



# LITTLE HEATH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

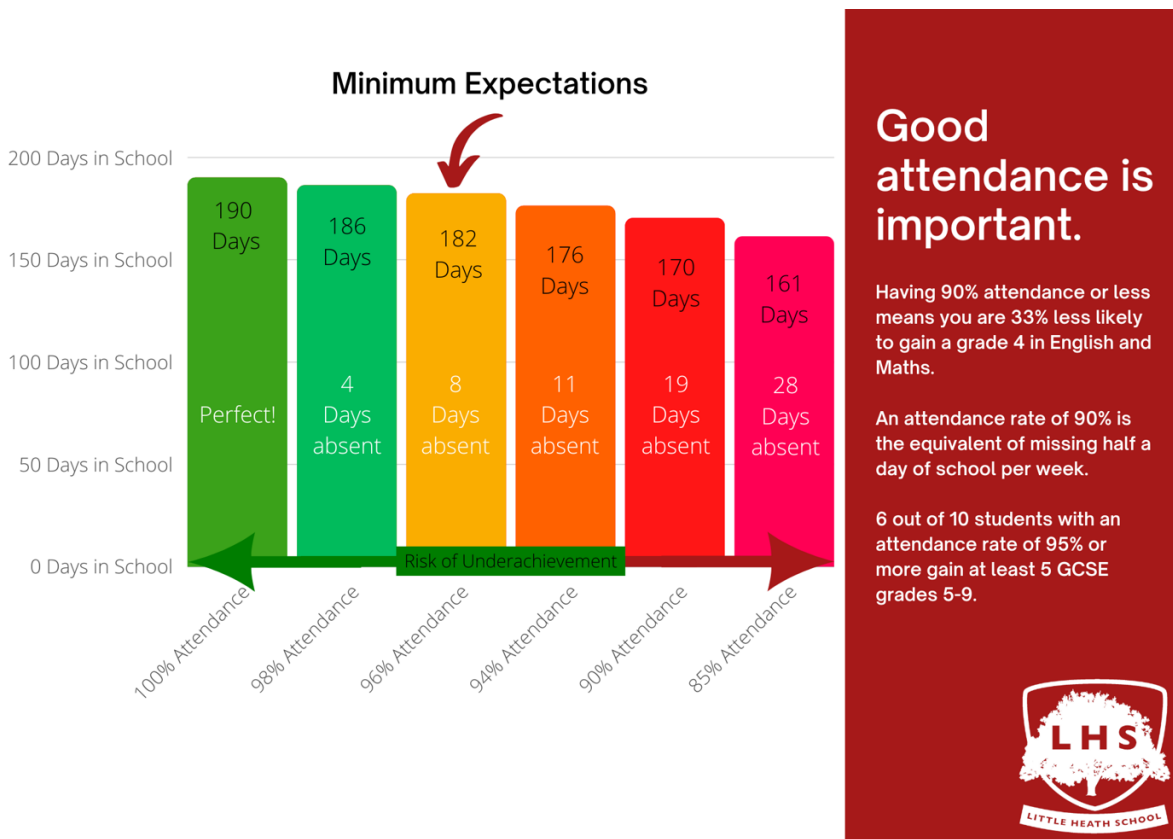
### Introduction

At Little Heath School we firmly believe good attendance and arriving on time are crucial factors in pupils achieving their full potential, staying safe and getting the most out of the whole school experience. There is a clear link between high attendance and high academic achievement and thus, absence, for any reason, has a negative effect on learning. Attendance is the responsibility of every stakeholder at Little Heath School: it is in everyone’s interests, and it is everyone’s business. Positive and consistent communication between home and school is central to improving and maintaining high levels of attendance.

### Attendance

We expect all our pupils to attend school regularly and on time. We set all pupils a minimum target level of 96%. Pupils and parents should routinely monitor their attendance and punctuality on Satchel One. The school regularly reviews each pupil’s attendance and West Berkshire Education Welfare Service may get involved where attendance falls below 90%. An attendance rate of 90% is equivalent to missing half a day of school per week or one day per fortnight. <sup>i</sup>

The diagram below illustrates clearly the impact attendance can have on academic achievement.



