Policy Title: **Attendance Policy**	Effective Date:	September 2024
LT Member Responsible: John Rumble	Review Date:	September 2025
Governors' Committee Responsible: Culture and Community		

1.   Rationale and Aims

1.1 Regular attendance and punctuality at school is important for the well-being and future prospects of children. There is a clear link between good attendance at school and attainment. **Nationally, the students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS4, students not achieving grade 9 to 4 in maths and English had an absence rate of 8.8% compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of students not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5. (8.8% compared to 3.7%)**

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 a school they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means that 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.

1.2 Sheldon seeks the co-operation, involvement and support of parents in its efforts to encourage, recognise and reward regular attendance within the school.

1.3 The School will seek to encourage good attendance and punctuality with the students through tutorial work and assemblies. Rewards will be given to students with particularly good attendance and improved attendance. The importance of regular attendance will be stressed to parents through Parent Information Meetings, Parent Teacher Consultations, School Newsletters and the School Website.

1.4 Sheldon key staff for attendance are:

The tutor plays a key role in monitoring and encouraging good attendance. Attendance will be discussed regularly in tutor time and in 1:1s with students.

Staff	Title	Role	Contact
Mr John Rumble	Assistant Headteacher	Senior Attendance Champion	jrumble@sheldonschool.co.uk

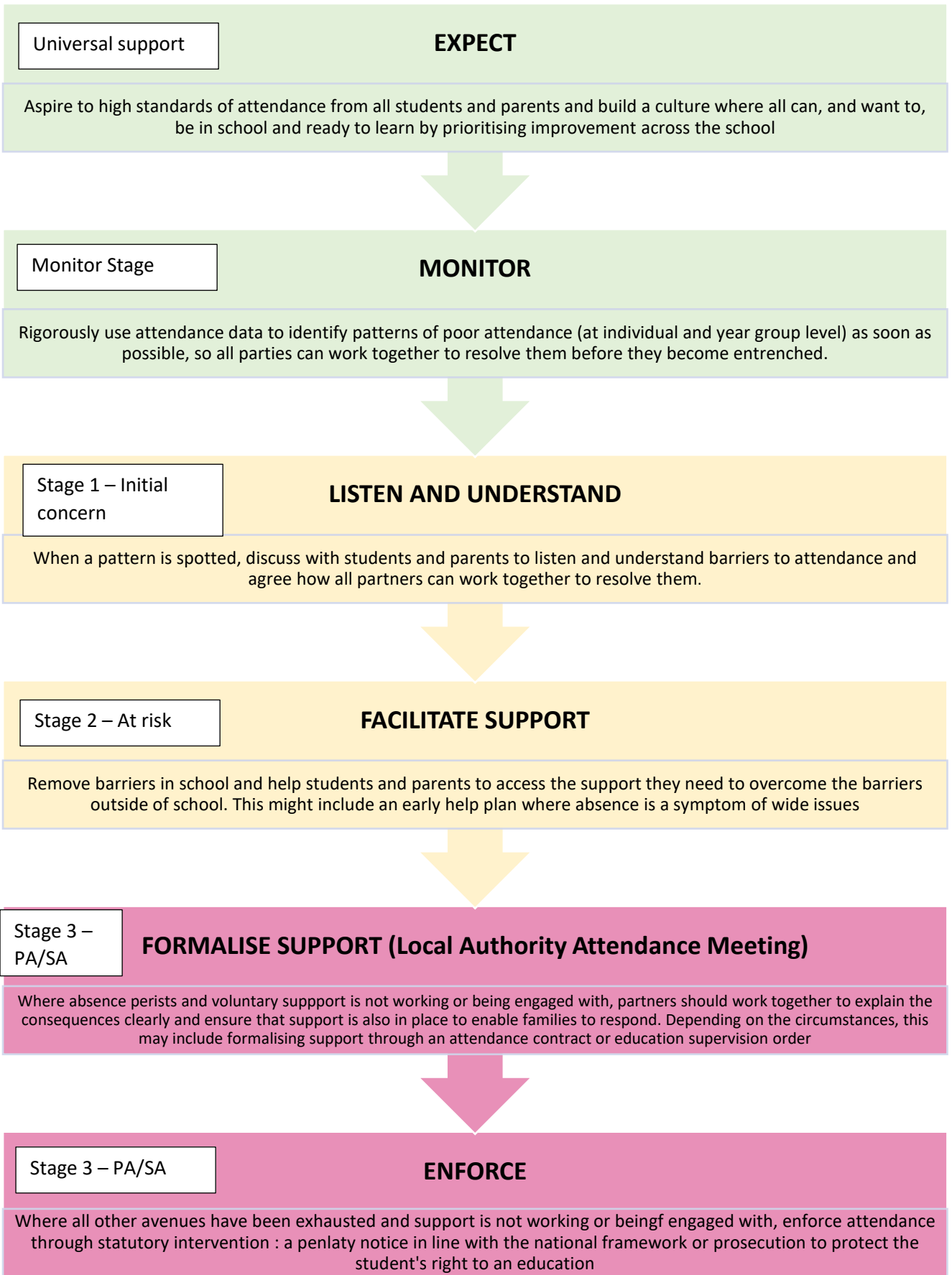| Mrs Lisa Hughes	Attendance Administrator	Day to day administration of attendance	lhughes@sheldonschool.co.uk
Mrs Lorraine Crouch	Pastoral Lead Y7	Support with attendance for Y7	lcrouch@sheldonschool.co.uk
Mrs Karen Colley	Pastoral Lead– Y8	Support with attendance for Y8	kcolley@sheldonschool.co.uk
Mrs Julie Mcquillan	Pastoral Lead – Y9	Support with attendance for Y9	jmcquillan@sheldonschool.co.uk
Mrs Dee Oxley	Pastoral Lead – Y10	Support for attendance with Y10	doxley@sheldonschool.co.uk
Mrs Elaine Wallis	Pastoral Lead Y11	Support for attendance with Y11	ewallis@sheldonschool.co.uk
Mrs Jenny Coombs	Pastoral Lead Y12/13	Support for attendance with Y12/13	jcoombs@sheldonschool.co.uk

