

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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<b>Governing Committee Responsible</b>	Full Governing Body	<b>Governor Approval (date)</b>	
<b>Website</b>	Yes		
<b>Staff Responsible</b>	Cath Bainbridge	<b>Next review</b>	Nov 23

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental](#)

[responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board 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
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Amy Hyde who can be contacted via the school office: 01767 699806 or office:mapletreepriamaryschool.com

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Lynne Fowler who can be contacted via the school office: 01767 699806 or office:mapletreepriaryschool.com

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enabling the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual pupils by recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Inclusion lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time – if after 9am, parents must bring their child(ren) to the office for signing in.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), 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
- Not book holidays during term time unless under exceptional circumstances which need to be authorised by the headteacher.

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and arrive by 8:55am (Years 5 and 6 by 8:45am)
- Understand that only 'real' illness can be a reason for absence.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning of each school day and once at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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 for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of the afternoon session (EYFS - Year 2 1pm, Years 3-4 1.15pm, Years 5-6 1.30pm) and will be kept open until 20 minutes after the register time.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

If the office does not hear from the parent/carer and your child is absent, a parentmail text will be sent to you asking you to ring the office to provide reasons.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

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. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Maple Tree actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils.

- 5 minutes of lateness every day = 3 days of school lost a year.
- 10 minutes of lateness every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year.
- 15 minutes of lateness every day = 10 days of school lost a year.
- 20 minutes of lateness every day = 13 days of school lost a year.
- 30 minutes of lateness every day = 19 days of school lost a year.

On-going and repeated lates (U code) are unauthorised absences and maybe be subject to legal action.

Parents/carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved.

If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will notify the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and may carry out a doorstep visit/contact the police etc.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Maple Tree Primary School will report their child's yearly attendance figure through the annual school report. Attendance will also be reported at Parents' Evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms. Should there be concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality contact will be made with the family as appropriate (as outlined in this policy).

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, or unavoidable events which could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Circumstances where absences may be regarded as exceptional will vary from school to school and family to family.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 5 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Personal illness (excessive or extended absences will require medical evidence)
- Medical Appointment (copy of appointment to be seen and copied)
- Family bereavement
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to a child's health and safety
- Religious observance (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)
- A travelling child's absence (Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – absence may be authorised only when a Traveller 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)
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Reasons an absence is **unauthorised**:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc.)
- Leave of absence which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of the time agreed by the school
- Special occasions, such as birthdays
- Minding siblings
- Parent/carer or sibling illness
- Family holidays in term time
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Overlaps with the beginning of term

Unauthorised absence from school is considered truancy. This can take the form of absence from school for complete days or lateness. Each of these is as serious as the other, but the strategies for effecting change may need to be different.

## **5.2 Holidays during term time**

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated in September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

It is important to note that Head Teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Circumstances where absences may be regarded as exceptional will vary from school to school and family to family.

There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from school office, or on the school website) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions of absence reaches the thresholds in Central Bedfordshire Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (10 sessions of absence on 12 school weeks), parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice or other legal action in accordance with the code.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

The Head Teacher will use discretion to grant authorised absence in a school year if there are 'exceptional circumstances' for the holiday.

Special reasons or exceptional circumstances that may be agreed to are:

- A dying relative in a different country
- A family funeral in another country/ part of the country
- Holidays for fostering or adoption purposes
- Religious observance
- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during normal school holiday times. (Evidence must be provided to this effect)

The school is therefore unable to authorise absence because of:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- Another sibling in another school where the holidays do not coincide
- A special treat for the child
- Absences which have not been explained

When deciding on the authorisation the following will also be taken into account:

- If the child's attendance is above the school's target of 97%;
- If there have been any other holiday requests during the same school year. (There must be only one request for the academic year);
- Should the application not be authorised and the holiday is taken, the Education Welfare Service in consultation with the school may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### 5.3 Children Missing in Education

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 Central Bedfordshire County Council.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- 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).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

### 5.4 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Maple Tree Primary School, we truly believe that every school day counts towards your child's future. Days off school add up to lost enjoyment, achievement and learning. We appreciate it when families use the 175 non-school days a year for time together, family visits, holidays, days out and routine appointments where possible.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between educational achievement and absence levels.
- Higher absence can lead to lower achievement.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to maintain.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders find transition points easier to manage.

