



Astrea Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

Date	September 2020
Written by	Astrea Deputy Director of Safeguarding
Adopted by Trust Board	
Review Date	September 2021

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1. Attendance Policy Principles and Aims

- 1.1. This policy has been authorised by the Trustees of Astrea Academy Trust, is published on the Academy website and is available in hard copy to parents on request. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. This policy and its procedures apply to all Astrea Academy Trust schools, whilst taking account of the local context and Local Authority procedures and code of conduct for attendance escalation such as the the issue of fixed penalties.
- 1.2. Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people 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.
- 1.3. Attendance is again mandatory from 1st Septemer 2020, following partial closures due to Covid 19. We are aware of the concerns parents/carers/pupils may have in returning to school, following mandatory partial closures. Parents/carers/pupils can request a meeting with the Attendance officer/Senior Leadership representative to discuss any concerns they have in returning to school.
- 1.4. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of all staff within Astrea Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as the 'Trust').
- 1.5. Gooseacre Primary Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Responding to attendance concerns is a safeguarding matter and will be treated as such.
- 1.6. Gooseacre Primary Academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:
 - Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
 - Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
 - Building a culture of safeguarding: ensuring all students feel safe, protected and valued;
 - Having clear and swift responses to address concerns including patterns of absence;
 - Supporting parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality.

2. Statutory and Regulatory Framework

2.1 This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities July 2019 \(Updated May 2020\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police January 2015 \(update May 2020\)](#)
- [Children Missing Education 2016](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)

- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

2.2 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2.3 This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Associated Policies

3.1. This policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and support for children with medical needs.

3.2. This Policy should be read alongside the Academy's:

- Astrea Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Astrea Inclusion Policy
- Astrea Exclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Missing Pupils Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

4. School Procedures

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See **Appendix 6** for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by their designated time on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at each designated time and will be kept open until 9.30 am. The register for the second session will be taken at the end of lunchtime break.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30 am or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the 'L' code. The 'L' code will be used from when register is taken and up to 9.30 am.

A pupil who arrives late, after the register has closed, will be marked as 'U', unless another code is more appropriate due to the reason for lateness after register (such as unplanned medical).

Lateness and punctuality will be monitored on a daily basis.

We may send a letter to parents/carers, by way of notification of our concerns in relation to their child's lateness and/or punctuality and may request a meeting to discuss the concerns in order to work together to resolve any issues.

Persistent lateness can result in a significant amount of leaning time being lost, resulting in gaps in learning and can also indicate a safeguatding concern. All class teachers must be alert to emerging patterns or concerns in relation to lateness and punctuality and inform both the Attendance Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have concerns.

4.5 Following up absence

The academy will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If we are unable to establish the reason for absence via telephone or the School ParentApp and by 10 am, we will follow the steps as set out within appendix 2 of this policy (appendix 4 of Astrea Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)

4.6 Reporting to parents

It is important to report on school attendance regularly to parents, aside from the notifications that parents will receive as part of our responses to absence.

All parents are encouraged to download the Astrea Parent App. This enable parents to track their child's attendance daily. The platform also has functionality for parents to report a child's absence and the reasons.

Parents will be updated annually in the written end of year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as : a personal/family/celebratory event that cannot be repeated year on year.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

5.2 Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.3 Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- Holidays taken in term time, where there are no exceptional circumstances
- Birthdays
- Hair cuts
- Shopping for new shoes/uniform

Targeting unauthorized attendance:

- **See appendix 2**

5.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices **Appendix 3**. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- *Assemblies*
- *Certificates*
- *Weekly class attendance monitoring*
- *Termly rewards/End of year rewards*
- *Telephone calls to parents/carers, where attendance becomes a concern*
- *Intervention & support from the Family Liaison & Safeguarding Officer, where attendance becomes a concern*
- *Intervention from the Astrea Educational Welfare Officer, where attendance becomes a concern or is a continuing concern*
- *Early Help/Family support as identified, incorporating other services as required*
- *Punctuality monitoring*
- *Letters to parents/carers and meetings where attendance becomes of concern*
-

7. Attendance monitoring and Intervention

7.1 See **Appendix 2** for Gooseacre Primary Academy Attendance Intervention Flowchart

The 'Astrea Attendance Tree' **Appendix 3** is used to illustrate our whole school attendance target and levels/percentages of pupils attendance. The tree is used and displayed across the school, by all staff. Pupils should be able to articulate which colour level/Percentage they are currently at and have opportunities to talk to staff about their attendance.