Working together to improve attendance

It is essential that all stakeholders work together to ensure good attendance at school. This includes successfully identifying the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance at home, in school or more broadly.

The students will analyse their own attendance on a weekly basis and will be rewarded for good levels of attendance and for improvements in attendance. This will be through praise points and entry into a prize draw held at the end of each term in the celebration assembly.

Year Heads will also promote attendance through assemblies and their weekly tutor notes. Tutors will be encouraged to praise the students that have made improvement with their attendance.

Working together is very important. The plan for this is summarised in the following flow chart.

Universal support	**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising improvement across the school

Monitor Stage	**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and year group level) as soon as possible, so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Stage 1 – Initial concern	**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Stage 2 – At risk	**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help plan where absence is a symptom of wide issues

Stage 3 – PA/SA	**FORMALISE SUPPORT (Local Authority Attendance Meeting)**

Where absence perists and voluntary suppport is not working or being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure that support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order

Stage 3 – PA/SA	**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or beingf engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention : a penlaty notice in line with the national framework or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education

2. Expectations and daily routines

2.1 Day to day

Student	Parent	School
• If you arrive in school early, the Refectory is available to sit quietly with friends. • Students should attend school every day unless too ill to do so or prior permission has been given for leave of absence • Students should arrive in school by 8.25am. • Registration starts promptly at 8.30am • Registers close at 8.55am. Arrival after this time is an unauthorised absence for the morning session. • Attend all lessons on time • If arriving at school later than morning registration, sign in at Student Reception • If leaving school for an appointment, bring a note from parent/carer and sign out at Student Reception. Parents can arrange leave of absence in advance through the online leave of absence form.	• Ensure that your child arrives at school on time. • Ensure that your child attends school every day unless too ill to do so • The parent/carer should call the absence line on the first day of absence by 8am. • If the child is going to be absent for more than one day, the parent/carer should call to update on the absence line. • If a parent would like to discuss the circumstances around an absence, they should speak to either the child's tutor, Head of Year or Pastoral Lead • Students should only be absent from school where they are too ill to attend or if permission has been granted for leave of absence prior to the absence. An electronic Leave of Absence Form should be completed for this. Leave can only be authorised in exceptional cirumstances. Leave of absence cannot be granted for a family holiday • If a child is taken out of school without authorised leave of absence, a fixed penalty may be issued. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. Where this is not possible, a leave of absence form should be completed.	•We will have staff on duty around school from 8.10am to meet and greet students on arrival. •Open registration at 8.30am •Close registration at 8.55am. Any student arriving after 8.55am will be marked as a U code. This is an unauthorised absence for the morning session. •If a student is marked absent and no call has been received, a text message will be sent to the parent. If there is no response, a follow up phone call will be made. Parents/carers will be reminded that it is their responsibility to inform the school if their child is off school. •The headteacher is the only person allowed to authorise leave of absence. This is delegated to Mr J Rumble (Assistant Headteacher) or another member of the Leadership Team. •The school may ask the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice, if leave of absence is taken without authorisation. •Class teachers will take a register in every lesson. If a student is not present and has been present earlier in the day, this will be investigated and if the child is not located, parents will be contacted for safeguarding purposes •Morning tutor time is used to check students' uniform and that they are ready for school, in terms of equipment etc. There will also be some tutor group activities around topical themes

