



Attendance Policy



Policy Review Schedule

Person Reviewing	Reason for Review	Date of review	Version
L Smith	Implementation of new policy review cycle in the school.	Autumn Term 2023	1.1
L Smith	Review of policy with School Education Welfare Officer	20 th September 2023	1.2

Approved at Governing Body Meeting on the 25th September 2023

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Head teacher

Signed:



Review Date: September 2023

Introduction

Purpose:

To promote excellent attendance and consistent procedures to promote and encourage improved attendance.

Aim(s):

- To improve attendance to at least 95% for all pupils
- To reduce the difference between attendance of pupils affected by poverty and those that are not;
- To develop a consistent rewards system to promote good attendance
- To develop a consistent approach to pupils and families who do not demonstrate positive attendance patterns.

Wider school aims/ethos:

Excellent attendance is an aspiration of the whole school community. It is underpinned by the schools vision, values and aims. Improving attendance is also part of the wide local and national improvement agenda.

Consultation:

This policy has been created from guidance from the LA and will be shared with pupils, parents, staff and governors.

Sources and references:

LA Promoting positive Attendance Policy & EWS Strive Attendance Framework

Principles/values:

Children and Young People must attend school full time to benefit from their education. This calls for the co-operation of the Local Authority, school governors, school staff, parents, carers, pupils and support from all of the bodies represented in the Children and Young People's Partnership and in the Community Safety Partnership.

Schools have a special responsibility to encourage full attendance – pupils who are not in school are not being educated and will not achieve their potential. This is both unsafe for the child or young person and is not acceptable legally and morally.

Staff Responsible for whole school attendance:

- Mrs L Smith - Headteacher
- Mrs L Smith and Mrs S Evans – Attendance Officer
- Ms L Rees – Educational Family Support Worker

Procedures and practice

Section 1: The law

The law defines compulsory school age as between 5 and 16 years old.

Parents

Parents must secure full-time education for children of compulsory school age. The education must be suited to the child's age, aptitude and ability, and to any special needs the child has. Parents can secure education for their child by registering the child with a school or in some other way. A child who is registered with a school must attend regularly and punctually.

The Local Authority

As a local authority (LA), Torfaen County Borough Council must ensure that:

- There are enough school places for the children in its area
- Parents secure full-time education for their children

Schools

Schools must:

- Record attendance at the start of the school day and during the afternoon on a paper or computer register;
- Tell the LA if
 - if a pupil fails to attend regularly OR
 - A pupil has not attended school for three days without contact from the Parent (day 1 if the child is known to be vulnerable/CP)
 - A pupil is absent for 10 or more school days in a row. The school should tell the LA why the pupil is absent if it knows in line with CME guidance
- Record in the register whether absence is authorised or unauthorised;
- Publish the percentage and number of authorised and unauthorised absences in the governor's annual report and prospectus;
- Comment on any unauthorised absence in pupils' annual reports and
- Allow the Local Authority to inspect the register during school hours.

Penygarn Community Primary School' Governing Body adopted the Local Authority protocol for Fixed Penalty Notices. Please read the supplementally guidance in addition to this policy.

Legislation

Under **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996**, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5-16) receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

If it appears to the LA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they may consider instigating procedures, including the use of **School Attendance Order** under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under **Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996**. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him to attend (Education Act 1996, **Section 444(1A)** as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). This offence requires proof that the parent knew of their child's non-attendance and failed to act. Under this aggravated offence a warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction can lead to a custodial sentence.

Section 444(ZA) of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 116 of the Education Act 2005) will extend the circumstances in which a parent can be prosecuted for failing to ensure that a child for whom he is responsible attends regularly to include alternative provision that has been made for the child. An LA must consider applying for an **Education Supervision Order (ESO)** before prosecuting a parent (Children Act 1989, Section 36). An LA may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting the parent.

For further details please see the following documents:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2005
- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The special position of **Traveller families** is also recognised in law (section 444(6), Education Act 1996). Traveller parents are protected from conviction if the parent can demonstrate that:

- he or she is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as requires travel from place to place;
- the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits;
- the child, where aged six or over, has attended school for at least 200 sessions (half days) during the preceding twelve months.

Registers

The register is a legal document. It may be needed to use it as evidence in court. Teachers must fill it in, accurately and consistently for every school session. All attendance codes must be used accurately – improper use of codes can mask attendance and potential safeguarding issues while also potentially impeding prosecutions.

At Penygarn Community Primary School, we use an electronic register within SIMs. Each staff member has their own log on and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is marked. If they delegate the task to a Teaching Assistant, they still remain accountable for the register. The register must be complete at the start of every session.

Completing the electronic register

Teachers must:

- Complete the register immediately at the start of each session;
- Not mark a pupil present unless the pupil is in the room when they call the register;
- Not leave any spaces in the register;
- Make any changes to the register clearly, **distinguishing between the original entry and the correction**. Both the original entry and any correction **must be preserved by ensuring the register is saved within SIMS;**
- Not allow pupils to mark the register;
- Mark pupils who are present / (am) and \ (pm);
- Mark pupils who are absent **O** if in school's view no satisfactory explanation is provided;
- Mark pupils who arrive late but before the register is closed **L** and
- Mark pupils who arrive after the register is closed **U** (see Section 3 for more information).

You should have easily accessible instructions for filling in the register near to the laptop being used to register the pupils. Use the codes within this document – **not those within SIMS as they are not the WG approved codes!**

Authorised and unauthorised absence

This section covers the different types of absence. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) can provide further advice.