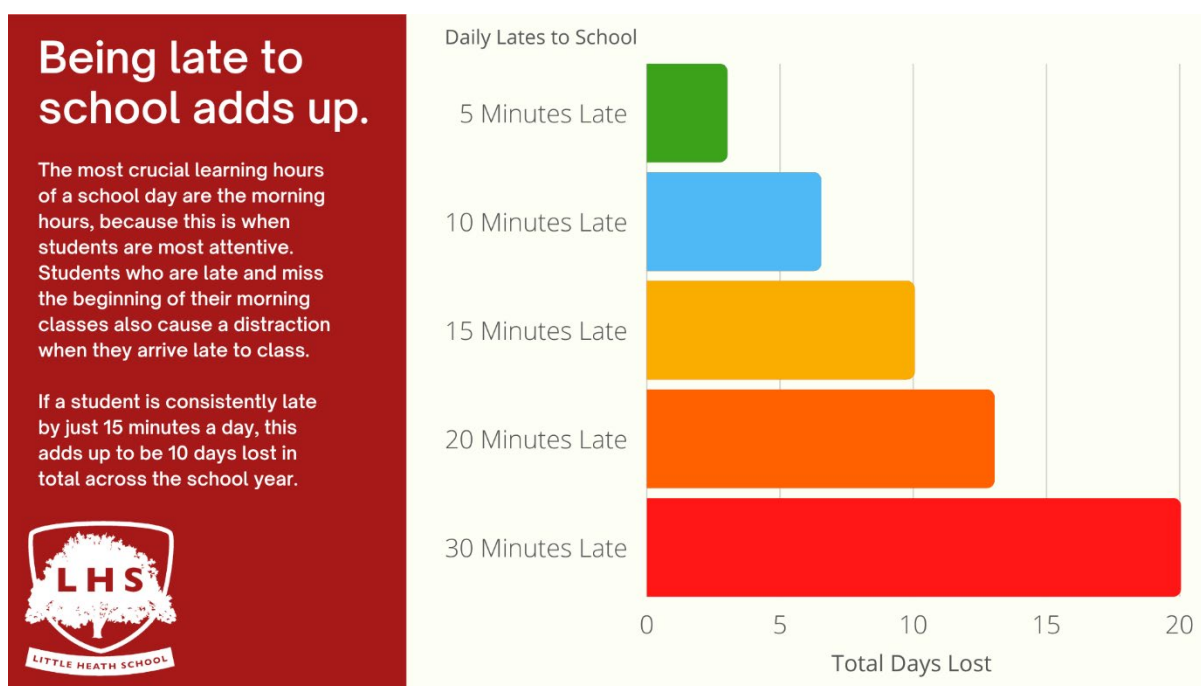
At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9-4 in English and mathematics had an overall rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those gaining grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%). <sup>ii</sup> Clearly any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Good attendance is also essential for pupils to get the most out of their school

experience, wellbeing and wider life chances. The aim should be 100% attendance all the time, although we understand this is not always possible. Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parent’s legal responsibility, but helping to maintain a regular pattern of attendance is everyone’s responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. We are keen to work with parents, pupils and the Local Authority to ensure attendance is as good as it can be to improve the chances of the young people in our care. Pupils who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance and punctuality also show potential employers and colleges that a young person is reliable.

## Punctuality

Punctuality is a very important part of time management and self-discipline. It is the responsibility of pupils and parents to ensure they arrive at school on time. The vast majority of pupils arrive promptly and move between lessons with pace and purpose. From September 2024, all pupils are expected to be on the school site and moving to their tutor room by 8.47am. A bell will sound, and the school gates will close then. Anyone arriving after this time will be classified as late for school. When pupils use public transport to get to school, they must ensure they catch a bus that allows them to be on the school site before the 8.47am bell. Those travelling by car need to allow plenty of time for adverse traffic.

