



Attendance Policy

**September 2022
Review September 2023**

Attendance Policy

Rationale

At Westhoughton High School we **LEARN**:

- L**ook after each other
- E**njoy our school
- A**im high
- R**espect each other
- N**ever stop learning

There is a strong and obvious link between school attendance and student achievement. Regular attendance at school is vital, put simply, *absence* means *missed learning*; without consistent attendance the learning process becomes fragmented and is unsatisfactory.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where their child is registered. 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/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444 (1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). Any absence should be considered unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. Unauthorised absence at any level is considered unacceptable by both the school and local authority.

Roles and responsibilities

Westhoughton High school aims to:

- emphasise the importance to all students of maximum attendance at school as an essential pre-requisite for making full use of all educational opportunities and to maximise individual achievement;
- make explicit to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers and students) our school's expectations on attendance levels;
- promote a consistent approach across our school towards all matters relating to attendance;
- ensure that accurate and up to date records of attendance are maintained and analysed to identify potential causes for concern
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- communicate to all relevant parties the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- emphasise the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

The Governing Body of Westhoughton High School will:

- Support the school in ensuring that the importance and value of high attendance is promoted to students and families.
- Review the school's attendance policy annually and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Regularly review attendance as a standing item at full governing body meetings and CSI committee meetings.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems in place to report, record and monitor attendance including those who are educated off site
- Ensure that there is robust analysis of attendance data and effective evaluation of intervention strategies

High attendance levels are achieved as a result of staff working closely together and knowing where their responsibilities lie. The specific roles and responsibilities of key staff are explained in **Appendix 1**. It is important that **all** members of staff are aware of the responsibilities so that when they take on the role permanently or in a temporary capacity, they know what is expected of them.

The Department for Education guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' 2022 reinforces that schools, families and other agencies must work together to remove barriers to attendance. The principles of this guidance are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

Key Attendance Personnel

Mrs C Unsworth – Deputy Headteacher - Responsible for Student Wellbeing and Engagement

Mr M Parkinson – Assistant Headteacher – Strategic Lead for Attendance

Mrs A Foster – Attendance Officer

Mrs D Arstall – Integrated Support Officer

Mrs J Travis – Admissions administration Officer

In addition each year cohort has a Student Support Leader (SSL) and Student Progress Leader (SPL) who are responsible for the operational management, recording and monitoring of attendance for the students in their year group.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

As part of our LEARN ethos we 'Aim high' and so we expect all of our students to achieve a minimum of 97% attendance. Students are expected to attend school every day between 8.45am and 3.10pm (2.10pm on Wednesdays). Regular and consistent attendance is important and so students should **not** have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school as part of our attendance protocols. Where a student's attendance falls below 90% this is classed as persistent absence and will require significant intervention and monitoring from school – for further details of this process see **Appendix 5**.

Authorised Absences

School cannot legally authorise **any** leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for **authorised** or **justified** absences:

- (i) a child is ill or receiving medical attention;
- (ii) days of religious observance, notified in advance;
- (iii) absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as **approved sporting activities** that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school; the Headteacher will use professional discretion in these cases to make a decision as to whether the absence can be authorised.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; **routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible**.

School will not routinely request medical evidence for absence due to illness. However, if absence rates reach a cause for concern then it may be necessary to put in place additional intervention, through liaison with health professionals, to ensure that absences can continue to be authorised if appropriate. Parents/Carers are encouraged to seek support from pastoral teams where there are ongoing issues with illness. Absence for planned medical appointments during the school day should be supported by an appointment card/letter wherever possible.

Unauthorised Absences

These are absences where:

- no acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carers;
- the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of **authorised** absence above
- the level of absence for illness has reached a concerning level and is not supported by medical evidence.

DFE guidelines state that the following activities would be classified as **unauthorised**:

- minding the house;
- caring for relatives;
- awaiting repair people;
- shopping;
- a birthday or family celebration.

Multiple sessions of unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice – see **Appendix 6** for further information. Significant attendance concerns may also be referred to the Local Authority attendance team for co-ordinated support and intervention.