Authorised absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. **You should not automatically class an absence as authorised because it is covered by a note from the parent. All notes once dealt with by the teacher should be filed and sent to the school office for safe keeping.**

(CODE CATEGORISATION ADVICE FOR THE NEW STATUTORY CODES)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	STATISTICAL MEANING	PHYSICAL MEANING
A	Present at registration	Present	This code should be used for pupils who were present in school during registration
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	Present	This code should be used for pupils that arrive late but before registration has closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival.
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	Approved educational activity	This code should be used where a registered pupil on roll is currently being educated off-site at a supervised activity approved by the school.

			Examples such as attending taster day at other school, pupils attending alternative provision arranged and or agreed by the school, pupils undertaking work experience as part of an alternative curriculum. Schools should not use this code if a pupil has an agreed part-time timetable as part of reintegration or transition. These pupils should be marked as code C for those sessions.
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)	Approved educational activity	The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school and they are not required to attend your school. The school where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity	This code should be used when a pupil is participating in or attending an approved sporting activity.
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	This code should be used for school organised trips or visits, including residential trips. Can also be used for other trips of a strictly educational nature, which are arranged by other organisations, provided they are supervised.
J	Interview	Approved educational activity	This code should be used for pupils undertaking interviews with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved educational activity	This code should be used for work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996. Work experience undertaken as part of an alternative curriculum should not be recorded using this code.
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code / description)	Authorised absence	<p>This code should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Schools should consider the nature of the event, its frequency and the overall attendance pattern of the pupil.</p> <p>Examples might include special occasions such as weddings, family bereavement, young carer, maternity leave, public performance.</p>
F	Agreed extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	School should only agree to absence for family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. School can only agree to absence of more than 10 days in a school year in exceptional circumstances.
H	Agreed family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	<p>Parents are not entitled to withdraw pupils for holidays during term time.</p> <p>School should only agree to absence for family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. School can only agree to absence of more than 10 days in a school year in exceptional circumstances.</p>
I	Illness	Authorised absence	<p>This code should be used when a child is absent for a whole session due to illness, medical or treatment.</p> <p>If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can</p>

			record the absence as unauthorised absence (code O) but should advise parents of the school's intention. Schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support absence on the ground of illness.
M	Medical or dental appointments	Authorised absence	For health and safety reasons a system must be in place to record that pupil has either arrived at school or left the premises during a session for medical (GP), hospital or dental appointments
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	A pupil who is excluded for a fixed period remains on the school roll but cannot attend the school. A pupil who is permanently excluded remains on roll until the appeal process has been completed.
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence	Absence to take part in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	Traveller child when the family is travelling. If the pupil's family are known to be travelling but it is not known whether the pupil is attending education provision, the absence should be authorised and recorded using this code. A school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling.

The main changes in the new codes and the associated WAG guidance are:

- A new 5th statistical category of 'not required to attend' to be used for a small number of specific infrequent circumstances. This category will cover absence due to the partial closure of a school e.g. where some of the pupils cannot attend due to bad weather. They would no longer be recorded as an authorised absence.
- Where Traveller children are registered at more than one school and are present at one of those schools, the other school (s) at which they are registered can record them as receiving approved educational activity. They would no longer be recorded as an authorised absence.
- A young offender may now only be deleted from the register where his or her period of custody is for at least four months and where the school has reasonable grounds for believing that the pupil will not be returning to school at the end of that period. He or she will be recorded as an authorised absence until his or her name is deleted from the register. If an alternative approved educational activity is provided during the period of custody, our school may record the pupil as receiving approved educational activity. Previously, a pupil's name could be deleted from the register if he or she had been absent for 4 weeks and had been detained by court order.

Unauthorised absences (truancy)

N	No reason for the absence provided yet	Unauthorised absence	This code should be used when a pupil is absent from school and no reason has yet been provided for this
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			absence. If no explanation is forthcoming after a reasonable amount of time the N code to be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised circumstances	Unauthorised absence	This code is used for all absences that the school considers to be unauthorised. A parent /carer may offer an explanation to the school. Examples such as shopping, 'couldn't get up', having haircut, transfer to another school.
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking into account the age of the child, the overall attendance of the child, the child's stage of education and progress, its nature and parental wishes. Schools should invite parents in to school to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.
U	Late and arrived after the register closed after 9.30 am	Unauthorised absence	Schools should (a) actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival and (b) have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. The WAG advises that schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the start of the session.

Unauthorised absences can be defined as absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence.

Parentally condoned absences include absences when:

- a parent is ill;
- a parent is using the child as a child-minder;
- a pupil is supporting other members of the family;
- work patterns, for example shift work, make it difficult for the family to ensure the child can attend school;
- a parent wants company;
- a parent gives in to the pupil who wants to stay at home;
- it is the pupil's birthday;
- a parent does not care whether the pupil attends school;
- a parent has taken the pupil shopping;
- a parent cannot control the pupil;
- a parent has taken the pupil to the hairdresser;
- a pupil is in paid work;
- a parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general;

- a parent distrusts authority and
- a parent is using the pupil as an interpreter.

Not required to attend codes

X	Non-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not required to attend	This code should be used for pupils who have not attained the age of 5 years at the start of the term in which the session takes place or were 16 years before the start of the school year in which it takes place. Under the new regulations, schools cannot delete Year 11 pupils who intend to remain at the school and enter sixth form from the school registers.
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend	This code should be used where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable causes such as no water or heating or flooding or the transport provided by the school or LA for pupils is not available.
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	Not required to attend	This code should be used for administration purposed for pupils expected to join the school roll. Under new regulations, schools must now put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend not, as previously, when they first attend. Schools should also remember that all pupils on the admissions register must also be entered on the attendance register and their attendance recorded.
#		Not required to attend	This code should be used for planned closures for the whole school.

Lateness

You must set a point at which you close the class register. The Welsh Assembly Government and Torfaen recommend this is set at **30 minutes after the start of school**. Penygarn Community Primary School adopt this recommendation. If any child arrives after this point, you must count it as an unauthorised absence.