The 'Astrea Attendance Tracker' is used by the Attendance Officer and Senior Leaders to support the regular and robust tracking of attendance and to monitor uses of interventions.

7.2 Daily Monitoring / Expectations

Daily monitoring is conducted through the taking of electronic registers and first day absence calls/texts are made within the first two hours of the school day. If a child/Young person is absent and parents/carers/primary contacts are uncontactable, the 1st and 2nd emergency contacts should be used. If no explanation has been reached for a child/young person's absence, school to follow internal CME (Children Missing Education) flowchart **Appendix 2** which will detail when a Home-visit is to be conducted.

A Home-visit should always be considered on the first day of absence however if this has not been conducted, then on the second consecutive day of absence a home visit should be conducted (if a reason for absence has still not been established through both the primary and emergency contacts). At least two emergency contacts should be held for each child.

If through daily calls or home-visits, concerns arise regarding the need for Early Help support or a possible safeguarding concern is identified, the matter should be passed to the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately (both verbally and recorded on CPOMS).

If at any stage, further concerns are identified, and the attendance lead/DSL is unsure of what action to take, the Astrea Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Director of Safeguarding should be contacted for consultation.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence increases in any week, in the first instance, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will follow our intervention flowchart **Appendix 1**.

Any attendance concerns identified by the attendance officer, such as patterns of absence, persistent absence, persistent lateness, will be addressed.

We may invite parents in for an informal meeting or a more formal Panel meeting, involving an education welfare officer.

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

Pupil-level absence data is collected each week internally within the Academy trust. Absence data is shared with relevant authorities termly and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this within the Academy Trust.

7.3 Weekly Monitoring / Expectations

The Astrea Attendance Tracker is completed and circulated to the senior leadership team and Class Teachers/Form Tutors.

Individual pupil/student and key group Attendance analysed and actions discussed between Attendance Lead and member of SLT responsible for Attendance.

Additional strategies discussed to address attendance of specific 'groups' causing concern.

Class teachers/Form Tutors to share whole class/tutor group attendance and discuss attendance beginning to cause concern with individual parents/carers (also with students within secondary).

Weekly actions/interventions completed: letters sent and Initial support meeting / Initial School Attendance Panel (ISAP) / School Attendance Panel (SAP) meetings arranged and communicated according to actions agreed within Attendance meeting (alongside SLT member).

If attendance of individual pupils/students and specific groups continues to decline despite following intervention flowchart, support can be accessed from the Astrea Specialist Leader of Attendance or from Astrea Safeguarding Officer.

Weekly attendance assemblies are conducted to share attendance figures - whole school and class/tutor group attendance and share attendance awards.

Weekly whole school and class/tutor group attendance is shared via either the parent app/website/email/text/social media post with all parents/carers.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Trust

The Trust is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a half termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance is discussed at every Transition Management Board (TMB) or Local Education Consultative Committee (LECC) meeting with Trust representatives and local committee members present.

8.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data, reporting it to the Trust and the TMB/LECC.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The Family Liaison & Safeguarding Officer:

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level on daily basis
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Senior Leadership Team/Principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

8.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information in a timely manner.

Any concerns that class teachers/form tutors have regarding absence and or punctuality, should be discussed with the Attendance Officer.

Class teachers/Form tutors may be expected to have initial conversations with parents/pupils regarding concerns,

8.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system in a timely manner.

9. Policy Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust and adapted by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the TMB/LECC.