The school provides regular information to parents about the importance of excellent attendance, through the website, school newsletters, a termly attendance leaflet and other forms of communication.



High levels of attendance are celebrated regularly, including the issuing of attendance bear to the class with the highest attendance each week, sharing the top 3 classes attendance each half term in the school newsletter and termly attendance certificates for individual children.

Where we have concerns about the attendance of a child we will communicate swiftly with parents/carers in order to highlight the issue and offer support and guidance in how to improve attendance.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The pupil administrator monitors pupil absence on a daily basis, regardless of whether the child is of statutory school age or non-statutory school age.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

The school asks that you inform us each day during the absence of the child. The pupil administrator will also complete thorough attendance monitoring once each half term. This will monitor trends in attendance and identify children causing concern. She will discuss her findings with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and actions will be put in place if required.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-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, and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Follow the protocol on the School Attendance Staged Intervention Flowchart (see Appendix) which will show when letters, meetings and closer monitoring will be used.

## 8. Education of Pupils with Medical Needs

In response to the guidance – Access to Education for Children & Young People with Medical Needs, DfES 0732/2001 – Maple Tree Primary School recognises its responsibilities ‘for all pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons. Young persons should be able to access education without stigma or exclusion.’ The school’s aim is to ensure pupils have access to as much education as their medical condition allows.

Pupils covered by this may:

- Be recovering from an illness or injury, keeping the pupil away from school during recovery
- Have a long term or recurring illness
- Have an illness or clinically defined mental health disorder which causes them to be absent for a period in excess of 15 days, where medical opinion states they are still unable to access mainstream school.
- The Head Teacher will meet with parents when a child requires support with their education and attention due to medical needs.

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by the designated senior leader. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour policy
- Children with Medical Needs

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil 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 pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Absence Protocol

### *First Day Response*

A child not arriving at school where the parents have not informed the school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- On the first day of absence parents/carers are expected to contact the school, preferably by telephone before 9.00 am.
- The parent/carer reporting the absence should give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return.
- If the date of the return is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the school; if the school receives no contact a member of the office team will inform the Headteacher.
- If further contact cannot be made with parents/carers, then staff will visit the home to make contact.

If your child is absent:

- We will telephone you on the first day of absence, this continues every day whilst the child is absent – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- If absence is long term or there are ongoing issues about illness, parents/carers will be invited in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher
- We will refer the matter to the Central Bedfordshire Council's Access and Inclusion Service if absence is unauthorised and doesn't meet school expectations.

### *Third Day Absence*

Please note: if your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carer, after three days of absence the school is required to consider implementing the child missing in education procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council.

We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to know friends, wider family and visiting the home.

