

# VALENCE SCHOOL

Westerham Road, Westerham, Kent TN16 1QN

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>This policy has been written for:</b>	Students at Valence School Parents/Carers of Students at Valence School Staff at Valence School
<b>Copies of this policy may be obtained from:</b>	The School Website Staff Shared Drive
<b>Responsible for policy:</b>	Assistant Principal with responsibility for attendance
<b>Approved by Governors Next Review</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2025 December 2026
<b>Relevant statutory guidance, legislation, and other sources of information:</b>	<p>This policy meets the requirements of the <a href="#">working together to improve school attendance</a> from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on <a href="#">school attendance parental responsibility measures</a>. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Part 6 of <a href="#">The Education Act 1996</a></li><li>➤ Part 3 of <a href="#">The Education Act 2002</a></li><li>➤ Part 7 of <a href="#">The Education and Inspections Act 2006</a></li><li>➤ <a href="#">The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)</a></li><li>➤ <a href="#">The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013</a></li></ul> <p>It also refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <a href="#">School census guidance</a></li><li>➤ <a href="#">Keeping Children Safe in Education</a></li><li>➤ <a href="#">Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools</a></li></ul>

<b>Statement of Intent:</b>	<p>Valence School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all students.</p> <p>Regular attendance is critical if students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. All students deserve a successful and fulfilling school experience, and the school will ensure that every student has access to the full-time education to which they are legally entitled.</p> <p>Each student is welcomed, valued, and respected. We encourage all students to embrace our learning ethos of being positive, passionate, resilient, independent, and respectful learners. The school aims to empower all students to gain the essential skills academically, socially, and emotionally that will equip them for their future. Valence School believes that by working together we can achieve improved attendance.</p>
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To achieve their full potential, students need to attend school regularly and punctually, and all students whose attendance is irregular will be considered vulnerable. When in school, students should try to attend lessons on time, and we put sufficient support in place to allow students to attend as many lessons as possible.

Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children while they are not in the care of their parents, and in all cases of non-attendance, it is essential that early action is taken. The school will follow its attendance and monitoring protocols to reduce absence, including persistent absence and lateness. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance at home, in school, or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.

The Governors, Senior Leaders and Staff have a duty to promote good attendance at Valence School and offer the necessary support and guidance for families to remove any barrier to school attendance. We will build strong relationships with families and work in partnership with parents and outside agencies.

(The term 'parent' includes all natural parents, any person who has parental responsibility and any person who has day to day care of the child)

#### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

At Valence School, there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

##### **The Governing Body is responsible for:**

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.

##### **The Principal is responsible for:**

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Reporting school-level absence data to governors.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

##### **The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Attendance is responsible for:**

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, and monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Analysing attendance data – this includes tracking attendance at lessons and identifying patterns of absence / lateness.
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Principal.

**Pathway Leads are responsible for:**

- Working with the Assistant Principal (STUDENTS) to devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.

**Administrative Staff are responsible for:**

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system.
- Transferring calls from parents/carers to the assistant principal / pathway lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Providing daily attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to Pathway Leads and Assistant Principal responsible for attendance.

**Student Services are responsible for:**

- Reporting attendance figures to the Department of Education and recording attendance figures in the paperwork for a student's Annual Review. This information is shared with the funding Local Authority.

**Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Parents/carers are therefore expected to:**

- Ensure the necessary transport is in place to allow their child to attend school.
- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the first day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence. Parents should provide an update on the pupil's condition and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Contact the school to discuss any concerns or issues.

**Students are expected to:**

- Attend school every day on time.
- Attend all lessons and be as punctual as possible.
- Engage with staff and students.
- Seek assistance from staff if they are worried or concerned, to give the school the opportunity to support the pupil to resolve the issue and break down any barriers to attending school.

**Recording Attendance:**

Please note that the school day is Monday – Thursday 8.45am to 3.15pm & Friday 8.45am to 1.45pm.