Authorised by	K Godfrey
Date	September 2020

Effective date of the policy	September 2020
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10. Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

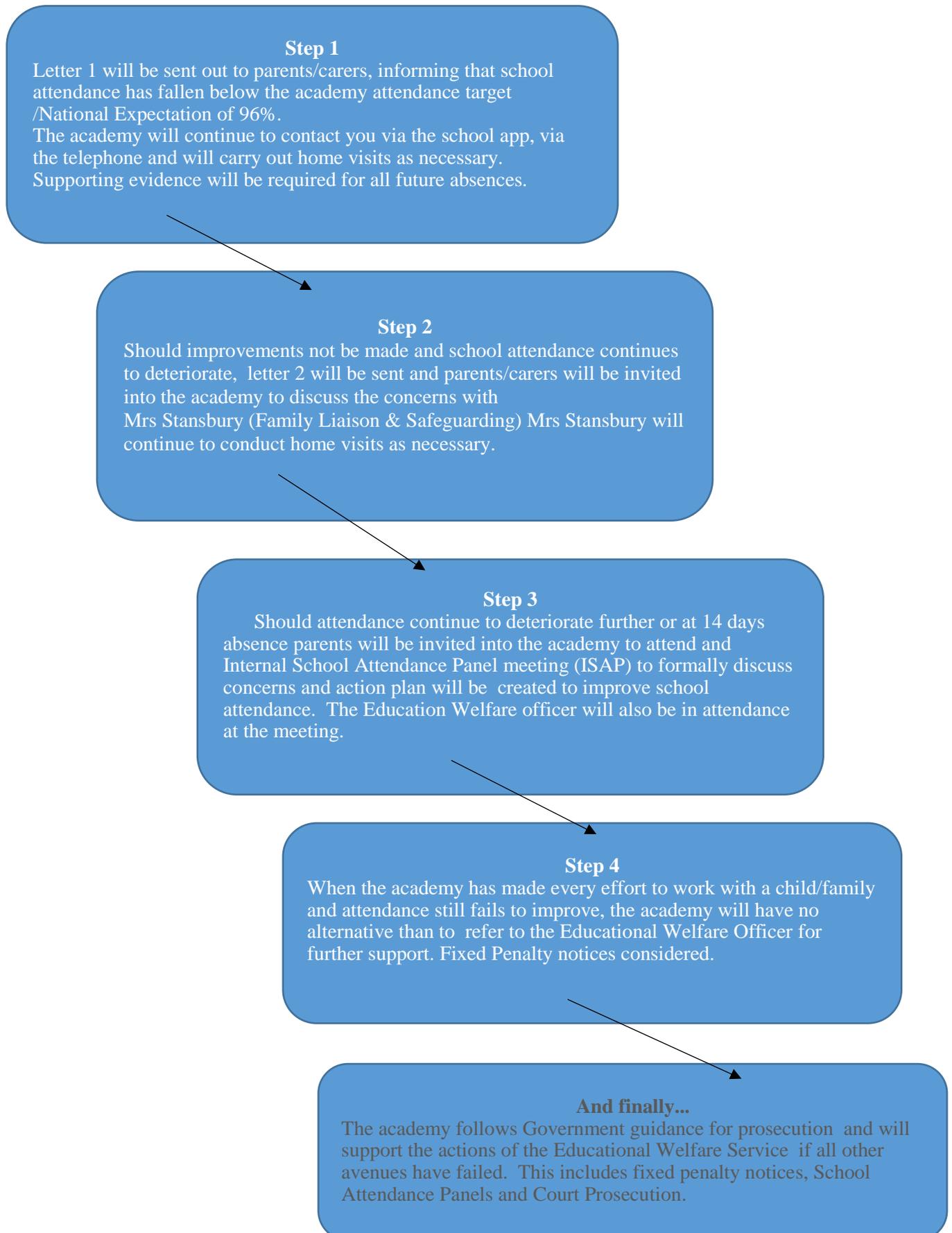
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend <i>Code X is also used for pupils who are isolating due to covid 19.</i>
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody <i>Code Y will be used in event of local / national lockdown measures.</i>
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

