ROOTS 4 LEARNING CIC

Attendance and Absence Policy

Last updated: 03/09/2026

Date policy last reviewed	03/09/2026

Signed by			
Liz Key	**Co-Headteacher**	**Date:**	08/09/2026
Alison Gardiner	**Chair of Trustees**	**Date:**	08/09/2026

Contents

Statement of intent 3
Legal framework 3
Definitions 4
Roles and responsibilities 5
Attendance expectations 7
Absence procedures 8
Attendance register 9
Authorising parental absence requests 10
SEND- and health-related absences 12
Absence in exceptional circumstances 14
Truancy 14
Missing children 15
Attendance intervention 16
Working with parents/carers to improve attendance 16
Persistent absence and Severe absence (PA &SA) 17
Legal intervention 18
Monitoring and analysing absence 19
Training of staff 19
Deletion from Roots's registers 20
Monitoring and review 20
Attendance Monitoring Procedures 20
Appendix: Attendance Agreement Forms 22

Statement of intent

At Roots we hope to create a safe and nurturing environment where children and young people want to attend regularly.

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

We take a whole-centre approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas (such as the curriculum, behaviour, bullying, SEND support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, pastoral support, support for young carers and children with a social worker, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium) can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling the benefit of regular attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with the LA and other relevant partners to understand and remove barriers to attendance, and to provide appropriate support.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with our mainstream partners, as well as other agencies. Keeping regular communication channels about our pupils' wellbeing and progress.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents, and pupils.
- Helping parents understand their legal responsibility to make sure their child receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs, and that, where their child is registered at a school, that school also has a legal duty to secure their regular attendance.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The Co-Headteachers are the main point of contact for matters arising around attendance. Given the size of Roots, the Co-Headteachers also carry out the functions the DfE recommends a Senior Attendance Champion undertake in a larger school, rather than this being a separate named role.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002

- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026'
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following centre policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relational Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Records Management Policy

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Not being present at centre for a session where the pupil is required to attend, recorded using the appropriate absence code.
- Arrival at centre after the register has closed.

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the centre has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during centre time, for which the centre has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the centre has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off centre unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the centre day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving centre for no reason during the day.

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of centre sessions for any reason, equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full academic year.

Severe absence:

- Missing 50 percent or more of centre sessions for any reason.

Missing education:

- Not registered at a school or centre and not receiving suitable education elsewhere.

Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the centre.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the centre's ethos and policies.
- Working with the Co-Headteachers to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, including recent and historic trends, and paying particular attention to pupil cohorts that face greater barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the centre's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Co-Headteachers are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the centre.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the centre's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Keeping in regular contact with our pupils' mainstream school to update on well-being and attendance at Roots.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance at Roots, including setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance and establishing effective systems for tackling absence that all staff follow.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring attendance training forms part of staff continuing professional development, with dedicated training for any staff who have a specific attendance function.
- Where there are reasonable grounds to believe a pupil will miss 15 centre days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness, providing the LA with a sickness return and working with the LA to support continuity of education.
- Ensuring a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker, where applicable, is informed of any unexplained absence.

Staff are responsible for:

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

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the centre day.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the centre with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the centre if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at centre.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the centre and the LA.
- Notifying the centre on the first day of an unexpected absence, giving the reason and, where known, when their child is expected to return.

Pupils are responsible for:

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

Attendance expectations

The centre has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend centre every day they are required to be at centre, for the full day if appropriate.
- Attend centre punctually.
- Attend each lesson.

The centre day will start at **9:30am**, ready to begin lessons at **10am**. Pupils will have a morning break, and a lunch break. If a pupil is doing afternoon sessions they start at **12pm** so will be encouraged to arrive at **11:45am.**

Registers will be taken at the start of the day and for each session start time, at the same time for all pupils registered for that session, to track both attendance and engagement.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

The centre will actively discourage late arrival, seek explanations from parents for lateness and monitor patterns of late arrival to identify where further support or intervention may be needed.

Absence procedures

Parents/carers will be required to contact the Roots office via telephone ideally before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the centre by **10:30am** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend centre. Where absence continues without explanation, the centre will make further contact with the parent and take appropriate steps to establish the pupil's whereabouts and ensure their safety.

The centre will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Offer support and hope that the child is ok.
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not, and record it using the correct code.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** centre days in a row, or more than **10** centre days in **one term**, the parents will be welcomed in for a meeting to discuss what support can be offered.

The centre will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, particularly if there is a safeguarding concern, Roots reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, the centre will take this into account.

In the case of PA, close communication is kept with a pupil's mainstream school and the attendance officer, attendance will be reported on a weekly basis. The centre will inform the LA, on a **6-weekly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 centre days or more without authorisation.

