

# Shawhead Primary School and Nursery Class



## Attendance Matters

QI: 2.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection

Date: October 2024

### Rationale

In line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, North Lanarkshire Education and Families recognises that children and young people do best within a context that is underpinned by shared values of respect, inclusion, fairness, community engagement and partnership, supported by their parents and carers, families, and communities.

This relies on staff at all levels developing high quality relationship-based practice, linked closely to Getting it Right for Every Child - the national approach to improve outcomes and support the wellbeing of children and young people.

Promoting positive social and emotional development alongside working in partnership with families and communities is important in ensuring children and young people are positively engaged with their learning.

Adopting a whole school nurturing approach provides a context for children and young people to form positive relationships and helps them settle to learn.

Along with this, promoting resilience is important in supporting all children and young people as they make their way through early years and school, including those who may have experienced adverse childhood events in their life. Establishing a safe nurturing environment is the foundation for building resilient children and young people.

These approaches are particularly important when promoting good attendance. Absence, for whatever reason, leads to disrupted learning for children and young people and can result in poorer outcomes. Ensuring schools and establishments provide a rich and supportive context for learning for all children and young people, including those who are looked after / care experienced or have additional support needs, is crucial in promoting good attendance.

## **Aims**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that as an establishment, we are doing all that we can to promote good attendance and to support families where there is a barrier to a child or young person attending school or nursery. Whilst attendance at nursery is not statutory, we ensure our policies and practises, are focused on promoting and supporting positive attendance throughout the establishment.

It is widely recognised that regular and consistent attendance at nursery contributes to the building of routines and promotes the values of education. This gives the best chances for progress in early skills development and learning, which in turn lays the foundation for a smooth transition to school.

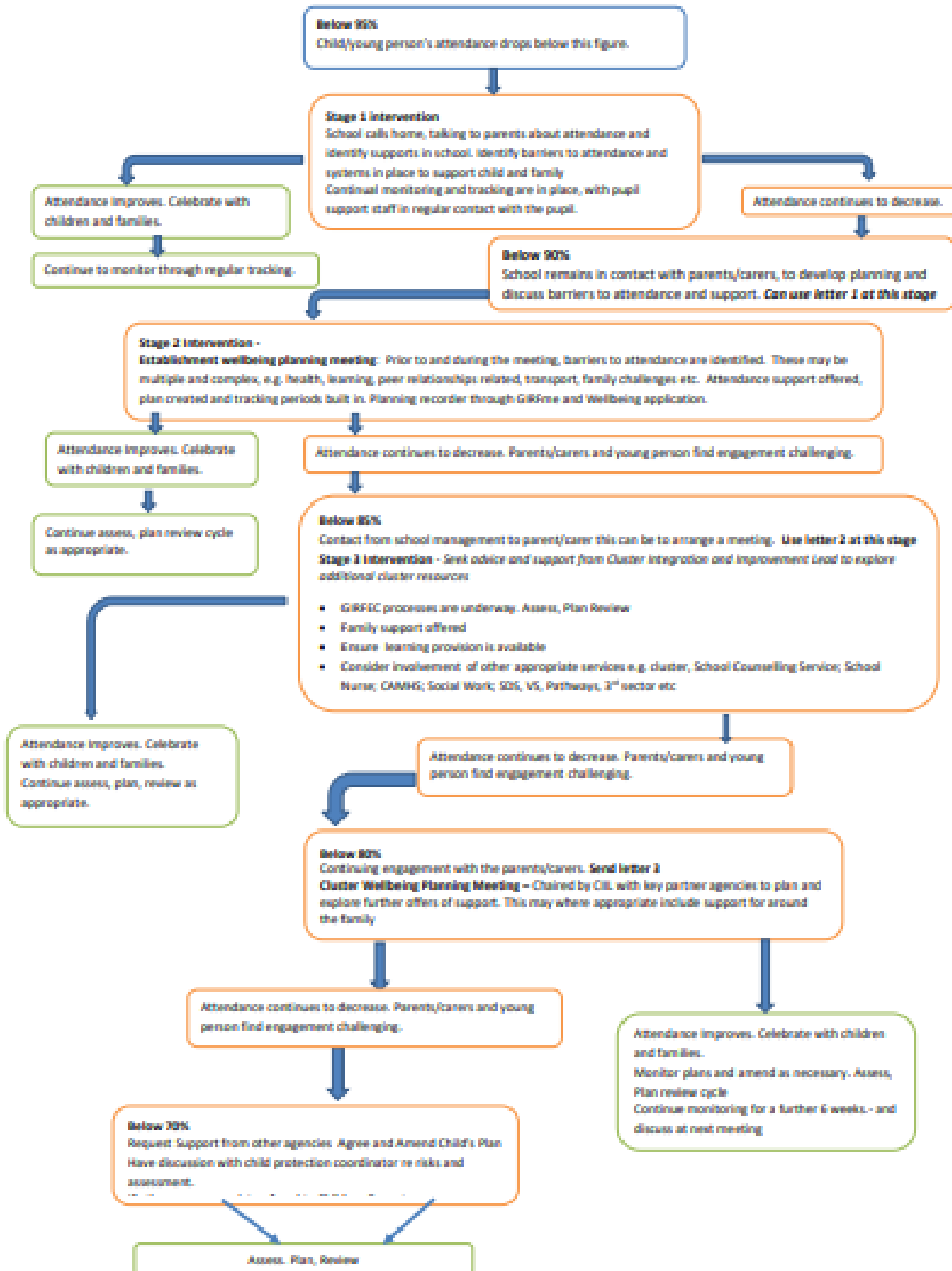
Promoting good attendance further extends to encouraging children and young people to arrive at school and at class on time and proactively addressing concerns over habitual lateness.