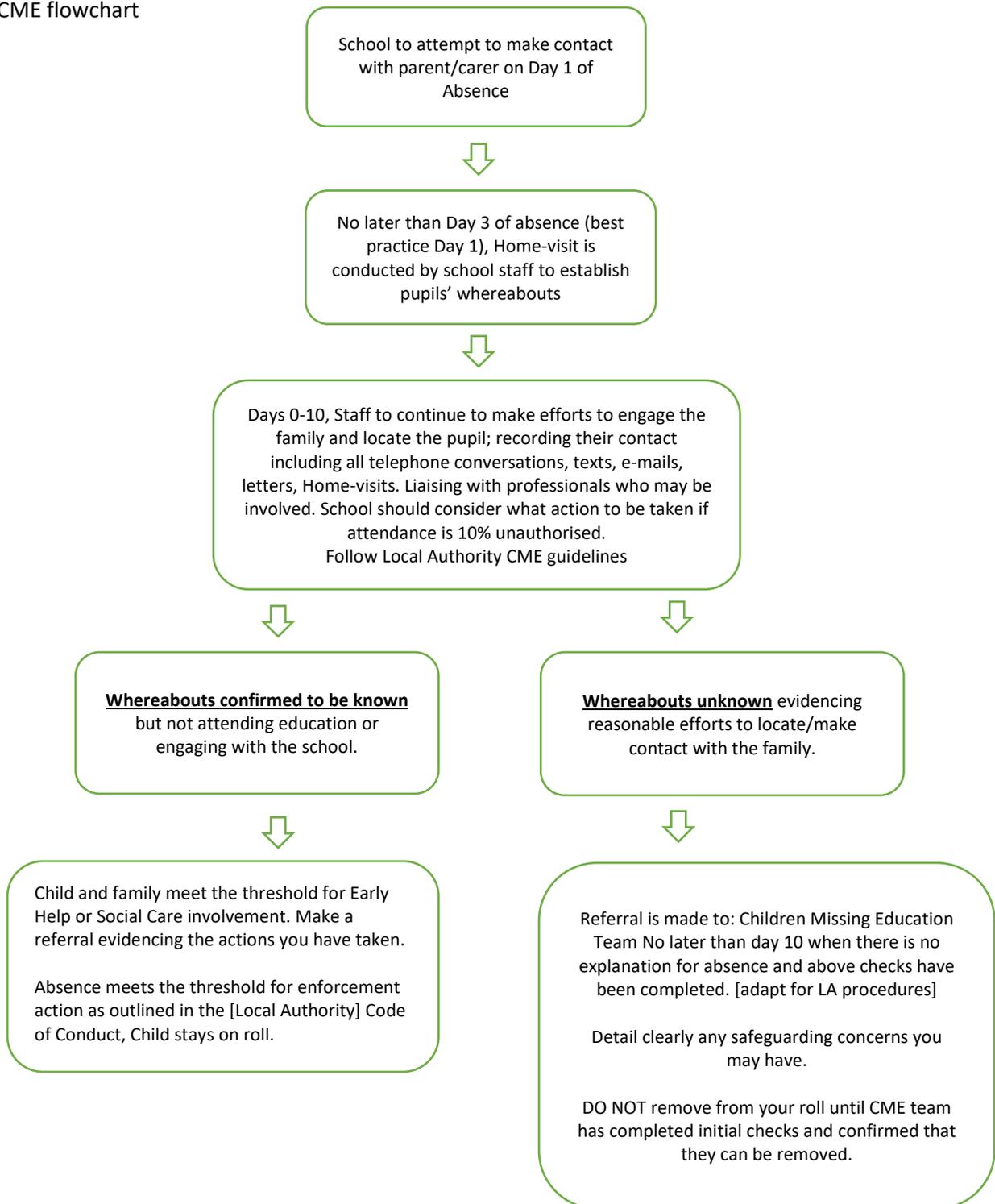


Appendix 2 – Attendance Flowcharts

Academy procedures – re: absences/attendance concerns



CME flowchart



Appendix 3 – Attendance Tree sample

Astrea Attendance Tree

Whole Academy Attendance From



Class
Whole Class Attendance



Appendix 4 – LA code of conduct for the use of Fixed penalties

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-absence/>

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

3.1 A Penalty Notice can be issued in cases of unauthorised absence and to a parent of a child who is of compulsory school age at the time when the unauthorised absence is recorded.

3.2 Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil per academic term. In cases where families contain more than one pupil, multiple 4 issues may occur but this will be the subject of careful consideration and co-ordination.

3.3 There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence. Where there is more than one person liable for the absence, a separate warning may be issued.

