Attendance Policy

Senior leader responsible for managing this policy:	Jen Carr - Assistant Headteacher jcarr@dawlish.devon.sch.uk
Adopted by the Governors of Dawlish College:	6 June 2023
Review date:	May 2026

Reviewing this Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the following circumstances:

· **Changes in legislation and/or government guidance**

· **As a result of any other significant change or event**

· **If the policy is determined not to be effective**

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Introduction

The Governors and staff at Dawlish College are united in their belief that regular college attendance is the key to enabling our young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Dawlish College values all young people. As set out in this policy we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

The Attendance leader (Jen Carr) and Attendance Officer (Emily Fitzgerald) will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success. Attendance concerns will be raised with parents if reasons are not known by the college, e.g. a long period of illness, this information may be shared with the Local Authority. Where we have concerns, or lack of engagement from families to improve attendance, we will follow the colleges escalation approach to improve attendance (Appendix 8). The colleges escalated approach is student-centred and prioritises support and developing strong working relationships with families. The early help process will be utilised to provide support prior to escalation and consider how we can work with families to enable the student to access their right to education.

Our aim is to always to work in partnership with parents and any referral for consideration of a penalty notice is deemed to be a last resort at Dawlish College. Attendance figures for each student will be reported to parents as part of the annual report, we will also share a student's attendance profile if we have concerns regarding their attendance. Throughout the college year the Attendance Team will report on the overall attendance figures for student groups, this will be closely monitored for support and reported to the Governing Body.

Dawlish College has developed a college culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all young people can attend college and thrive. This approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with young people, and parents, prior to escalation. We use a staged approach to ensure we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns.

In summary to support good attendance, and safeguarding, at Dawlish College we:

- Ensure the college is welcoming and every student feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Ensure the college site is open at the stated times.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is complete by every class teacher each day. This further supports our approach to safeguarding within the college.
- Take safeguarding seriously and we will always contact you on the Dawlish College day that your child is absent from college, this includes before and after-college clubs. If your child arrives late after the close of registration, we will record their arrival at student reception and transition the student to class.
- Consider any requests for leave in term time individually. This will be aligned to the Local Authority code of conduct.
- Notify the Local Authority within 5 days if a new student is joining the college roll.
- Inform the Local Authority of young people whose parents have notified the college in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Work closely with the College Attendance Support Team.
- Notify the Local Authority of Children Missing in Education

  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

1. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all college leaders, staff, parents, and students.

For the purposes of this policy, references to 'teachers' include all paid staff responsible for the supervision of students.

For the purposes of this policy, references to 'students' include all learners in our college.

For the purposes of this policy and the procedures, we refer to Section 576 of the Education Act which defines the 'parent' of a student or young person as:

- **Both of their natural parents, whether they are married or not.**

- **Any person who, although they are not the natural parent, has parental responsibility for the student or young person, as defined in the Children Act (1989).**

- **Any person who, although not the natural parent, has the care of the student or young person i.e., a person with whom the student lives, irrespective of their relationship to the student.**

2. Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve college attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on college attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern college attendance:

- **The Education Act (1996)**

- **The Education Act (2002)**

- **The Education and Inspections Act (2006)**

- **The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)**

- **The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2010)**

- **The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2011)**

- **The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)**

- **The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2016)**

- **The Education (Penalty Notices) England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)**

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the college census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 All children aged 5 - 16 years must receive suitable education. (Section 7, Education Act (1996)). A student of compulsory college age who is registered at a college must, by law, attend regularly.

3.2 By law, parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that students of compulsory college age attend regularly. (Section 576, Education Act (1996)).

3.3 The Local Authority (LA) must offer educational provision for all children of college age.

3.4 By law, all colleges are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register from the beginning of the first day on which the college has agreed or has been notified that the student will attend the college.

3.5 Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.6 By law, all colleges must keep an admissions' register, the contents of which includes all students, their personal details, (including at least two telephone numbers for different safe adults, to ensure that we can always contact someone in the event of an emergency), the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and details of the college last attended.

3.7 Students will be removed from roll only when they complete their education stage, transfer to another college, move out of the area or emigrate or following a parental request for elective home education. We follow statutory guidance for removing students from roll and notifying the local authority. Further information can be found in Appendix 6.

3.8 There is a clear link between attainment and attendance. Under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a college where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance, this is done to ensure that all students can benefit from their legal right to receive an education.

3.9 Dawlish College will communicate attendance concerns to the young person's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual College Head, if the student is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual College Head, where relevant.