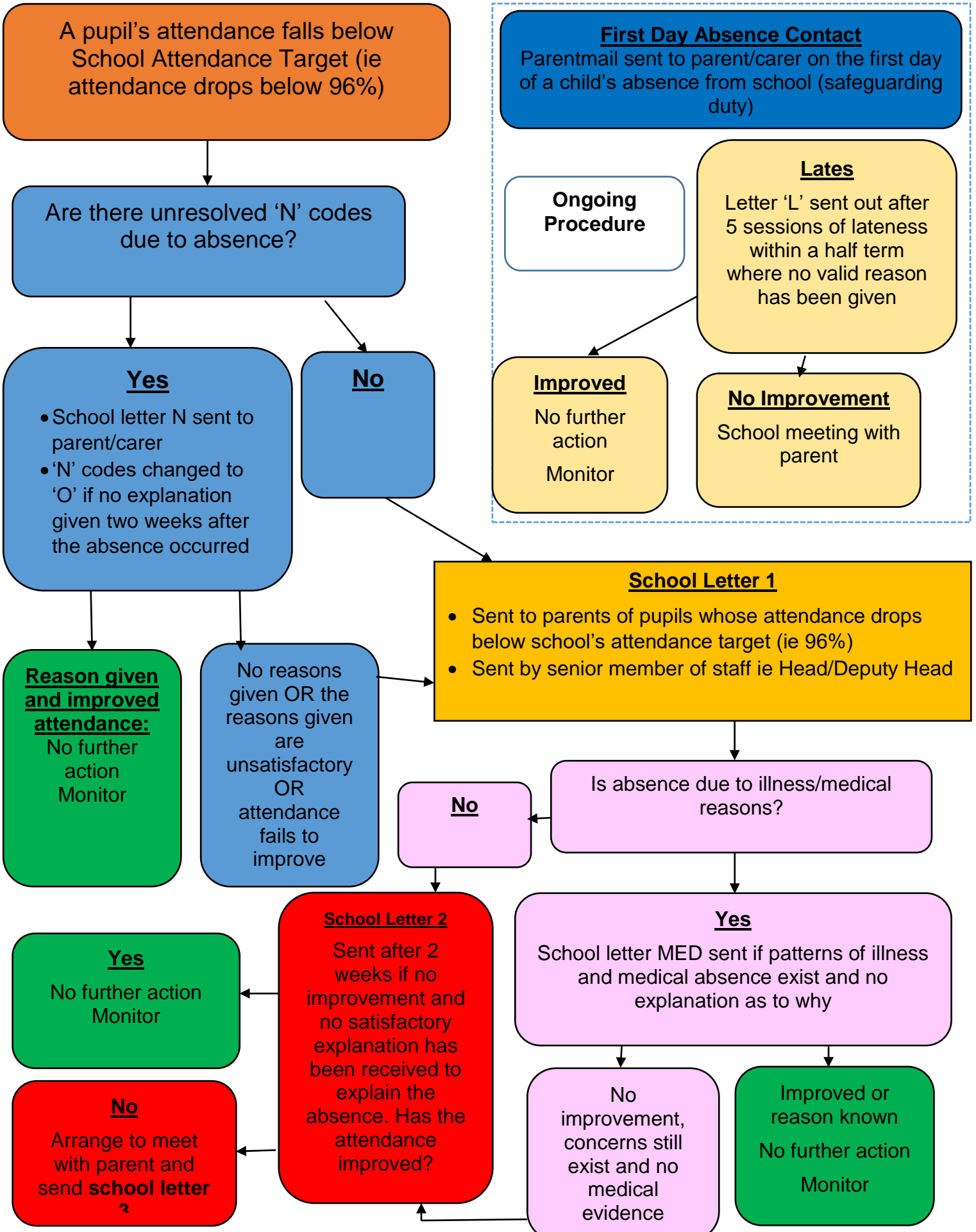
### *Five Days Absence*

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days.

If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named Parent/carer then the local authority is notified and the Child is Missing Education. Staff from the Access and Inclusion Service may visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

You can help us and your child by making sure we always have an up-to date contact number and home address.

## Stage One - School Attendance Staged Intervention Flow Chart



## Appendix 4: Template for Individual Attendance Plan

<b>Name:</b>	<b>DOB:</b>

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>In attendance:</b>

Attendance Zone	Less than 85%	85% - 94%	95% - 97%	97%+
Review 1				
Review 2				
Review 3				

What are the reasons for absence? (please tick)			
Genuine Medical		Illness	
Parent Mental Health		Lesson avoidance	
No Reason Provided		Student Mental Health	
Behaviour / exclusions		Bullying	
Historic Attendance Issues		Peer/Relationship Issues	
Parent having difficulties getting child to school		School based anxiety	
Other:		Reason:	

What actions have been taken? (please tick)			
Traffic Light Monitoring (see over the page)		Curriculum/class changes	
Pupil Interview		Peer mediation	
Telephone calls home		Rewards & Recognition	
Meeting with parent/carer		Early Help	
Attendance improvement meeting		Referral to Outside Agency:	
		External agency support (please specify)	
Group work			
Legal Action			
Other:			

Historic Attendance:								
Nursery (1)	Nursery (2)	Rec	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6

Information Shared (including views of the parent/child, where possible):



Target:	Strategies	Monitoring Milestones	Responsible person	Outcome

Signed:	
Parent/Carer	
Staff	