If a child is frequently late, the parent may be failing to ensure that the child is receiving full-time education. We may prosecute the parent under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

Vulnerable groups

Gypsies and travellers

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller - Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. Our school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling if it is the base school.

If the pupil is known to be dual registered and present at another school during the session in question, the attendance should be recorded using code D.

If the pupil is known to be absent from other provision for reasons other than travelling (e.g. illness, unexplained absence) the appropriate code should be used. Children from “traveller” families are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of requirements to attend school. However, there is a defence available to traveller families if prosecuted for non attendance provided that the child has attended a school for at least 200 sessions in the 12 months ending when legal proceedings are started.

Children Looked After:

Each school has a designated teacher for children in public care. At Penygarn Primary this is the Wellbeing lead. The LA intervenes where the student has 10 days (20 sessions) absence in one academic year. The LA will monitor all LAC’s attendance.

Children on the Child Protection Register:

The Headteacher and Education Welfare Service will review each child’s attendance that attends Penygarn Primary School and recommend appropriate action. The Headteacher (and where the EWS has involvement they) will attend Child Protection Case Conferences and contribute to the core group and care plan where necessary.

Children and young people with medical needs:

Children and young people who are absent from school because of physical or mental health issues need to be reviewed regularly and sensitively. They are entitled to educational provision and the school and EWS can give advice on dealing with medical absence as can the school nurse. Parents may be requested to provide medical evidence to substantiate a child’s absence from school, the EWS can also contact the GP/Health Clinician involved further to gaining Parental consent to do so.

Missing children

Where pupils do not return to school and neither the school nor the EWS have been able to trace the whereabouts of the pupil, and no requests for the school file have been received, the pupil should be treated as a “missing child”. The school must notify the EWO and School Admissions who will place the pupil’s name on the national missing children database. This would also involve contact with and a referral made to Torfaen Social Care and Housing department.

Changes of address

If we as a school suspect that a pupil’s family has moved away from the area without giving you its new address, you must tell the EWS. The school and the EWS must make a reasonable attempt to find out where the pupil has gone. If you are unable to determine where the pupil has gone, you may take the pupil off the school roll after four weeks.

Pupils attending alternative education provision arranged by the school

Where a child remains on the roll of a school, that school must ensure the pupil’s attendance and take appropriate steps where this attendance is unacceptable. There is no specific legislation covering the duty of a provider of alternative education to contact a school in the event of a pupil failing to attend. However, providers have a common law duty of care to play their part in ensuring the health, safety and welfare of a pupil. It is good practice to set up a partnership agreement with the provider to ensure effective communication of attendance and welfare issues prior to using that provider. However, the primary duty to follow up attendance and welfare issues remains with the school.

Family holidays and extended holidays during term time

The Headteacher at Penygarn Primary will not be able to authorise absences for family holidays during term time, based on advice by the Local Authority & Welsh Government. Parents have no right to demand that absences are authorised.

Where a parent requests permission to take their child on holiday during school term and their child’s attendance is below 95% over the last two terms, this request should be declined in all cases (unless there is clear medical evidence to support the child’s absences).

If the parent takes their child, regardless of permission not being granted, then the pupil’s attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

- **NB** attendance below 95% in this case refers to total attendance rates inclusive of both authorised and unauthorised attendance rates.

Where a parent requests permission to take their child on holiday during school term in all other cases the Headteacher should use their judgement as to whether permission is granted. However to ensure consistency it is highly unlikely that any holidays will be authorised, unless

the pupil is under the statutory school age. Where it is not granted and a parent still withdraws their child then these absences should also be recorded as unauthorised.

Our school will not allow an absence of more than 10 school days for a family holiday unless the situation is exceptional. The LA advises not to approve requests for holidays where the pupil's attendance is below 95%.

Recording, monitoring and setting targets

Recording attendance

Recording information about attendance accurately and effectively as a school will allow us to:

- report to parents;
- report to governors;
- provide the LA with the information it needs to monitor your performance;
- provide the information required by WG;
- find out how you can improve attendance;
- set targets for individual pupils, teaching groups, year groups and the school as a whole.

Monitoring attendance

To allow us as a school to monitor attendance effectively, we will:

- use the same registration procedures throughout your school;
- use the codes prescribed by WG;
- keep track of pupils during the day, ensure that all classes have clearly visible the number of pupils present and on roll at start of each session;
- have a system, possibly spot checks, to tackle truancy after registration;
- identify a SLT member to carry out this role (Headteacher) and
- provide clear information to the EWS so that it can detect patterns of absence quickly and intervene early.

Setting targets

As a school we set targets for improving attendance every year. Our current attendance targets (2020 – 2021) are 94% overall attendance and 1% overall unauthorised absence.

Where a governing body has previously set absence targets under these regulations the following will apply:

- A final target for the following school year, being the reviewed target set in the previous school year but revised if the governing body deem it necessary to do so.
- A reviewed target for the school year next but one, being the provisional target set in the previous school year but revised if the governing body deem it necessary to do so.

Where the LA is not satisfied with any target submitted by a governing body as stated above, it must give notice to the governing body of that fact, and the governing body must submit a revised target within 21 days of receipt of such a notice.

Where the LA is not satisfied with the revised target submitted by the governing body it must set the target. A final absence target set by a governing body must not be modified by the governing body without the agreement of the LA.

First Day Response (FDR) at Penygarn Community Primary School

Parents are politely reminded it is their responsibility to contact the school on the first day of an absence. If parents do not contact the school, or if they give an unacceptable reason for the absence, the school will follow up absences in a fair way that is clear to all teachers, pupils and parents through the FDR.

