



Congleton High School

Together in the Pursuit of Excellence

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Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	2
4. Recording attendance	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	6
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	10
7. Attendance monitoring	10
8. Monitoring arrangements	13
9. Links with other policies	13
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	14

PRINCIPLE-

Outstanding attendance and punctuality at school facilitates an outstanding education and job/career prospects and minimises the risks of students being drawn into anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting excellent attendance (98%) and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled Acting early to address patterns of absence
- We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#) and also [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

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 monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

(CHS employs its own attendance officer and also an attendance officer from Cheshire East Local Authority)

The attendance officers:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

3.6 Parents

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary statutory responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES:

To help fulfil their important role in their child's education, parents must:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- notify the Main Office if their child cannot attend for any reason – this is for the child's security as well as administrative reasons;
- work with the school and education welfare service to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence;
- ensure they obtain 'leave of absence' for their child if required during term time.

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents should always:

- encourage good attendance making sure that their child goes to school regularly, arrives
- on time and keeps to the school's rules on attending all lessons;
- take an interest in their child's school work;
- make sure their child understands that the parents do not approve of absence from school;
- support the school in its efforts to control less than outstanding attendance;
- inform the school on the first day of non-attendance;
- co-operate with school staff and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems and receives an education;

- discuss planned absences with the school and apply for permission well in advance (at least one month's notice)

Parents should not normally:

- expect the school to agree to shopping trips during school hours;
- take their own family holidays outside of the school holidays;
- take their own family holidays during exam or test time;

STUDENTS:

Students are actively encouraged to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons.

- Students should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence, e.g. bullying, racism, etc.
- Students should pass on absence notes from parents to their progress tutor and to pass school correspondence to their parents.

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 first session of each school day and once during the second 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 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 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

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.

A written note or email should be sent to the Attendance Officer by the parent/carer to inform them of this planned absence. 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

A pupil who arrives late:

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

Congleton High School actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. The Pastoral and SLT Team will be on the main school gates every morning. The school's attendance officer will stand at the main student entrance at 8.40 am – 9.10 am issuing detentions for students who are late to school. Normal register entries do not usually indicate the severity or degree of lateness and the school insists students 'sign in' at Student Reception after 9 am and tutors will investigate and report as necessary. Students who are late to school will serve a Late detention. Frequent lateness of students can provide grounds for prosecution of parents. This allows detection of patterns of late arrival.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason,
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Regular communication between CHS and parents around concerns over attendance is a priority. Absence alerts trigger a text home on each day of absence. A follow up phone call from the Attendance Officer will be made where parents do not contact CHS. A home visit from the Family Support Worker employed by CHS will then be triggered if contact still cannot be made. Parents receive a termly attendance report for their child and are contacted more regularly if there are attendance concerns. Attendance is discussed with parents at every Early Help, CIN and CP meeting and also as appropriate at meetings involving other external agencies.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. CHS will decide whether an absence request constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance' based on the individual circumstances and the relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. 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

The Following are examples where there **may** be valid reasons for absence:

- Public performances or competing at regional, county or national level for sport.
- A performance licence will be required for absences for public performances.
- Funeral of close family member
- Wedding of close family member
- Graduation ceremony of close family member

*This is not an exhaustive list.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Attendance is monitored closely on a daily and weekly basis to identify trends and issues for individual students and groups of students. Regular contact is made with parents/carers as attendance nears key borderline % levels. This could be in the form of phone calls, emails, texts, letters, meetings and home visits.

An action plan will be created with parents and other involved agencies as well as the child. This will have key review dates and SMART targets to be met. Intervention programmes of support will be an integral part of this plan.

Relevant external agency support will be requested as necessary such as the school nurse, Early Help, SWANS, CAMHS and Medical Needs Teams.

Students will be recognised and praised where improvement is made and also where attendance meets the required level.

The high profile of attendance will be maintained at CHS via notice boards, the website, Twitter, Facebook, newsletters, assemblies and Form tutor time.