Where a pupil does not return from a period of leave, or has a continuous period of unexplained absence, the centre will make reasonable enquiries, working jointly with the pupil's mainstream school and the LA as appropriate, to establish the pupil's whereabouts and ensure their safety. Where the centre is unable to establish the reason for a pupil's absence and there are safeguarding concerns, the centre will take appropriate action in line with its safeguarding procedures. Unexplained or prolonged absence from education can be a safeguarding warning sign.

Where a pupil is on site at Roots but is subsequently found to be absent from an expected lesson or activity without permission, staff will follow the centre's procedures for locating the pupil and establishing the reason (see 'Truancy' below). Any unexplained internal absence will be followed up promptly and safeguarding action taken where necessary.

Attendance register

Roots uses an electronic registration document to keep attendance registers. They are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each day**, and once during each afternoon session, at the same time for all pupils registered for that session. This register will record the appropriate national attendance or absence code for every pupil, reflecting whether they are:

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

The centre will use the national attendance codes set out in Regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- C1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- S = Study leave
- T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- N = Reason not yet established; where the reason cannot be established within five centre days, the entry will be amended to Code O
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- D = Dual registered at another educational establishment
- B = Off-site education activity
- J1 = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

- K = Attending education provision arranged by the LA
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Q = Unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements, in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- V = Educational visit or trip
- W = Work experience
- X = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend centre
- Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the centre premises being closed
- Y4 = Unable to attend due to the whole centre site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the centre has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the centre has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from Roots but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register, using the appropriate absence code. Remote education will only be used in line with DfE guidance, including as a last resort and as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil into centre.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment. The register will only routinely be amended where the reason for absence could not be established when it was taken and it later becomes necessary to correct the entry.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **six years**.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Co-Headteachers. The decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Co-Headteachers, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Co-Headteachers' decision is not subject to appeal; however, the centre will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The centre will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the centre will expect parents to contact the Co-Headteachers **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Co-Headteachers will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from centre. A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation will not generally be considered an exceptional circumstance, and the centre is not likely to grant leave of absence for this purpose.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during centre hours.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of centre hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The centre will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from centre, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the centre's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the centre for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from centre to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. This may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a centre maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend centre if they were attending a centre maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Study leave and part-time timetables

In very exceptional circumstances, and only where it is agreed to be in a pupil's best interests, the centre may grant a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable, with

parental agreement, regular review dates and a clear proposed end date, with the aim of returning the pupil to full-time education as soon as possible. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour. Where a pupil on a part-time timetable has an EHC plan, the centre will discuss the arrangement with the LA so the pupil's support package can be reviewed; where the pupil has a social worker, the centre will keep them informed and involved.

The centre may also grant leave of absence for a pupil to study for a public examination, agreed in advance with a parent or, where the pupil is over compulsory school age, with the pupil themselves. Study leave will not be granted by default once tuition for the examination syllabus is complete, and will be used sparingly; provision will still be available for pupils who want to continue coming into centre to revise.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** in advance.

The centre will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The centre will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. Where the relevant religious body sets apart only one day for the observance, only that day will be recorded using Code R. Any additional absence requested will be considered separately as a request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

The centre may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parents travelling for occupational purposes

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes. The centre will not routinely require evidence that a parent is travelling for occupational purposes; however, evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason given.

SEND- and health-related absences

The centre recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will maintain the same high ambition for their attendance as for all other pupils, while providing additional support and reasonable adjustments where needed.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the centre will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The centre will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the centre has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a concern about a pupil's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. Every effort will be made to thoroughly support our pupil's mental wellbeing.

If a pupil is unable to attend centre for long periods of time due to their health, and there are reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 centre days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness, the centre will inform the LA and work with them to support continuity of education.

The centre will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending centre may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending centre as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the centre will consider:

- Holding regular meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Implementing "TEAM PUPIL" in line with our Relational Behaviour Policy.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- SEBDA support through Dr Rob Long.
- Interventions from My Happy Place.
- Flexibility around start times and finish times.
- Phased returns to centre where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend breaktimes.
- A system whereby pupils can request time out of a lesson if they feel they need it.

The centre will not routinely request medical evidence to support illness-related absence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or where a pupil has prolonged or repeated illness and further information would help the centre understand their needs, identify appropriate support, or accurately record the absence. The centre will not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and will consider other appropriate evidence provided by parents.

Absence in exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the centre, LA or parent is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance (Code Y1).
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending (Code Y2).
- The pupil is in custody (Code Y5).