First Day Response is both critical for ensuring effective attendance; it also helps ensure that children are kept safe and that the school has discharged its duty of care. It is part of our school-wide attendance policy.

Most absences are short. We can greatly reduce these absences by following up all absences quickly. Research suggests that pupils are less likely to take time off for trivial reasons if they know the school will notice their absence and follow it up swiftly. Schools that contact pupils' homes on the first day of absence have cut short-term absences. This has led to lower rates of absence overall.

First Day Response (FDR) principles at Penygarn Community Primary School

Parents are told about the FDR during induction to the school, in the prospectus and in newsletters. We believe parents need to know what the school procedures are to eliminate any confusion. We aim to promote the positive principles for FDR within the community by publicising it is: Safer for all; all staff should be vigilant – attendance is both an issue about raising attainment and a significant safeguarding issue. It is not something to “trap” parents with. Parents are our partners.

If we are to be successful we need to be supportive. However FDR is not to be used as an alternative for parents in ringing the school, nor should it be used as an alarm clock. FDR is not to be used as a means to authorise absences; FDR is about challenging explanations and not authorising where there is doubt.

Implementing First Day Response at Penygarn Community Primary School

Procedures and guideline for staff supporting and implementing FDR

- Registration begins at 9am and lasts for approx. 10 mins. Registers close at 9.30 and any pupils arriving after 9.10 should be recorded as either late before closure of the register, or late after registration closes 9.30.

- Lateness procedures – all children who arrive late enter the school via the main door to be signed in the Late Book.
- There is a robust recording and reporting processes for First Day Response actions in school – this evidence might be needed for potential legal action. This will be done using the reporting function within SIMS.
- FDR staff should complete reasons for absence or no response within the child's SIMS record.
- Should any concerns arise from FDR this information must to be passed onto the designated person(s) - Headteacher or Deputy Head. All records will form part of the attendance data recorded within SIMS.
- If significantly (approx. 1/3 of class) large numbers of children are absent from a class the Headteacher should be informed. For example, a widespread sickness bug, in case advice needs to be sought from the LA Health & Safety department.
- Identified staff must carry out 1st day CONTACT – an unanswered phone call should be followed up by a text message, email or a standard letter - requesting they contact school to inform us of a child's whereabouts/ reason for absence.
- All pupils need to be followed up, with particular focus on vulnerable groups, such as those on the child protection register, or those who are CLA. The sooner the contact is made the more effective its impact in most cases. Office staff and teaching staff should identify those pupils on their absence sheet with a code of V – and check SIMS and the school's vulnerable pupils' list held by the HT, for details.
- Where there is no contact with a vulnerable child, the school should always attempt to contact the Parent/named contacts on SIMS, liaise with known agencies involved -**If there has been no contact before the end of the third school day the EWO should be informed and asked to carry out a welfare check which may include a home visit to the household.**
- The reason the parent gives for the absence should be recorded. However it is for the school to decide whether or not the absence is authorised and the following guidance should be referred to in all cases:
 - If a pupil has had more than 10 days off in any term due to medical reasons, the parent must attend a meeting in school to discuss their child's absence or provide a letter from a medical professional that offers some explanation. This could be a letter from the child's consultant paediatrician for example. Where there has been more than 10 days absence in a term and no evidence is available from the parent then the child's absences should be recorded as an unauthorised absence. School should also bring this child to the EWO's attention.
- By ensuring first day response happens, schools are letting the parents and child know the school cares and the child will be missed.

Incentives for good attendance at Penygarn Community Primary School

We believe pupils should be rewarded for good attendance. We have the following incentives for good attendance.

- Fair procedures that are followed by all staff
- Consultation with pupils about the form of rewards
- Short-term targets that are easy to achieve
- A clear understanding among pupils and parents of the attendance needed to achieve a reward
- Recognition of improved attendance
- Presentation of certificates or awards in assembly
- The appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for ensuring that awards and certificates are available.

Benefits and incentives for individual pupils

The benefits can be that:

- Pupils know that the school recognises and appreciates their efforts
- The school communicates better with parents
- Pupils of all abilities can gain awards
- Pupils have personal targets.

Rewards offered for good attendance include:

Rewards	Period of time	Reward
Celebration Assembly - best class attendance and punctuality in PS 1 2 and 3 for the previous week.	Weekly	FP – Mascot and Trophy KS2 – Mascot and Trophy
100 % over the term	Termly	Certificate and sticker
100% & 99% Attendance individuals	End of year	Certificates, stickers and gift
5% improvement on attendance on previous academic year		Certificates, stickers and gift

Supporting pupils when they return from absence

Supporting a pupil after a long period of absence requires careful planning. The school, the parents and the EWO may have spent much time persuading the pupil to return. Returning to school may also have required courage on the part of the pupil.

Procedures for dealing with pupils who return after an absence not only help the pupil but also reduce disruption for other pupils. Sensitivity is vital, as well-intentioned jokes can undo good work.

Steps to success

We will:

- Appoint a named person to co-ordinate support for the pupil. This will be either the class teacher or teaching assistant.
- Set the return date in advance and alerting all staff, particularly the class teacher and teaching assistants within the child's class.
- Consider a special timetable or a phased return with learning support.
- Ensure that staff can provide work or details of work to be done.

Liaising with other schools

As a cluster of schools we are committed to improving the attendance of all our pupils to ensure that they attain the maximum benefit from their education. Together we have developed systems which will support us in our drive to raise standards.

Attendance letters

At the end of each half term all pupils are sent an attendance letter. The letters will be coloured coded and sent according to the percentage attendance of the pupil.

