



**Kidsgrove**  
**Learning Campus**  
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# **Attendance Policy**

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## **Introduction - Attendance matters**

It is widely accepted that attendance has a direct impact upon achievement, success and welfare. Strong evidence shows that where any individual student attendance percentage is below 96% it will have a detrimental effect on their achievement and development, becoming increasingly damaging as their attendance percentage becomes lower. Non-attendance is one of the single biggest blocks to achievement and the school carrying out its function in safeguarding the welfare of children. Regardless of the reason for absence, not being present at school disadvantages children.

**Therefore, it is imperative to work with parents and carers to maximise every student's attendance. By focusing on good attendance, we can make a significant impact across the range of outcomes for students and support all their needs.**

## **Attendance**

All students at The Kidsgrove Secondary School are expected to aim for 100% attendance if they are to fulfil their learning potential. Full attendance maximises learning opportunities and parents/carers have a vital role in promoting positive attitudes towards attendance. We ask for support from parents/carers to ensure that their children are present at every opportunity, arrive on time and to avoid allowing children to stay at home unnecessarily, or taking them out of school without authorisation. Evidence shows that students who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially.

We monitor all students' attendance closely and follow up unexplained absence with parents/carers by text and/or telephone calls. Where a student's attendance record reaches a concerning level (below 96%) we will contact parents/carers to discuss ways in which we can support them and their child.

Attendance during one school year	Equals days absent	Which is approximately weeks absent	Which means the number of lessons missed	Absences over 5 years
97%	5 days	1 week	25 lessons	5 weeks
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons	¼ Year
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 lessons	½ Year
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	200 Lessons	1 Year
70%	57 Days	11 ½ Weeks	288 Lessons	1 ¼ Year
60%	80 Days	16 Weeks	400 Lessons	2 Years

## Statutory Obligations

Legislation – Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full- time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”*.

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that *“if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”*. Therefore, regular, and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition ‘parental responsibility’ lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students at compulsory school age who are on the school’s roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

## Procedure

Students are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves learner's absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

**\*Please note that both of the above absences deduct from a student's overall percentage.**

## Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is a serious problem for students. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these students at a considerable disadvantage.

A student defined as a 'Persistent Absentee' is one who misses 10% or more of school.

## Registering Attendance

- AM Form time registers are our most vital. These need to be swift and accurate and all absence will then trigger actions. Registers to remain open for 30 minutes after which a pupil will be marked absent.
- Registers are to be marked using within 10 minutes of the start of each period.
- Students present should be given a "/" mark (present for that session).
- Students not present in the lesson should be marked with a "N" (No reason yet supplied for absence). If it appears that the student has been marked as absent by the attendance manager, staff are not to override the marks already inputted.
- Students who arrive late should be given an "L" mark and the number of minutes late recorded. Parents will be informed via the schools messaging system of their child's late mark and the reason for this will be provided to them.
- Paper registers should only be marked when there is no possible alternative and these should be returned promptly to the main reception unless another arrangement has been made.

## Punctuality and Arriving Late to School

- All students are expected to be punctual to school (8.35am) and to their lessons.
- Students arriving after 8.40am will be marked as late using an 'L' code.
- Any student who is late to school must attend a detention.
- Failure to attend this detention will lead to a more serious sanction with the SLT team.
- Students who arrive considerably late will be marked with a 'U' code (Late after morning registers have closed) and the absence will be unauthorised unless a satisfactory reason is given.
- Students who are persistently late to school will have support provided to them, contact home will be made and if appropriate a sanction will be issued if there is no good reason. The Local Authority will issue statutory action when a threshold of 10 'U' codes is reached.

The school uses a system called 'A Star Attendance' to monitor student absence. This enables real-time data analysis and efficient processes to manage the next steps in facilitating improvements to individual pupil and whole school attendance. The database will direct the next course of action to be taken if a pupil's attendance is not improving at a consistent rate and generate the required parental letters to outline where a rapid improvement is needed. See Appendix one.

### Action

## Letters and Action Plans

### Attendance Procedures and Responsibilities

Parents/carers are asked to telephone school **before 8.30am** to notify us of a child's absence. Where parents/carers fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the attendance manager will endeavour to contact them by text initially with a follow up telephone call or home visit. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted as valid the absence will be unauthorised.

For an absence to be authorised, for example due to illness, it must be supported by a letter, note or phone call from the parents/carers explaining the reason for the absence. Medical evidence may be requested.

