



Attendance Policy

June 2023

CEO: Sarah Watson
Headteacher: Carly Wilkins

Due for review: Summer Term 2024

Purpose:

- To ensure and encourage a high level of attendance for all students in order that they maximise their educational achievement.
- To ensure that the attendance of students is in line with Wellesley Park Primary School's definition of regular attendance. This is 96%.
- To ensure no unauthorised absences.

Key Points:

- Effective monitoring of attendance is vital.
- Registers must be accurate and kept in accordance with this policy.
- The appendices to this policy outline the roles (Appendix 1) and expectations of everyone involved in ensuring good attendance. These include
 - Parents
 - Pupils
 - ⊖ Phase Leaders
 - Pastoral Lead
 - Deputy Heads / Assistant Heads
 - Education Safeguarding Officer (County)

Attendance and Punctuality

Across the Trust, good, excellent and outstanding attendance and punctuality are acknowledged and rewarded.

- Governors, Directors and staff within the Trust recognise the high correlation between achievement and attendance and strive to maintain high levels of attendance for all students.
- Parents have the responsibility to ensure attendance at school. Unless there is a major health concern attendance should rarely drop below 96%.
- We ask for the cooperation of all parents in helping the school to monitor attendance closely.

Any planned medical absence should be notified by telephone or letter. As far as possible, appointments should be made out of school hours.

Once the school has obtained confirmation the school will authorise the absence if the reasons given are considered appropriate e.g. illness, unavoidable medical appointment etc. If the reasons given are not appropriate the absence will be considered as unauthorised and the parent contacted. The school will follow up any absence which has not been notified.

Illness & Medical Absence

Absence, whether due to illness or other reasons impacts on a child's educational and pastoral outcomes. Absence due to illness should only occur if your child is unable to attend school. If your child's attendance drops below 96% (defined as regular attendance by Wellesley Park School) and this is due to a significant amount of illness, you may be asked to provide medical evidence for the period of absence.

Examples of medical evidence (this is the responsibility of the parent to provide to the school directly):

- Medical appointment card/printed slip
- Medical appointment letter
- Copy of prescription showing name and date
- Prescribed medication with pharmacist label showing name and date
- Hospital Discharge letter

Please note: We never ask for ‘doctor’s notes’ so please do not approach your GP asking for this.

Punctuality

Arriving late to school is very disruptive for the teacher and other class members. It also means that late pupils themselves miss important input from teachers.

If for whatever reason, you know your child will be arriving late, please inform school beforehand.

Lateness of more than 30 minutes after registration will count as an absence from that session and will therefore require a note/telephone call from parents. *If there is no good reason this will count as an unauthorised absence.* Lateness to school will be subject to sanctions unless there is a genuine reason.

Term Time Leave/Holiday Requests

Holidays/Leave of absence in term time will not usually be authorised because they will affect a student’s education. There is **no automatic right** to take children away from school for a holiday. A leave of absence will only be given for exceptional circumstances. The school may request a Penalty Notice for over 10 sessions of unauthorised absence where the student’s attendance falls below 95%.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Emergency service / forces personnel with proof of enforced holiday period.
- Forces personnel returning from or embarking on active service.
- Holiday industry employees with proof of this being the **ONLY** time period allowed by employer.
- A transcontinental leave request to see a terminally ill close relative.

If a leave of absence in term time is requested the following procedure must be followed:

- Parents/carers should complete a form and return it to the school office (see example in Appendix 2)
- If the request is due to work commitments preventing time off at other times, then evidence from the workplace should be provided.

Child Missing in Education (CME)

Wellesley Park Primary School will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow Somerset Child Missing in Education process and make CME referrals as appropriate.

Relevant Legislation/Guidance

The Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the notional threshold of

ten school days. **The amendments made clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist.** The regulations also stated that Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted for 'exceptional circumstances'. This legislation expects that any term time leave must be requested in advance, in writing, direct to the Headteacher, and this should come from the person with whom the child normally resides, must be authorised by the person with whom the child normally resides. The Headteacher will then determine whether the reason is exceptional.

