

St Barnabas C of E First and Middle School

'Let all that you do be done in love' 1 Corinthians ch16 v14



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Approved by	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Next Review Date
EAW	LAB	March 2023	v1	March 2025

This policy is written with guidance from:

- *Education Act 1996*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997 and 2001)*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 and 2011*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*
- *Local Authority Guidance for Nursery Education Funding*
- *EWO - WCF*

Rationale

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

Research findings and learning from best practice show that:

- Children must attend regularly to achieve their full potential
- Children who miss out can feel vulnerable and left behind
- Leave in term time can be disruptive and seriously affect a child's education

This policy is intended to ensure every child's regular and punctual attendance at this school. We strive to work in partnership with parents/carers to give every child the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential academically, socially and emotionally.

Aims

Our aim is to encourage full attendance for every child. We aim to do this by:

- Maximising attendance of all children
- Ensuring that all children feel safe at all times
- Developing a strong sense of responsibility and self worth within our children
- Offering a curriculum that engages and inspires
- Ensuring high quality teaching and learning is in place at all times
- Ensuring that there is a positive school culture which celebrates, praises and encourages success.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers to resolve any problems relating to attendance and punctuality
- Work closely with support from the wider community including the EWOs and multi-agency teams

Implementation

Supporting Attendance

Registers are completed twice daily and as part of our safeguarding protocols all children must be accounted for. Great attendance is celebrated at individual, group, class, year group and whole school level.

Where children and families need support, targets may be set and barriers to attendance will be identified. Strategies will be put in place to support families in removing or overcoming these barriers. Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analyse the impact of the school's work and identify priorities and areas for development. Data will be used to:

- Monitor individual attendance and punctuality
- Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
- Identify children who should be praised for excellent attendance or significant improvements

Safeguarding

First day calling is used to ensure the safety of all children.

If children do not attend school regularly, they may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding children is a collective responsibility for the whole school and this encompasses promoting the welfare and life opportunities for all children in our care. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create, nurture and foster patterns of good attendance and punctuality are the responsibility of everyone; parents/carers, children and school staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

School roles Responsibilities

Head teacher

- Provides a strategic lead with Attendance Lead throughout the school for attendance
- Ensures compliance with the policy
- Oversees cases that are being prepared for formal prosecution
- Reports to Governing Body / LAB

Attendance Governor / LAB

- Meet with parents as part of Attendance Panel
- Liaise with the HT about attendance and punctuality
- Liaise with Attendance Lead
- Feedback to Welfare Governors / LAB members about attendance panel outcomes and review of Attendance.

School Attendance Lead

- Works strategically with the Head teacher to agree relevant internal attendance targets.
- Monitor attendance regularly and evaluate progress towards the targets.
- Identify attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of children
- Identify barriers to attendance and develop and implement strategies to help these students overcome barriers
- Send letters, emails and make phone calls to parents and carers as appropriate
- Prioritise and promote good attendance with staff and pupils

- Identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance and plan early intervention to avoid bad habits being established.
- Monitor attendance at school, year group and class level. Work in strong collaboration with the Head teacher to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Ensure there is a clear attendance policy with clear roles and responsibilities
- Ensure all staff know that good attendance and punctuality is a collective responsibility.
- Promote regular attendance including incentives and rewards.
- Involve the governing body / LAB through the Attendance Governor / LAB member.
- Work closely with administrative staff and nurture team.
- Develop positive relationships with parents and carers that you are working through regular contact
- Liaise regularly with EWO, WCF staff and other outside agencies as appropriate

Class Teacher

- Promote regular attendance through praise and encouragement
- Ensure that registers are always completed accurately
- Identify patterns of absence of individuals
- Add concerns to Arbor and Myconcern and alert Attendance Lead.
- Share attendance data with parents at Parents' Evenings and SEND Reviews

Attendance Administrator

- Key point of contact between home and school
- Ensure that contact is made either by parents or school in all cases on the first day of absence
- Be prepared to be assertive. Parents must explain absence. Explanations need to be plausible. Refer to Attendance lead / Head when no contact can be made or no suitable reason given.
- Show sympathy over genuine absence however encourage parents to bring their children to school at the earliest point
- Issue attendance letters where required. Make sure they have the effect intended. Seek advice from Attendance Lead when you need it.
- Work closely with Attendance Lead
- Provide data regularly to school's Attendance Lead, newsletter and Reflect and Celebrate collective worship.
- Check and file all absence notes that are received and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
- Pass messages from parents efficiently to the class teacher or other relevant member of staff.

