Attendance Policy 2025/26

Review		
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Document Status	**Date**	**Responsibility**	**Date of next review**
Creation	**09.25**	**Adele Lord-Laverick** **Georgina Gowthorpe**	**Sept 2026**

Signed	**Adele Lord-Laverick**	
Signed	**Georgina Gowthorpe**	

Attendance Policy

AIMS AND RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of the school community of Lord Gowthorpe's School of the following:

- How we encourage and enable good attendance
- How we monitor and review attendance
- How we monitor punctuality and lateness
- How authorised and unauthorised absences are managed
- How leave of absence in term time is managed
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, our school and their partners should work with young people and their parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with our schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including effective use of the pupil premium funding. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, our Governors, the local authority and other local partners.

We comply with the DfE guidance on school attendance - Working together to improve School Attendance: guidance for maintained Schools, Academies and Local Authorities (Department for Education – applies from September 2022)

WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school

Across one school year:

Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance

14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance

20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance

30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.
The Education Act 1996 states that: S.576: "Meaning of "parent". In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person— (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him." S.7: "Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable— (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise." S.444: "Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

The aim of the policy is to promote the 'most effective education for pupils'. Our school consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance in school, sets high expectations for every student, communicates those expectations to parents and systematically analyses their data to identify patterns to target improvements in attendance. We recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundations of attendance begin with a sense of belonging, a supportive school environment where students want to attend. Therefore we are expected to;

o Have an accurate and up to date admissions register where attendance is recorded.

o This must include the pupil's name, date of birth, date of admission, name and address of parents/carer and details of the last school attended.*(A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies)*

o Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

o Have consulted and shared the school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.

o Accurately complete admission and attendance registers on our MIS - Arbor (twice daily - morning and afternoon) and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up incidents of absences or lateness.

o Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.

o Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families (and other relevant organisations) to remove them.

o Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

Good attendance is a learned behaviour and our school recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. A positive view of attendance is an integral part of our school's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance, leaders are expected to:

o Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside behaviour and safeguarding, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.

o Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).

o Ensure that the curriculum addresses attendance positively in the context of learning and progress, employability and social relationships and routines.

Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and we have a designated senior leader (Headteacher) with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.

Responsibilities for this role will include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.

o Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.

o Be clear with parents and students about attendance expectations and the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

o Ensure our language around non-attendance recognises the complexity of each students- they are not simply 'school refusers' or 'persistent absentees'.

o Monitor attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance and trends for groups/individuals before they become an issue

o Listen to parents and students concerned to understand barriers to attendance and try and resolve them

o Facilitate any necessary support and understand when these need to be made more formal should attendance not improve.(This may include ‘early help’) Enforce attendance through necessary routes, considering whether there are safeguarding avenues to pursue

We publish our start and finish time on the website. Registers close at 10:15am in our school and 1:30pm.

The Headteacher is responsible for chairing weekly attendance meetings and half termly meetings of those on part time timetable/missing from education meetings and termly pastoral board meetings and attending the weekly safeguarding meetings. These meetings combined discuss any child who is deemed to be vulnerable in terms of their attendance, behaviour, safety (safeguarding concerns), health or mental health. In terms of attendance, they should work in strong coordination with the safeguarding and attendance officers, admin team and phase leads to make sure that,

o Monitor the attendance data from the previous week(s) and identify any patterns/trends, and plan interventions for individuals

o Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.

o Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement. Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher than average absence or for pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers.

o Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.

o Provide updates for teachers on attendance issues for individuals and cohorts Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals

o Gather information to fully understand the reasons for poor attendance
o Arrange suitable support for individual students and work with the students and their families to plan for improvement. (This may be with the class teacher, support staff, Children’s mental health team, family liaison workers, etc)
o Plan a support package for a return to school for long term absentees. Identify any children missing from education

The Headteacher and Attendance Officers are responsible for creating termly attendance reports for the school report on a termly basis. These reports will provide an overall bench mark for the Governors.

TEACHERS' & SUPPORT STAFF RESPONSIBILITY

Teachers should monitor their classes' attendance and report any concerns. They should create an ethos around 'attendance matters' and encourage positive attendance patterns and punctuality by;

o Completing class and lesson registers accurately in line with academy guidance and ensuring that business support colleagues are aware of any communication with home/bus escorts re a child's attendance

o Being consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, developing respectful relationships with parents and carers that can be a foundation for good attendance

o Ensuring they receive the training and professional development they need. Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

o Helping parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.

o Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level. Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.

o Be curious as to patterns in attendance or why a child might not be in school. Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

o Ensure the benefits of good attendance is communicated through the curriculum and is seen as a key employability attribute.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Adults have a primary role in ensuring the attendance of pupils. Good examples of attendance and timekeeping by staff and parents provide role models for pupils. Parents are expected to;

o Contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason, otherwise the school will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided.

o Ensure that the school has more than one emergency contact number for their child. This is good practice to give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult.

o Attend meetings with the school if their child is persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement.