In addition, in 2015 Somerset County Council further clarified the definitions for leave in term time as the following: -

- Rare
- Significant
- Unavoidable
- Short

By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Any other requests for leave during term time, such as educational or sporting trips/visits will be looked at on an individual basis on receipt of a written request, with evidence. The following criteria would, in such circumstances, be taken into account:

- Number of days requested
- Is the request in reasonable time (received at least three weeks prior to first date of proposed absence)
- What will the pupil be missing during the period of absence (e.g. exams, controlled assessments, key revision period etc.)?
- Is it in the child's best interests?
- Current attendance of the pupil

If a child has been absent from school due to illness/other authorised circumstance, but the school has reason to believe that the absence would not in actual fact fit that criteria (e.g. the pupil is actually on a holiday etc.), the school will request additional supporting evidence and unauthorise the absence unless this evidence is received. If a leave of absence in term time is requested, the following procedure must be followed:

- Parents should complete a form from the school office and return it to the school office (see example in Appendix 2)
- If the request is due to work commitments preventing time off at other times then evidence from the workplace should be provided.

Penalty Notices

The school follows DfE guidance and will take legal action against parents/carers who do not send their children to school regularly. We do try to work with parents to ensure there are no barriers to school attendance. If strategies for supporting regular attendance do not work, the school will take legal action.

In the first instance, a Warning Penalty Notice will be issued. If this does not result in improved attendance, a fine will be issued (Appendix 3). The school works closely with the Education Safeguarding Service to ensure full attendance and adherence to procedures.

At Wellesley Park Primary School, regular attendance is classed as attendance of 96% or more. Attendance below this level could result in the issue of a Warning Penalty Notice, Penalty Notice or court action.

Legal sanctions

Sanctions are used as a means of enforcing attendance where there is reasonable expectation that improvement will be secured with their use.

Penalty Notices are an available sanction for the Local Authority as an alternative to prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. They enable parents to discharge potential liability to a formal prosecution.

Penalty Notice Code of Conduct is considered in the following circumstances:

- There have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 12 school weeks (including unauthorised lates) and the school, in consultation with the Education Safeguard Officer, believe this early intervention will resolve the poor attendance and stop the matter moving towards a prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- If a parent proceeds to take term time leave despite not being authorised by the Headteacher, there must be at least 10 continuous sessions of unauthorised term time leave taken.
- An excluded pupil is found in a public place, without their parent, during the school day. (A school is not deemed a public place for this legislation).
- A pupil is approached by, for example, a police officer or Education Welfare Officer, when out of school without reason.

This school is committed to ensuring full attendance and as such, we shall seek the use of statutory duties when required by liaison with the Local Authority.

If issued with a penalty notice, EACH parent must pay £60 per child within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payments must be made directly to the Local Authority.

A 'parent' is defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as; 'all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means that a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with that child, is considered to be a parent in education law'.

If payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute that parent or withdraw the notice.

Procedures in Place to Ensure Good Attendance

First Day Calling: Parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence. The Pastoral Lead/Inclusion Support Officer may also call key pupils. These are pupils whose attendance is being monitored by Phase Leaders.

Absences: Parents are requested to contact the school on the first day of absence. At any point, if there is a concern for a child's welfare, school staff may carry out a 'door knock' or the police may be contacted if we feel there is a need. The attendance will be authorised via the Attendance Officer. If there is any doubt about a reason, the school will contact parents to query the reason. If the school is not satisfied with the reasons given,

it will unauthorise the absence and in some cases will request further evidence. The absence flow chart will be followed in regard to this and future absence.

Medical reasons: If the school requires more information about a medical condition, or is not satisfied with a reason, consent may be sought from the parent/carer to contact the GP directly. If permission is not given, the school will expect the parent/carer to provide necessary medical information themselves. The absence flow chart will be followed in regard to this and future absence.

Reporting to Parents

Your child's attendance will be reported to parents termly at each parents' evening and annually in the pupil's end of year school report. Where a child's attendance drops for whatever reason, Wellesley Park Primary School will write to you as parents to highlight this.

