

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy 2023-2024

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School Pupil Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to enjoy their education and make good progress.

At St Anthony's Catholic Primary school, we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. This policy sets out how school staff will work with pupils, parents, and partners to promote, encourage and support regular attendance at school and remove any barriers to attendance.

Aims

- To set clear expectations and aspirations that all pupils have a high standard of school attendance and punctuality.*
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.*
- To make attendance a priority for everyone.*
- To ensure there is a clear process to identify and address emerging attendance concerns*
- To work effectively with parents, pupils, and partners through building trusted relationships to work together to remove barriers to attendance.*

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- a welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environment;*
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential;*
- listen to parents and pupils to understand barriers to attendance*
- build trusted relationships with parents and pupils where attendance concerns can be discussed, understood.*
- high expectations of our pupils and all staff;*
- a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;*
- recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life;*
- equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life;*
- high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies;*
- a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning;*

- provide experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding;
- support, guidance and training for all those who teach and work with our children;
- foster and maintain links with our wider community

Expected Levels of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

We expect pupils to attend every day possible and reach the national average of 95%



Attendance Partnership Expectations

We expect the following from all of our pupils:

- *To attend school regularly.*
- *To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day, having been offered breakfast or attended breakfast club;*
- *To talk to a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.*

We expect the following from parents and carers:

- *To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually;*
- *To ensure contact is made with school, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their child is unable to attend;*
- *To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day, well rested and offered breakfast*
- *To talk to a member of school staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attend of school.*

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- *Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason;*
- *Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance*
- *To inform parents if a pupil's attendance falls below expected levels*
- *To listen and understand the barriers to school attendance and offer appropriate support and agree appropriate plans to improve attendance.*
- *Follow up support if needed.*

Roles and Responsibilities for Attendance

- *St Anthony's Catholic school has an Attendance Champion, a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.*
- *The first point of contact for parents and pupils with any attendance concerns is Miss Watkins*

- Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school.

Role	Responsibilities
Schools Governors Mr Boyd-Attendance governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (eg pupil registration, attendance registers) • Reviewing school attendance • Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy
Head Teacher Miss Watkins Sue Gibbons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with relevant legislation • Data analysis and Strategic Plan for attendance. • Implementing school policy and leading on whole school approach. • Authorising/authorising absences • Leave of absence request • Line management • Contact with parents • Overview of clear and escalating interventions • Evaluation of interventions. • Promoting school attendance. • Responsibility for links with CSAWS and the LA Statutory Team. • Attendance at attendance panels • Producing attendance reports • Communication with CSAWS. • Identifying children whose absence needs further follow up action in line with the school absence procedure. • Process for clearing registers •
Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking registers • Promoting importance of regular school's attendance • Providing early warning of attendance concerns • Positive role modelling

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following policy and procedures consistently. • Point of contact for parents to discuss concerns
<p>Pastoral</p> <p>Named staff:</p>	<p>Miss Watkins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Attendance Officer</p> <p>Named staff:</p>	<p>Mrs Gibbons</p>
<p>Designated Safeguarding Lead</p> <p>Named staff:</p>	<p>Mr Scanlon</p>
<p>School Office</p> <p>Mrs McSheffrey Mrs Clarke</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining registers • First day calling/text messages • Late arrivals • Administration of school attendance letters, leave of absence letters etc.

