



DOROTHY BARLEY JUNIOR ACADEMY ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Related Policies:
Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
LAC Policy

Created: September 2014
Last reviewed: September 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Intent

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils 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 both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2016

Dorothy Barley Junior Academy is committed, in partnership with parents / carers, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted upon.

Dorothy Barley Junior Academy expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. **The minimum expected**

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
99-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
97-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
96%	Satisfactory/Expected	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

attendance at Dorothy Barley Junior Academy is 96% or better.

1.2 Objectives of this Policy

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date record and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/ punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Attendance Team to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

2.2 Local Governing Body (LGB):

- To ensure statutory duties in relation to pupil attendance are met.
- To regularly review the school's Attendance and Punctuality policy to ensure it reflects statutory duties and accurately reflects school practice
- To work with the school to minimise levels of absence and the impact on pupils' achievement.
- For Attendance Link Governor: To be part of 'Attendance & Punctuality Panel Meetings' for children experiencing issues with attendance/punctuality.

2.3 Attendance Team/Admin Assistant:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child does not arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the SLT if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for SLT as requested.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of Arbor registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter if attendance drops below 96%.
- To maintain Arbor attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within the year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils (Pupil Welfare).
- To support SLT with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

2.4 Staff:

- To complete the daily class attendance register with the pupils.

- To ensure quality first teaching every day with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the Arbor register system taking a formal register of all pupils twice a day at 8.45am and 12.45 (Y3&4) or 1:15 pm (Y5&6).
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the SLT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance or poor punctuality.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

2.5 Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. **If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they do not get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.** If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time – by 8:45am – every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day and each subsequent day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

2.6 Pupils:

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Ensure they are punctual, and regular attendance is maintained at the highest level.
- Attend all their lessons on time and be ready to learn.
- Inform their class teacher if they are experiencing difficulties with their attendance in the first instance.

2.7 The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.

- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

3.0 PARENTAL LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Education Act

Education Act 1996 Part 1 Section 7 states:

- The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
 - [a] To his age ability and aptitude and
 - [b] To any special need he may have (either by regular attendance at school or otherwise).

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/ or those that have day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age are registered at school is contained within this Act. Part VI Section 444 contains details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

4. CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded with one of these categories.

4.1 Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.
- Going shopping, birthdays
- Looking after other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are disabled or unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Haircut
- To get new shoes or uniform

4.2 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be under the Education Act 1996.

There may be some exceptional circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- Illness - High temperature/vomiting and diarrhoea, emergency medical/dental appointments which unavoidably falls in school time. While pupils should not be sent to school if they are genuinely unwell, if their illness is not sufficient to go and consult a doctor then parents/carers are advised to

send them to school in the first instance, where they can be monitored. Should the need arise parents/carers can then be contacted and arrangements made to send pupils home.

- Religious observances.
- Family bereavement.
- Visits to prospective new schools, external exams or educational assessments.
- Exclusion from school.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of the appointment day as possible. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, appointment card, etc.

4.4 Religious observance

Dorothy Barley Junior Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

4.5 Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Educational trips and visits
- Sporting activities
- Approved education of site
- Most types of dual registration

5. Absence Procedures

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school on the first day of sickness.

5.1 Persistent Lates

Registration and Lateness

- Gates open at 8.35am
- Doors open 8.35am
- Entering the school building between 8:35am and 8.45am
- School gate closes at 8:45am
- Registration closes 8.50am

Children arriving after the gate(s) close should enter the school via the front office with parents signing a Late Form to provide an explanation of why their child is late

Persistent lates are monitored and checked by the school attendance officer daily and action will include:

- Daily log of all lates
- Phone call/ Group call from the School Attendance Officer on 2 or more lates in one week
- Letter from the School Attendance Officer on 4 or more lates in two weeks
- No improvement (6 or more lates in one term) meeting with Attendance Team
- Still no improvement referral to Borough Attendance Office, warning letter, meeting with Borough Attendance Officer
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5.2 Five Days Absence

Any pupil who is absent without explanation for 5 consecutive days will be referred to the Borough Attendance Officer.