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY

Students who are able should ensure that they foster good attendance and punctuality habits so that they are building skills for adulthood and having the best learning opportunities.

GOVERNORS

The Governing Body will ensure that there is a consistent focus on attendance and effective approaches to ensure that children attend well. They will;

o Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the schools' ethos and policies.

o Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

o Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and help trust and school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.

o Ensure all school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

o Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

o Set high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents.
o Ensure attendance is prioritised in wider improvement strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.

o Ensure the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.

o Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils. This includes those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.

o Repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of their school(s)' processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve

o Review attendance action plans schools and ensure that good practice is shared.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

All local authorities are expected to have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in its area (regardless of type). There is no requirement for a specific service delivery model or name, but each local authority is expected to provide the 4 core functions (Communication and advice, Targeted support meetings, Multi-disciplinary support for families and Legal intervention) free of charge to all schools. They will also monitor the attendance of children with a social worker through the virtual head. These core functions should not, therefore, be traded or require service level agreements from schools.

EQUALITY

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, our school recognises the specific and sometimes very complex needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. Leaders will ensure that they apply the attendance policy fairly and consistently but will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of our policy, school leaders should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

GRANTING ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised absence from school. Family holidays do not fall into this category. However, it is up to the head teacher to decide if an absence is approved and recorded as an authorised circumstance. Examples may include situations where there is an important family celebration such as a wedding, or where a young person has a life limiting condition and there may be limited opportunity for the family to be together. Absence for the observance of a religious festival will be authorised for a maximum of two days per school year. The Governing Body has delegated this responsibility to the Headteacher.

Families are asked, where possible, to make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours, but we acknowledge that hospital and more specialist appointments may be more difficult achieve. Absences will not be authorised retrospectively.

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature in some of our school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

SCHOOL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073591/School_attendance_guidance_May-2022.pdf

To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. Medical evidence may include an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication etc.

We are no longer required to use code x for covid absences.

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

• present
• attending an approved educational activity

• absent
• unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Morning registers close at 10:15am except on days of particularly inclement weather, when the Headteacher may declare that the school should close registers later. Afternoon registers at 1:30pm. Class teachers should carry out ongoing monitoring of both attendances. First day absence calls are made by admin support colleagues as soon as the registers have been completed. The register is amended to show the reason for the absence. A message will be left on the home phone/mobile phone if staff are unable to speak to parents about their child's absence. If no contact is made, the information will be passed to the 'Safeguarding and Attendance Officers' who may make a 'Safe and Well' visit. If no contact is made with the parents by the second day of absence for any child a "Safe and Well" visit will be made. If no one is at home every attempt will be made to find further information i.e. from neighbours and Emergency Contacts. If no progress is made staff will contact the missing children team and report the child as missing.

If a child returns to school, where no contact was able to have been made during the absence, the parents will receive a letter from the Headteacher of the school procedures for pupil absence. Regular attendance reports are shared through the SEND team.

If a parent contacts the school to say a child is ill and will be off for a week the school will do a "Safe and Well" check after the third day.

Where children are admitted to hospital we will contact the family and will provide liaison to enable the pupil to return to school as soon as they are well enough to do so. Where they are able to complete school based work or attend virtually, this should be provided.

Pupils who arrive late at school because of difficulties with organised transport (taxi or minibus) will be marked as present but late. Where patterns of consistent late running by contractors occur, the LA transport team will be informed. Pupils who arrive late in school will be required to report to the school office where their late mark will be recorded.

When classes go off site during school time details of children leaving site and those remaining in school must be recorded in the school office.

Returns of school data are made termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our schools within local and national contexts.

A small number of students are independent travellers and some parents/carers transport their child to school. Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will discuss directly with the young person directly and/or make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Deputy Head or Head of School will write to the parents/carers about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer.

CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL FOR LONG PERIODS DUE TO ILL HEALTH

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have complex special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and

therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This should include:

o Holding sensitive conversations with families in order to support healthcare needs and consider whether additional support from other services may be needed. Ensuring the support listed in the EHCP can still be accessed where appropriate if the child is absent long term with a medical condition.

o Ensuring that during a long term absence the child retains contact with the school, their teachers and peers and where possible they keep up to date with as much of their school work as possible, within the limitations of their illness.

o Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority.

Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

In all cases, staff need to be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents, and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), we will put in place a programme of targeted support in collaboration with a range of professionals and inform the LA. This will identify any barriers to attendance and consider how schools might reengage these pupils. In doing so, staff will always sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching for punitive approaches. If there are medical reasons for absence then colleagues should refer to the DFE guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and statutory guidance on ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_da ta/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_da ta/file/941900/health_needs_guidance_accessible.pdf

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and, where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Given the challenges many families face, and the strong relationships our school aims to foster with them, it would be extremely rare that legal intervention would be used. However, this should always be kept in mind as a last resort.

The average level of persistent absenteeism across special schools nationally for 2019-20 was 29%. Our school aims to be below this rate and has a key performance Indicator of being below 20%.

CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps. It will be imperative that these most vulnerable children are monitored during their absence either by the school, or in written agreement with other agencies.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Definition - Children missing education (CME) is defined as those who are of a compulsory school age, but are either not registered at a school or else not receiving suitable education in place of a school setting.

A "pupil missing from care" refers to

a child who is under the care of a local authority but whose whereabouts are unknown, either because they are not in their designated placement or expected location, such as school. This term can also overlap with "Children Missing from Education" (CME)

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the Local Authority missing children team**. We will always follow statutory guidance;**

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education/children-missing-education-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-schools

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

o Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).

o Letters home (including recorded delivery)
o Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered and possible home visits
o Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc through school contacts

o All communication should be recorded on CPOMS.

REMOVING A PUPIL OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE FROM THE REGISTER

No child shall be deleted without the consent of the local authority, or, if the LA refuses to give consent, without a direction from the Secretary of State, unless:

A pupil has died.

A pupil's name should only be deleted from the admission register when the school is informed of the death. This would normally come from the pupil's parent but it is possible that notification comes from another source, such as relatives, social care or the police. Once the school receives the information it should immediately delete the pupil's name to prevent inadvertent and unnecessary contact with the family about the child.

A pupil has been permanently excluded.

A pupil has been registered at the school as a result of a school attendance order, and the order has been revoked for some reason.

HOME EDUCATED CHILDREN

On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil's Local Authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Our school will never seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record, neither will it seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system.

PART TIME TIMETABLES

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs e.g. where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Part time timetables should never be used as a response to managing challenging behaviour. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

SHARING INFORMATION AND WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

Our school will work collaboratively to help to remove barriers to attendance experienced by families. This may mean sharing attendance data for individuals with health care workers, the local authority or social care.

Local Authorities have school attendance teams available that are free of charge and therefore each academy will have a point of contact in their LA.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring attendance within school on a weekly basis and reporting concerns to the SEND team. The Headteacher is also responsible for monitoring overall attendance within the school and these will report each term to the Local Advisory Body and the Governing Body. The Head teacher will monitor attendance and rates of persistent absenteeism through the Full Governing Body, Standards Committee and report headline data, trends, analysis and strategy to the termly.

MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body, or more frequently if required. Resulting aspect of good practice will be incorporated in updates to this policy. Effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through annual quality assurance activity.

This policy will be shared with Governors each autumn term**.**

APPENDIX 1 -ABSENCE PROCEDURES

•09:00 - 10:15 Arbor registers completed by class team. Registers close at 10:15am and 1:30pm

•10:15 - 10:30 - Follow up calls made by Admin team. Contact and reason is logged on Arbor. If no contact is made, this is passed to Safeguarding and Attendance Officer.

Safeguarding and Attendance Officer contacts the families via phone call, text or email. Results of additional contact shared with Staff

Dynamic risk assessment carried out in relation to vulnerability to determine next steps.

On the second day of absence, if still no contact made, a safe and well visit is carried out by staff and recorded onto CPOMS. Decision making about referral/welfare.

If a student is absent and returns without any contact, parents will receive a letter from Headteacher and if contact is made, this is recorded on Arbor and CPOMS by Safeguarding and Attendance Officer

Attendance data is reviewed and discussed at Attendance and Safeguarding meetings

If no successful contact after attempts have been made for 10 days, a referral to Missing Children Team is made.

APPPENDIX 2

The Children Act 1989

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations

2007 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) 2007

The Education (pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Relevant government Guidance

Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour Children missing education
Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022
Working together to safeguard children