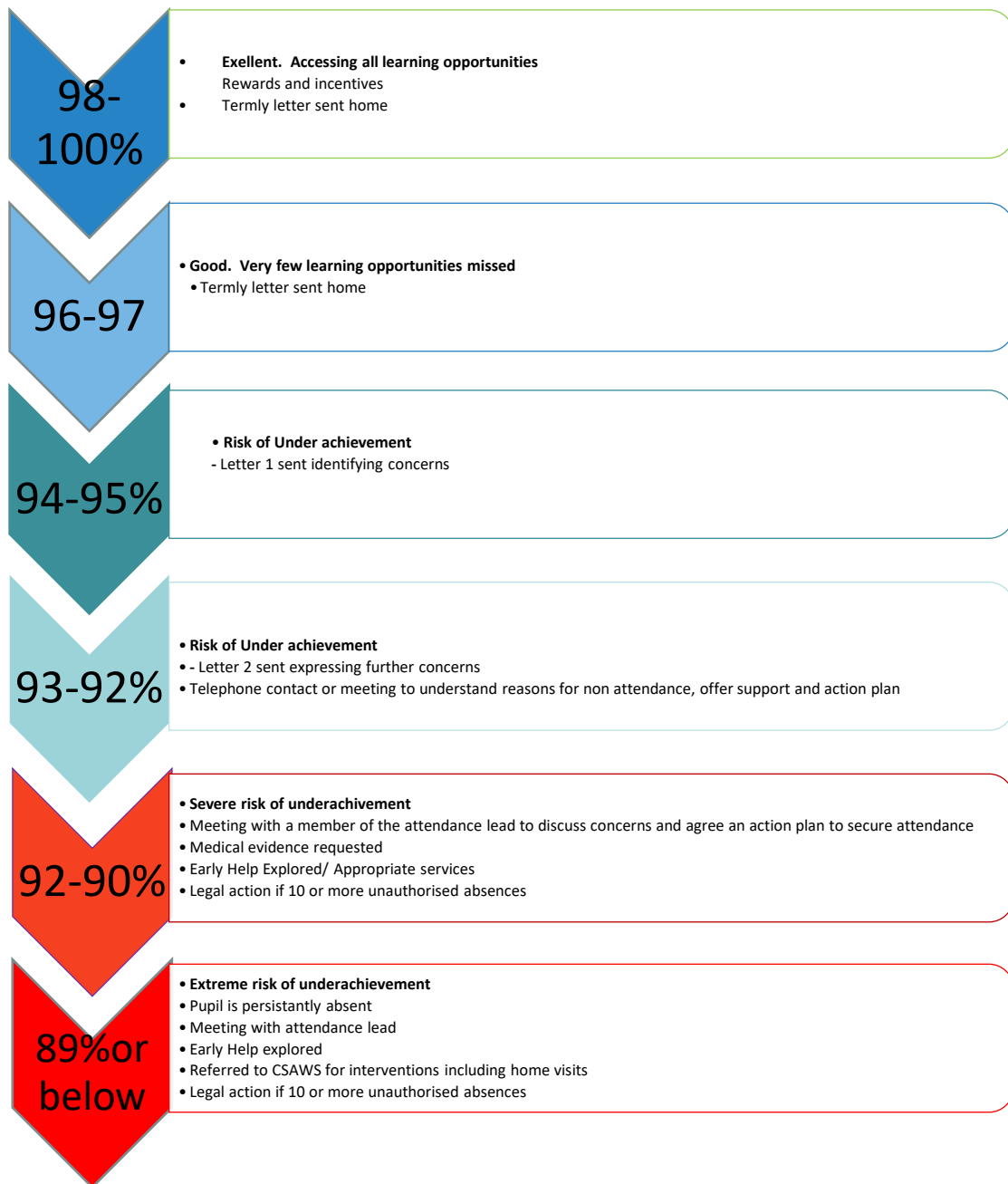
- Attendance matters are reviewed by the head and members of the senior management team.
- Attendance issues are reported, on a minimum termly basis, to the Governing Body.
- School will liaise with the Local Authority Attendance Support Team at a minimum, termly
- School uses Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS) to support the school with the processes associated with children's attendance at school. School employ CSAWS to provide the legal monitoring services and support that will help reduce the number of persistent absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.

Procedures

Our school procedures follow the expectations set out by the Department for Education in the guidance *Working Together to improve school attendance (September 2022)*.