## **Procedures**

- Attendance is recorded by the class teacher/key worker each morning shortly after 9.00am. If a child is absent, then TBC should be recorded, or SEL if a continued absence and the parent/carer has made contact with Clerical staff. The teacher/key worker should check the register again after lunch time to ensure all children who present in the morning have returned. If a child is missing, SLT should be informed immediately.
- Clerical staff will code pupil absences based upon the information parent/carers have provided as reason for absence. This will be recorded on SEEMIS and paper copies of class/nursery registers.
- Children arriving late, will report to the office, where this is recorded.
- If a child does not arrive to school to nursery, clerical staff will send a SMS message via Groupcall to main carer to contact the establishment. If no contact is made, clerical will contact the family to find out the reason for absence.
- Attendance should be a standing item during Parent Teacher Interviews and is recorded on each child and young person's Annual Pupil Report.
- The Head Teacher has overall responsibility to track and monitor attendance. Each month attendance will be tracked and monitored across the Establishment.
- If a child begins to fall below 95% then a member of SLT will contact the parent in the first instance to discuss concerns and identify any potential barriers (Appendix 1).
- If attendance begins to decrease and cause concern, the Head Teacher will contact the parent/carer to formally discuss barriers and supports available.

**NLC Education and Families to Promoting Positive Attendance**

**At every stage involve children and young people in discussions.**



## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Parents/Carers***

All parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school until he or she reaches school leaving age (section 30, Education (Scotland) Act 1980). However, there is no clear evidence that legal sanctions improve school attendance. Working in partnership with schools and partner agencies is vital to ensure positive relationships are in place, promoting the benefits of regular attendance and reduce any barriers.

It is important that parents/carers liaise and communicate with the school when there is an indication that attendance at school is becoming an issue. This will allow any issues to be dealt with promptly and to allow the right support at the right time and to remove barriers to non-attendance as quickly as possible. Parents/carers should provide guidance and motivation to assist a child or young person to attend school and should encourage wider participation in whole school life and the wider community. Parents/carers should inform the school of absences on the first day and indicate when their child or young person is likely to return to school.

### **Holidays Outwith School Terms**

We would advise that Parent/Carers do not take family holidays during term time. Parent/Carers who wish to take their child out of school during school term should either provide a written letter to the Head Teacher or contact via telephone detailing the dates. In almost all cases they will be informed that the absence shall be recorded as 'unauthorised parental holiday' as per North Lanarkshire Council and National Guidance.

### ***School/Establishment***

- To provide a welcoming school ethos and a culture of support and encouragement and promote positive attitudes to attendance in children and young people and their families.
- To work in close partnership with parents/carers and other professionals. In discussing attendance with parents/carers and the child or young person it is important to maintain a practical focus that recognises the range of challenges. Schools should work with partners to ensure that any barriers for families are supported and overcome when possible.
- To recognise early signs of potential non engagement and steps are taken to consider a flexible and creative approach to enthuse and engage learners, by developing effective responses to support the needs and reintegration of children and young people into learning following absence from school.
- To involve children and young people in any areas of development around attendance and encourage children and young people to engage in wider school life. Families are also likely to encourage full attendance where they feel part of the school community, where schools work alongside them as equal partners.
- To take appropriate preventative measures to identify early signs of concern which may lead to being absent from school and respond quickly to absence to ensure that children and young people are safe and well. Staff should ensure they implement robust assessment and planning as outlined in NLC Staged Intervention Framework.
- Providing additional support may help children and young people to engage more fully with school and promote good attendance. Schools should recognise that poor attendance can often be related to, or be an indication of, an additional support need and they should use their staged intervention processes to ensure that any barriers to learning are identified and appropriate support is provided.