Medical evidence will be requested to support absences of 3 or more days and a welfare visit will be carried out at the home address. The child must be seen during this visit, and

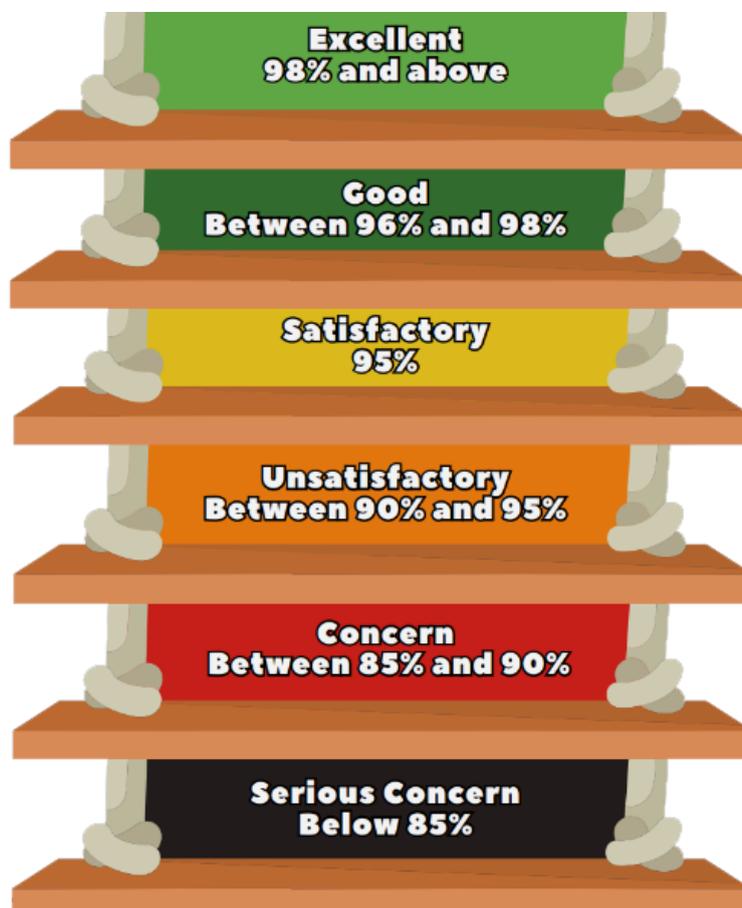
this is an opportunity for parents to discuss any concerns around attendance, absence and frequent illness with the schools Education Welfare Officer.

Students who wish to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter or note from their parents/carers explaining the reason and enclose evidence of appointments. We discourage lessons being missed for appointments.

Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at the main reception and should sign out at the reception if leaving the premises before the end of the school day. **This must be authorised prior.**

A first day response strategy is in place whereby when a child has not attended school by 9:30 am the attendance manager will make contact to establish the reason for the absence and an estimated time of return to school. These actions are logged and recorded.

As part of our attendance strategy, we monitor and address attendance patterns using our form tutor led Attendance Ladder approach. Students are familiar with the categories of attendance and these form pastoral discussions during form time and are also reinforced by assemblies.



As a school, we wish to work closely with parents to help and support all students to move into or stay in the *Excellent 98% and above* zone. As these are such important targets. Students that can achieve 'Good' or 'Excellent' attendance has such a positive impact on progress and attainment. To recognise these achievements, special awards are presented to students who achieve 100% attendance each term.

**Each 'Attendance Zone' represents different levels of absence.**

### **Green Zone**

Students in the 'Green Zone' have an attendance level of 96% or more. This recognises patterns of good to excellent school attendance and students that fall within this band are more likely to do well at school and achieve good results. There is a clear link between attendance and attainment and the higher the attendance the better the educational outcomes for students.

### **Yellow Zone**

Students in the 'Yellow Zone' have an attendance level of 95% which is satisfactory and requires some improvement. Students with this level of attendance are cause for concern and are at risk of under achieving at school as this

### **Orange Zone**

Students in the 'Orange Zone' have an attendance level between 90% and 95%. Students in this zone are regularly absent from school and less likely to achieve their potential. These students are closely monitored by the Education Welfare Service as their attendance is unsatisfactory and requires improvement.

### **Red Zone**

Students in the 'Red Zone' have an attendance level between 85% and 90%. Students in this zone are frequently absent from school and less likely to achieve their potential. These students are closely monitored by the Education Welfare Service and will be asked to provide evidence to support absence where patterns have been identified.

A stage 1 absence letter will have already been issued and then followed with a stage 2 letter if attendance is still in decline.