Reducing persistent (<90%) and severe (<50%) absence:

At Wellesley Park Primary School, there is a relentless drive to ensure that pupils get the best opportunities. We have high expectations to support this vision. Therefore, we will actively challenge families to access support available to secure their child's attendance at school. This may involve: working with the School Engagement Officer, gaining consent to place the family on the agenda at a half termly Local Inclusion Support Panel (previously known as Team Around the School meeting). There may be a need to involve wider support services to understand how to remove the attendance barriers best, including SEN services, CAMHS, ESS, CSC, FIS, PFSA and others. More recently, the Somerset Educational Psychology team have produced information and resources linked to emotional based school avoidance, which the school will use to improve persistent and severe absence.

Roles and responsibilities

At Wellesley Park School, we take a whole-school approach to maintain high attendance.

School Leadership Team

- Be active in their approach to promote good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognize and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with.
- Nominate a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing the monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job.
- Report to the Local Governing Body termly on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.
- Develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend school.
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- Ensure that they are fully up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken twice daily.
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed.
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and Carers

- Engage with their children's education; supporting their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Ensure and support their children's aspirations
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment.
- Follow the set school procedures for reporting absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours.
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of home learning, bedtime, etc., so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do in school about the importance of attendance.
- Do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make an exceptional request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher using the term time leave request form.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between all parties. To help us all focus on promoting high attendance levels, methods include:

1. Attendance published in the school's newsletter and on social media.

2. Class attendance trophy to be award and celebrated in weekly celebration assembly.
Very good attendance highlighted and celebrated through the use of certificates.

Children Missing Education (CME)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

All schools have a duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register, who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent for a period of 10 school days or more. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

A referral to the Local Authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) may be considered if there are any safeguarding concerns when a child is missing or for following up any rare, unexplained absence. Immediately notifying social services and the local authority's 'children missing in education' team should a child who is known to be vulnerable be absent without explanation.

Safeguarding remains the highest priority for the school and will continue to be. There is a rigorous process for removing any pupil off roll. When the pupil is CME then reasonable enquiries are made to locate and find a new school. If it is the case that a pupil is moving school then first it is ensured that the child has arrived at the new school. On both occasions off rolling forms are completed, accompanied by a CTF transfer. Under all circumstances it is ensured the child is safe and that all involved professionals are aware of the situation.

APPENDIX 1

CEO: Mrs S Watson

Post Holders at Wellesley Park Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs C Wilkins

Phase Leaders with responsibility for attendance: Mrs F Murphy
Mrs F Doidge
Mrs A Baines

SENDCo: Mrs E Hartley-Criddle

Pastoral Lead: Vacancy

Attendance Officer: Mrs A Matthews

Inclusion Officer: Mrs A Kent

WELLESLEY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL
REQUEST FOR TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE



NAME(S) OF STUDENT(S) 1 CLASS
2 CLASS
3 CLASS

If you have children in another school who will also require leave of absence please give their names and school.

NAME(S) SCHOOL

Please state your reasons for requesting term time leave of absence. If this is because your employer will not grant holiday during school holidays please attach a supporting letter from your employer:

DATES REQUESTED:

FROM: **TO:** (inclusive) **No of days**.....

Please continue overleaf if necessary

Please return this form to the Front Office.

A confirmation letter will be sent to you by post once a decision has been made.

For office use only:

Current Attendance Percentage: 1 % 2% 3%

Leave of absence authorised? **YES/NO**

**APPENDIX 3
ATTENDANCE TRACKING SYSTEMS**

Every day in school makes a difference to your child's future.

Rewards to promote good attendance:

- Every week each Key Phase holds a celebration assembly to award the attendance trophy, to the class with the best attendance;
- At the end of each term, the class with the best attendance in EYFS, Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2 will win a class film afternoon with popcorn.
- Certificates for 95% - 100% each term.
- At the end of the year, every child who has achieved 100% attendance will be awarded a certificate and 100% attendance badge.