Holidays

There is no automatic right to any holidays in term time and we strongly discourage holidays being taken as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. We ask parents who feel it is absolutely unavoidable that they take their annual holiday (or any other proposed special occasions) during term time to notify the school by completing a leave of absence form (**Appendix 7**) **at least four weeks in advance of the proposed date**, explaining the circumstances. Further information about holiday requests and a copy of the leave of absence request form (**Appendix 7**) can be found on the school's website.

Westhoughton High school will **not** authorise holidays retrospectively.

Any requests for term time holidays must be made via a formal request to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher. Each request for leave will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of proposed leave
- School year of the student
- Student's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of internal and public examinations
- Student's educational needs
- General welfare of the student
- Circumstances of the request
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made

The DFE guidelines outline that it is the **school** that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. With regard to holidays, the Headteacher must determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. As a general guide any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time should not be authorised during the school term. A note from home does NOT automatically make an absence or holiday valid, justified or authorised. If the absence is approved by the Headteacher it will be marked as authorised, if not approved but still taken it will be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice as outlined below and in **Appendix 6**.

Working within our Home/School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents/carers to:

- Do all you can to ensure your child arrives **on time** for school; morning registration begins at 8:45am and students should be in class by this time. We will monitor persistent late comers and action will be taken on the day of lateness. Our registers close at 9.10am at the end of the form time period. Students arriving after this time will be recorded as 'U' which classes as an unauthorised absence for the session.
- If your child is ill, notify the school **on the first day by calling the absence line on 01942 814122 or sending a message via School Synergy.**
- Notify the school of each day of absence if the absence continues;
- Get in touch with the year group pastoral team at an early stage about any concerns you have about your child's attendance and any emerging barriers.
- Inform the school as soon as possible if your child needs to leave the school site prior to the formal end of the school day at 3.10pm (2.10pm on Wednesdays).

In return, school will:

- Contact home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home;
- Contact home over any unexplained absences;
- Follow up promptly any concerns parents/carers pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in school;
- Support students to re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances;
- Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Reward excellent or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

Attendance and Safeguarding

We believe that attendance at school is an important part of our safeguarding procedures. Where a student is not in school the attendance procedures will be followed to ensure that the student is safe.

Where a student is dual registered the school will maintain contact with the provider to ensure that there is a clear process in place to alert key worker in school to support if they are absent from their provision.

Where a student is CLA the school will liaise with the local authority to report attendance as requested by them. All CLA students will be placed on the vulnerable priority contact list for absence and contact will be made with EIT before 10.30am for any unexplained absences to ensure that support can be put in place with home contact.

Where a student is under a Child Protection Plan or has an allocated social worker they will be placed onto the vulnerable priority contact list for absence and contact will be made with EIT before 10.30am for any unexplained absences to ensure that support can be put in place with home contact.

Students who have attendance below 80% for any reason will be placed on the Vulnerable Student Register (VSR) and will be discussed at the weekly safeguarding team meeting.

Where a student has an EHCP their attendance will be monitored by the SEND team and any causes for concern with attendance will form part of their SEN review process.

Complex Circumstances

Westhoughton High School will take a supportive and proactive approach where a student has complex health needs or family circumstances which may impact on regular school attendance. Individual support plans will be created where appropriate in liaison with other agencies. Where this requires the completion of an Early Help Assessment the student will be allocated a key worker to oversee this process and co-ordinate any support required. If a student is hospitalised for a period of time the school will liaise with relevant medical teams and any educational support in place to

ensure that continuity is sustained as much as possible -in an appropriate way to reflect individual circumstances.

Part-time timetables

All students are entitled to a full-time education. In line with Department for Education guidance, in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. Westhoughton High school will ensure that if any student is placed on a part-time timetable the following guidance is followed:

- The timetable is agreed by school staff, the student and by parents/carers
- The timetable is accompanied by a pastoral support plan
- A review date is set to monitor the impact of the timetable
- The timetable is kept in place for the shortest time necessary
- Relevant outside agencies are updated as appropriate, including the local authority attendance team and social workers/virtual school staff if relevant.
- Any absence as part of an agreed part-time timetable will be authorised under the appropriate coding (usually C unless absence is part of agreed medical appointments)

Children Missing Education

Westhoughton High School will follow Bolton Local Authority procedures with regards to students who are missing education.