Punctuality

Every month a letter is sent to parents/carers highlighting the number of times that their child has been late to school **(See Appendix)**

Primary school

Stage	Action
Stage 1 (Green)	95% and above- no action
Stage 2 (Amber)	85-94.9%- Amber Panel- Pupil and parents to meet with the panel and an attendance support plan to be issued. The panel will consist of the Deputy Headteacher, EWO and a Families First representative.
Stage 3 (Red)	84.9% and below- Red Panel- Pupil and parents to meet with the panel and an attendance support plan to be issued. The panel will consist of the Deputy Headteacher, EWO, a school governor and a Families First representative.

The Education Welfare Service

The main role of the Council's EWS is to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. The EWS does so in partnership with school and parents.

The EWS can help you if you cannot find out why a pupil is absent, or if you cannot ensure that a pupil attends regularly. An educational welfare officer (EWO) can contact the child's family and can offer advice if a child is absent without good reason.

Initially, schools are responsible for identifying and dealing with absence. You must tell the EWS if a pupil is frequently absent (for example for more than one day a week) or if a pupil is absent for 10 or more school days in a row.

It is important to work in partnership with the EWS. School staff and the EWO should understand each other's roles and responsibilities. Staff, such as year heads, should set aside time to meet the EWO.

As well as advising staff on individual cases, the EWO may:

- Help to explain the importance of attendance to staff, pupils, parents and governors
- Take part in joint initiatives with the school, including personal and social education, group work with poor attenders and liaison between primary and secondary schools.

Referrals to the Education Welfare Service

All schools should follow the same procedures for involving the EWS. This section explains:

- When you should involve the EWS
- How the EWS deals with persistent absence.

Stage 1: referral to the Education Welfare Service

Before making a referral to the EWS, our school tries to contact the parent to resolve the problem.

Typically these actions might be:

- Unexplained absence should be followed up by the school using the system they have in place for 'first day response'.
- ***Where the pupil's home cannot be contacted by telephone, after 3 days of unexplained absence a letter should be sent requesting an explanation and or Social Services will be contacted.***
- If the first letter elicits no response from the parents/carers, further contact should be made within a further 3 days, either by telephone, letter or home visit.
- Where specific problems are encountered (e.g. language), the school should consider involving appropriate services to assist.
- At this stage, the appropriate in-school person should address the attendance pattern of the pupil. Plans for dealing with the problem should be devised with the involvement of parents/carers and any support agencies available to the school.
- When successful contact has been made it is often possible to agree strategies which resolve the attendance pattern without recourse to the EWS. Parents/carers should be encouraged to be involved actively in dealing with attendance problems. They should be kept informed about the use of report systems, curriculum or timetable changes, pastoral counselling, and assessment of learning difficulties or other interventions.
- Referral to the EWS should be considered if a pupil's attendance has not significantly increased, despite school's endeavours as outlined above, i.e. is above 85% in secondary and 90% in primary.

You must make the referral on form EWS1 (see Appendix 3). You must attach records of your telephone contacts, letters to home and meeting minutes for the referral to be accepted.

Stage 2: Action Plan

On receiving a referral, an EWO will try to contact the pupil's parents within five working days. On contacting the parents, the EWO will normally arrange a meeting with the family and school staff in school, the purpose of which is to draw up an action plan to target improvements in attendance. The EWO will try to agree the action plan with the family, the school and any other agencies involved and the plan will set out the roles and responsibilities of each. The EWS will produce the action plan within five working days of the meeting and will send a copy to the school, family and any other agencies involved as soon as possible.

The EWS records information about all referrals for non-attendance, including the pupil's attendance for the most recent 100 half days. This enables the Senior EWO to monitor the effectiveness of the service by comparing attendance before and after the EWS became involved. This information is also important should the LA be forced into considering taking legal action against the family due to non-engagement / continued non-attendance.

Stage 3: Internal Review of Attendance/First Warning

Once the meeting has taken place the EWO will monitor the pupil's attendance for the next 2-3 school weeks. If the pupil's attendance has improved over this period then the EWO will monitor the situation closely. If, at the end of the six week monitoring period since the plan was agreed with parent/carer, a pupil takes 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence¹, the EWO will automatically send a warning letter to the parent/carer giving a warning that legal action may be taken against them unless there is a significant and immediate improvement in their child's attendance.

The legal action that the EWS will consider will include:

- Applying for an education supervision order (the Children Act 1989, section 36)
- Prosecuting the parents (the Education act 1996, section 444).

The EWO will call a review meeting with the parents and school staff to happen four weeks later i.e. giving the pupil and parent/carer a further four weeks in which to work with school and the EWO to achieve improvement in attendance.

Stage 4: Second Warning

The meeting described above will happen unless there has been improvement in the pupil's attendance. If there is no improvement, a second warning will be issued to the parent/ carer.

¹ Any medical absences during this period should be carefully considered by school before they are authorised – your EWO should be updated on the reasons and evidence given when schools authorise these medical absences.

The EWO will also send a standard letter to both Social Care and the Educational Psychology Service asking them if they are involved and whether or not they are aware of any reasons why a prosecution should not be instigated.

At the review meeting, the plan will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary, and a new review date set for four weeks later. The EWO will clarify for the meeting that, if a significant improvement in attendance is not seen over this period, then the Final Warning Notice will be issued.

Stage 5: Final Warning

This planning meeting will normally involve the pupil, the pupil's family, the school and any other agencies involved. The meeting normally takes place at the pupil's school but it will be arranged and chaired by the EWO and, in some cases, the Senior EWO. At the meeting, the EWS will consider the case, consult social services about applying for an education supervision order, and decide whether to take legal action.

Stage 6: Prosecution

If the pupil takes fewer than 10 half days of unauthorised absence in the 100 half days after the final warning, the EWS may close the case. The school can refer the case back to the EWS at any time. If the pupil takes 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence, the EWS will prepare the papers for a prosecution immediately. If a Parenting Order is recommended or given by the court the EWS will inform Social Services.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors: are responsible for ratification of policy, setting targets and developing patterns of good attendance as a school.