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p>Attendance Officer to SLT Official Register Report for previous 4 weeks</p> <p>Look at patterns/session absence</p> <p>Follow-up with parents if required</p> <p>Attendance Officer to closely monitor key children identified</p> <p>Attendance Officer to action letters in line with attendance flow chart</p> <p>Class attendance shared on the fortnightly newsletter</p>	<p>SLT provided with Attendance Concerns report (90-92%)</p> <p>Evaluate for session absence</p> <p>Record actions/next steps</p> <p>Inclusion Officer to hold individual meetings with pupils below 95%</p> <p>Second follow-up letter to parents/carers in line with attendance flow chart</p> <p>Liaison with School Education Safeguarding Support</p> <p>EHA, Parenting Contracts, Team Around the School and home visits actioned. Liaison with Attendance officer re WPN/PN requests</p> <p>Attendance Officer actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PN requests • WPN requests • Referrals via EHA for EWS casework 	<p>SLT provided with Attendance Concerns report (90-92%)</p> <p>Evaluate for session absence</p> <p>Record actions/next steps</p> <p>Student Focus Meeting: CT/Phase Leader/SENCO</p> <p>Meet to discuss barriers to attendance and identify support and effective rewards</p> <p>Report to Governors regarding attendance</p>

Education Attendance – Parenting Agreement

Name		Date of birth	
Address			
School		Year Group	

Current Attendance	%	Sessions of Unauthorised Absence	
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Details of Parents / Guardians/ Carers					
Forename		DOB:			DOB:
Surname					
Relationship					
Address					
Contact Number					

Parent's Explanation for Poor School Attendance:

Agree Action Plan:

New Attendance Target	%	Review Date	
I agree to the action plan. I understand my responsibilities to ensure regular attendance at school and if there is no improvement legal action may be taken.			
Parent Signature	Date		

Attendance Information Sheet

We would like to remind you about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Missing lessons makes it hard to catch up and pupils have to work harder when they come back. Pupils attend school for 187 days per year; there are 175 non-school days a year for holiday, cultural experiences and family time. Any child with attendance of 90% or below is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) by the Government.

Every school is required to take action to work with families to improve attendance. It may be useful for you to know what attendance figures mean for your child.

100%	Excellent Attendance
Above 98%	Good Attendance Pupils with attendance above 98% have had less than 4 days of absence in the year.
Below 96%	If your child's attendance drops below 96% you will receive a letter highlighting this.
94%	If your child's attendance drops to 94% you will receive a letter and be asked to attend a meeting.
92%	If your child's attendance drops to 92% the Pastoral Manager and/or Education Safeguarding Officer (EWS) will become involved.
90% and below.	Persistent Absentee (PA) as defined by the Department for Education (DfE). Pupils with 90% attendance have had 19 days of absence over the year Pupils with this attendance level are missing a month of school per year and may drop academically. Parents of pupils with this level of attendance may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or have legal action taken against them.
85%	Exceptionally Low Attendance/Persistent Absentee Students with 85% attendance have had 29 days' absence over the year. These pupils are missing 6 weeks of a school year; it will be very difficult for them to keep up with work and they are likely to drop further academically – meaning that the attainment gap will have widened. It is highly likely that a Fixed Penalty Notice will have been served and should attendance not improve significantly after this, a referral will be made for legal action to be taken against parents for failure to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Reporting an Absence