Our procedures are based around the principles and stages of:

- *Preventing poor attendance*
- *Early intervention and Early Help to address early patterns of poor attendance and agree ways to improve*
- *Targeted interventions (including Early Help and Formal interventions) for those children who are persistently absent or severely absent*
- *Understanding barriers to individuals' attendance and agree individual plans for children with specific needs.*
- *Formal Statutory Interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.*



Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of absence, a number of unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns raised a referral may be made straight to CSAWS. Referrals will be made to the Education Enforcement team for the issue of penalty notices where pupils have 10 or more unauthorised absences.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive education. Estranged parents with whom the child has had regular contact may be prosecuted as well as the day-to-day carer. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. The term 'parent' also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children Act 1989 or who have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1999

This includes parents referred for penalty notices to Solihull Education Inclusion service for unauthorised leave of absence for holidays taken in term time.

Promoting Attendance and Preventing Absence

Attendance is promoted with a reward system in class, in assembly each week and in the school newsletter. School attendance post cards are also sent home to celebrate improved attendance.

School Day and Punctuality

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every-day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



(Over one academic year)

To access the most from the school day we ask parents to ensure that their children are in school for 8:45am

Children arriving after 9.00am will be late for school and have to report to the school office.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes, this will be classed as an unauthorised late absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 9:15am

Arriving late after registers have closed at 9:15am is coded as U and counts as an unauthorised absence.

The registers are monitored daily and identify pupils who are arriving late. Regular late arrival for school will be challenged as not acceptable. Pupils who have 10 or more U codes will be referred to the Education Enforcement Team for the issue of a penalty notice.

Absence

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30am school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given. Please respond if school staff have left a voicemail. If school is not given a reason for the absence, it will be unauthorised.

School staff will make a phone call to parents to ascertain a reason for the child absence from school.

If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to telephone calls, they will follow the process in detailed in Appendix 1. This includes telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance guidance 2022)

It is imperative that at least two up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school.

Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (KCSIE 2023) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

Illness:

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the above absence process.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

School will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Child is absent and there are frequent odd days' absences due to reported illness
- Child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Child is absent and attendance is below expected levels and there is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
- Where there is a medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support
- Pupil has been reported as unwell but may be on holiday

Medical appointments

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.

If attendance is a concern parents may be asked to provide medical evidence in order for school to authorise absence due to illness.

Other reasons for absences:

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

Religious Observance

School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies maybe contacted to verify these occasions.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates

School will authorise absence of Traveller children if their parent(s) are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place and has given indication that they intend to return.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence:

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (Appendix 2) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result, for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.
- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 2). There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with a senior leader.
- Where the head teacher is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupil's attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer (appendix 3: model pro forma)
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent. The letter provided in this guidance (appendix 4) can be used.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to un-authorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupil's register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met, then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Enforcement Team for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

- Both parents with parental responsibility are liable to the issue of a fixed penalty notice.
- Incomplete leave of absence forms may result in the leave of absence request being return to parents for completion
- If, after an absence of 5 school days, school become aware that a pupil has in fact been on holiday in term time a fixed penalty notice referral will be made.

Reintegration of Long Term Absentees

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of students learning, and positive strategies should be employed to minimise such effects.

Key Principles

- We should always keep in touch with a student/and his/her family during a long absence.
- We should always make sure he/she is welcomed back
- We should never make sarcastic comments about an absence – a thoughtless word can destroy hours of work by staff.

Head Teacher and SENCO to consider a phased return where appropriate. This needs to be considered in line with the Solihull LA process and procedure, which includes seeking expert advice from relevant professionals and co-ordinating a multi-agency meeting. Consideration needs to be given to any special needs the pupil may have and appropriate support identified. Consideration must be given to a package of support which may include providing a mentor (staff member/student)

Class Teachers should ensure that the pupil feels welcomed back to school in an appropriate way and take any necessary steps to support their re-integration.

Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Absent from Education

A child absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow their own procedures for dealing with children that go absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions. This will help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Truancy within school

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School monitor attendance to each lesson period of the school day using the registers in the morning and afternoon, in order to ensure all pupils are safe in school and whereabouts known. If a pupil does not present to scheduled lessons/activities, office staff are informed and staff alerted to find missing pupils. If pupils cannot be located and are suspected of leaving school premises, parents will be informed and the police notified of a missing child.

Alternative Education Providers

On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider or dual registered with another school, agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at St Anthony's Catholic Primary School. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored. When pupils are dual registered at another school or alternative provider, their attendance will be recorded in the register as a D code (on days they are required to attend the other school/provision). The other school/provision will record the attendance of absence. For children who are Educated Off Site but not dual registered, attendance will be recorded in St Anthony's Catholic Primary School register as a B code if they are confirmed present or the appropriate absent code if

absent. The responsibility of ensuring pupils is safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with St Anthony's Catholic Primary School.

Suspension and permanent exclusion

Good behaviour in schools is essential to ensure that all pupils benefit from the opportunities provided by education. The government recognises that school exclusions, managed moves and off-site direction are essential behaviour management tools for head teachers and can be used to establish high standards of behaviour in schools and maintain the safety of school communities. For the vast majority of pupils, suspensions¹ and permanent exclusions may not be necessary, as other strategies can manage their behaviour. If these approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff can work in safety and are respected.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181584/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the head teacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the head teacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks. School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categorise absence (Appendix 5).

Use of Attendance Data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Attendance is reviewed at a minimum half termly, where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with CSAWS during regular attendance meetings held at school. CSAWS then follow up attendance concerns with parents and carers on school's behalf.

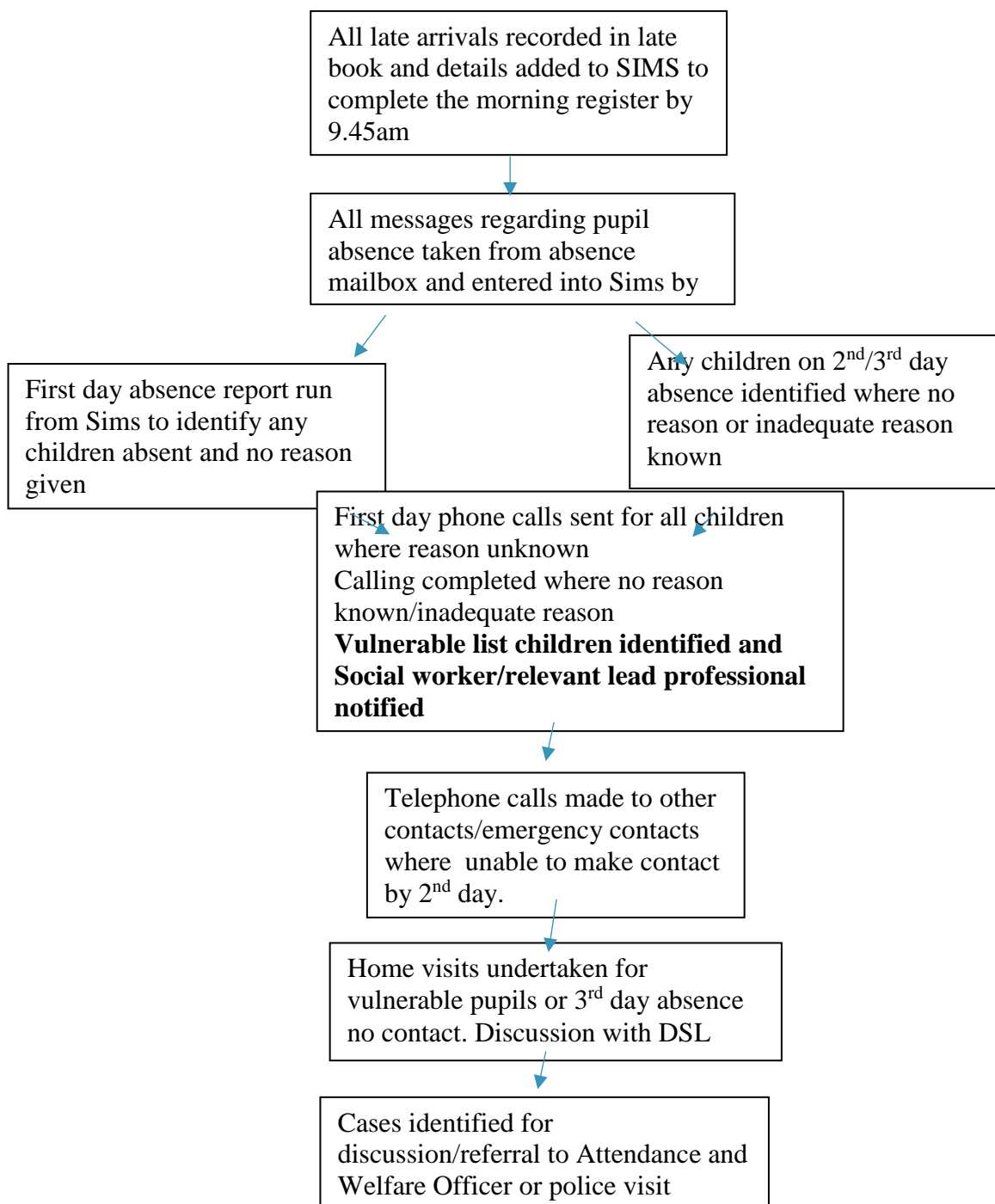
Information regarding attendance concerns may also be shared with the Local Authority as part of statutory processes and in Attendance Targeting Meetings at least termly in line with "Working together to Improve Attendance 2022"