3.10 We have a roles and responsibilities framework outlined in Appendix 3 to complement this policy. This defines agreed roles and responsibilities for parents, students and staff. This includes our College Attendance leader who is Mrs Jen Carr – Assistant Headteacher.

4. Definitions

4.1 A student is classed as absent if they arrive after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason.

4.2 An authorised absence is when approval has been given in advance for a student of compulsory college age to be absent for a specific (legal) purpose, or we have accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence from a parent or carer. This may include:

- An absence for illness for which we have granted leave

- Medical or dental appointments may be granted leave where every attempt has been made to arrange outside of college hours, has been unsuccessful and so cannot be avoided, or where the appointment is a genuine emergency

- Religious or cultural observances for which we have granted leave. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents or student belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance

- An absence due to a change to exceptional circumstances

4.3 An unauthorised absence is defined as one where we are not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Reasons may include:

- Parents keeping children from attending unnecessarily or without reason

- Missing sessions before or during the college day

- Absences which have never been properly explained

- Arrival after the register has closed

- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed

- Leaving our college without authorisation during the day

Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each student's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each student's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

Persistent lateness is defined as students who have five or more late marks recorded in a single half-term.

5. Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

Dawlish College recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a student's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in college. Parents should inform the college of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in college. This will help the college to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any student at any time will be reported to the designated senior leader Kate Bukowski. We will always follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 and our safeguarding policy.

We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of students may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

We set challenging attendance targets for the whole college.

Student-level absence data is collected regularly and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's college absence national statistics releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average.

Specific measures are taken to monitor attendance. These processes are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the effective safeguarding of all students through specific tailored interventions. Data on attendance is collected and analysed a minimum of once a half term. Key analysis is made of:

· **Patterns of absence**

· **Patterns of lateness**

· **Patterns of medical appointments**

· **Correct and consistent use of absence codes**

· **Trends in reasons for absence, for example, use of the C code, leave of absence and exclusions**

· **Trends in particular groups of children for example, students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).**

Attendance data informs action planning and supports the identification of key priorities in our college development plan and future revisions of this policy. The attendance data will be reported to the Headteacher and all other relevant staff, to facilitate discussions with students and families. Data will also be used by the college to monitor the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

AMENDMENT RECORD

Date	Reviewed by	Nature of Change	Next Review
May 2023	JC	Reviewed existing policy and updated as required.	As required and no later than May 2026

Appendix 1

1. **Key Personnel**

Name	Role	Email:
Sam Banks	**Headteacher**	sbanks@dawlish.devon.sch.uk
Jen Carr	**Assistant headteacher/Attendance Lead**	Jcarr@dawlish.devon.sch.uk
Emily Fitzgerald	**Lead Attendance Officer**	efitzgerald@dawlish.devon.sch.uk
Emma Robson	**Attendance officer**	erobson@dawlish.devon.sch.uk
	Governor responsible for attendance	
	Progress leader 7	
	Progress leader 8	
	Progress leader 9	
	Progress leader 10	
	Progress leader 11	
	Student welfare officer Y7	
	Student welfare officer Y8	
	Student welfare officer Y9	
	Student welfare officer Y10	
	Student welfare officer Y11	

Appendix 2

Maintaining an Attendance Register

2.1   The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each college day and once during the pm session. It will mark whether each student is:

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

2.2   Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person making the amendment

2.3   The college gates are open from: 8:30pm. The college day starts at 8.45am. All students should be in their classroom at this time.

2.4   The first (morning) bell rings at 8.40am. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their designated classroom by 8.50am. The am session register closes at 9.15am. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. After the register closes at 9.15 students will receive a mark to show that they are on site, (U) but will count as an absent mark.

2.5   Students arriving late should report to student office and sign in.

2.6   The second (afternoon) registration session starts at 12:25pm

2.7   If a student needs to leave college during the day, they must sign out at student reception with a parent once authorisation has been given from Emily Fitzgerald (Attendance officer)

2.8   Students educated off-site are monitored daily for their attendance at the off-site/alternative provision. Staff work closely with the staff at the off-site provision, the student, and their parents to support the student to maintain good attendance.

3. Recording Attendance

3.1   The national absence and attendance codes enable colleges to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the Census. The data helps colleges, local authorities, and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence. See Appendix 4 for the DfE attendance codes.

3.2   There should be no pre-population of codes and individual college tracking systems which monitor the whereabouts of students educated off-site, must be robust and quality assured regularly.

3.3   Where students are dual registered, are on voluntary service or are taking part in other approved educational activities, the register will be updated following regular discussion and information sharing with the other establishment.

3.4   Emily Fitzgerald (attendance officer) will check the missing register report throughout the day and report any registers that have not been completed.