## Grey Zone

Students in the 'Grey Zone' have an attendance level below 85% which is a serious concern. Students in this zone are absent from school regularly and are at significant risk of low attainment and not achieving educational outcomes. At this stage a legal staged process will be fully utilised.

## Medical Absences

Any medical absences more than 3 days per absence period (6 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. This does not have to be a doctor's note but can be prescriptions, medication, or appointment cards. If no medical evidence is received the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Medical evidence should be provided for any long-term medical condition which may affect a student's attendance rate.

## Medical Appointments

Whilst we recognise that it is not always possible, we do encourage Parents/ Carers to book non-urgent medical and dental appointments **outside of the school day or during the holidays**. Where this is unavoidable, we request that evidence of the appointment is supplied to our attendance manager/officer.

If this is not possible, a note or a medical card must be produced. It is important that students attend school directly after/before the appointment, where this is possible. Whole days off for medical appointments will not be authorised without prior consultation with the Attendance Manager or a member of the senior leadership team.

## How do I decide if my child is too ill to come to school?

We ask that you consider the following when deciding with your child if they are well enough for school?

1. Should this dismiss the whole school day and learning?
2. Is my child too ill to undertake the activities planned in the school day?
3. Would I take the day off work for this illness?
4. Is my child suitably looked after at home when absent from school?
5. Is it appropriate to take pain killers and then attend school?
6. Does my child have a condition that could be passed on to other children?

The website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) can give helpful advice when making the decision 'is my child too ill to go to school?' (<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Yourchildatschool/Pages/Illness.aspx>).

If your child's attendance is broken by regular absence due to minor illnesses (broken weeks) we will write to you to advise you that any further absences will not be authorised

without medical evidence. In these circumstances reporting your child ill will no longer be sufficient to authorise the absence.

Where there is a pattern of repeated, frequent absences over a long period of time, further information will be required in order to authorise the absences. In cases where there is no known medical reason for the frequency of absence reported as 'illness' the school will seek clarification from a health professional that they are aware of the absences and verify that these should be authorised.

### **Application for Exceptional Circumstances- Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Amendments to the 2024 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Headteachers should determine the number of school days a student can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

Please note, we will not grant permission for holidays during term time. This policy is in line with current statutory guidelines which came into effect in August 2024. The Headteacher will only authorise leave of absence in term time when evidence is provided to show there are exceptional circumstances for a child to miss school.

Parents/carers must make a request to the attendance manager/officer at the school, in advance, on the appropriate form and should show that there are special reasons why the leave of absence must be in term-time. The cost, convenience or availability of a particular holiday/insurance related to a holiday will not be taken into consideration. If permission is not sought and school have reason to believe a child is on holiday, a home visit will be carried out.

It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs for more than one school day, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer. The Penalty is £160 per parent/carer per child if paid within 81 days, reducing to £80 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days. The Local Authority is supporting schools to tackle repeated offences by introducing a flat rate of £160 per parent/carer per child for a second penalty notice in three-year period and not allowing more than 2 penalty notices. After which an alternative route for a third offence E.G. prosecution will be considered as the penalty notice procedure is not working.

Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Further details on National Framework for penalty notices including schools' role are provided in the updated 'Working together to improve School attendance guidance, August 2024'.

Where guidance refers to a parent, the school / Local Authority will need to decide which adult is most appropriate to work with. Generally, parents include.

- Natural parents whether married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the care (I.E live with and looks after the child).

### **Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

Students are rewarded for good attendance and for improved attendance. This can take the form of positive letters home, postcards home, awarding achievement points, achievement certificates and entry to a reward events/trips.

### **What can Parents/Carers do to help?**

- Do not allow the child to make the decision.
- Create positive routines around school days.
- Think about that day and what may be happening, and is a full day absence necessary?
- Let the school know straight away why your child is absent from school.
- Open and honest communication with school regarding absence
- Communication with school is extremely important in supporting your child in school.
- Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.
- Ensure that addresses and telephone numbers of parents and key contacts are up to date.

## **If Parents/Carers are worried about their Child's Attendance at School, what can they do?**

If you are concerned about your child's absence, please speak with their form tutor. You can find their contact details if you would like any more information on the school website, you can also contact the school directly.

### **The legal framework in relation to student absence**

We understand that occasionally absences cannot be helped but we do ask that you work collaboratively with the school on any occasion that your child is not present – key to this is communication.