We will keep an attendance register on our school management information system (ISAMS), which all students will be placed onto. We will take our statutory attendance

register at the start of the school day (8.45am) and in the afternoon (12.30pm). The registers will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- If there is a specific reason as to why a student is late.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register after the date on which the entry was made.

All attendance data is stored on our school system ISAMS, using the following codes:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

<b>K</b>	Off-site educational provision arranged by the LA	Student is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act(1) or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act.
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>C1</b>	Authorised leave of absence (abroad)	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
<b>C2</b>	Authorised leave of absence (part-time timetable)	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable.
<b>J1</b>	Authorised leave of absence (interview)	The student is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.

<b>S</b>	Authorised leave of absence (public examination)	The student is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination.
<b>X</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school.
<b>Y1</b>	Authorised leave of absence (transport)	Student is unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
<b>Y2</b>	Authorised leave of absence (disruption to travel)	Student is Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.
<b>Y3</b>	Authorised leave of absence (part of the school is closed)	Student is unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
<b>Y4</b>	Authorised leave of absence (whole school is closed)	Student is unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.
<b>Y5</b>	Authorised leave of absence (student is in criminal justice detention)	Student is unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.
<b>Y6</b>	Authorised leave of absence (in accordance with public health guidance)	Student is unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.
<b>Y7</b>	Authorised leave of absence (any other unavoidable cause)	Student is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness.
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment.
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance.
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school.

<b>Q</b>	Student withdrawn from normal lessons.	Student has been given a different timetable away from their usual class.
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Student has been excluded from school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence (this code will also be used if a student truants a lesson)
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