4. Reporting Absence

At Dawlish College we expect our parents to report any unplanned absence on the first day of absence.

4.1   It is the responsibility of the parent to inform us of a student absence and to inform us of any changes to contact details.

4.2   Parents are expected to inform us of a student's absence before 8.30 a.m. on each day of absence providing the reason for absence and when the student will be returning to college. We will contact parents and/or other listed emergency contacts where no contact has been made. Where required, we may conduct reasonable enquiries with friends or neighbours and will carry out welfare home visits as necessary. If no contact is made, we may request a welfare check from the police.

5. Reasons for Absence

5.1 Appointments

5.1.1   As far as possible, medical, and dental appointments should be made outside of the college day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to us prior to the appointment.

5.1.2   Students must attend before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the student's record. Should a student arrive late following an appointment, they should report to the student office to be signed in by student reception.

5.1.3   Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with an M code.

5.2 Religious Observance

5.2.1   Parents must inform us, in advance, if absences are required for days of religious observance. We will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

5.2.2   Absences for religious observance will be recorded with the R code.

5.3 Illness

5.3.1   In order to make informed decisions about their student's fitness for attending parents are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance 'Is My Child Too Ill for College?'. Any authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the Headteacher or member of staff delegated to carry out this task.

5.3.2   In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of an INSET day or Bank Holiday), parents may be asked to provide additional medical evidence before authorising the absence, however this will only be requested if there is any genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In this instance, if medical evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

5.3.3   Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis. Parents will be notified of this by letter. Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as medical evidence when attendance is a serious concern. For the purpose of this policy, 'serious concern' may be defined as: repeated unexplained/unauthorised absences or 3 x separate illnesses within a half term where no medical condition or underlying health issues have been identified.

5.3.4 Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:

- Medical card with one appointment entered with the student's name and surgery stamp included, signed by the receptionist
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital consultant
- Evidence of consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes / call log
- Letters detailing hospital appointments Doctor or GP 'sick notes' are not required, and we do not expect parents to request these from their GPs.

5.3.5   In some cases, a student may be absent for long term due to an illness or injury. We will liaise with families to ensure children return to college quickly and that there are no safeguarding concerns. On occasions where this is not possible, and the section 19 threshold is met, we will make a referral to the Local Authority Medical Panel which provides educational opportunities for students who are unable to attend their regular college.

5.4 Traveller Students Travelling for Occupational Purposes

5.4.1 Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes covers Roma, English and Welsh Travellers, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Circus workers, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers), Showman and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with us, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

The aim for the attendance of Traveller students, in common with all other students, is to attend college as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act (1944), Section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e., 200 half days) in a year. It is important to note that this is only relevant when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is regularly attending college when that trade/business permits following a request from parents (and the minimum 200 session criteria is met).

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller students is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their child is receiving a suitable education when not at college.

It is parent's responsibility to:

- Ensure that your child's ethnicity has been registered with the college. You can ask the college to correct this or update it.
- Ensure you tell your child's college ahead of time. 2 weeks' notice is useful.
- Your children should attend as much college as possible.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is accessing at least 100 days (200 sessions) of college in any 12-month period.
- To have regular contact with their child's college whilst travelling. Once a week is suggested.
- To support their child to complete the work set by colleges whilst travelling.
- If staying in a new area for a week or more, the parent/guardian can register their child for a temporary place at any college – called 'dual registration'.

It is the college's responsibility to:

- Allow Traveller students to travel with their parents for work purposes.
- Create work packs for their students to complete when away.
- Arrange times for at least a weekly 'check in' with the family. This can be through a call or email.
- Contact the Local Authority if they have concerns.
- Mark student's work and provide valuable feedback.
- Ensure missed opportunities such as parents evening, vaccinations and careers advice are supported on the student's return.

5.4.2 Students with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students 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 student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students should be the same as they are for any other student.

Dawlish College will:

• Work with parents to improve attendance, be mindful of the barriers students face, make reasonable adjustments, and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. It is also expected that parents will engage with the support offered both internally and with external partners to ensure our children have all the support they need to thrive.

• Encourage positive conversations so that a good support plan can put in place including making reasonable adjustments.

• Consider possible explanations for absence including Emotionally Based College Avoidance (EBSA).

• Work with parents to consider 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.

• Ensure relevant referrals are made for students who are too ill to attend college, which may include medical panel (under section 19) and or medical agency support such as CAMHS.

• Establish strategies for removing the in-college barriers this may include considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in college and lunchtime arrangements.

• Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place and consider whether a time-limited, closely monitored and reviewed, phased return to college would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about college attendance.