5.3 Children Missing in Education

Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

Schools should also refer to the Children Missing in Education Statutory guidance September 2016 which refers to:

- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full-time education which 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. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

At Dorothy Barley Junior Academy we follow the Local Authority's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

We put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils are placed on both registers.

We inform our local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.

The local authority is notified when we delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This is done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that we comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children not compulsory school age who are missing education, can follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

We inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 5 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

The school keeps a log of all pupils who are on and off-rolled mid phase and follows statutory guidance found in the document 'Children Missing from Education' (September 2016). This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from or added to the admission register at standard transition points – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school/at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

5.4 Frequent Absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are discussed between the school, the parents and the child.

The Borough Attendance Officer (BAO) meets with school staff bi-weekly to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parent/s by:

- First day absence calls
- Attendance Concern Stage 1 Letter (below minimum expectation of 96%)
- On-going Attendance Concern Stage 2 Letter (no improvement, attendance continues to be below 96%). Meeting with school Attendance Team at Attendance Panel meeting with school Governor.
- Serious Attendance Concerns (attendance below 'causing concern' threshold/PA of 90%). Referral to Borough Attendance Officer –Warning Letter sent out
- Meeting with Borough Attendance Officer
- Borough Attendance Officer will make a referral to the court under the Education Act 1996

Please note that monitoring, escalation and improvements letters can be used at any point in the above procedures.

5.5 Persistent Absentees

Children who are persistently absent (e.g. attendance of 90% or lower) are automatically referred to the Borough Attendance Officer. Where appropriate written proof of absence will be required by the school, for example: an appointment card, prescription or doctor's note.

5.6 Failure to Ensure Regular School Attendance

Borough Attendance may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to parents/ carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Borough Attendance Officer. Before a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, parents are warned of their liability to receive such notice.

5.7 Exceptional Leave of Absence

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday. The school **does not authorise any holiday during the school term**. Unauthorised holiday will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Borough Attendance Officer will be notified. A fine will be issued.

This policy reflects the DfE regulations which came into force in September 2013 which state: **'Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they are exceptional circumstances'**

Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made, in writing, to the Head Teacher using the 'Request for Absence from Learning' form (see Appendix 3).

5.8 Penalty Notices

The Borough Attendance Officer, acting on behalf of LBBD may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The penalty is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per child per parent if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28-day period the Local Authority must prosecute the recipient for failing to ensure regular school attendance under section 444 Education Act 1996.

5.9 Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued:

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/ carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the Borough Attendance Officer.

6.0 THE BOROUGH ATTENDANCE OFFICER

The Borough Attendance Officer monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Borough Attendance Officer will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to the Borough Attendance Officer. The Borough Attendance Officer will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the Borough Attendance Officer can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months or both.

7.0 REWARDS AND INCENTIVES

Weekly

- The class with the best attendance is rewarded during the weekly attendance assembly.
- Barley Bear is awarded to the class with the highest attendance.
- Classes who achieve 100% on a regular basis will be given additional playtime

Termly

- Rewards given at the end of each term for 99% and 100% attendance
- All children at 99%+ to be given additional play at the end of each term

End of Year

- Attendance reward event for pupils who have achieved attendance 100% and 99% attendance.
- Attendance certificates for 100% attendance
- Pin badges awarded at the end of the academic year for 100% attendance.

Appendix 1

Example attendance letters

Attendance Concern: Stage 1

I am writing to let you know that your child (name)'s attendance, at __% is below both the national average and the school target and therefore needs to improve.

Children with 96% attendance are more likely to get the best results during important school assessments. Remember if your child misses just one week from school every term, then by the time they eventually leave school they would have missed the equivalent of an entire academic year's schooling.

Many thanks for your support in this important matter. If your child has been poorly recently and we know about it then we wish them well and a good recovery – if we can help you further with this, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I hope to write to you at a later date to inform you of further improvement in your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,



Miss C Leicester

Headteacher

Appendix 1a

Re: IMPROVEMENTS IN ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

Dear «AddeeTitle» «AddeeSurname»,

I am writing to you to congratulate «KnownName» for the significant improvement we have seen over the last few weeks in their attendance / punctuality

There is a strong link between academic success and attendance and therefore this should have a positive impact of «KnownName»'s achievements in school. If you feel we can support you and «KnownName» in maintaining a good level of attendance please speak to one of the Attendance Team, Ms Lewis, Mrs Nickless or Mrs Kemp and they will endeavour to further support you.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school should you have any concerns.