2.2 Persistent and severe absence

- Good attendance is where a student is in school for 96% of the time or more. Where a student's attendance rate drops below 90%, this is deemed to be persistent absence and equates to 1 day off every fortnight. Early help intervention is put into place in our monitoring stage if attendance falls below 96%. If it falls below 92%, the child is at risk of becoming persistently absent and stage 1 interventions are used. Details of these interventions are in our attendance stages.
- We fully understand that there are often valid reasons for absence and these barriers will be explored with parents and students in a School Attendance Meeting. Strategies will be explored to overcome these barriers.
We will take the individual needs of students into account, including Special Educational Needs and disabilities, as well as mental health needs and medical issues.
Where the student has an EHCP, either the SENDCO or Deputy SENDCO will be part of the attendance meeting. This will help to ensure that the individual needs of the student are being considered.
- Where necessary, reasonable adjustments can be made to provision, to make attendance more achievable. This is considered on a needs basis and will form part of the School Attendance Meeting.
- If the needs of the family and child are wider than just school attendance, an Early Support Assessment will be opened, to explore what further support can be put into place for the child/family. This can include engaging the support of wider support networks.
- In certain cases, attendance may form part of a Keyworker Support Plan, Child in Need plan or Child Protection Plan from Social Care. The school will attend these meetings and work collaboratively with the wider professionals and family to support them.
- In some instances, the school may request medical evidence to support absence from school due to illness. This will be discussed at a School Attendance Meeting. In this situation, absence due to illness will be unauthorised without such evidence.

Monitor (96 – 93%) (Initial Concern)

Reason	Action	Review
Attendance is between 96% and 93% with absences due to medical appointments or illness.	**The tutor should hold a 1:1 meeting** with the student to discuss their overall attendance. Underlying issues will be discussed and logged on CPOMS**.** **Parents/carers will be notified when required.** **When unauthorised absences are on the record**, **contact** will be made with the **parent/carer** to address the issue and ensure reasons for the absence are communicated.	Attendance should be monitored each week by the tutor to ensure that it moves towards and above 96%. When attendance does not improve,

Unauthorised absences may be on the attendance record	**A letter will be sent to parents/carers** to inform that their child's attendance is now being formally monitored.	learners will move to stage 1

Stage 1 – At risk of becoming persistently absent – approaching 92% or below

Reason	Action	Review
Attendance levels continue to fall (approaching 92% or below) Unauthorised absences remain on the attendance record There are patterns of broken weeks of attendance. There is regular absence due to minor illness	The tutor or Pastoral Lead will **complete an absence questionnaire** with the student. This will help **establish the reasons for absence** from school. This should be uploaded to CPOMS. **A formal phone call will take place with parents**. The outcome from the questionnaire will normally be discussed. Advice should be given around good school attendance. Any barriers should be identified and interventions implemented **This phone call should be logged on CPOMS**. Any unauthorised absences should be discussed and reasons established. Parents should be informed that if their attendance continues to fall, a formal School Attendance Meeting will be held. **A letter will be sent to parents** to inform them that the learner has moved to Stage 1	Attendance should be monitored each week by the tutor to ensure that it improves. If attendance continues to fall, the learner will move to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Persistently absent (below 90%)

Reason	Action	Review
Attendance levels continue to fall (below 90%) There are still unauthorised absences on the record There are patterns of broken weeks of attendance	**Parents/Carers will be invited to a School Attendance Meeting (SAM). A formal letter will be sent and uploaded to CPOMS** **In this meeting -** Current attendance levels and number and percentage of authorised and unauthorised absence will be recorded. Barriers to good attendance will be discussed and interventions planned to support the student. This may involve parent support, academic support or pastoral support. This could include : Mentoring, a careers interview, mental health referral, regular meetings with the Student Support Worker, changes of seating plans in classrooms, meetings with teachers where relationships are more challenging etc Where the barriers are not in school, referrals to outside agencies should be discussed and made if parents are in agreement. Where there are frequent absences due to illness, the school may request that medical evidence is provided from the GP before any further absences are authorised. Medical evidence can take the form of a dated prescription, a prescribed medicine package with the child's name on and the date of issue, or an appointment card, dated with the child's name on.	Attendance will be monitored for a period of 4 – 6 weeks. A SAM Review will be held with parents/carers. Where concerns persist, the learner will move to Stage 3 (EWO referral)