If a pupil arrives late to school regularly their learning begins to suffer. Each pupil is responsible for ensuring they are in the correct classroom at the right time. The bar chart below illustrates how being late to school every day over a school year soon adds up and this will understandably have a negative impact on learning. At Little Heath we believe that arriving to lessons punctually helps create a positive environment for learning and shows that our pupils are ‘Ready to Learn.’



Morning registration will commence at 8.50am and pupils should be sat in their tutor room ready for morning registration by this time. Pupils have their second registration mark of the day at 2.05pm and again should be in their form rooms by this time. Pupils can only enter school through the Sixth Form or Main Gate, and it is their responsibility to ensure they arrive in plenty of time to enter the school grounds by 8.47am at the latest and be in their tutor rooms by 8.50am.

The Sixth Form gates are closed at 8.47am and any pupils arriving after this time will have to enter the school through the Main Gate, into reception and sign in using our Inventory electronic sign in system, which records the number of minutes late. All pupils who arrive after 8.47am will be issued with a 25-minute lunchtime detention for that day. Failure to attend the lunchtime detention will result in a 60-minute Same Day Sanction (SDS) that evening. Parents will be notified via email.

Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed at 9.15am will again have to sign in at Main Reception and be issued with an automatic after school Same Day Sanction of 60-minutes. They will be marked on the register as 'U'. This counts as unauthorised absence for the morning session as registers have closed. This will therefore impact on a pupil's overall attendance. Parents and carers should inform the school as soon as possible if there are exceptional circumstances that caused their child's late arrival. Where pupils have already had one late in a term the detention will stand regardless of parental contact.

This academic year, we are addressing lateness after break times. If a pupil is late to Period 3 or PM Tutor Time (11:20am and 2:05pm respectively), then they will be issued with a 20-minute lunchtime detention the next day. On the rare occasions when there is a valid reason to be late (e.g. in a meeting with a teacher), then pupils must have a note to explain this. We will sound a warning bell at 11.17am and 2.02pm to let pupils know they need to move to Lesson 3 and pm tutor time.

Pupils are expected to arrive to lessons on time. If pupils are late to three or more lessons or tutor times in a week, we will give pupils a warning and notify parents. If this continues the pupil will be issued with a Same Day Sanction for 60-minutes after school. Further lateness results in a SLT detention and then if this persists Internal Exclusion for the day. Where there is a persistent problem with getting to lessons or tutor time punctually, we will discuss with parents and further consequences will be put in place.

### **Daily Routines at Little Heath School**

School is open from 8am and pupils are welcome to use the library for quiet study, go to the canteen to buy breakfast, make use of the basketball courts or outdoor seating areas. Pupils are welcomed into school in the morning at the Main entrance and Sixth Form gate from 8.30am by members of our Senior Leadership Team. All pupils must be on school site by 8.47am and sat in morning tutor time by 8.50am.

How to report absence:

- Contact school preferably before 8.30am – it is a parental duty for you to do this and helps with safeguarding.
- The preferred method of contact is that you email [attendance@littleheath.org.uk](mailto:attendance@littleheath.org.uk)
- Ensure the email contains your child's name and year group / tutor group.
- You must clearly state the reason for absence –it is not enough to say 'unwell' or 'not coming in.' You must give us specific details of the illness.
- Please remember it is up to the school to authorise absence, not the parent. It is easier for us to do this if you provide evidence for the absence e.g. photo of prescribed medication, screen shot of hospital appointment etc.
- If no communication has been received, we will call parents / carers, as appropriate.
- In the case of pupils who we have identified as vulnerable, a priority phone call, directly to the pupil or parent, will be made by 10.30am.

- If you would like to speak to the Attendance Officer to further discuss absence it is better to do this after 10am, but please ensure you have already emailed in. Ring 01189 427337 and select the absence line.
- Non-urgent medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours and usually only a half-day will be authorised i.e. pupils are expected to attend school and leave for afternoon appointments and sign in late for morning appointments.

