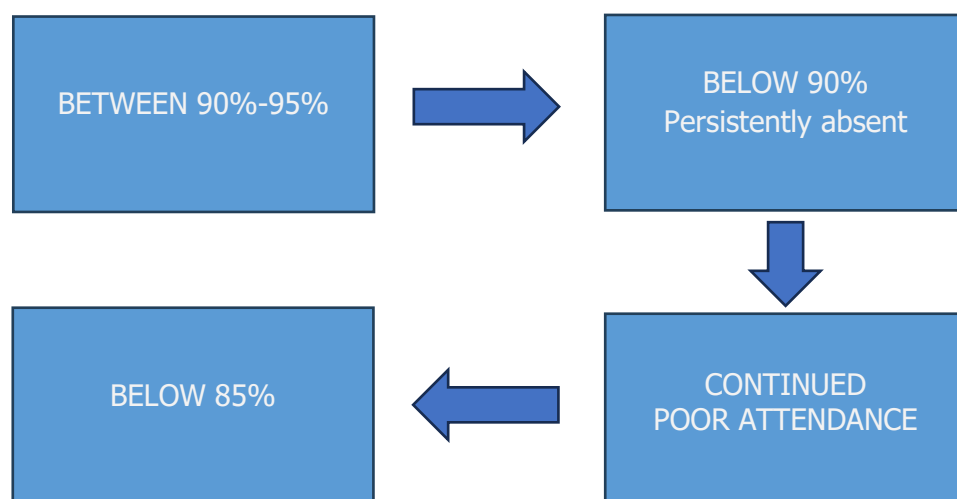
Students are expected to attend every timetabled session published on their timetable and additional events and opportunities including private study sessions, interventions, tutorial sessions, careers events, enrichment sessions and assemblies.

Any student missing timetabled sessions without authorisation, will be referred to the Sixth Form team and appropriate action will be taken.

Attendance will be monitored and tracked in line with the LeAF Studio Attendance Policy. For further details please refer to the Sixth Form Professional Etiquette documentation.

The minimum attendance rate expected at LeAF Studio Post 16 provisions is **96%**. Attendance that is **below 96%** could result in the following:

- Students may be asked to pay for their exam entries
- Students not entered for examinations
- Removal from opportunities and training
- Compulsory full-time days
- Students advised to leave LeAF Studio Post 16 Provision



PRE-FORMAL STAGE Attendance between 90% and 96%

- Courtesy communication sent to parent/carer and student advising them (email/phone call/Teams)
- Touch base between staff member (Tutor, Head of Sixth, Pastoral, Attendance Officer) and student
- Technical training and opportunities may be removed for a period of time.

STAGE 1 Attendance or Attendance to Lessons Below 90% (Persistently Absent)

- Communication sent.
- Should attendance or attendance to lessons decline to 90% or below, students will be required to attend a meeting with their form tutor or partner lead at a time and date to be specified.
- If a student's attendance or attendance to lessons is of greater concern, this meeting will be with the Head of Sixth Form or the Head of Sixth Form will be present.
- Parents/carers will be informed that these meetings will be taking place. Parents/carers may be asked at this time to discuss attendance or attendance to lessons with their child.
- Students may be put onto an Attendance Action Plan at Tutor level.
- Technical training and opportunities may be removed for a period of time.

STAGE 2 Continued Poor Attendance or Poor Lesson Attendance

- Communication sent.
- Should attendance or attendance to lessons continue to be 90% or below, students will be required to attend a meeting with their Education Lead / Head of Year.
- If a student's attendance or attendance to lessons is of greater concern, this meeting will be with the Head of Sixth Form or the Head of Sixth Form will be present.
- Parents/carers will be informed that these meetings will be taking place and will be asked to discuss attendance or attendance to lessons with their child.
- An Attendance Action Plan will be issued by the Education Lead/Head of Sixth Form
- Technical training and opportunities may be removed for a period of time.
- Student may be required to attend compulsory additional lessons to catch up.
- Student may be expected in Sixth Form 8.45-15.15 every day.

STAGE 3 Failure to Meet the Targets set on the Attendance Contract

- Parents/carers of the student will be invited to a meeting.
- The student will be asked to meet with the Education Lead and/or Head of Sixth Form with parents/carers.
- A formal warning will be issued if appropriate and a further Attendance Action Plan will be re-issued.
- Technical training and opportunities may be removed for a period of time.
- Student may be required to attend compulsory additional lessons to catch up.
- Student may be expected in Sixth Form 8.45-15.15 every day.

STAGE 4 Continued Failure to Meet Targets of Attendance Action Plan

- Meeting with Education Lead **and** Head of Sixth Form to discuss reasons for persistent absence from school or lessons and refusal to engage in intervention procedures.
- The parents/carers of the student will be invited to the meeting.
- CEIAG interview will be offered to the student.
- All technical training and opportunities will be removed from the timetable and extra-curricular.
- Student will be expected in Sixth Form 8.45am-15.15pm every day.
- Student will be required to attend compulsory additional lessons to catch up.

Attendance or Attendance to Lessons below 85%

- Any student whose attendance or attendance to lessons drops below 85% might be invited to an immediate meeting with the Principal and/or Education Lead/Head of Sixth Form. The parent/carer will also be expected to attend the meeting. Should there be no genuine reason or circumstances to explain this level of absence, the school reserves the right to withdraw the Sixth Form place permanently.
- At this stage
 - Students/parents may be asked to pay for their exam entries.
 - Students may not be entered for examinations.

If the interventions above are unsuccessful and/or the student continues to be absent from school, their place in the sixth form may be at risk. If a student has been missing from school for 20 or more consecutive days, we may remove that student from their study programme and ask them to leave the sixth form. In any such case the following 3 conditions will have been fulfilled:

- At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the school.
- There are no reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.
- The school has made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the student's whereabouts.

Failure to Attend an Assessment/Examination

- For internal assessments/examinations, LeAF Studio and our partners will endeavour to find an alternative, suitable time for students to complete. This however cannot be guaranteed, and examination board guidance may be requested.
- For public live examinations, students and parents may be charged the exam fee should LeAF Studio or the partner site have not authorised the absence.
- Where appropriate, in line with our Exams Policy and JCQ guidelines, special consideration may be requested, with required evidence.