<b>Unplanned Absence</b>	<p>The Student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school administrative staff on 01959 562156 or by emailing <a href="mailto:valence@valence.kent.sch.uk">valence@valence.kent.sch.uk</a>. This information will be shared with the student's Multi-Disciplinary Team.</p> <p>Absences due to ill health will be authorised however the school may seek additional information from parents, if the pattern or frequency of absences raises a concern.</p>
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<b>Planned Absence</b>	<p>Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and can provide evidence of the appointment.</p> <p>If your child is a <b>day student</b>, please email reception and copy in the <b>class coordinator and form tutor</b> as soon as possible with details of the appointment.</p> <p>If your child is a <b>boarder</b>, please email reception and copy in the <b>key worker and form tutor</b> as soon as possible with details of the appointment.</p> <p>Reception will keep a record of all emails and evidence on our school management information system (ISAMs) and update the Valence calendar.</p> <p>Where possible, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.</p> <p>The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.</p>
<b>Requesting Absence from School – Authorised or Unauthorised</b>	<p>Only the Principal may authorise absence requests.</p> <p>Any request for absence must be made in writing, 4 weeks in advance, with an explanation of why the absence is being requested and the expected duration. The Principal will consider each application on an individual basis, taking into account the student's attendance record as well as the specific circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The Principal is not obliged to accept the request and a letter from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.</p> <p>Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, introduced on 1st September 2013, state that "Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances." If the leave is granted, "Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school." The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable, and short, and by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.</p> <p><i>Please note that once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. If you do take your child on holiday during term-time without authorisation from the Principal, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority. These are currently set at £120 per child per parent with a reduced penalty of £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days. Non-payment of Fixed Penalty Notice fine may result in court action.</i></p>
<b>Authorised Absences</b>	<p><b>Authorised absences include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Genuine illness</li> <li>➤ Medical appointments that are not routine appointments that could be arranged outside of school hours.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Religious observances - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.</li> <li>➤ Traveler students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.</li> <li>➤ Direct family member bereavement</li> <li>➤ Absence previously agreed with the school.</li> </ul> <p><b>Please note that this list is not exhaustive, but rather illustrative.</b></p>
<b>Unauthorised Absences</b>	<p><b>Unauthorised absences include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Holidays and family outings, unless agreed with the school under 'exceptional circumstances.'</li> <li>➤ Traffic</li> <li>➤ Unable to take a child to school (unless exceptional circumstance).</li> <li>➤ Birthday celebrations</li> <li>➤ Oversleeping</li> <li>➤ Parent appointments or ill health</li> <li>➤ Sibling appointments or ill health</li> <li>➤ Waiting for a delivery, builder, plumber, electrician</li> <li>➤ Shopping</li> </ul> <p><b>Please note that this list is not exhaustive, but rather illustrative.</b></p>
<b>Exceptional Circumstances</b>	<p><b>Exceptional circumstances could include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced that the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.</li> <li>➤ Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.</li> <li>➤ The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.</li> <li>➤ To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.</li> <li>➤ Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.</li> </ul> <p><b>Please note that this list is not exhaustive, but rather illustrative.</b></p>
<b>Lateness and Punctuality</b>	<p>Morning registration is from 8:45-9:00am and we expect students to arrive by 9:00am. However, we understand that due to local authority transport issues, this may not always be possible. If a student arrives after 9:00am, we will mark them as L, which is an authorised late.</p>
<b>Following up an Unexplained Absence</b>	<p>Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the student's whereabouts and the reason for their absence. If the school cannot reach the parent by phone, text or email, the school may approach any of the identified emergency contacts for the child.</li> <li>➤ Confirm whether the absence is approved or not and assign the correct attendance code.</li> <li>➤ Continue to monitor attendance and seek to call the parent/carer each day that the absence continues without explanation. The school may conduct a home visit or request a welfare check (police or social care visit) if the absence continues and the student's whereabouts are not known.</li> <li>➤ Where a student's whereabouts are known, the school is expected to inform the local authority of any students that fail to attend school regularly or miss 10 school days or more without permission.</li> <li>➤ In addition to the notification, the school will seek to arrange a meeting with parents to explore what support may be offered to improve attendance.</li> <li>➤ The school will work with the family and any professionals involved (e.g., Education Welfare Officers, Social Workers) to improve student access to education.</li> </ul>
<b>Illness during the School Day</b>	This is covered in our Medical Conditions policy.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	If the school suspects that a pupil may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer concerns to the appropriate external agencies, e.g. Children's Services, Early Help, and the Police. The school will inform parents/carers if a referral is to be made unless to do so is deemed to present further potential risks to the child.
<b>Children Missing Education</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed. A Child Missing Education referral will be submitted under the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If the whereabouts of the child are unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.</li> <li>➤ The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area, but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.</li> </ul>
<b>Children out of School for Long Periods due to Ill Health</b>	<p>When a child is absent for extended periods of time due to ill health, the school will maintain regular contact with the family to offer support and work may be sent home (if requested by the family). The school may seek clarification in relation to treatment and likely duration.</p> <p>A return to school meeting will be arranged once the child is well enough to return to school. At this meeting, a plan of action and support will be agreed with the parents/carers and the school, together with the health team, if appropriate. (Refer to medical conditions policy)</p>
<b>Reporting to Parents</b>	The school will provide a copy of pupil attendance 3 times per year to parents/carers. This will be in line with the report on your child's progress in their various courses (term 1, 3, and 5).
<b>Promoting the Importance of Good Attendance</b>	To ensure that all students understand the necessity of attending school, the Assistant Principal will hold assemblies for each pathway at the start of every term to discuss the benefits of being in school. Weekly assemblies led by the pathway leads will celebrate student achievements and showcase their fantastic work. The weekly newsletter will highlight the