6. Requesting Leave in Term Time

6.1   Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Student Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). "Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional." Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted.

6.2   The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are: 'rare; significant; unavoidable and short'. Holidays during term time will not usually be considered as exceptional circumstances. The following guiding principles apply:

• Term-times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off a year including weekends and college holidays. We will rightly prioritise attendance.

• The decision to authorise a student's absence is wholly at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each individual request.

• If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'. It is acceptable for the Headteacher to take a student's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.

• We will take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if this prevents them from being able to take family holidays during scheduled holiday time.

• We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special needs and/or disabilities.

6.3   Family emergencies need careful consideration before decisions about attendance are made. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the student to miss education for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at college with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The college routine can offer a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. Relevant members of staff will work with parents to decide what is in the best interest of the student.

7 - Persistent and Severe Absence

7.1   Students with 90% or less attendance are classified as Persistent Absence (PA). PA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

7.2   Students with 50% or less attendance are classified as Severe Absence (SA). SA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences

7.3   All PA students will have bespoke action plans to try to improve their attendance to above 97%. This will be monitored by Emily Fitzgerald (Attendance officer) with the support of Jen Carr (Attendance leader). Students who are PA will be discussed as a potential concern at weekly or fortnightly attendance review meetings. Where students have an identified special educational need, the colleges SENCO will also provide support, so that the impact of needs are clearly understood and appropriate, supportive actions are taken.

7.4 The college's strategy for tackling persistent absence, can be found in Appendix 7.

8 - Following Up Absence and Taking Statutory Action

8.1   We will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason. Any students who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than one week will be referred to Kate Bukowski (DSL) and Sam Banks (Headteacher).

8.2   Unexplained absences will be followed up on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and the college will identify whether the absence is approved or not. The college will identify the correct code to use and will input it as soon as the reason for absence in ascertained. This will take no longer than 5 working days after the session.

8.3   In the case where the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the college and no reason has been issued for the student's absence, the college will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the student, following procedures for children missing in education as outlined in the document from the Department of Education.

8.4   Where it is appropriate, a member of staff may carry out a 'Return to College Interview' to discuss the absence and to offer any support. Following three separate periods of absence the interview will be carried out by a senior member of staff such as Jen Carr.

8.5   It may occasionally be necessary to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised for a particular student unless medical evidence is provided. This decision can only be made by Sam Banks (Headteacher) in consultation with Kate Bukowski DSL and where relevant, the SENCO Kathryn Wharton-Darke.

8.6   It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send children to college regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. Colleges can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their student, where the student is of compulsory college age. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, in line with the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

•   A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

•   Singular incidences of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

•   Where an excluded student is seen in a public place during college hours without a justifiable reason

8.7   Issuing Penalty Notices: each parent receives a penalty notice for each student who has unauthorised absence. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

8.8   Taking Parents to Court for unauthorised absence: The Education Act (1996) Section 444 (1) states that courts can fine each parent up to £1000 per student, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

8.9   Taking Parents to Court for Persistent Unauthorised Absence: The Education Act (1996) – Section 444 (1A) states that courts can fine each parent up to £2500 per student, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to three months.

9 - Children Missing from Education (CME)

9.1   We have due regard to our statutory duty to safeguard students who are CME. We follow the Local Authority's processes for reporting students missing from education.

9.2   If a student fails to return following a period of absence, investigations will be made by staff to their whereabouts. If our investigations fail to contact the parents/student the case will be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Team within 20 days.

10 - Attendance Causing Concern

10.1   Specific measures to monitor attendance are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the safeguarding of all students through specific and tailored interventions.

10.2   Dawlish College records and collects attendance data using our Data Management System, Sims. We recognise that there are particular groups who nationally, and within our local setting, are more vulnerable and susceptible to lower attendance patterns such as children who are defined as Pupil Premium, and students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. We work with families to overcome any specific barriers that children may be facing regardless of these needs to ensure that students access all their education.

10.3   Staff make daily use of Parent Mail to report to parents on trends and patterns in attendance.

10.4   Where attendance is deemed to be a concern, we talk to students and parents. From this, there may be one of three Early Help outcomes:

•   Initiate simple reasonable adjustments

•   Develop a college focused plan with the student and their parent as appropriate

•   Initiate a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA)

10.5   If the conversation with the student indicates a serious safeguarding concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures as set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

11. Supporting the Attendance of Every Student

11.1   We use a variety of strategies to encourage attendance. Promoting a culture of good attendance and celebrating success.   Ensuring there is a culture of feeling safe and college being a place where young people want to be. Dawlish College promotes, and supports, a whole college approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring SEMH support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all young people.