- Track the attendance of all children in the establishment to identify patterns of absence and supports which may be required.

### ***Empowering Cluster***

Where a child or young person's attendance is causing a concern or there is prolonged nonattendance, the Cluster Improvement, and Integration Lead, plays a vital role in liaising between the home and school in offering support, providing support strategies through groups or personalised support to encourage good attendance. They are also the link between the school and integrative practice with partner agencies.

Planning at this level can offer a range of support, which help address the barriers being faced.

- Discussion at Cluster Planning for Children's wellbeing
- Links with the Digital School to plan for online contact with children and families.
- Online learning offer and planning to track and record engagement with this.
- Use of the wellbeing base to support a return to in establishment learning.
- Broader pathway planning to increase curricular engagement and learning opportunities.
- Assessment of the barriers to attendance.

### **Where Attendance Continues to a Concern**

#### **Establishment Planning - Universal**

Research has shown that early help/support is needed for a child or young person, in collaboration with the child, young person, parent/carer. Longer term absences, become more challenging to manage and the barriers to attendance can increase. In line with the national practice model of GIRFEC, the questions below should be asked by an appropriate link adult in school to help inform why attendance is challenging and we can in partnership support a child or young person.

#### **GIRFEC 5 key questions:**

- What's getting in the way of this child or young person's wellbeing?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do now to help this child or young person?
- What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

Assessment and Planning tools to help practitioners answer the key questions:

1. The wellbeing assessment/GIRFME plans
2. The My World Assessment Triangle
3. The Resilience Matrix
4. Outcome Star to track impact of health and wellbeing interventions.
5. Wellbeing App

***The universal support for all children and families is their school and the known/identified link staff within the establishment. Should staff answer be 'no' to the GIRFEC questions above, the process planning on the***

*next page will support with the next steps. The above planning and assessment tools must be used by establishments to plan, record and track attendance and appropriate interventions.*

### **Cluster – Additional Planning**

When attendance and wellbeing concerns cannot be met within universal level alone, consideration needs to be given to what additional support is required. This first place to discuss an integrated approach is through the Empowering Cluster.

The link adult in school, which can be a Principal Teacher or Head Teacher, in some cases must have a discussion with the Cluster Integration and Improvement Lead. The CIIL is the link to partner agencies, providers, and integrated approaches to supporting children/young people and their families.

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### **Multi Agency - Intensive Planning**

This meeting can facilitate further assessment and interventions from additional staff from other agencies for intensive supports.

Named Person or Lead Professional is responsible for the assess, plan, review cycle.

This planning may also include referral to the Children's reporter.

**Review Date – August 2025**

## Appendix 1



### Solihull Supporting Your Child's Attendance

Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Background Information (completed by school prior to meeting)**

Share with parent/carer at start of meeting.

<b>Current Attendance Percentage and occasions late if relevant</b>	Which equates to ____ days missed per week, and ____ years missed by S3. (each 20% equals one day, or one year by S3)
<b>Notes on patterns of attendance and reasons offered</b> (e.g. block absence, repeated short absences, particular day, previous years, TBC or SEL, reasons)	
<b>Notes of Impact on attainment</b> (current CfE level and expected CfE level for age/stage)	
<b>Notes on any additional opportunities missed</b> (e.g. support for learning interventions, nurture etc)	

#### **Dialogue with Parent/Carer**

What do you feel are the main challenges to your child's attendance at school?

**Further conversation prompts if not covered above**

*Any ongoing Health issues? (illness, condition, sleep, toileting etc)*

*Have any recent life changes impacted? (e.g. new baby, family bereavement, change of carer)*

*Does the child report any concerns about school?*

*What are you as a family current doing to address these issues?*

*What support can the school offer to address these concerns?*

*Any other concerns or relevant info?*

**Actions**

Offers from Universal Provision (tick as appropriate)

<b>What I Think Tool</b>		<b>Getting it Right for Me Plan</b>	
<b>Breakfast Club / Soft Start</b>		<b>SLT morning 'check-in'</b>	
<b>Nurture Room</b>		<b>Circle of Friends</b>	
<b>Seasons for Growth</b>		<b>Lego Therapy</b>	
<b>Supported Break Times</b>		<b>CAMHS</b>	
<b>Other (please specify)</b>			

Agency Referrals (tick as appropriate and obtain verbal consent)

<b>Community Learning &amp; Development</b>		<b>Social Work</b>	
<b>Educational Psychologist</b>		<b>Virtual Schools Team</b>	
<b>Community Paediatrician</b>		<b>CAMHS</b>	
<b>SLT</b>		<b>Occupational Therapy</b>	
<b>None necessary at this time</b>			

**Review**

<b>Date of Review</b>			
<b>Telephone Call</b>		<b>Meeting</b>	