	<p>outstanding work from of our students both in lessons and as part of our extra-curricular provision. The weekly newsletter will also feature our leaflet promoting good attendance, which will be displayed around school.</p>
<p><b>Celebrating and Rewarding Achievement</b></p>	<p>Due to the nature of our cohort (many of our students have complex medical conditions and, in some cases, degenerative conditions), the school is mindful that good attendance will always be a challenge for some students and their families. Therefore, attendance statistics will not be included in our termly celebration assemblies, as they are to be inclusive to all students. For some of our students, improving their attendance is simply not possible due the nature of their medical conditions and we do not wish to highlight their challenges or make them feel excluded.</p> <p>However, the school will celebrate and reward all improvements and excellence in attendance. Every term, the school will send certificates home to those students, who have excellent attendance or who have improved their attendance. The certificates will be sent to the student's home address and will be addressed to the whole family to try and encourage both student and parental engagement.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring, Recording and Action Procedures</b></p>	<p>The school has robust monitoring procedures in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily recording of attendance on ISAMs and on an Excel spreadsheet.</li> <li>• The office phone number and email are provided to all parents/carers and absence can be reported in these ways.</li> <li>• First day contact with parents/carers where a pupil is not in school and there has been no contact with the family.</li> <li>• Contact letters where communication has not been possible over the telephone, text, or email.</li> <li>• Termly attendance is reviewed by the Assistant Principal (STUDENTS) for all students but particularly those below 95% (not including medical procedures and/or recovery)</li> <li>• Where students are below 95% attendance (not including medical procedures and/or recovery – or periods of isolation due to Covid 19), depending on the reason for the fall in attendance, the following procedures are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Stage 1 - Standard letter sent home alerting parents that the pupil has fallen below the expected level and advising that an improvement in attendance is expected. Parents are invited to contact the school to discuss the level of attendance and any support that may be needed.</li> <li>o Stage 2 - If there has been no improvement in attendance, a second letter is sent home advising that medical evidence is required for all further absences. The letter will include an invitation to contact the school to discuss the level of attendance and any support that may be needed.</li> <li>o Stage 3 – The Assistant Principal will telephone the family to discuss attendance and expectations and offer any support necessary to facilitate better attendance.</li> <li>o Stage 4 – Parents/carers are sent a letter requesting their attendance at a meeting with the Assistant Principal and Vice Principal. The LA School Liaison Officer and/or Social Worker will be invited if appropriate.</li> <li>o Stage 5 – Either referral to Early Help, or LA School Liaison Officer, dependent on the reason why attendance has not improved.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>At all these stages, the school will work with and support families and pupils to ensure that help, support, and guidance are being offered to facilitate school attendance. Depending on</p>

	<p>the reasons why attendance is below the expected level or is not improving, the stages of attendance action protocols can change to benefit the student.</p> <p>For persistent absent students, those below 90% (not including medical procedures and/or recovery – or periods of isolation due to Covid 19) or severally absent students, those below 50%, we will work with families, school staff and the <i>KCC School Liaison Officer to remove barriers for attendance at school</i>. We understand that some students have complex medical conditions, and these will always be taken into consideration with regards to attendance.</p> <p>Our link governor meets with the Vice Principal (T&amp;L) and Assistant Principal (STUDENTS) termly to review attendance and procedures and reports back to the Governing Body.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal (STUDENTS) will provide a report to the T&amp;L Governors Committee three times per year, (term 1, 3, 5) summarising the school’s overall attendance. Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE’s school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average.</p> <p>Valence School believes that by working together we can promote good attendance and our monitoring, recording and action procedures are designed to put strategies and support in place to ensure we are proactive in maintaining, encouraging, and reducing persistent and severe absence. Through the school values, we promote a positive, strong ethos to attendance – school is a place to polish your potential, and every child and their family matters!</p>
<b>Analysing Attendance</b>	<p>The school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.</li> <li>➤ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.</li> </ul>
<b>Using Data to Improve Attendance</b>	<p>The school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, class coordinators, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families.</li> <li>➤ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence</b>	<p>Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school (not including for medical procedures and/or recovery – or periods of isolation due to Covid 19), and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.</p> <p>The school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.</li> <li>➤ Contact the parents/carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.</li> <li>➤ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.</li> </ul>

<b>Monitoring Arrangements</b>	This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Vice Principal (T&L)/Assistant Principal (STUDENTS). At every review, the policy will be approved by the T&L Governors Committee.
<b>Links with Other Policies</b>	This policy links to the following policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Child protection and safeguarding policy</li><li>➤ Behaviour policy and Medical Conditions Policy</li></ul>