Whole college thinking, culture and climate - a fully embedded ethos in which excellent college attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. An escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.

Supportive policies, systems and processes - The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the college to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.

Professional learning – staff development - The college prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance.   External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified young people and families.

Implement targeted programmes and intervention - Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the attendance leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.

Connect appropriately with approaches to behaviour management - Connecting and belonging drives the college approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The college has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

11.2   We recognise that not all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable, are able to achieve 100% attendance through no fault of their own. We celebrate improvements in attendance and contextualised good attendance for individual students.

11.3   Each student is supported and encouraged to achieve their individual highest possible attendance. Student's will be provided with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound) individual targets for their attendance which should be reviewed regularly and include parental consultation where appropriate. Attendance effort awards will be awarded on a termly basis for students who have made a clear effort to improve or maintain their attendance and/or punctuality.

11.4   Our Behaviour Policy (including rewards, sanctions and exclusions) sets out the details of how we reward students for attendance and punctuality, and what sanctions we apply for lateness.

12. Ethnic Minority Students

12.1   Student registration regulations states that absence should only be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

12.2   The following might be considered as exceptional circumstance for ethnic minority students:

Religious festivals: the college should authorise any absence where the parent/carer's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival.

For example: There are two key festivals in Islam, Eid-ul-Fitr (celebration that takes place at the end of Ramadan, the period of fasting) and Eid-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice). The dates of these key events are set according to the Islamic calendar. Muslim families usually need to take one or two days to celebrate these important festivals. Absences may be recorded as R.

- Religious rites e.g. Bar Mitzvah, Holy Communion. The Headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence individually to determine the number of days approved.
- Close family wedding if dates cannot be during college holidays.
- Illness or death of an immediate family member; the head teacher should consider time needed for the length of journey when child needs to travel abroad.
- Child, parent/carer requires medical treatment overseas or elsewhere in the UK due to language barrier or requiring specialist treatment elsewhere.
- Length of journey from abroad; the Headteacher will consider length of journey or limited regional flights.
- Cultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year or Diwali. Cultural celebrations give children a feeling of belonging and make them feel part of their culture. This sense of identity is like a natural buoy for a child's emotional health.
- Children attending their annual exam in their home country. There are exams which are compulsory in some EU countries. They are normally during holidays but can occasionally be requested during term time.
- Child, parent/ carer's visa have been revoked and they need to return to their birth country whilst pursuing the renewal of a visa.
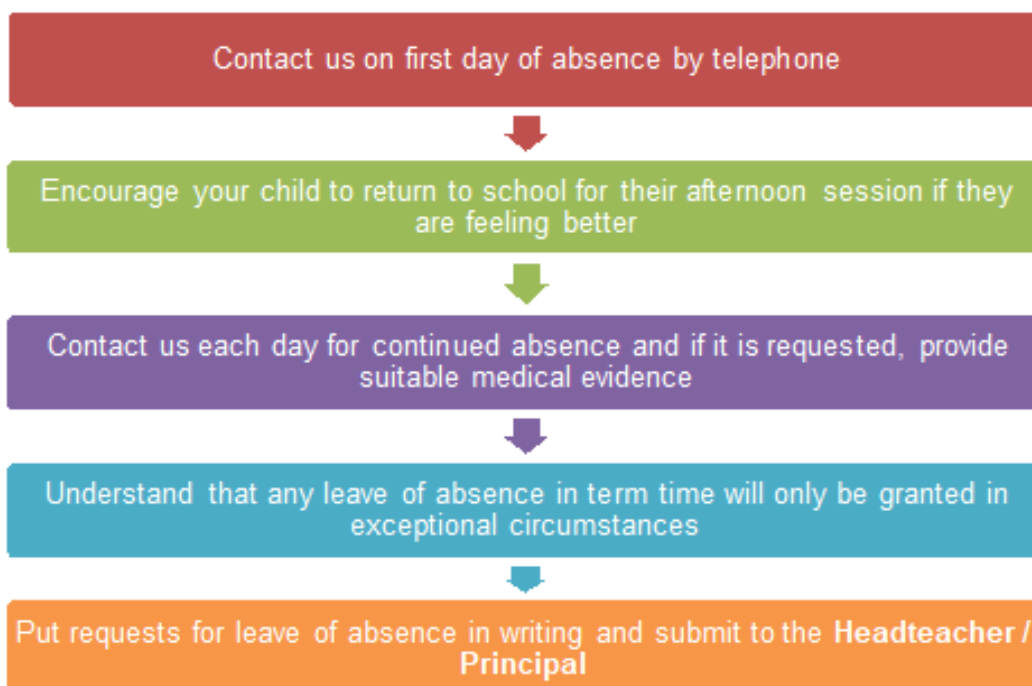
Appendix 3 – Framework of Responsibilities

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the college, parents and students, therefore, Dawlish College expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting attendance at college.