Parents/carers can be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice by the school, local authority, or police, for their child's non-attendance. The penalty is £80 (per parent/carer), and this rises to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

There is no right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If this is not paid, the local authority can proceed to prosecution.

If a registered student of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly the parent/carer could be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Supreme Court has held in April 2017 that attending school "regularly" means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not "sufficiently frequent attendance". This means that a child must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so and failure to do this may lead to the commission of an offence.

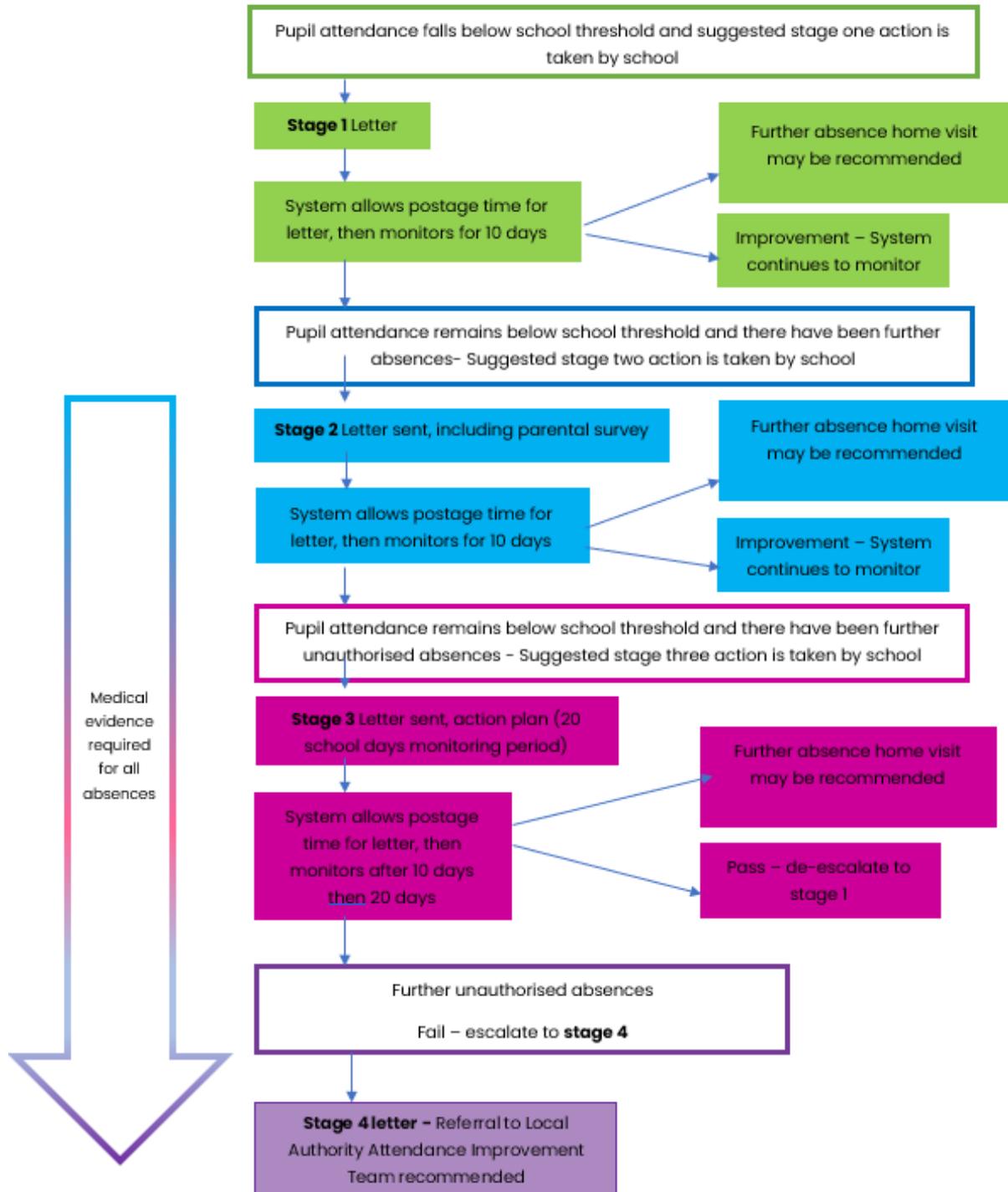
### **There are two offences:**

1. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 – if the child is absent without authorisation, then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1000.
2. Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 – an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent/carer knew about the child's absence and failed to act, then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