Deletions from register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the school register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools has been completed and the student has been placed on roll at another school
- Student has been withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- A medical condition prevents a student's attendance and return to school before ending compulsory school-age
- A student is in custody for more than 4 months (in discussion with the Youth Offending Team)
- The student has been absent without reason for 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student – in line with LA CME procedures.

Rewards for Good Attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance Westhoughton High school offers a number of rewards and ensures that the recognition of high attendance and improving attendance is high profile. Attendance recognition features in form time sessions, year group assemblies and presentation evenings.

Attendances and absences are included in termly assessments, which are also sent home.

Integrated Working/Early Help

Our Integrated working officer and attendance officer have oversight of attendance and work closely with other agencies around welfare issues. Students who are giving cause for concern around attendance are discussed as a matter of course each week at the attendance team meeting. This may result in staff visiting homes, or seeing and supporting students in school. This work is a vital component in our efforts to secure high attendance. The Student Support Leader is available to assist parents / carers where difficulties arise and can be contacted at the school. In extreme cases the school also initiates legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility for getting their child to school. Before a case goes to court, parents / carers will be contacted in order to set targets to improve attendance levels; there may also be interviews which could lead to a fixed penalty notice. The prime aim of all action is to get the child attending school on a regular basis.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Absence Codes – Recorded on registers
- Appendix 2 Working together to improve attendance
- Appendix 3 Staff Guide to Registers and Associated Procedures
- Appendix 4 Attendance - Roles & Responsibilities
- Appendix 5 Stages of Intervention
- Appendix 6 Bolton's penalty notice code of conduct – information for parents/carers
- Appendix 7 Request for Leave of Absence form