Strategies for pupils at risk of persistent absence *

- establish robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem, for example by:
 - sending letters to parents and carers
 - having a weekly tutor review
 - creating attendance clinics
 - engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
 - using fixed penalty notices
 - engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate
 - establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
 - monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures (and intervention), for example:
 - having a review and clinic drop in
 - sampling of case files
 - evaluate the impact of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work and that reflect the school context best
 - attend or lead on attendance reviews and clinics in line with escalation procedures
 - engage governors in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.
- establish clear and effective service level agreements with external partners to support pupils with persistent absence, including:
 - local authority education welfare and attendance services
 - independent attendance organisations
 - alternative providers
 - youth services
 - school nursing and mental health professionals
 - children's social care staff where appropriate
- establish good relationships with a network of voluntary organisations and charities to support vulnerable pupils including those with persistent absence, for example:
 - mental health charities
 - mentoring organisations
 - young carers association
- engage in or lead on attendance reviews and clinics in line with escalation procedures

Teaching staff and tutors

- rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- apply rewards and sanctions consistently
- follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality
- review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets
- periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments
- proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils
- welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:
 - lesson resources
 - buddy support
 - one to one input
 - meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
 - establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets. This could include:
 - lunchtime arrangements
 - support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing
 - lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
 - make regular contact with families to discuss progress
 - consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups
- prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return
- develop targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence (including considering small group additional support)
- contribute to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate
- provide tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time

Attendance officers, pastoral staff and family support workers

- engage with feeder schools or organisations to access absence information in order to identify target cohorts prior to transfer, including mid-year transfers and managed moves
- provide appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice
- carry out robust first-day calling procedures including priority routine for vulnerable children including children with a social worker
- undertake home visits in line with your policy to engage families and ensure children are safe

- identify and, where possible, mitigate potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies
- implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures
- implement children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate
<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/children-missing-education.aspx>
- ensure that that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education (EHE)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791528/EHE_guidance_for_parentsafterconsultationv2.2.pdf
- where pupils have additional vulnerabilities which may require multi-agency meetings try to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible
- provide regular attendance reports to tutors to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes
- initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures. This could include:
 - letters home
 - attendance clinics
 - engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
- work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard to reach families and find methods that work and are understood
- consideration if further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on [parental responsibility measures](#)
- provide regular reports to leaders on the at-risk cohort
- provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils
- develop and implement persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
- identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil, for example:
 - mentoring
 - careers advice and guidance input
 - college placement
 - out of hours learning
 - alternative provision where appropriate
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the local authority attendance team, external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress
- liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments
- coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- work in partnership with local authority attendance team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- provide regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions

*Not all strategies will be appropriate for each child or context.

Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and half termly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If the pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above two days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. Absences of three days or longer will trigger home visits by the family support worker.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will involve the CHS Family Support Worker and consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

5.3 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 *

Leadership and management will:

- Offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
- Make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.

- Have a designated attendance champion in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- Make sure staff receive professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.
- Governors should have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

Relationships and communication

- Build respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicate openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
 - treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

Parents and carers should:

- treat staff with respect
- actively support the work of the school
- call on staff for help when they need it
- communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Systems and data

- Use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences. Make sure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.
- Make sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- Every member of staff should know and understand their responsibilities for attendance.
- Robust school systems provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
 - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
 - young carers
 - children who are eligible for free school meals
 - children who speak English as a second language
 - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
- Monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.

- Attendance leaders may consider providing regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.
- School attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support policies should clearly outline:
 - the key principles
 - rules pupils need to follow
 - routines
 - consequence systems
- The escalation of procedures to address absence needs to be:
 - understood by pupils, parents and carers
 - implemented consistently
 - reviewed regularly

Intervention

- Deliver intervention in a targeted way, in response to data or intelligence.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence (register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking).
- Use attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance.
- Create action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families, for example, children's social care and early help services. Commission or deliver interventions to improve attendance.
- Monitor the impact of any intervention, making adjustments if necessary and using findings to inform future strategy.
- Where interventions fail to address attendance issues, identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention.
- Follow local authority codes of conduct, policies and procedures and make referrals for statutory intervention when interventions have not resulted in improved attendance and relevant triggers / thresholds are met.

School leaders

- deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
- use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through your regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness
- monitor implementation of policy and practice, for example through:
 - form time drop in
 - shadow late gate
- engage community businesses, partners and residents to promote attendance and report non-attendance

- monitor whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- establish, implement and monitor robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME)
- develop good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)
- engage pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions
- ensure that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education

*Not all strategies will appropriate for each child or context.