To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Parents

- Ensure students attend regularly and punctually.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular college attendance at home
- Do everything you can to prevent unnecessary college absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of college hours.
- Work with the college and your child to address any in-college barriers to attendance and support their learning by taking an interest in what they have been doing at college.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that you child is used to consistency and the college day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that your child receives the same message at home as they do at college about the importance of attendance.
- Provide the college with more than one emergency contact for your child.
- Provide proof of medical appointments that can only be attended during the college day.
- Make early contact with us when you become aware of problems with your child attending college.
- Attend meetings if concerns are identified.
- Participate in Early Help Meetings if required.
- Support attendance contracts where appropriate.
- Support us in actioning agreed interventions/action plans.

Please follow this process if your child is going to be absent from college:

Contact us on first day of absence by telephone

⬇

Encourage your child to return to school for their afternoon session if they are feeling better

⬇

Contact us each day for continued absence and if it is requested, provide suitable medical evidence

⬇

Understand that any leave of absence in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances

⬇

Put requests for leave of absence in writing and submit to the **Headteacher / Principal**

Students

- Attend college every day and every timetabled lesson punctually
- Acknowledge positive behaviours needed both inside and outside of our college
- Adhere to our systems for late registration
- Adhere to attendance contracts if they are in place
- Aim for the highest possible attendance
- Discuss concerns about your attendance or punctuality with a trusted adult in our college, especially if you are experiencing difficulties at college or at home which may impact on your attendance and/or learning
- Attend all lessons ready to learn with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for your class. Lesson times will be made clear through your college timetable

Support Staff

- Understand that promoting student attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what students say about the barriers to accessing education
- Assist in ensuring attendance has a high profile at Dawlish College
- Build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents
- Challenge parents when no reason has been provided for an absence
- Complete return to college interviews with students when required
- Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Participate in training in relation to attendance

Teachers

- Understand that promoting student attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- Ensure attendance has a high profile within the class
- Consider whether a student's known, or not yet identified, SEN could be impacting on attendance and whether provision and/or further reasonable adjustments should be made
- Take registers at the beginning of every lesson including when the lesson is also the legal registration session
- Build a culture of challenge when addressing absences with parents. Treat all students and parents with dignity and model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and college
- Challenge parents when they do not provide a reason for absence
- Communicate with parents positively. Teachers should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing. Teachers should challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like (this is outlined in more detail in figure 1 below).
- Escalate concerns as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Discuss attendance with parents at every opportunity (celebrate good attendance as well as concerning attendance).
- Participate in training relating to attendance as appropriate

Where a student or family need support with attendance, the best placed person in the college will support the family. This person should remain consistent, and the college will draw on positive relationships to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the student or family is experiencing.

The Attendance Officer

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the college system
- Offer support and guidance on attendance where needed
- Monitor and analyse attendance data and ensure these are sent regularly to class teachers
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Provide regular attendance reports to college staff and report concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader and Governor responsible for attendance
- Monitor students with attendance below 95% with regular communication with both the student and their parents, facilitating attendance meetings where required and agreeing individual action plans
- Attend welfare home visits where required
- Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy
- Work with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence Advise the Headteacher and Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices

College Attendance leader

- Take a lead in promoting student attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what student's say about the barriers to accessing education
- Develop a clear strategy and vision for improving attendance
- Work with the SENCO, where relevant, to ensure any SEND needs are fully understood, including how these may impact on attendance, and to ensure that the provision in place meets needs and supports good attendance
- Monitor daily attendance for vulnerable students and track weekly attendance patterns and trends for all students, delivering intervention and support in a targeted way to students and families. This needs to include patterns of attendance for individual students, cohorts, and groups but particularly for students with attendance below 90%
- Support all staff to monitor attendance patterns and tackle attendance concerns effectively by providing regular attendance reports to year leaders so they are able to facilitate discussions with students (this also includes any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and student premium leads).
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends including analysis of students and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Work with the leadership team and the College Attendance Governor to benchmark the college's attendance data (at whole college, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Monitor in the data the impact of college wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented ensuring there is regular and positive communication with parents
- Ensure attendance is a standing agenda item for every team meeting and use practice examples to explore safeguarding themes and review relevant policy, procedures and code of conduct on a regular basis
- Conduct return to college interviews where students have had 5 absences or more
- Provide rewards for improving attendance, punctuality and overall high attendance while not penalising students with complex medical or additional needs which impacts on their ability to attend college regularly
- Set annual college attendance targets with the Headteacher

- Work on proactively on building strong relationships with families
- Follow the LA Fast-Track procedure and support staff to offer Early Help where necessary and work with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Work with the LA, agencies, and safeguarding partners to overcome barriers to attendance
- Advise the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Attend welfare home visits where required
- Escalate concerns when deemed appropriate as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Lead attendance training for staff and governors
- Communicate attendance concerns to the student's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual College Head, if the student is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual College Head, if the student has one.