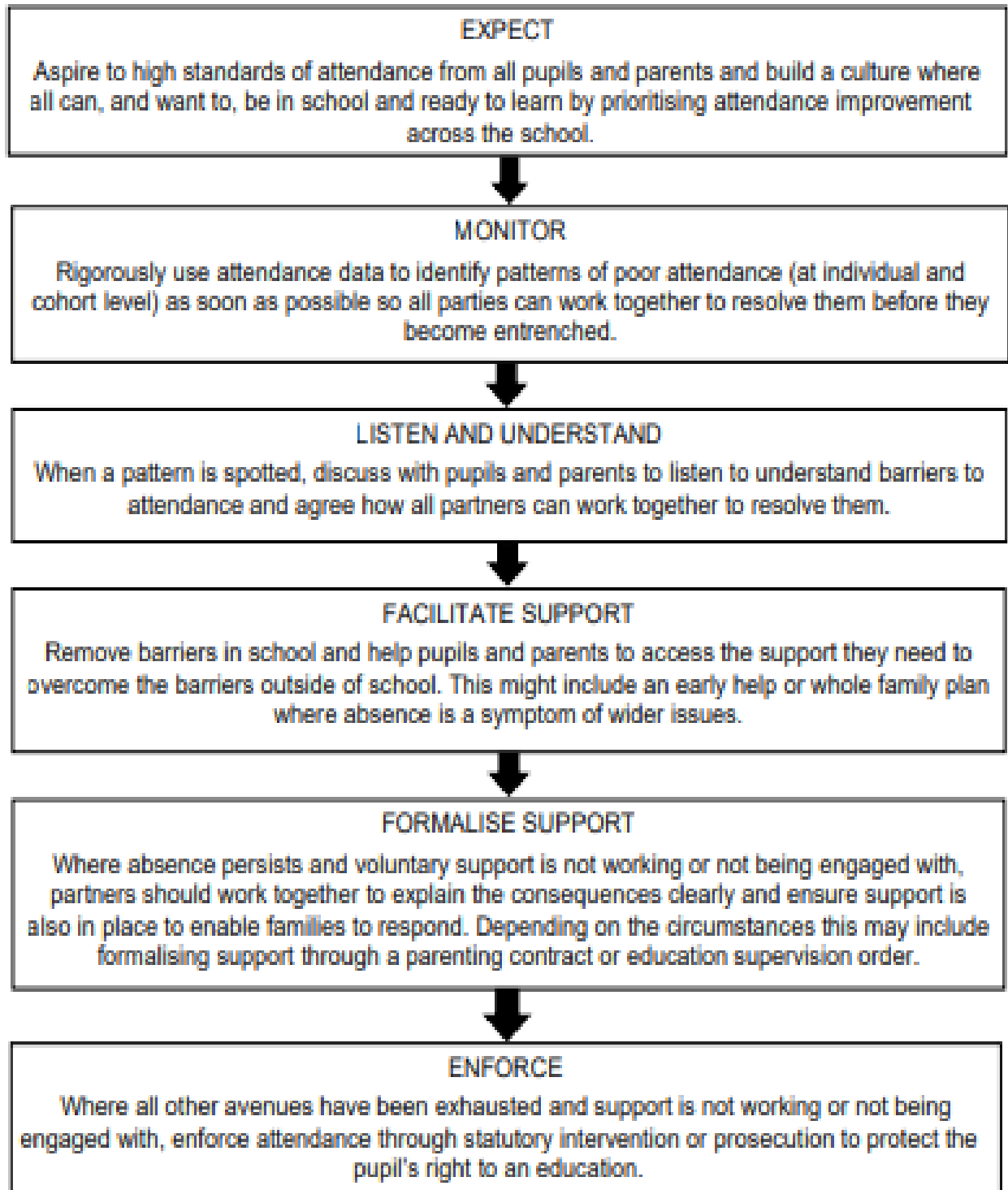
APPENDIX 1

Absence Codes – Recorded on registers

A	Present at registration
B	Off-site Educational Activity
C	Leave of absence agreed by the school
D	Dual registered (ie present at another school or at a PRU)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H	Agreed holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Absent without authorisation
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Arrived in school after the register closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not based working)
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Prospective pupil not on admissions register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
AEA	Authorised Educational Activity - counted as present.

APPENDIX 2 Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



APPENDIX 3

Staff Guide to Registers and Associated Procedures:

This section complements the Attendance Policy and should be read in conjunction with it. It deals with the practicalities of completing the registers and associated procedures to do with attendance. Registers are recorded in School Synergy and data is automatically transferred to SIMS. Registers are important legal documents. We rely on accurate input in order to follow up any concerns as well as for data analysis.

Marking the register

Form Tutors will be responsible for recording absences during form time and passing on any attendance related communications to the pastoral team and attendance officers where appropriate. **All staff** are responsible for flagging changes in attendance with the school office through every session of the school day. If there is a change in attendance and a student is missing from a class, all staff have a duty to report this.

Reading the registers

The registers information is read every morning during registration. It is important that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for **EVERY** student (everyone **must** fall into one of the three categories of present, absent or late). Staff must enter either 'present', 'absent' or 'late' (+ how many minutes late). A student who arrives late will arrive to the form room with a late slip from the office. **Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information we have is as accurate as possible.**

We operate a policy of first day response regarding absence across the school. The Attendance team contacts parents of any child not registered/given a reason for absence in form time and lesson 1.

Communication with/from parents or carers

We ask all parents and carers to contact the school as early as possible on the **first** day of absence to notify us of their child's absence; there is a dedicated line on which parents can leave messages about absence.

We do require **ALL** absences to be covered by a letter, e-mail, phone call or note in the planner from parents/carers. Communication is required for every day of a period of absence. The Student Support leader will pursue any unexplained absences with parents/carers.

Lates

- Statutory Registration starts at 8:45 am and students should be in form rooms by this time. Our registers close after a set period (currently 9.10am). Thereafter students' absence will be recorded as unauthorised (U) unless a valid reason is provided such as a medical or dental appointment.
- A student should only be marked as **late** when the teacher has completed the whole register and a student arrives after the register has been saved on the School Synergy system.
- It is important that we are consistent in our procedures across the school. Staff should record the late mark and the number of minutes late then re-send registers.
- Lates are counted as present when the data is collected; however, parents have been successfully prosecuted for failing to get their child to school consistently on time. Therefore, we will take a robust response to those who are regularly arriving late.

N.B. If for any reason staff are unable to take an electronic register, a paper register must be taken and given to the Attendance Officer.

Attendance Data provided to form tutors

Form Tutors have access to any student's attendance data via School Synergy and SIMS. In addition, summary data is provided on each set of assessments which go home termly. Form tutors should be provided with regular data from the Student Support Leaders and Student Progress Leaders so that patterns can be picked up and addressed.

During reviewing and mentoring time, we expect all form tutors to refer to a range of performance data on their tutees, including that pertaining to attendance.