Thank you once again for all your efforts in improving your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'CL', written in black ink.

Miss Leicester

Headteacher

Appendix 1b

On-going Attendance Concern: Stage 2

Unfortunately, I am required to write and inform you that your child's attendance, at ___% is still well below our threshold of 96% and I need to bring this to your attention and ask for your help.

Attendance between 91%-95% means that your child is absent from school for approximately half a day per week. **If your child's attendance continues at this level throughout their school life, by the time they eventually leave school, they will have missed the equivalent of an entire academic year's schooling.**

Most parents want their children to get on well in life. Nowadays, it is more important than ever to have a good education behind you if you want opportunities in adult life. Children only get one chance at school and your child's chances of a successful future will be affected by not attending school regularly.

Every lesson really does matter.

We understand that children may also have to attend a medical or dental appointment. However, you should try to make routine appointments before or after school – or, failing that, bring them to school first and return them afterwards. In these circumstances will need to see all appointment cards or letters.

We will continue to closely monitor your child's attendance during the next half-term and my staff will do their utmost to help you. I thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher

Miss C Leicester

Appendix 1c

Serious Attendance Concern: Stage 3

Unfortunately, I am obliged to write and inform you that, at «PercentAttendYTD»% your child's attendance is still below our "causing concern" threshold of 90% and, as a result, I ask for your support in improving this.

If your child's attendance continues at this level throughout their school life, by the time they eventually leave school, they will have missed the equivalent of an entire academic year's schooling.

Pupil's attendance is monitored by the Local Authority. As a school, we are striving to meet a target of 96%. Our school registers are also scrutinised each fortnight by the LA's Access and Attendance Officer.

Due to your child's current attendance you have been referred to the Borough Attendance Officer. Borough Attendance Officers work with parents to address their child's attendance difficulties and they will make contact with you.

As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being taken to court. The LA may decide to prosecute a parent. If this happens, parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that a parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.

A penalty notice of £60.00 may be issued (by the LA, school, or police) as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 28 days.

Many thanks for your support in this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