Term time absence and requests for leave

Parents/carers do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time without prior permission and agreement from the Headteacher. Holidays in term time will not be authorised by the Headteacher under any circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, parents may request leave for their child and applications will be considered by the Headteacher.

Leave will not be considered retrospectively.

Fixed penalty fines and prosecution

Under the latest government legislation, parents/carers who take their children out of school during term time without authorisation, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the local authority and could face prosecution in court.

The Head teacher will refer term time leaves of absence or accrued absence to the local authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per parent, per child.

Unpaid penalty notices or repeated offences will be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Unpaid Penalty Notices will be prosecuted in the Court. It is therefore a requirement that before the issue of a Penalty Notice there is enough evidence to proceed to Prosecution.

A Penalty Notice is issued for two main types of absence:

- 6 or more consecutive days unauthorised leave of absence (e.g. holiday in term time)
- Accrued unauthorised absence over time due to poor attendance or unauthorised lateness.

In respect of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absences, the following criteria must be evidenced (as appropriate):

- All parents are made aware of the policy via letter and email.
- The policy is also on the school website.
- The parents will be informed in any response to a request for term time leave of absence that the matter will be referred for penalty notice legal action.

Where a child has 11 or more days' consecutive absence, this case will be referred to the EWO / WCF and may lead straight to prosecution.

Statutory Intervention – Attendance

The Education Attendance Service carries out the Local Authority's legal function to enforce school attendance. The available measures are as follows.

Prosecution of parents under sections 444 / 444 1 (a) of the Education Act 1996

S444 Education Act 1996 states 'if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, his / her parent is guilty of an offence'. This offence is one of 'strict liability', a legal term that means that the offence is committed whether the parent knew the child was absent or not. It is not a defence to say that the parents have tried everything in their power to get the child to school. The parent's efforts could be raised in mitigation if they were found guilty but would not amount to an outright defence. Defences against s.444 are specific and set out in that section of the Act.

The penalty for the offence is a fine of up to £1,000 for each parent.

Under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 as inserted by s72 Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2000, both parents can be prosecuted for an aggravated offence when the child fails to attend school with the parent's knowledge but the parent fails without reasonable excuse to cause the child to attend. This offence carries a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

The aggravated offence was introduced after the consultative exercise 'Tackling Truancy Together'. If parents facing the aggravated offence fail to turn up at court it is likely that a warrant for their arrest would be issued.

The possible outcomes following a conviction for the lesser offence are a fine, an Education Supervision Order, Community Order, a Parenting Order, a Conditional Discharge or an Absolute Discharge. For the aggravated offence, a custodial sentence is possible.

School Attendance Orders s.437-443 Education Act 1996

School Attendance Orders (SAOs) are used when a child of compulsory school age is not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education and where the authority believes that the child should attend school. They are not to be used for children who are on the roll of a school. Failure to comply with an SAO will lead to a prosecution under section 443 and is a criminal offence carrying a maximum fine of £1,000 per parent.

Education Supervision Orders s.36 Children Act 1989

An Education Supervision Order (ESO) gives the LA more control in educating a child of compulsory school age. The LA may apply for an ESO instead of prosecuting the parents for poor attendance. ESOs are 1989 Children Act orders and as such the welfare of the child is paramount. Parents must obey the reasonable directions given under an ESO and persistent failure to comply with reasonable directions is a criminal offence carrying a fine of £1,000.

Parenting Orders

Magistrates may impose a Parenting Order under s8 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 if this would help prevent further pupil absence. The order will require parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions for up to three months. It may specify other requirements, for example ensuring the child is escorted to and from school for up to 12 months. Non-compliance with a Parenting Order can result in a further prosecution by the Police and carries a fine of £1,000 if convicted.