Summary of Procedures:

- Staff take accurate registers during registration and lessons, making use of appropriate codes (present, absent, late).
- All staff, particularly form tutors/SSL/SPLs should monitor attendance of individuals.
- Staff should raise issues of attendance and punctuality with student, parents and Student Support leaders or Student progress leaders as necessary. The focus should be on early intervention to try to bring about improvements in attendance as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 4

Attendance: roles, responsibilities and related tasks

Form Tutor/Teacher.

We are all responsible for safeguarding children in our school; therefore you should:

- Mark registers accurately in tutor time and in all subject lessons;
- Report any changes in attendance to the attendance office immediately by updating the School Synergy system.
- Practise good housekeeping – ask for absence letters for coding, pass on letters for filing: communicate concerns to Student Support / progress Leaders
- Inform the Student Support leader of any students giving cause for concern in the weekly tutor team meeting, or earlier if needed;
- Assist students in recording attendance targets in their planners, where necessary;
- Keep attendance high profile by discussing attendance data with students and parents/carers during mentoring, Parents' Evenings and academic reviewing / mentoring sessions.

Attendance Officer – Admin

You are responsible for the attendance aspects of safeguarding children across the school; therefore you will:

- Check attendance on School Synergy as a priority task;
- Liaise with Student Support Leaders regarding students who are late;
- Ensure all registers are complete and follow-up and log, where necessary informing the Deputy Headteacher (Student Support & Progress) on the day;
- Ensure codes are recorded accurately (**see Appendix 1**);
- Ensure first day contact made – vulnerable students checked and referred for home visit where necessary;
- Liaise with Attendance team weekly and monitor those students giving cause for concern.

Student Support Leaders

Working with your SPL you are responsible for your team of form tutors; therefore you must:

- Ensure your form tutors are operating to our agreed procedures

Additionally, you should:

- Promote high overall attendance across your year group and low absence rates
- Liaise with form tutors over students who are persistently late
- Liaise, as a minimum at fortnightly meeting, with Integrated Working Officer/Attendance Officer over targeted / vulnerable students on 90% attendance or below;
- Liaise with SPL to use assemblies regularly to reinforce the importance of punctuality and good attendance and praise students with consistently high punctuality and/or attendance;
- Monitor students and raise any concerns around attendance / welfare issues with Integrated working officer/attendance officer;
- Hold meetings with students and/or parents/carers, liaising with Integrated working officer as appropriate;
- Complete EHA with families as required.
- Conduct home visits and hold meetings according to need

Student Progress Leaders

Working with your SSL you are responsible for your team of form tutors; therefore you must:

- Ensure your form tutors are operating to our agreed procedures

Additionally you should:

- Promote high overall attendance across your year group and low absence rates
- Liaise with form tutors over students who are persistently late
- Liaise with SSL to ensure intervention plans are in place for targeted students.
- Liaise with SSL to use assemblies regularly to reinforce the importance of punctuality and good attendance and praise students with consistently high punctuality and/or attendance
- Monitor trends in attendance for identified groups within your year group cohort

Integrated Working Officer (IWO) and Attendance Support Officer

You are responsible for working with our vulnerable young people, supporting families and ensuring a multi-agency approach is taken to care when appropriate; therefore you must:

- Prepare, analyse and bring relevant data to fortnightly meeting with Student Support Leader
- Liaise with Attendance Officer to produce a list of vulnerable families
- Liaise with Student Support Leader to discuss causes for concern and decide appropriate level of intervention and action(s);
- Support students and families, conducting home visits as appropriate;
- Follow appropriate escalation process with students and families giving cause for concern including the tracking of Fixed Penalty notices and fines;
- Set targets for those students whose attendance is 90% and below;
- Liaise with Early Intervention Team when absences persist and as letters/meetings and home visits have not had the desired impact (attendance levels falling into fixed penalty warning criteria);
- Prepare half-termly report summarising individual cases, level(s) of intervention and impact for Deputy Headteacher, Student Support & Progress;
- Prepare case studies on 3 individual cases (including PA and FSM) on a termly basis showing impact of work of the team
- Update EHA with actions following CAM to raise concern
- Prepare any documentation needed for a court route if other interventions fail