If there is an unexplained absence, parents / carers will receive an email by 10.00am asking them to inform us of a reason for their absence by 11am. If no communication has been received, we will call parents / carers, as appropriate.

Where pupils and families require support to improve attendance, we can create a personalised plan, including support from internal and external agencies. Ultimately, our goal is for all pupils to regularly attend school to maximise their chances of fulfilling and exceeding their potential.

### Types of Absence

There are two formal registration windows each day in every school– morning and afternoon registration. <sup>iii</sup> Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by schools as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why it is important we have clear information about the reason for absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Where attendance drops below 95% we may request medical evidence for the absence and this will be essential where attendance is below 90%. <sup>iv</sup>

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like:

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Medical / dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time i.e. consultant or clinical ones, not routine dental check-up
- ✓ Emergencies or other unavoidable causes
- ✓ Religious observance (although this is for a limited number of days)

Please be aware that although all the above are authorised, they still do affect a pupil's overall attendance percentage for an academic year.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions or legal proceedings. This includes:

- ✓ Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- ✓ Truancy (including leaving the school site during the day)
- ✓ Absences which have never been properly explained
- ✓ Children who arrive too late at school to get a mark e.g. due to sleeping in
- ✓ Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- ✓ Day trips and holidays in term time\*
- ✓ Minor illnesses e.g. a tummy ache or a slight headache
- ✓ Excessive illness without medical evidence
- ✓ Days off to rest after school trips or other private trips

\*Absence request forms can be found at [Little Heath School - Attendance](#) Please note due to new government statutory guidance holidays during term time will not be authorised and are never considered exceptional circumstances. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday during term time to be an exceptional circumstance, regardless of the reason.

We understand that some children do not like attending school, so please work with us rather than allowing your child to stay off unnecessarily. Please contact your child's form tutor and / or Head of

Year if you or your child have any concerns. We really want to work with you to ensure the best achievements for all the pupils in our care.

### Appointments during the school day

Dental and medical appointments should, wherever possible, be made out of school hours. If your child has an unavoidable appointment, we request that an email copy of their appointment letter is sent in advance to our Attendance Office to authorise as a medical appointment. When the time arrives for the pupil to leave school, they should report to Main Reception to sign out and sign in when they return to school. Please be aware, that although these may be an authorised medical appointment, if your child misses a morning or afternoon registration, the appointment will affect a pupil's overall attendance percentage. In most circumstances, pupils should not be absent from school for the whole day for medical appointments.