Senior Leadership Team

- Take a lead in promoting student attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- Ensure attendance has a high profile across the college.
- Work on proactively on building strong relationships with families.
- Build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents.
- Attend welfare home visits where required.
- Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Liaise with Attendance Lead, DSL, Behaviour Lead and SENCo as appropriate to discuss attendance concerns for individual students. Participate in appropriate training in relation to attendance.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and ensure that adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring Dawlish College conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance e.g., deletion from college roll is adhered to for example.

Headteacher

- Take a lead in promoting student attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented consistently across the college
- Ensure attendance is a target in performance appraisals
- Ensure attendance has a high profile across the college in all communications
- Monitor college level absence data with the College Attendance lead and report data to the Local Governing Board
- Support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Agree with the Attendance Lead when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Decide whether to grant leave during term time for exceptional circumstances
- Ensure attendance training is including provided to staff annually

Local Governing Body (LGB)

- Recognise the importance of college attendance and promote it across the college's ethos and policies
- Review the implementation of the College Attendance Policy

- Ensure the college fulfil their statutory duties
- Ensure the importance of college attendance is promoted across policies and procedures
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Discuss the targets for attendance with the Headteacher and review progress towards these at LGB meetings.
- Regularly monitor attendance figures through data analysis at LGB meetings. Ask questions about attendance trends and be curious about what is being done to challenge and prevent persistent poor absence

Figure 1:

There are 190 school days each year, this means that there are 175 non-school days a year.

Attendance %	Rating	Days absent	Description
100%	Perfect Attendance	0	This is the best chance of success for your child
97%	Good Attendance	5	
95%	Improvement Required	9	Less chance of your child succeeding as it is harder for them to make progress
92%	Concern (Persistent Absence*)	19	
90%	**Serious Concern ****	30	**Serious Concern** **Missing this much education is not fair on your child and will result in legal action**

*Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

** Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

Appendix 4 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on college attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late Arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the college
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the college
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the college
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstance
I	Illness	College has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study Leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the college
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the college
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	College is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at college after the register closed
Other		
X	Not required to be in college	Pupil of non-compulsory college age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	College site is closed, there is disruption to travel because of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the college
#	Planned college closure	Whole or partial college closure due to half term/bank holiday

Appendix 5 – Creating a Positive Attendance Culture

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the college, parents and young person, therefore, Dawlish College expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting attendance at college.

To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

For a positive attendance culture to be fully embedded across our college, it needs to be a holistic approach and not seen in isolation.

<div align="center">Aims of our attendance strategy</div>

- ✓ **CULTURE**
- ✓ **PERSISTENCE**
- ✓ **ACCOUNTABILITY**
- ✓ **REWARDS**
- ✓ **COMMUNICATION**

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure attendance is well managed within the college, with the appropriate level of resources allocated
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- A strong emphasis on wanting students to come to college and value education
- Improving the college experience for children and parents
- Offering an enriching curriculum instilling a sense of pride and responsibilities

<div align="center">Objectives</div>

- create an ethos within the college in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every student aims for excellent attendance

- make attendance and punctuality a priority

- set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole college attendance levels

- embedded roles and responsibilities and promoting consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality

- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism

- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data

- provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, young people and develop mutual cooperation between home and the college in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues

- utilise support available from external partners e.g., Early Help, College Attendance Team, SEMH, C&I, medical, inclusion, young carers network, social care.

Appendix 6 – Removing a child from the college roll

Elective Home Education (EHE): The Statutory Notification and the EHE form, together with the Safeguarding form must be submitted on the day of receiving the de-registration letter from the parent with a copy of the letter.

The student should be taken off roll from the day the college receives the letter or in cases where the parent is giving advance notice of the date requested.

Do not backdate it to an earlier date than receipt of the letter even if the parent requests this. The college should confirm that the student has been registered with the LA as EHE to ensure that they have assumed responsibility for the student. Do not just assume that because the college has submitted the paperwork it has all gone through.