Headteacher: is responsible for developing the policy based on LA guidance and will monitor and review its implementation.

Teachers: are responsible for implementing the policy.

Pupils: to attend school regularly, on time and tell school if there are barriers to developing excellent attendance patterns.

Parents: to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. Support the school policy for attendance; inform the school about absence of their child. Ensure they keep contact details up to date with school so we are able to contact them about pupil absence. Try to avoid taking their child out of school for holidays.

Equal Opportunities: See strategic equality plan.

Health and Safety: See policy (Relevant safeguarding issues are also covered within the Safeguarding Policy)

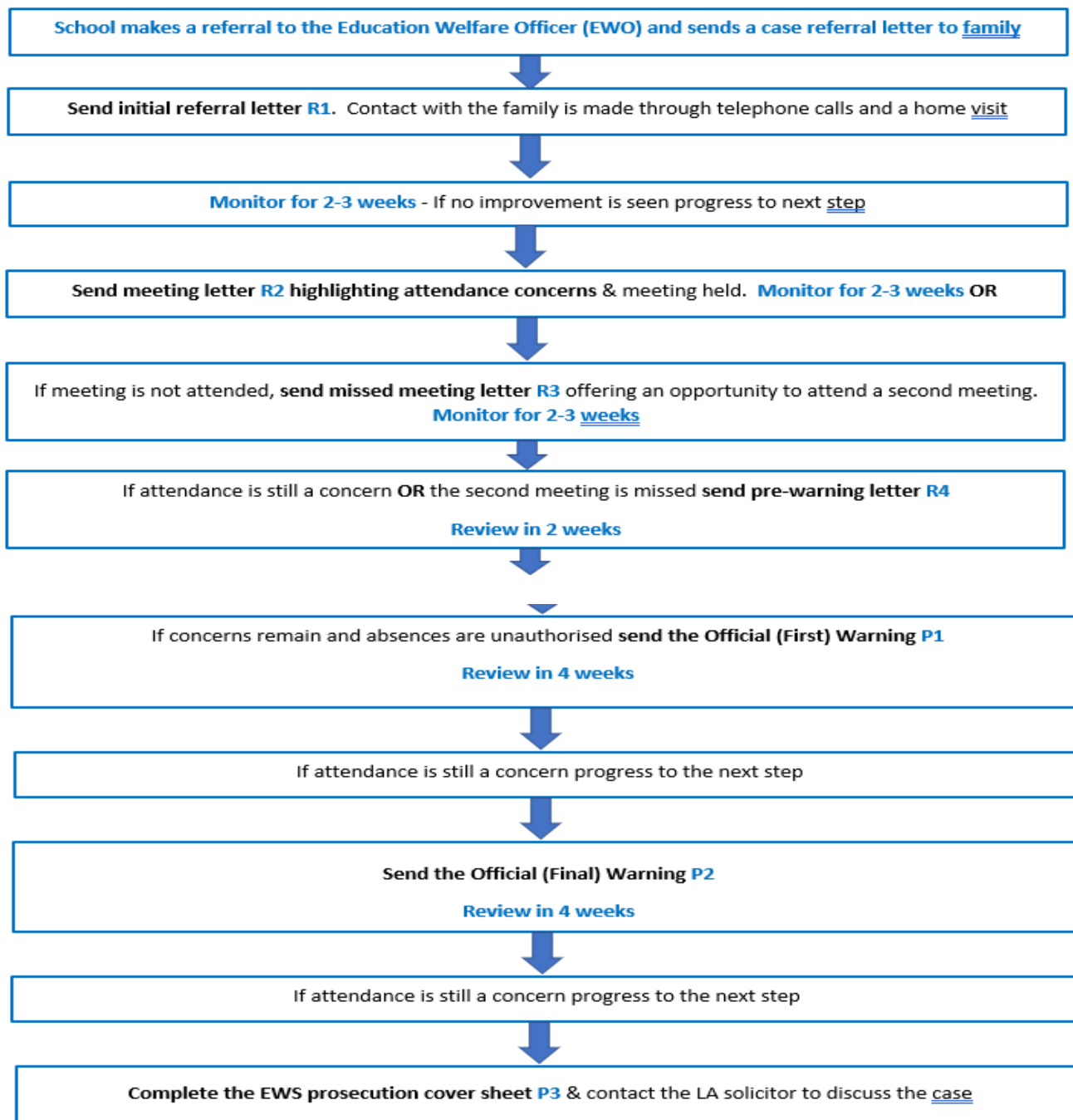
Monitoring and evaluation:

The policy will be monitored and evaluated by the HT, Staff member in school office and EWS.

Other documents and appendices:

See LA guidance on achieving high attendance

EWS Attendance Referral Process Flowchart



Throughout this process communication is maintained via various means, and strategies are implemented accordingly.

Save all evidence in the student file – see 'EWS Prosecution Cover Sheet' for an example of the evidence required should the case proceed to prosecution.

Recording and Monitoring Cases

The EWS will keep a record of each pupil who is referred for poor attendance.

The record will include:

- The pupil's personal details
- The pupil's year group
- The date of the referral
- The stage that the case has reached
- The number of unauthorised absences

The Headteacher can ask to see this information on a monthly basis.

If the case is active, the EWO will monitor attendance at least once every fortnight.

Referring a case back to the Education Welfare Service

If a school has to refer a closed case back to the EWS within 100 half days, the EWS will return to the stage at which the case was closed.

Termly register checks

At least once each term the EWO must check the registers and give the Senior EWO details of any pupils who have taken 20 or more unauthorised absences in any 10-week period.