### Important Contacts

Please note all calls are via the school office – 0118 9427337

Person	Role	Contact Detail
Ms Alex Glanville	Attendance Officer	<a href="mailto:attendance@littleheath.org.uk">attendance@littleheath.org.uk</a> Please notify of any absence by <b>8.30am</b> .
Form Tutor	Twice daily check-in with pupils and completes statutory am and pm registration	A list of all the Form Tutors and their email addresses are on the website here: <a href="#">Little Heath School - Key Stage Contacts &amp; Tutors</a>
Miss N Guppy	KS3 Administrator	<a href="mailto:nguppy@littleheath.org.uk">nguppy@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs Roanne Harper	KS3 Progress Leader	<a href="mailto:rharper@littleheath.org.uk">rharper@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs J Perry	KS4 Administrator	<a href="mailto:jperry@littleheath.org.uk">jperry@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Miss Ellie Glasgow	KS4 Progress Leader	<a href="mailto:eglasgow@littleheath.org.uk">eglasgow@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Miss K Nicholson	KS4 Progress Leader	<a href="mailto:knicholson@littleheath.org.uk">knicholson@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs M Wraight	Pupil Premium and Disadvantaged Pupils Progress Leader	<a href="mailto:mwraight@littleheath.org.uk">mwraight@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs Fae Apsey	Head of Year 7	<a href="mailto:fapsey@littleheath.org.uk">fapsey@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs Amy Parsons	Head of Year 8	<a href="mailto:aparsons@littleheath.org.uk">aparsons@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mr Chris Davies	Head of Year 9	<a href="mailto:cdavies@littleheath.org.uk">cdavies@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Ms Jess Kennedy	Head of Year 10	<a href="mailto:jkennedy@littleheath.org.uk">jkennedy@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs Rachel Jessop	Head of Year 11	<a href="mailto:rjessop@littleheath.org.uk">rjessop@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mr Toby Jessop	Head of Year 12 & 13	<a href="mailto:tjessop@littleheath.org.uk">tjessop@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs Ros Rayner	Assistant Head i.c. KS3	<a href="mailto:rrayner@littleheath.org.uk">rrayner@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Ms Kayley Button	Deputy Head i.c. KS3, Safeguarding Lead and Acting SENDco	<a href="mailto:kbutton@littleheath.org.uk">kbutton@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mr Steve Rayner	Assistant Head i.c. KS4	<a href="mailto:srayner@littleheath.org.uk">srayner@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs Rebecca Whitford	Assistant Head i.c. KS4	<a href="mailto:rwhitford@littleheath.org.uk">rwhitford@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mr Josh Coulson	Deputy Head i.c. KS4	<a href="mailto:jcoulson@littleheath.org.uk">jcoulson@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mrs Sam Chaventré	Deputy Head i.c. KS5	<a href="mailto:schaventre@littleheath.org.uk">schaventre@littleheath.org.uk</a>
Mr David Ramsden	Headteacher	<a href="mailto:dramsdn@littleheath.org.uk">dramsdn@littleheath.org.uk</a>

## **Promoting and Incentivising Good Attendance**

We will seek to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality with pupils through tutorial work and assemblies focusing on the benefits of good attendance. Posters outlining the importance of good attendance and punctuality will be displayed in each tutor base. Positive messages regarding the importance of good attendance and promoting inter-house attendance competitions will be displayed on the digital signage.

Reward schemes for good attendance and punctuality at Little Heath include:

1. Weekly house points for 100% attendance and excellent punctuality.
2. Praise letters to recognise good or improved attendance.
3. Half-termly prize draw for pupils with 100% attendance.
4. Inter-form competitions to encourage competition in attendance.
5. Letters home to praise improved punctuality and attendance.

In addition, the importance of good attendance is promoted to parents at parent information evenings, in school reports and through the school newsletter.

## **Procedures for return to school following a long period of absence**

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly. Parents/carers are expected to arrange for their children to come to school every day whenever possible even if there are on-going medical or other difficulties. If a child is recovering from an illness or injury and not strong enough to stand the full rigours of a school day, it may be possible to make special arrangements. However, the full quarantine for infectious diseases should be observed. Parents/carers should contact the Tutor or Head of Year to discuss this.

Parents/carers should contact the Tutor or Head of Year if a long absence is known about in advance (e.g. after some operations). For extended periods of absence due to hospitalisation or recovery from serious illness or injury, the school will liaise with the Local Authority to organise medical tuition if this is deemed necessary. Alternatively, it may be appropriate for pupils to work in our Inclusion department before returning to their usual lessons.

## **Little Heath School Strategy for using data to improve attendance**

The School Attendance Officer will monitor attendance and punctuality daily through the school's management information system (SIMs). Where a pupil's attendance has been identified as a concern the parent / carer will be phoned on the first day of absence and we will actively seek to help the child return to school as soon as possible.

Form tutors will use SIMs to check daily attendance and punctuality and each week house points will be given to those with 100% attendance and punctuality. They will discuss concerns during tutor times and praise those with consistently high attendance or excellent punctuality and discuss concerns with those who are not meeting expectations. Tutors will discuss attendance and punctuality concerns with their HOYs at the fortnightly tutor briefings.