Deputy Headteacher

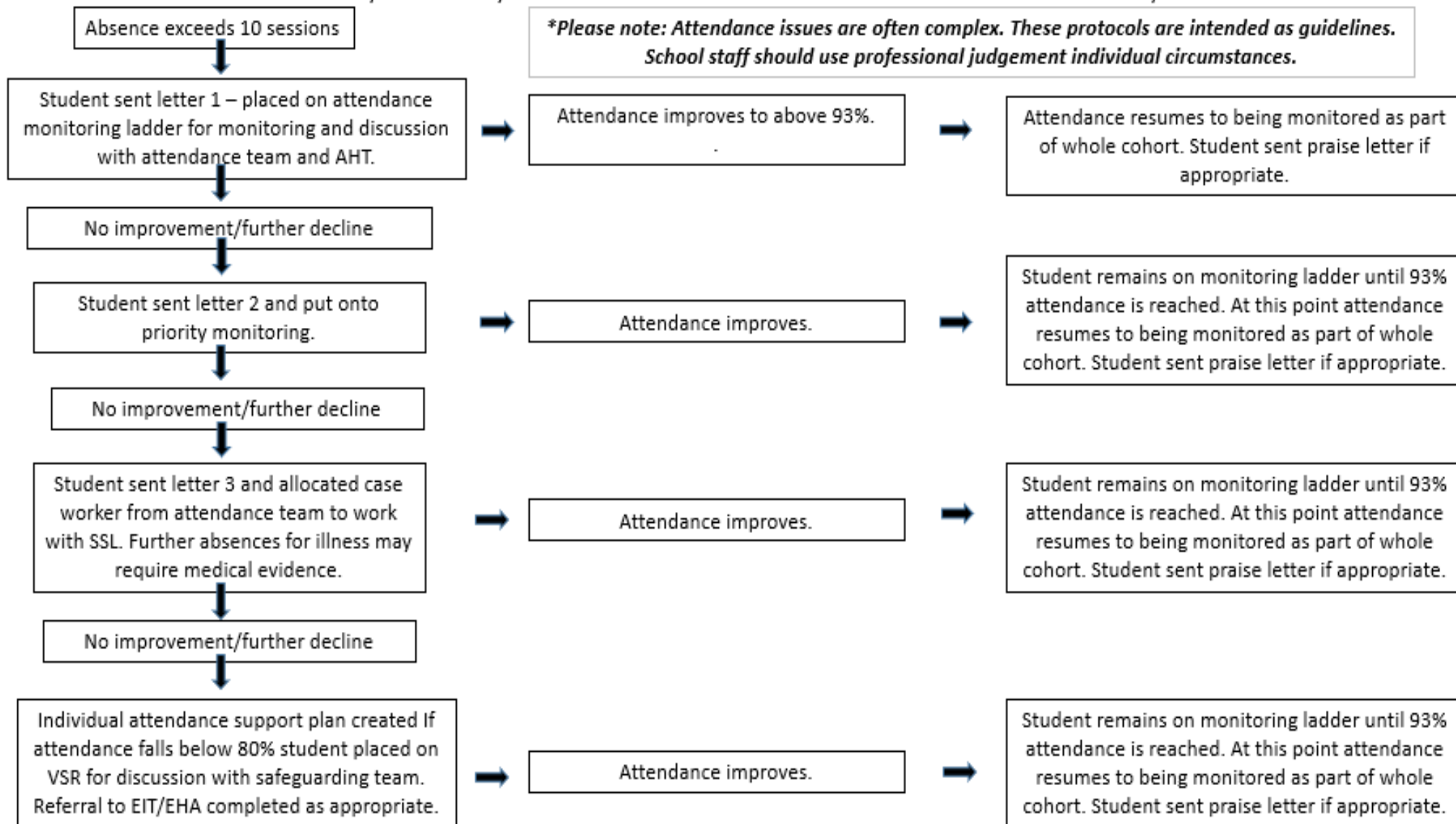
You are responsible for behaviour, attendance and safeguarding procedures across our school; therefore you must:

- Ensure the team follows these procedures so that attendance levels are high and absence is low, with no child missed out
- Meet Integrated Working Officer regularly (minimum twice per half term) to discuss individual cases and overview of attendance data;
- Collate summary cumulative % sessions missed (high PA) and school attendance data;
- Analyse data to identify trends, areas of improvement and areas needing improvement;
- Investigate strategies to improve attendance of all students;
- Liaise with Integrated Working Officer and wider student support team regarding individual cases and trends in sub-groups (Below 90%/PA, CLA, FSM, gender, year group);
- Report impact of strategies to Headteacher, wider SLT, Governing body (Community Students and Inclusion) and School Improvement Partner.