Appendix 1: Model family holiday application form

SCHOOL ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Form to be returned to the school office with a minimum of two weeks notice

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Pupil: Date of Birth:	Class:
<p>Please detail below the exceptional circumstance why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with the <i>please insert appropriate member of SLT</i>. (Please attach your supporting evidence)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	
Address:	
Leave of absence from date: to date	
Number of school days that your child will be absent from school:	
Signature: Name of Parent/Carer:	Date:

Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised. These may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration which could result in a Penalty Notice.

For School Use:

Previous requests for leave of absence	Yes/No	Attendance%
Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance	Yes/No	
Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer	Yes/No	Date & Time.....

Authorised

☐

Unauthorised

☐

By Headteacher

Notes on family holidays

Planning your holiday

We publish the dates of school terms well ahead. This is to help you plan your holidays. When you book your holiday, please check that it does not clash with the school term.

The value of regular attendance

Your child must attend school regularly, especially to gain qualifications for their future employment. Research shows that pupils perform better if their parents or carers emphasise the importance of attending school.

Your legal responsibilities

You have a legal duty to make sure your child attends school regularly and punctually. The school and the Local Authority monitor your child's attendance and will take action if it is poor.

Absence for a family holiday

The Government recommends that family holidays are taken outside school terms. Headteachers will sometimes give permission for a pupil to go on holiday during term time. The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the holiday, the pupil's past attendance, and the effects the absence will have on the pupil's learning. The Headteacher will not normally give permission simply because holidays cost less during term time.

The Headteacher will not normally give permission for more than 10 days' absence for a family holiday in any school year. Only in exceptional situations will the Headteacher give permission for a longer absence.

Applying for absence because of a family holiday

If you have to take your family holiday during school term, please fill in the form over the page. Please do not assume that you will automatically get permission for the absence because you have filled in the form. Please wait to hear if the Headteacher agrees to your request.

Warning

If you take your child out of school without permission you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may consider punitive measures being taken including issuing of an FPN and/or Prosecution. A conviction may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a prison sentence of up to three months or both.

Appendix 2

Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standards Letter

TO THE PARENTS OF:

Dear Parents

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

I write to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise our child's leave of absence.

Requests for leave of absence are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have accepted your reason and evidence for the exceptional circumstance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc Class Teacher/File

Appendix 3

TO THE PARENTS OF:

Dear Parents

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

If you decide to go ahead with your proposed leave of absence (pupil name) absence will be marked as unauthorised. I should inform you that unauthorised absences are referred to the Education Welfare Officer who may under certain circumstances consider issuing you with a Penalty Notice in relation to these absences, following a request to do so from myself.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc Class Teacher/File

FPN ADVISORY LETTER FOR SCHOOLS

Dear (Parent name)

Name of pupil:

Date of birth:

Date:

I have reviewed your child's attendance record and am concerned to note that he/she has incurred at least 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence so far this current academic year.

I enclose a copy of your child's attendance record and remind you that as a parent/carer of a child who is a registered pupil at this school, you have the legal responsibility for ensuring your child attends regularly.

All schools share the Welsh Government's determination to raise levels of pupil attendance and achievement in order to ensure the best possible start in life for our children.

Under the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003, the Local Authority has the power to issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice for each of their children, who fail to attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is an early deterrent intended to prevent more extended periods of unauthorised absence developing and incur a fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice will result in prosecution under the Education Act 1996.

Following this warning notice, parents/carers have a period of 15 school days within which to respond. During this time, the pupil must have no unauthorised absence. I can therefore advise you that the school will be closely monitoring your child's attendance from the date of this letter and should any further unauthorised absence occur, consideration will be given to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Support and guidance regarding attendance is available from school or the Local Authority, however should you have any specific queries in relation to this letter, please contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix 3:

Referral to Torfaen Education Welfare Service



Pupil legal name:		School:	
Pupil preferred name:		Home Address:	
Date of Birth:			
Year group:			
Pupil Current Attendance: %		Names and Dates of Birth for Siblings and details of schools attended:	
Pupil Current Unauthorised Attendance: %			
Vulnerable grouping:			
Social care involvement: CIN/CP/CLA			
Named Social Worker:		Attendance included on CIN/CP/CLA Plan: yes/no	
Full Name of Parents/Carer:		Full Name of Parent/Carer:	
Address:		Address:	
Telephone Numbers:		Telephone Numbers:	
Home:		Home:	
Work:		Work:	
Mobile:		Mobile:	
First Language Spoken:		First Language Spoken:	
Interpreter required:	Yes/No	Interpreter required:	Yes/No
Strive letter 1 sent?	Yes/ No (Delete as appropriate)	Strive letter 2 sent?	Yes/No (Delete as appropriate)
If no, please explain:			
Dates of attendance improvement meetings & reviews (Please attach AAP & review doc)		Dates of attendance improvement meetings & reviews (Please attach AAP and review doc)	
AAP		AAP	