Each week a report will be sent to the Achievement Leaders, HOYs and SLT Link for pupils whose attendance is 91-95% and for those that is 90% or below. When a pupil's attendance falls below 93% a letter will be sent to parents to make them aware. This will prompt a discussion with their tutor to ensure the pupil is aware of the implications to their learning and to ensure there are no barriers to

learning. The pastoral team will contact parents to consider how we can work together to support the pupil attending school regularly moving forward if attendance continues to drop.

When attendance drops to 90% or below, a pupil's attendance will be monitored daily by the Attendance Officer and the HOY, and they may be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer for closer monitoring. Parents / carers will be informed of their child's attendance and of the school's concern about its potential negative effects on the child's education. Parents / carers may be invited into school to formulate an individual action plan and set targets for improved attendance. Where possible, we aim to avoid referrals to the Local Authority Attendance Officer and would prefer to work directly with our families to offer support and ensure attendance improves.

Each half term an attendance report is produced by the Attendance Officer that provides attendance data for Years 7 to 11. This includes:

- percentage attendance by year group and gender
- identification of pupils with 100% attendance
- identification of pupils with less than 90% attendance
- identification of pupils with 90-95% attendance
- identification of pupils who are late to school on a regular basis

### **Little Heath's School Strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90%. Severe absence is that which falls below 50%. At this stage, the school will require evidence that medical advice has been sought before authorising any absence due to illness. These types of absence are potentially a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work missed during days off school is never made up, leaving these persistently absent pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Where a pupil is identified as having persistent or severe absence we would prefer to work with the pupils and parents / carers than prosecute. A meeting will be called to discuss barriers to attending, create an individual plan and to set targets for improvement. The Pastoral Team will liaise with the Well Being Team and if necessary, we will work with the LA to help formalise support and access further support from outside agencies.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices and other sanctions**

Little Heath School and the Education Attendance Officer will seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working together to support the family with improving a child's attendance. Where this is not successful, or where parents do not engage with support, then more formal procedures may be followed.

#### **Attendance contracts:**

- A formal written agreement between a parent and the school and/or Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.
- Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- This is a supportive tool, which aims to provide an alternative to prosecution.
- The aim is for the parent(s), pupil, the school and Local Authority to work in partnership towards the common goal of improved attendance.

If an attendance contract is not effective at improving attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress legal interventions:

- **Penalty Notices** (See poster on right for clarity). The threshold is 10 sessions (tutor times) which is equivalent to 5 days of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks or for term time holidays.
- **Education Supervision Orders**
- **Attendance prosecutions**
- **Parenting Orders**

**We would like to stress that we would prefer to work with our children and families to improve school attendance and encourage our pupils back into school without having to resort to the legal powers outlined above. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you are struggling to get your son / daughter to school and hopefully if we all work together, we can ensure each pupil is in school receiving the education they deserve.**

**EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS**

**Penalty Notice Fines for absence from school are changing**

From 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 Penalty Notice fines increase to £160 for each parent, for each child.

You can be fined if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks, for things like:

- being late after the register has closed
- truancy
- taking a holiday without permission from the school
- or if a headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason for missing school

Over a rolling 3-year period the sanctions are:

- 1st offence – £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- 2nd offence – £160
- 3rd offence – Court hearing and up to £2,500 fine, or up to 3 months in prison and a criminal record

For more information please contact: EWSS@westberks.gov.uk

### Further Reading

The Department for Education's attendance guidance for schools can be located here: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118111/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

For further information and specific details of legal interventions please read: [School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118111/School_attendance_and_absence.pdf)

### Appendices and related documents

See Sixth Form Attendance Policy for specific details relating to Sixth Form attendance and punctuality. This can be viewed on the website here: [Little Heath School - Sixth Form Attendance](#)

<sup>i</sup> Please note we always have 2 registers in school per day, even on the last day of term. A half day absence is missing 1 registration.

<sup>ii</sup> [The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4, Academic year 2018/19 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118111/The_link_between_absence_and_attainment_at_KS2_and_KS4_Academic_year_2018_19.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Including at the end of term.

<sup>iv</sup> Medical evidence for physical and mental illness can include screen shots of doctor's appointments or medication issued.