3.4 The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances: • Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps) • Parentally-condoned absences • Unauthorised leave of absence in term-time • Unexplained absence i.e. no reason given for absence • Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) • Excluded pupil present in a public place during the school hours of the school where the pupil is on roll

3.5 To ensure consistent delivery of the process and the issuing of Penalty Notices, there will be at least 10 sessions (5 school days in total) lost by the pupil due to unauthorised absence during the current term. In which case, the following criteria will apply;

Unauthorised absence

- If due to sporadic absences, then, other than in specific circumstances, the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. If there are further absences within the 15 day monitoring period then a penalty notice may be issued. •

Schools must consider every aspect of a pupil's case before considering whether a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. This, in appropriate circumstances, should include strategic discussions with the EWS and any other attendance support staff who have involvement with or knowledge of the pupil/family.

Fixed penalty notices

Leave of absence - taking your child out of school in term time

To take your child out of school in term time, you must apply to the school for leave of absence. Ask the school for their attendance policy for further guidance.

If you take your child on holiday in term-time without the school's consent, you'll receive a fine of £60 for each child. If you don't pay this within 21 days, it will be increased to £120. You'll need to pay the increased fine within 28 days or court action can be taken against you. Read our [Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices](#).

Unauthorised absence

Penalty notices may be issued in the following circumstances: truancy, parentally-condoned absences, excluded pupils found in a public place during school hours, and persistent late arrival for school. As the liable parent, you'll receive a formal warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued and given 15 school days to improve your child's overall school attendance.

Appendix 5 – Sample letters

Punctuality letter

Dear Parents/Carers

We have noted recently that punctuality has slipped and that they have accrued late marks. This equates to hours of missed learning.

As you know, all children are expected to arrive at school in their allocated drop off time and be ready to learn (If you are unsure of your child's drop off time, please check with the school office or class teacher)

By arriving to school on time, your child will have the best possible start to the school day and will be ready to learn, alongside his or her peers. Arriving late can cause embarrassment, it can disturb whole class learning and can mean that your child will miss the key input at the start of the lesson, so they will be unsure of expectations and what is required of them during that lesson, which can be very unsettling.

Please take action to ensure that Punctuality begins to improve straight away. Should you require any support with getting your child to school on time or have any concerns regarding punctuality, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Stansbury, via the school office in the first instance.

Letter 1

Dear

RE: School Attendance (Child's name)

From reviewing registration certificate today, I am concerned to see that his/her attendance has fallen to%, which falls below the Academy Target and National Expectation of 96%.

We will continue to monitor attendance and with your support, will expect to see an improvement over the coming weeks.

Should you have any concerns regarding this letter or feel that you may require some additional support in improving Attendance, please speak to your child's class teacher or Mrs Stansbury in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Letter 2

Dear

RE: Continuing attendance concerns – CHILDS NAME

Further to our previous letter, dated (copy attached), I am writing to inform you that (Child's name) attendance has failed to improve and currently stands at%, which as you know fall's below the national expectation and Academy Target of 96%.

Due to the amount of learning (child's name) has missed, I am requesting that you attend a meeting with Mrs Stansbury at Gooseacre Primary Academy on date/time to discuss our concerns further.

It is hoped that at this meeting we will be able to discuss and resolve any barriers or issues that are currently affecting (child's name) school attendance, thus ensuring that further learning is not missed.

If you are unable to attend this meeting for any reason, please contact Mrs Stansbury, via the school office to arrange a mutually convenient appointment.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Letter 3

Dear

RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (Child's name)

Further to our last attendance meeting on (date), and from reviewing (child's name), registration certificate today, I am extremely concerned to see that (child's name) attendance has failed to improve and that you have failed to communicate absences with the school office, resulting in a large number of unauthorised absence.

As such, you are now invited to attend an Internal School Attendance Panel Meeting (ISAP) at Gooseacre Primary Academy on date/time to discuss the continuing concerns.

Please note that: Louise Champeau (Astrea Educational Welfare Officer), will also be in attendance at the meeting.

Should you fail to attend this meeting, it is likely that (name) will be referred to Louise for further support, which will include weekly monitoring, regular home visits and weekly telephone contact, you may also be prosecuted under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, which if you are found guilty of failing to secure regular school attendance could lead to a conviction in a Magistrate's court, you may be fined up to £2500 or imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Please confirm that you are attending this meeting as soon as possible, if you are unable to attend, we will rearrange at a mutually convenient date/time.

Yours sincerely

Principal