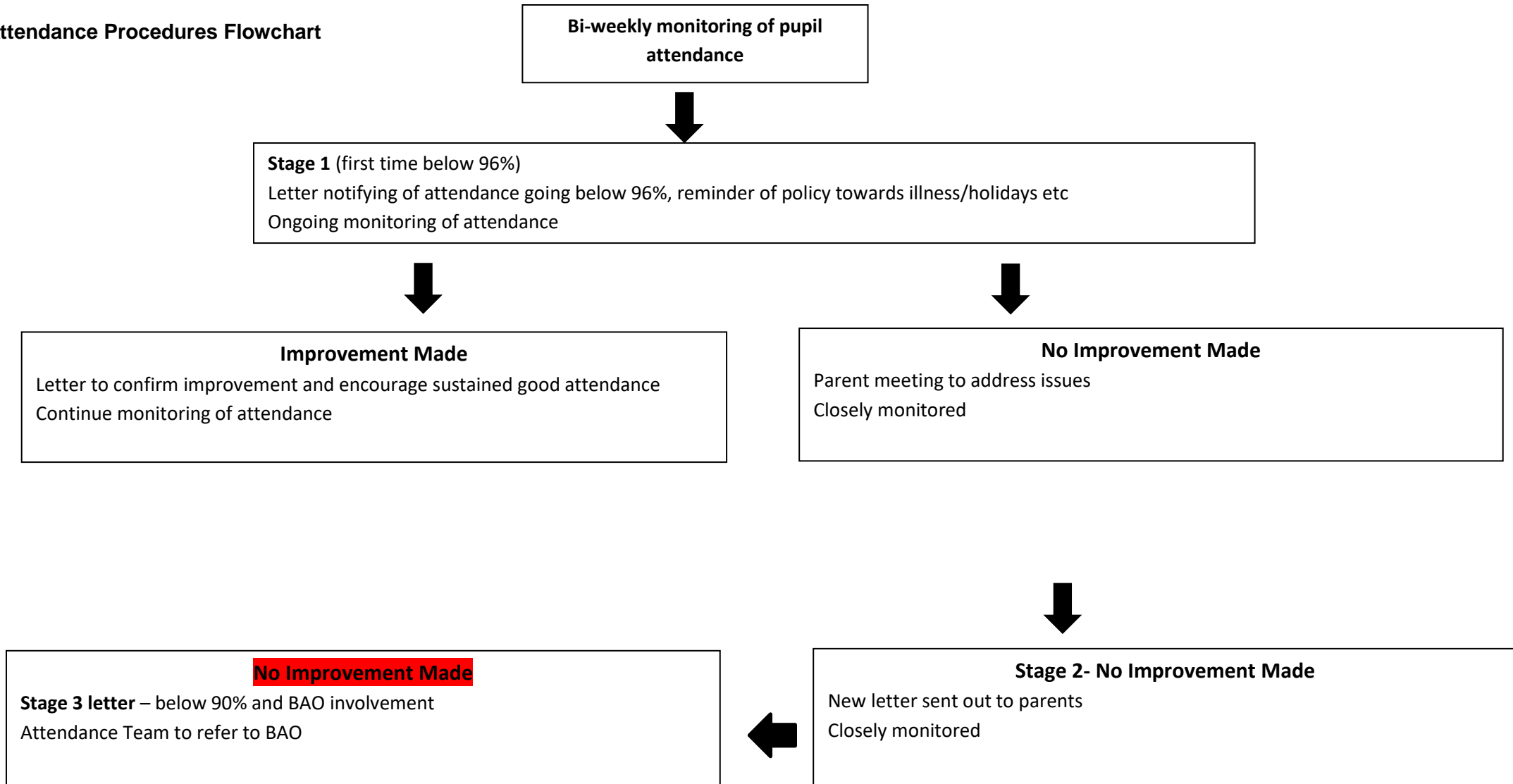


Headteacher

Ms C Leicester

Appendix 2

Attendance Procedures Flowchart



Request for Absence from Learning

Please note: For any absence, you may be asked to supply further supporting documents.

- This form is to be completed and given to the School Office who will pass the form to the Headteacher
- Any application should be made well in advance of the proposed absence and parents are strongly advised to apply for leave of absence **before** making any arrangements. If your child does not return on the agreed date, then you may lose the school place.
- **Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for any unauthorised leave of absences during term time, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued per parent per child.**

PLEASE READ AND COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS OF THE FORM

Parent/Carer Name and Address:

Name of Child:

Class:

Is this the first request for absence this academic year?

YES

/

NO

Dates of absence requested:

No. of school days requested:

Start date:

End date:

Reason for absence:

Please provide the names of all siblings that attend any other schools

Name of Sibling

Name of School

Contact details whilst abroad/absent from school

If your child is being taken out of school during the term time and the details of their location is not provided, this could turn into a serious safeguarding issue. When a child is absent or missing from school, they could be at risk of harm. The school has a duty to keep children safe and this includes knowing where they are. If the Parent/Carer fails to provide required information then the school may make a

referral to the International Police and International Social Services as a 'missing child'.

Address whilst away: _____

Telephone number whilst away: _____

Email address whilst away _____

Please attach proof of where you will be whilst away

I make application for my child named over the page to have authorised absence from school. I understand that if this is not agreed then any subsequent absence will be treated as unauthorised and this could lead to a penalty notice or a summons to court for irregular school attendance.

I have read and understood the guidance above.

Parent* 1: Title _____ Full Name _____ Tel: _____

Relationship to child: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent 2: Title _____ Full Name _____ Tel: _____

Relationship to child: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

*This is defined as any adult with legal parental responsibility for a child.

SCHOOL OFFICE TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Decision: Thank you for this information, leave of absence is not **granted/granted** and therefore your child is expected to be **in school**. If your child does not attend school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the Education Welfare officer will be informed.

Reply slip to be given to parent Pupil Name: _____

The absence will be recorded as Authorised absence / Unauthorised Absence Reason:

Date: _____ Signed: _____