Appendix 5

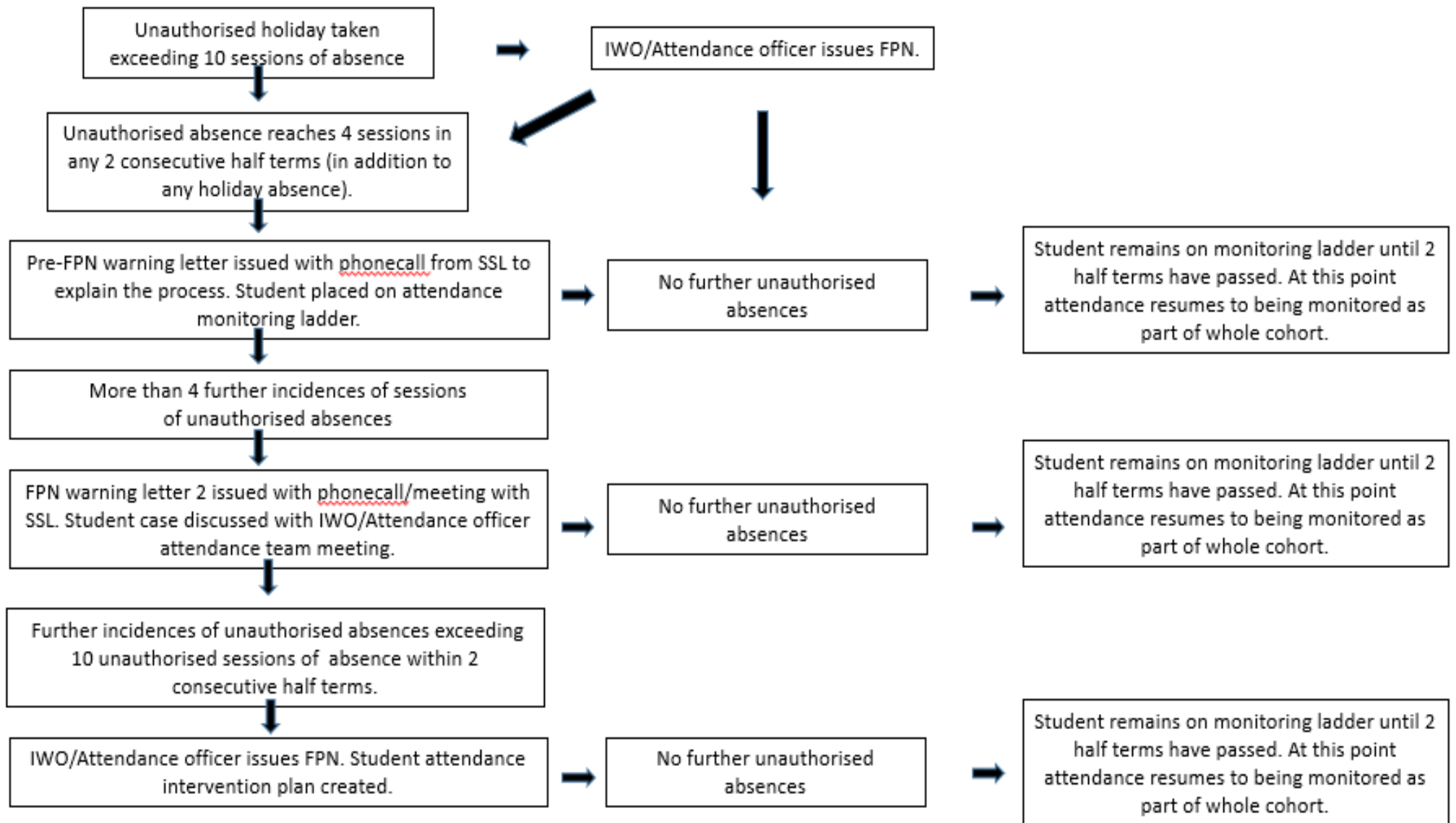
Attendance Concern Protocols – High absence

Attendance levels are monitored by SSL on weekly basis. Overall attendance and unauthorised attendance levels used as key indicators for intervention.