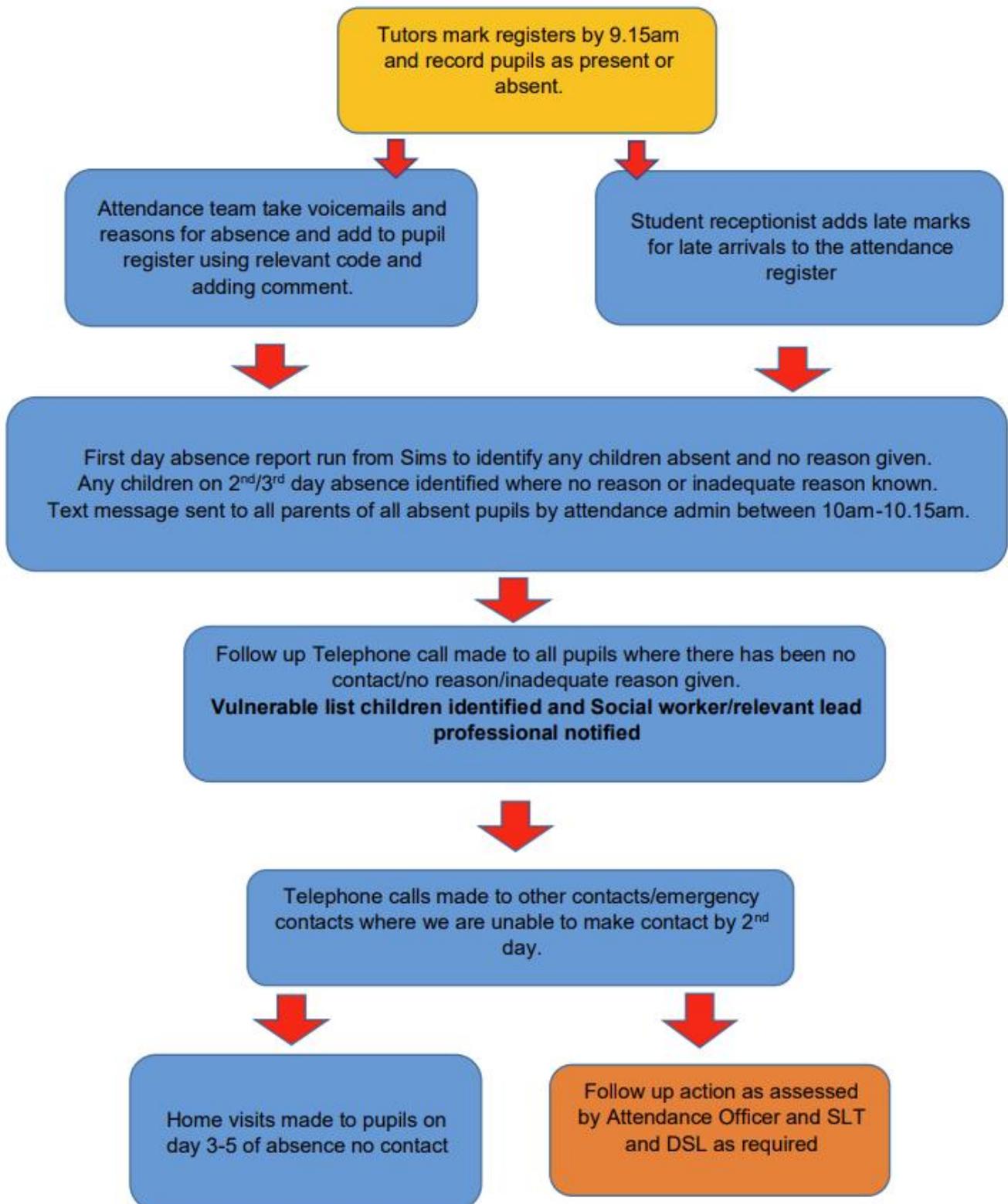
Parents/carers can also be prosecuted by local authorities under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, if a student of compulsory school age who remains on the admissions register is found in a public place during school hours after being excluded from school. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1000.

Please note that whilst we support the government's stance on reducing absence, the school does not benefit financially from this action.

## Attendance Monitoring Review Process



Appendix  
two



## **Policy amendments since the last policy publication in January 2023**

- 2024 new 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- Requirement for medical evidence to support absence for illness of 3 days or more.
- Safe and well / Welfare visits may be carried out for absences of 3 days or more.
- Home visits will be conducted where school have reason to believe a student may be on holiday and where a 'request for leave' has not been submitted and absence has been reported as illness.
- Changes to school MIS system and way attendance marks are recorded.