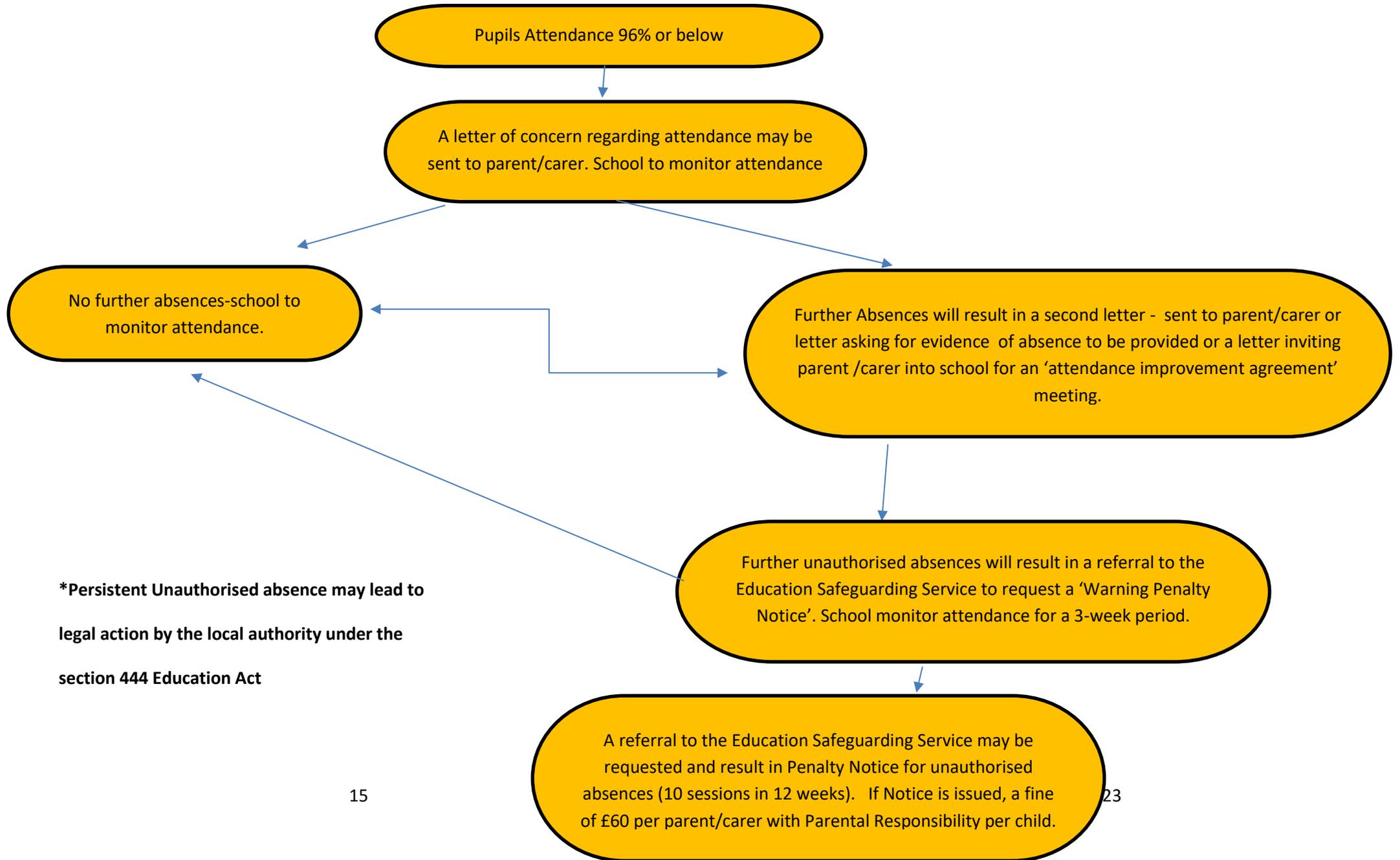
- All absences must be reported by 9.25 am each day (and on each subsequent day) by either calling the absence line or emailing the relevant school.
- If you know your child is going to be absent, please let us know in advance. If your child has been absent due to a medical appointment, please attach or email in a copy of the appointment card/hospital letter.
- Medical evidence **may** be required if your child has a prolonged absence of more than three days. Medical evidence **must** be produced if we have previously written to you stating that no further absence due to illness will be authorised without it.

Punctuality

Arriving late to school and into lesson is very disruptive for the teacher and other class members. It also means that late student themselves miss important input from teachers and/or tutors.

If for whatever reason, you know your child will be arriving late, please call the absence line or provide your child with a written note.

Attendance Flow Chart



***Persistent Unauthorised absence may lead to legal action by the local authority under the section 444 Education Act**