At CHS, SIMS is used to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 12 months by the member of SLT with overall responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- SEND policy
- Parent and carer contact policy
- Mental health policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Absconding student policy
- RBFL policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

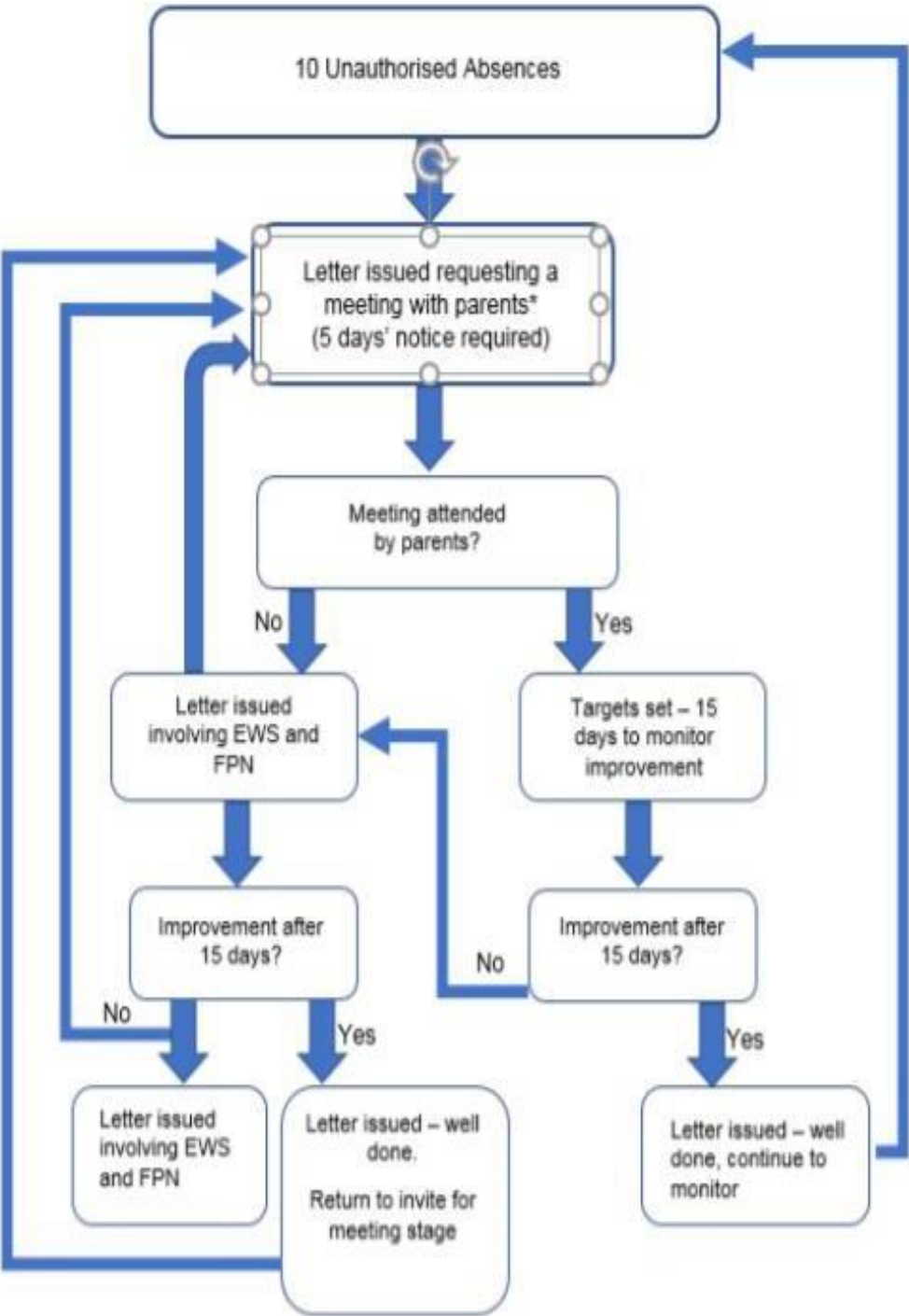
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the 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
Authorised absence		
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
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Unauthorised Absence Flowchart



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