	If necessary, parents can be asked to sign a medical consent form at the SAM and the school will write to the GP with a copy of the attendance certificate.	
	If the actions agreed at the SAM are not successful and, if the parent consents, an **attendance contract** will be formulated**.** This document is signed by all parties involved. This document is not legally binding, but formalises the agreement of all parties to work together to improve attendance.	
	Parents will be informed that if attendance does not improve and unauthorised absences continue to occur, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.	
	In some circumstances, a notice to improve letter will be issued to parents and then if further unauthorised absences occur in the notice period (30 days), the local authority will issue a fixed penalty notice. This is £160 which reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A leaflet will be sent out with the letter.	
	If attendance does not improve, despite the fixed penalty notice letter or fine, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made. Please note that only the Headteacher or delegated member of the leadership team can authorise absence from school.	
	A School Attendance Review Meeting will be held after a period of 4 – 6 weeks.	

Stage 3 – Attendance is below 90% and is continuing to fall.

There has been a School Attendance Meeting and at least one review meeting.

A fixed penalty notice has been considered

Reason	Action	Review
Attendance levels continue to fall is below 90% despite a SAM meeting and SAM review taking place. Unauthorised absences remain on the absence record (10 or more) There are continued patterns of broken weeks of attendance	**A formal referral to the EWO will be made. Parents/carers will be invited to a Local Authority Attendance Meeting (LAAM) chaired by the EWO.** The Senior Attendance Champion or a senior colleague will attend. A full review of attendance, interventions and support will take place and an action plan for improvement will be made. Full consideration of factor surrounding attendance will be made. The meeting aims to improve school attendance. If this is unsuccessful, various legal options are available to the EWO including an Education Supervision Order through the family court or prosecution through the magistrate's court **A LAAM review meeting will be held in 4 – 6 weeks.**	If improvement to attendance is not made and sustained, the EWO will decide whether the Local Authority will take legal action. If sufficient improvement is made, the case will be closed and the school will continue to monitor the learners attendance.

3. **Framework for penalty notices**

From 19th August 2024, there is a new national framework for penalty notices. We will follow this national framework to ensure that our practices are fair and transparent. This is available on page 56 of the document linked below

Working together to improve school attendance

4. Use of Data and communication

3.1 As well as the daily monitoring of student absence and follow up of this, the school will also produce and analyse attendance data as follows:

Frequency	What information?	Purpose	Shared with
Fortnightly	Attendance data for students that have fallen below 96% Attendance is compared to 2 weeks prior to show trend. By year group, Student information such as SEND, PP, FSM	Facilitate conversation between tutor and student. Identify where student should be on the attendance stages and implement interventions	Tutor Head of Year Key Stage Lead SEND team
Termly (6 times per year)	Whole school attendance summary by year group. Broken down into Tutor Group, Year Group, Gender, FSM etc	Strategic analysis of school attendance data	Leadership Team Year Heads Governing Body

5. Working with the Local Authority and other schools in the local area

4.1 The school will work in collaboration with the other schools in the local area as part of an attendance network. This will involve discussion of strategies to remove barriers to attendance that families experience. In some cases, families will experience the same or similar barriers to attendance for multiple children who attend different schools in the area

4.2 The school will meet with the Local Authority in regular Targeting Support Meetings, at least once per term.

4.3 We will communicate the following information with the Local Authority:

- every time a student's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside the standard transition time.

- the name and address of any student who fails to attend school regularly or has missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised.

- Student level attendance data. This will be automatically collected electronically.

6. Role of Governing Body

5.1 The governing body are expected to:

- recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school

- Ensure all school leaders fulfill their expectations and statutory duties.

- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends. Support school leaders to focus on improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts that most need support.

- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance

5.2 The member of the Leadership Team responsible for attendance will provide a regular report for the Governing Body.

5.3 The Governing Body will scrutinise and approve the attendance policy on an annual basis to ensure that it is fit for purpose and appropriate for the strategic improvement of the school.