Attendance Concern Protocols – Unauthorised Absence

Attendance levels are monitored by SSL on weekly basis. Overall attendance and unauthorised attendance levels used as key indicators for intervention.



Appendix 6

School Attendance and Penalty Notices Information for parents and carers

Your child's education is really important. Regular attendance at school increases your child's chance of getting good qualifications and a good job.

Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in primary and secondary school.

The Law

You are responsible for:

- Ensuring your children receive full time education
- Their regular and punctual attendance at school

As the parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly and the absence is unauthorised by the Headteacher, even if they are missing school without your knowledge.

If you fail to ensure your child's regular attendance at school the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice or instigate legal proceedings for an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

What is regular attendance?

In April 2017, the Supreme Court held that attending school "*regularly*" means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not "*sufficiently frequent attendance*". This means that a child must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so and failure to do this may lead to the commission of an offence.

What counts as unauthorised absence?

- Any absence from school that the school has not given permission for
- Truancy from school, with or without parent's knowledge
- Parentally-condoned absence (i.e. you know your child is absent from school and you do nothing about it)
- Delayed return from a period of leave of absence
- Arriving late at school after the register has closed

Can I take my child out of school for a holiday during term time?

You should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time.

In 2013 amendments to the Pupil registration regulations removed all reference to family holidays and made clear that Headteachers should not approve any absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances why your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply in advance, by writing to the Headteacher explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting leave of absence.

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher whether or not to authorise the absence. If the school refuses a request for leave of absence and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and can be issued when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent of 5 days consecutive or otherwise) over two consecutive half terms. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent per child.

You have to pay a fine but you do not have to appear in Court. You also have to make sure that your child's attendance at school improves.

Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

Is a warning given?

The school will send you a formal letter of warning telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued. This warning letter will also include details of your child's absences. If you receive a warning letter this is an opportunity for you to work with the school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice.

Your child must have no further unauthorised absences from school from the date of the letter. If your child's unauthorised absence continues and reaches 10 sessions (5 school days) or more, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning may be issued. This depends on each individual case. ***However, the school is not required to send a warning letter where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.***

What are the costs?

£60 if you pay within 21 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice or £120 if you pay after this but within 28 days. (Per parent, per child).

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances.

The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If the poor school attendance persists the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

What can I do?

Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child.

Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school. If you suspect your child is not happy in school you should contact the school as soon as possible.

Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

If you are experiencing problems with your child's attendance at school, it is really important that you work closely with school to resolve the matter. Alternatively, for further guidance and support you can contact:

**Child Employment and Enforcement Officer
Early Intervention Service
2nd Floor, BASE
Marsden Road
Bolton
BL1 2PF
Tel: 01204 338173**

Every lesson counts. Improving attendance, raising attainment

The legal definitions of 'parent' are:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act (1989)
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Appendix 7

Application for absence during term time

Parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for holidays during term time. By law you must ask for permission for your child to miss school. Parents wishing to apply for their child to have leave from school should complete this form and return it to school for authorisation well in advance of the proposed leave. Applications for leave will be considered on a case by case basis – please include all relevant information.

Surname of child		First Name	
Date of birth		Form Group	
Surname of parent/carer making application		First name of parent/carer making application	
Address of child			
Postcode		Contact telephone number	
About the request for your child's leave of absence	Reason for request You may add any additional information you feel is important in a separate letter/document if needed		
	Would (s)he miss any national tests or examinations?		Yes/No
	Is his/her attendance already below 90% or a previously agreed target?		Yes/No
	Is the proposed absence during the month of September?		Yes/No
	Would (s)he be absent for more than five school days?		Yes/No
	Has (s)he already had leave during term-time this school year? (If so, please give dates and number of school days leave)		Yes/No
	Did (s)he have leave of absence during term-time in the previous school year?		Yes/No
Length of absence (school days)	From (date)	To(date)	
Parent/Carer Signature		Date	

Please return this form to school in advance of the absence date – school will not retrospectively grant leave of absence. Your request will be considered by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher and you will receive written notification to inform you of the decision regarding authorisation.