Penalty Notices for parents of Truants

The penalty is £120 per parent or an adult with Parental Responsibility, per child. However, if it is paid within 21 days, the fine reduces to £60 per parent or an adult with Parental Responsibility, per child. The EWS are responsible for the issuing and collections of notices and fines. If the attendance of a child improves but the fine remains unpaid, the parent must still be prosecuted for non-payment.

School responses to absence

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact for individuals. We are aware that at times absence is inevitable or unavoidable, each individual case below 90% will be discussed and evaluated in order to ensure that decision making is fair and consistent.

96% is average attendance for a primary aged pupil.

90% attendance or below is Persistent Absentee and this information is held at a local and national level at the end of each academic year.

Attendance Threshold Action

Thresholds	Actions at each threshold:
>90%	<p>Registers are checked daily to identify absentees. If a child is absent and no reason has been provided by their parent/carer, the school office will make a telephone call home to the parent/carer asking them to contact school that day, to explain the reason for absence</p> <p>On each day of absence, parents must inform the school office of the reason for absence before 11am.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where no reason is given or contact cannot be made, this is referred to the Attendance lead or Head teacher.
<90%	<p>Pupils deteriorating to 90% (equivalent to one session missed per week, persistent absence threshold)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The office staff will make first day calls as above. • School Attendance Lead/ Headteacher will monitor the attendance of those pupils whose attendance is less than 90%. • Welfare checks may be made by 2 members of staff if deemed appropriate. • A standard letter will be sent to parents pointing out the deterioration in attendance levels and will be reminded of the school's target levels for attendance and the negative effect of irregular attendance on learning. • Continue to monitor weekly attendance. • Should attendance continue to be an issue, then it may be necessary to refer to Worcestershire Children First Education Welfare office. • Parents may be requested to attend a meeting to discuss the child's attendance and/or punctuality and the detrimental effect on learning with support offered. <p>Below 90% Absence will no longer be authorised without a medical note unless there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Parents may be invited to an Attendance Panel meeting and targets or a plan will be put in place.</p>

Where attendance continues to deteriorate, this may lead to a fixed penalty fine or prosecution.

Early Years - The expectation for children in early years is the same as that of all other years in school.

- Children in Pre-School who fall below 75% may have their funding for their place removed by the Local Authority and will either have to leave or parents fund the place.

Lateness

Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. The school day starts at 8:50am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. (soft start and classrooms open 8.40am)

Registers are marked by 8:55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

The register closes at 9:00am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

After lunch, registers are marked by 1pm for KS1 and 1.10pm KS2/3. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

Pupils attending after 9:00am will receive a mark and the number of minutes late.

Equal Opportunities

This policy has been assessed for equality impact on 01/02/2023 and has been graded as: low priority. Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with special educational needs as part of their annual / interim review if required.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance data is collected weekly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This includes cases where there may be:

- Persistent Absence e.g. less than 90%

- Incomplete weeks
- Monday and Friday absences
- Lateness
- Periods of extended absence
- Periods of "unauthorised" absence
- Periods of absence for leave taken in term time

The Attendance Lead will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance at least annually and will ensure the Governors / LAB are kept informed of the whole school's attendance percentage, including groups, at each LAB meeting.

The Governors / LAB, and Executive Headteacher will set an annual target of attendance and review this annually. The attendance target for Academic year 2022/2023 is 96.5%.

Review

Policy Written: February 2023 EAW

Policy to be reviewed February 2025

Approved by Governors / LAB :

Glossary

Attendance

The act of going regularly to and being present at school.

Authorised absence

Authorised absence is when a child is absent from school for a genuine reason such as illness where they are too unwell to attend.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is when a child is absent from school where no reason for absence has been given, the reason does not warrant authorisation or leave where the leave request has not been authorised.