The Head teacher will analyse attendance data for whole school and groups of pupils. This will be shared with governors and used to inform the strategic plan to improve school attendance.

Attendance Data will be shared with class teachers in preparation for Pupil progress reviews and parents' evenings and to target interventions.

Appendix 1

School Absence Procedure



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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

Appendix 3 *Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard Letter*

Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard 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 your 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

Template Letter 5

(insert full Name of individual Parent)

Insert Full Address of individual Parent)

Dear *(individual Parent)*,

Child:

DOB:

Class:

Dates applied for: _____ **to** _____

Re Leave of absences request for pupil detailed above

It has come to my attention that your child was absent from school due to a Leave of Absence taken in Term Time. I understand this absence was due to *...example: Family Holiday/funeral* as *(state how you know EVIDENCE IS REQUIRED examples: (first day calling, social media, pupil information,* As stated in the school policy and previous communications to parents, I am not able to authorise your child's absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.

(name of child) absence of *(how many sessions)* will be marked in the register as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences will be referred to Solihull Council and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. Class Teacher/File

Appendix 5

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
<i>I</i>	<i>Present (AM)</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>\</i>	<i>Present (PM)</i>	<i>Present</i>
B	<i>Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
C	<i>Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
D	<i>Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
E	<i>Excluded (no alternative provision made)</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
G	<i>Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)</i>	<i>Unauthorised absence</i>
H	<i>Family holiday (agreed)</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
I	<i>Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
J	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
L	<i>Late (before registers closed)</i>	<i>Present</i>
M	<i>Medical/Dental appointments</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
N	<i>No reason yet provided for absence</i>	<i>Unauthorised absence</i>
O	<i>Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)</i>	<i>Unauthorised absence</i>
P	<i>Approved sporting activity</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
R	<i>Religious observance</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
S	<i>Study leave</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
T	<i>Traveller absence</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
U	<i>Late (after registers closed)</i>	<i>Unauthorised absence</i>
V	<i>Educational visit or trip</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
W	<i>Work experience</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
X	<i>Non-compulsory school age absence</i>	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>
Y	<i>Enforced closure</i>	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>
Z	<i>Pupil not yet on roll</i>	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>
#	<i>School closed to pupils</i>	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>