Student Moves Out of Area: Submit the Statutory Notification as soon as the college finds this out.

Continue to track destination and liaise with LA admissions team. They will advise the college when a student may be removed from roll if it has been established that the student/family have left the last known address and their new location is known.

Student Emigrates: The college must follow the procedure above for moving out of area but also need to have ascertained from the parent the forwarding address, details of destination college and moving date.

Student Transfers to a New school: Confirm the student's start date at the new school and that the student has started there. Submit the Statutory Notification on the day the school has it confirmed that the student started at their new school.

The college can take the student off roll from the confirmed start date or the last school day if it precedes it e.g., a Friday and they started on a Monday. If the start date is the first day of a school term the college can back date the leaving date for the college's student to the last day of the previous term.

If the college must investigate in the new term to find out why the student is 'absent' keep them on roll until the college gets a confirmed start date at the new college. If there is a gap between the leaving date the college has been given by a parent and the start date for a student, the student should remain on the college's roll, marked absent, until the transfer college confirms the student has started there. If after ten days, the student has still not started, the college should submit a CME form.

The college cannot remove a CME student from the college's roll for a further ten days from the initial notification or safeguarding referral (so 20 days in total from the first day of absence) unless the LA confirms where the student has gone

Appendix 7 - Strategy for reducing persistent absences

We will always support young people during each stage. If there is lack of engagement, or concerns regarding the reason for absence, we will follow the stages to ensure we prioritise a student's learning and right to education. At Dawlish College we aim to communicate the importance of attendance with parents and young people. We have a particular focus on reducing persistent absenteeism at the college. The persistent absence threshold for young people is currently 10% and Ofsted will use this threshold in its inspection of colleges.

Incentives are used, in consultation with the college council, to actively promote high or improved attendance within the college. Where needed, this considers student's individual needs

An initial letter is sent to parents/carers explaining that the student's attendance is causing the college concern, and this will be closely monitored. The attendance leader (or delegated member of staff) will ensure that all possible support has been offered. For some young people, poor attendance could be indicative of additional needs including anxiety typically referred to as emotionally based college avoidance (EBSA). Anxiety based college avoidance (ABSA) – Education and Families (devon.gov.uk).

If attendance continues to decline, a 2nd letter is issued, daily calls will continue.

Further decline in attendance will result in a meeting with the college attendance officer and commissioned welfare officer to look at proactive strategies to improve attendance. Future actions are outlined to parents/carers and students should this continue to decline.

The threshold means that any student will be classed as persistently absent when they have missed 38 or more sessions. This equates to 19, or more, missed days during the academic year - which is as little as 6 days over each of the three terms. This also equates to the equivalent of 1 day of absence, or more, a fortnight across a full college year

We will use a 19-day tracking system to make parents aware of the number of days a student has missed in education. This will allow us to work together to reduce the number of days and attempt to prevent student's from reaching this number.

Once a student has reached 38 sessions, or 19 days absence, they will be classified as persistently absent from college, and we will report this to the Local Authority and follow external legal proceedings.

The local authority is notified of any further decline for consideration of next steps, this may involve legal action.

Appendix 8 – Attendance Escalation Process

Everyone	4 days absence	7 days absence	10 days absence	13 days absence	16 days absence	19 days absence or more
Dawlish is a place where every student belongs We create welcoming environments to allow all students to gain a sense of belonging and ultimately achieve academically through regular college attendance	Concerning levels of student absence Internal monitoring **Stage 1 letter sent to parents** Early intervention considered as a preventative measure **Student welfare officer meets with student** Possible early help support offered	Growing concerns regarding attendance **Stage 2 letter sent to parents** Explore barriers and agree attendance contract to remove barriers **Meeting with progress leader** Early help support reviewed or offered, links to other areas of pastoral and academic support	The student is a high risk of persistent absence **Stage 3 letter sent to parents** Review of early help and intervention programmes. **Attendance leader meeting with parents** Involvement of external services as required	The student is at risk of persistent absence. **Formal warning notice sent to parents** Continued internal and external programmes of support Parenting contract or supervision order considered at this stage A multi-disciplinary approach to be reviewed	The college will work closely with the LEA. All avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with. **The college will now enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the students right to an education.** All support, and offer of support to be reviewed. Continued support of the young person and family.	The young person is now considered a persistently absent child. Persistent absence is when a students enrolment's overall absence equated to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions. Over an academic year this equates to 19 days. At this stage the student will be PA for the remainder of the college year. **Safeguarding referrals at this stage can be made.** The young person and their family will continue to be supported.