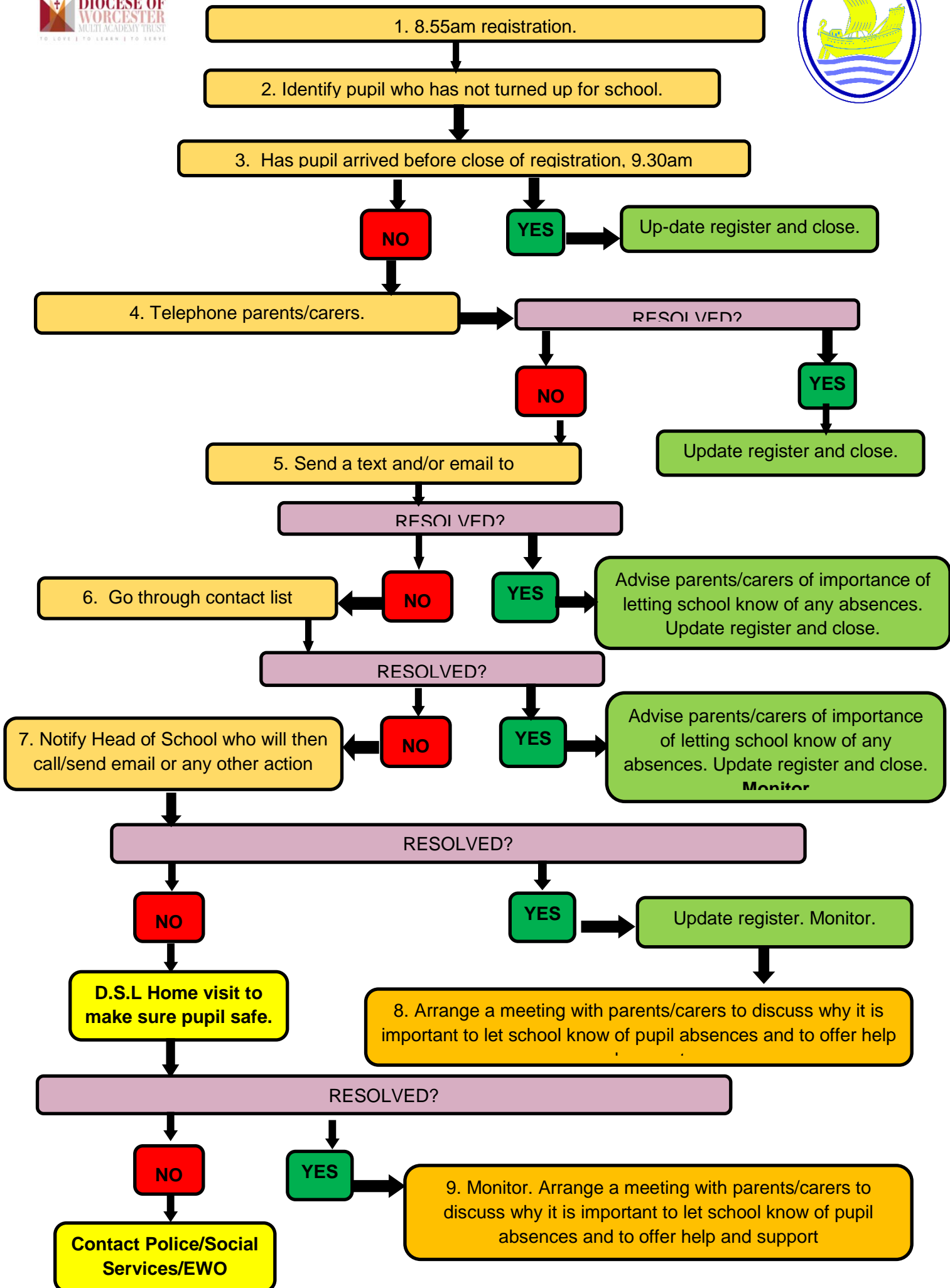
Persistent Absenteeism

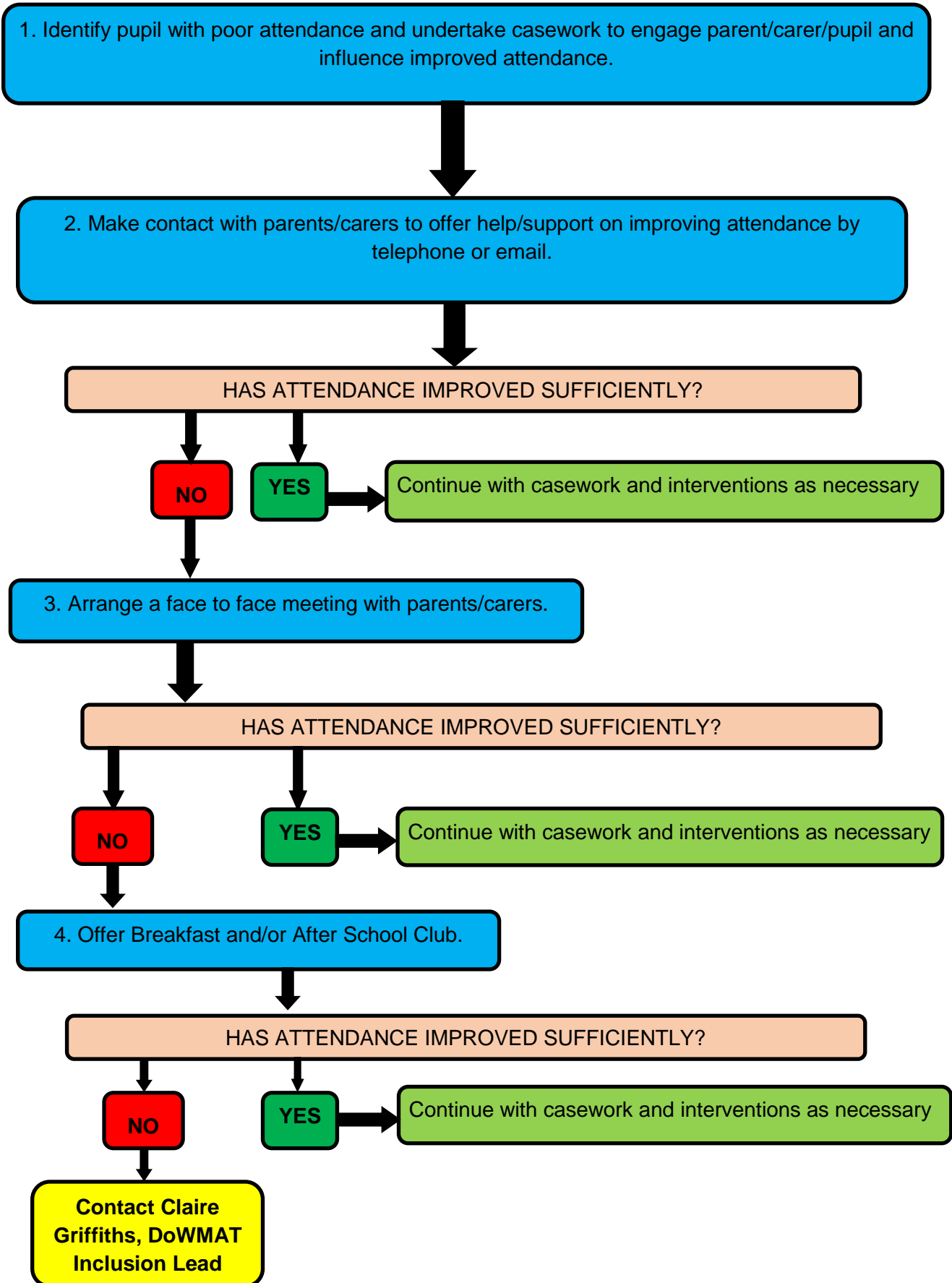
Persistent absence is when a pupil's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions.

Therefore attendance of 90% or below.



Case Work for Pupil





Attendance Improvement Meeting – Review

To be completed as a contemporaneous record of the meeting and a copy given to all attendees at the close of the meeting. If parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend a copy of this record should be sent to them by post.

Name:	07	Year:	D.O.B.
Date of Review:			
Present:			
Initial AIM Date :	Current attendance		%
Sessions of absence since AIM meeting:			
Authorised		Unauthorised	
Have all the agreed actions from the AIM been met by all parties?			
Provide details:			

Action

(please tick appropriate box below)

Targets met – No further action	
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or

Improvement but targets not met – plan to continue – Review	
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or

Targets not met – Request for legal action to Education Performance & Inclusion team

Review Date:

As Parent /Carer of I understand that failure to meet these targets may result in legal proceedings taken against me.

Signed:

Parent **Parent**.....

Date:

Pupil **School** **Other**

Date:

For use if parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend

Date plan posted to parent(s)/carer(s):

Signed: **Date:**