The 'C' code for exceptional circumstances, and the related Y1-Y7 codes above, will be collected in the centre census for statistical purposes.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from centre, during which the centre has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. This includes internal truancy, where a pupil is present at Roots but absent from a timetabled lesson or other required activity without permission.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the centre during the day must sign out at the **centre** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Co-Headteachers are notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending centre.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance a conversation with home to inform that their child is not onsite at the centre.
- Then a conversation will follow with the pupil to try to establish the reasons why they might not want to attend, being curious around the wider context of the situation and mindful of potential safeguarding concerns.
- If this happens again a meeting will be held together with their school representative and parents/carers, with the young person's well-being at the heart of the discussion and action plan.
- Advice will then be sought from the LA Attendance service if the young person becomes missing in education.

Where truancy or other unauthorised absence forms part of a wider attendance concern, the centre will work with the pupil and their parents to understand and address the barriers to attendance, offering support before any legal intervention is considered. Where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with, or is not appropriate, the centre will work with the pupil's mainstream school and the LA to consider formal support or legal intervention (see 'Legal intervention' below).

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern, and any such concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the centre premises during the centre day unless they have permission from the centre. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at centre:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Co-Headteachers immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the centre premises as directed by the Co-Headteachers.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
- All rooms inside Roots
- All toilets
- Changing rooms
- The Boxing Gym and Sports Hall
- The basketball court
- The centre grounds and park areas
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the centre premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents/carers of the pupil will be notified immediately.
- The centre will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The DSL will fill in a new incident on CPOMS, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker and/or youth offending team worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed without delay.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Co-Headteachers will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, a restorative conversation will be conducted including parents and carers if necessary.

The Co-Headteachers will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary. Any necessary attendance records will be reviewed and amended, where appropriate, to give an accurate record of the pupil's attendance during the relevant session.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the centre has effective procedures for managing absence, the Co-Headteachers work hard and proactively to:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews within the centre and held by LA.
- Establish robust interventions and support systems for families that are experiencing barriers to attendance.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies and interventions, adapting them where necessary.
- Where absence intensifies, ensure support is increased and work with the LA and other relevant partners where appropriate.

The centre will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

Where the centre recognises attendance and effort, this will be done sensitively and without discrimination, and any reward scheme will take account of individual circumstances so that pupils who face additional barriers to attendance, including SEND, disabilities or health conditions, are not unfairly disadvantaged.

Working with parents/carers to improve attendance

The centre will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of centre life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The centre will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Roots will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the centre has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

We are mindful of how some families find the conversations and narrative around attendance particularly hard. Especially if their child has had long periods not being able to attend school. The very reason for Roots being set up is to help and support our families, so it is important to note that all communication around attendance with

our families comes from an empathetic, compassionate, non-judgmental, and supportive place.

If a child's reason for not wanting to attend is to do with the environment inside the centre, e.g. bullying, staff conduct etc, a meeting with the parents/carers and Co-Headteachers will be arranged at the earliest opportunity.

Any agreed attendance support, actions or interventions will be reviewed regularly with the pupil and their parents to assess how well they are working, and adapted where necessary to reflect the pupil's and family's circumstances.

Persistent absence and Severe absence (PA & SA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA missing 10% and severe absence less that 50%, such as:

- Pupils with a social worker, including children in need and pupils subject to child protection plans.
- LAC.
- Young carers.
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM.
- Pupils with EAL.
- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils with physical or mental health conditions.
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination.
- Pupils from groups or backgrounds that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers.

The centre will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA and SA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The centre will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend centre. These include:

- Offering more one to one support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent/carer to discuss and explore the reasons behind not wanting to attend. Is there missed SEND?
- Weekly check ins with parents/carers to establish stressors/calmers, things that might be helping or not helping.
- Consider external support from SEBDA/My Happy Place.
- Opportunity to do some outdoor work with the dogs.
- Regularly reviewing progress and the impact of support with the pupil and their parents/carers.

The centre will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent (severe absence), and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all

relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the centre will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the centre's duty of care. The centre will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

At Roots4Learning CIC, we follow the Department for Education's guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, which defines a learner as persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions, and severely absent if they miss 50% or more. We recognise that learners in these groups are at greater risk of falling behind, becoming disconnected from their peers, and facing wider safeguarding concerns, so we treat their attendance as a priority. Attendance is monitored weekly so that emerging patterns are spotted early, before absence becomes persistent. Where a learner is persistently absent,

Liz Key, our Attendance Lead, will meet with the learner and their parents or carers to understand the reasons behind the absence and agree a personalised support plan. This may include adjustments to their timetable or learning environment, additional pastoral support, or referral to external services such as early help, health professionals, or the local authority. Where a learner is on roll at another school or has been placed with us by a school or local authority, we will share attendance concerns with them promptly and work together on a joined-up plan.