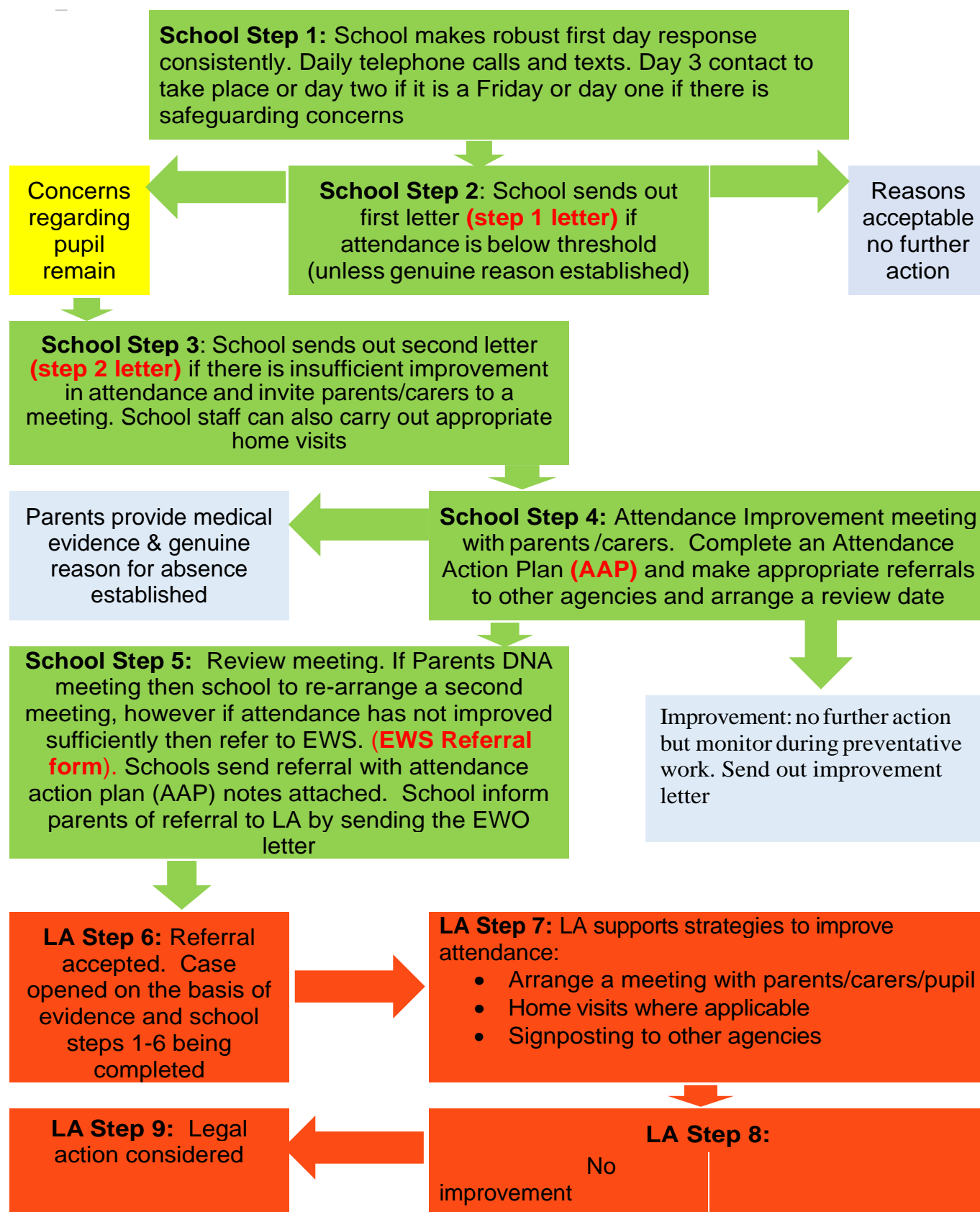
AAP reviews				AAP reviews			
Have you attached a registration certificate?		Yes		No			
Are parents aware of the referral?		Yes		No			
If no, please explain:							
Named Inclusion Officer:							
Date contacted:		Outcome:					
School-based actions taken to improve attendance				Offered/ Accepted/ Declined		Start/ End Date	
PCP meeting with pupil							
Modified day/ PSP meeting							
Parenting Contract (AAP signed by parent)							
Reduced timetable							
Help with catching up missed work							
Change of tutor group							
Behaviour support							
Play therapy							
Mentoring/buddying							
Bullying resolution							
Time at school inclusion unit or equivalent							
Referral to Traveller Education Service							
Counselling – school based or CCYP							
Wellbeing emotional support							
Family engagement officer support							
Advised parent/carers to take child to GP							
Other school-based support not included above:							
Outside agency referrals to improve attendance				Offered/ Accepted/ Declined		Start/ End Date	
In-Reach							
Spacewb							
CAMHS							
School nurse							
Educational Psychologist							
SpaceND							
Transport assistance investigated							
Outreach							
Inspire							

Version 1.2

Review Date: September 2023

Families First			
Resilient Families			
Social care			
Young Carers			
Other support not included above:			
Intended Outcome of referral			
Support	Add detail:		
Prosecution	Add detail:		
Are there any issues regarding worker safety which should be considered when planning a response? This section <u>MUST</u> be completed			
Referred by:		Title:	Date:
Email address:			
Telephone number:		Mobile :	

Traffic Lights Attendance Scheme – Improving Attendance Pathways



Pupil back in school; monitor for four weeks if improved close case on the ROC. During the next four weeks the case can be reopened to the EWS. If improvement in attendance is consistent over a period of 8 weeks the case is closed to the EWS and referred back to the school for monitoring and the school must start the Strive process again before referring to the EWS

Triggers and Timeline - **School Steps**

	Stage of Process	Attendance and Time triggers
Steps to be taken	Schools need to consider the proportion of authorised and un-authorised attendance when make decisions on following steps	
School Step 1	School to carry out first day response (Phone call and text)	Daily
School Step 2	School sends out letter 1 if attendance is below the threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below threshold current academic year with at least 2 weeks attendance at the start of the academic year.
School Step 3	School sends out letter 2 if there is insufficient improvement in attendance and inviting parents/carers to a meeting	No improvement 2 weeks after letter 1
School Step 4	Attendance Improvement Meeting (letter 2 meeting). Complete Attendance Action Plan (AAP)	Review meeting to be arranged within a 4 week period. This meeting can be brought forward if concerns remain high
School Step 5	Referral and discussion with EWS for investigation if no improvement following school Attendance Improvement Meeting.	Discuss with EWS. 4 weeks after Attendance improvement meeting if no improvement.