Severely absent learners are treated as our highest priority: we will work closely with the local authority and other partners to put intensive, coordinated support in place, and will consider whether safeguarding procedures need to be followed. Our approach is always support-first, focused on removing barriers and rebuilding the learner's connection with learning. However, where support is not engaged with or is unsuccessful, we may work with the home school or local authority to consider formal measures, which, as a last resort, can include statutory legal action.

Legal intervention

Roots pupils remain on roll at their mainstream school or are placed via the LA, so formal legal intervention, including Notices to Improve, penalty notices and Education Supervision Orders, is led by the LA and/or the pupil's mainstream school rather than by Roots directly. The centre will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the Co-Headteachers will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents/carers and a pupil's mainstream school.
- Working with the LA to take the best course of action.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Co-Headteachers will be led by the mainstream school's policy on attendance. We must stress that Roots does not use penalty notices but we have to be led by the host school or LA.

So that families understand what this can involve, Roots will make sure parents/carers are aware that the mainstream school and LA's process may include the following, in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and the LA's Local Code of Conduct:

- A Notice to Improve, usually issued as a final opportunity to engage with support before a penalty notice, normally with an improvement period of three to six weeks.
- A penalty notice, where the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-school-week period has been reached and support has not been successful or is not appropriate. The first penalty notice is currently charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Only two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a three-year rolling period; a second is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- An Education Supervision Order (ESO), considered where voluntary support has not succeeded, as an alternative to prosecution. Where an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the LA decides any actions or requirements, which may include parents attending support meetings or a parenting programme.
- Prosecution, only as a last resort and only by the LA, where all other appropriate support and legal interventions have failed or are inappropriate.

Monitoring and analysing absence

Roots will monitor and analyse attendance data **regularly** to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The centre will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The centre cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams or other key transition points.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA or severe absence.

The Co-Headteachers will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects, sessions or times of the centre day which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Trust Board will regularly review attendance data held at Roots, including benchmarking against local, regional and national data where this is available and useful for a small alternative provision.

Training of staff

Roots recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The Trust Board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance.
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances.
- The legal requirements on settings, e.g. the keeping of registers.
- The centre's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- The centre's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from centre, including persistent or severe absence and children missing education, could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Deletion from Roots's registers

Roots will only remove a pupil's name from its own attendance register where a genuine ground applies, such as the pupil formally leaving Roots, being deleted from their mainstream school's admission register, or the placement otherwise ending, and never for any other reason, as this could constitute off-rolling. Names will not be retrospectively removed: Roots's registers will remain an accurate record of who was attending and when, up to the date of removal.

Where a pupil's placement at Roots ends, the Co-Headteachers will inform the pupil's mainstream school and the LA, and will pass on the pupil's attendance record to support a smooth transition.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Co-Headteachers. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **August 2027**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

1. Attendance is accurately recorded every day and if a pupil is dual registered reported back on a weekly basis to the school.

2. Contact will be made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. Second day N codes will be sent to CH daily by staff. OS should contact home by telephone. Any N codes not established after a week will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

3. Pupil attendance drops below 95 percent - CH will speak to pupils to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the centre can help to improve their attendance. OS will make a phone call home, if applicable.

4. Pupil attendance drops below 93 percent - a meeting is arranged with parents/carers raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the centre target of 95 percent.

5. Roots arranges a meeting with the child's mainstream school if appropriate.

6. Pupil attendance drops below 90 percent - a letter will be sent home explaining that a pupil's absence is now being monitored. OS will contact parents. Attendance monitored for two weeks. If attendance has not improved, then parents will be required to attend a meeting in centre to create a support plan. If parents are unwilling to co-operate, or genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO) who will then carry out a home visit.

7. If attendance has not improved within the two-week monitoring period (likely to be close to 85 percent or below), or if attendance has fallen rapidly, parents will be invited to either: a centre attendance meeting with CH and EWO if appropriate, or a medical action planning meeting with the LA nurse, and SENCO/SEND Lead. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance. This will be monitored over a further two-week period.

8. After the two-week monitoring period, if targets are met, a letter will be sent home from the leadership team to congratulate the pupil and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises - if targets are not met, the CH will make a referral to the EWO.

9. Education Welfare protocol will be followed and Roots will be lead by the school or LA.

Key

CH - Co-Headteachers

OS - Office Staff

S - Staff members

Appendix: Attendance Agreement Forms

Pupil Attendance Agreement

I agree to attend centre and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100 percent. I will ensure that the centre is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the centre full details of my absence.

As a pupil of Roots 4 Learning, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to centre and lessons.
- Informing the centre of the reason for any absence.
- Not being absent from centre for trivial reasons.

Pupil name:	**Date:**
Form tutor name:	**Date:**

Parental Attendance Agreement

I understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to centre. I agree to send my child to centre every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When my child is absent from centre due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Parent name:	**Date:**
Form tutor name:	**Date:**