

School Attendance Guidance and Legislation

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	Page/s
Introduction	3 – 4
Attendance Roles and Responsibilities	5 – 7
Statutory Responsibilities:	
Pupil Enrolment and Registration	8 – 9
Absence from School	9 – 13
Role of Education Welfare Service	13 – 15
Local Authority Powers / Sanctions	15 - 16
Appendices:	
1. Model School Policy	17 – 23
2. Attendance Codes	24
3. Flow chart – School Intervention Absence procedures	25
4. Flow chart – Managing Persistent Late Arrival	26
5. Flow chart – Managing Post Registration Truancy	27
6. Flow chart – EWS Intervention procedures	28
7. Parenting Contracts and Exclusions	29
8. Best practice framework	30
Referral Forms and Sample Letters:	
▪ EWS Referral Form	31 – 32
▪ Leave of Absence Form	34 – 34
▪ Penalty Notice Referral Form & guidance notes	35 - 36
▪ Attendance Letters	37 - 42
▪ Absence slips	43
▪ School / EWS Intervention Plan	44 - 45

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Attendance has long been recognised as being fundamental to attainment. “High rates of attendance are closely related to success in public examinations. In schools with unsatisfactory or poor results, a strong correlation with low attendance rates is discernible” (OFSTED). It has been shown that for every 5% of absence a child or young person has, s/he will drop one grade at GCSE. Therefore a child who is classed as a persistent absentee (i.e. absent for more than 15% of school days) will be at significant risk of falling behind with their studies and of not achieving the 5 A* - C grades including English and Mathematics threshold at GCSE.

The Isle of Wight Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion as well as a prerequisite to effective learning. Where children who are registered at a school fail to attend that school regularly, the Council recognises that children are placing themselves at greater risk of either offending or of becoming the victims of offending by others. Attendance patterns such as sudden or a gradual alteration can indicate a safeguarding issue.

Children should attend school regularly and punctually because school is where they learn and school is where they are safe. The Isle of Wight Council is therefore committed to ensuring the highest levels of attendance at school.

It aims to do this by:-

- a) adopting a zero tolerance approach to absence
- b) promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance;
- c) reducing all forms of unjustified absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism.
- d) having active and meaningful partnerships with schools, parents, pupils and other agencies and services.

Underpinning this is the knowledge that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and gain the skills to enable them to participate fully in further education, training or employment.

Attendance is a key whole-island improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS), as commissioned by the Local Authority will:

Work to secure full time school attendance of all pupils on roll.

- Support schools to address, reduce and manage Persistent Absence.
- Liaise directly with pupils and their families to facilitate effective communication with schools and related services.
- Encourage parents and carers to be involved as partners in the education of their children by supporting and contributing to school life.
- Link with other agencies to support children not attending school
- Challenge schools and/or parents/carers when legal obligations are not being met.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all children of compulsory school age.
- Monitor and challenge schools to ensure that all staff in schools are appropriately trained in Child Protection Procedures.
- Disseminate good practice amongst EWS staff, schools and parents/carers.

This document sets out the current guidance and legislation about school registration, attendance and the role of the EWS.

For the purpose of this document the following definitions apply:

1.1 COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

Children are of compulsory school age from the start of the term following their 5th birthday.

Children / Young people cease to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the academic year in which their 16th birthday falls.

1.2 PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents** are legally required to secure full-time education for children of compulsory school age. The education must be suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special needs the child has.

Parents can secure education for their child by registering the child at school or in some other way. A child who is registered at school must attend regularly and punctually.

Definition of parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

2.0 ATTENDANCE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and
 - act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons

2.1 DUTIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

An LA must:

- Ensure that there are sufficient school places available for children of compulsory school age living in its area
- Satisfy itself that any child of compulsory school age living in its area is receiving a suitable education by attending school or in some other way.

2.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

Schools have a statutory duty under Section 175 Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This can only be fulfilled through effective registration systems and active, whole school monitoring of pupil absence.

2.2.1 PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

In order to support and promote regular attendance schools:

- Will have a robust school attendance policy, endorsed by the governing body. The policy should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The policy should be actively supported by all staff. **(See Appendix 1 Model School Policy for further guidance.)**
- Will publicise and adhere to their own attendance policy ensuring it is available to parents/carers, pupils, the local authority and the wider community.
- Will inform parents/carers and pupils of term dates and in-service days as far in advance as is practically possible & will send reminders of these dates.

- Will keep parents/carers informed about initiatives, strategies and progress and/or trends through newsletters or similar.
- Will encourage and support good attendance, rewarding effort and achievement as appropriate.
- Will ensure staff are trained in attendance protocol and procedures.
- Will set an exemplary model of personal and organisational punctuality and attendance.
- Will ensure the senior management team are seen to pay special attention to latecomers to demonstrate that being in school and in class on time is important.
- Will conduct regular spot checks and patrols by identified senior teaching staff during the day to detect and deter lesson truancy.
- Will welcome back pupils who have been absent for whatever reason with care, devising appropriate re-integration programmes where necessary.
- Will follow up unexplained or insufficiently explained absence directly with parents/carers by making prompt contact to discuss with parents/carers where pupils attendance levels are raising concerns.
- Where attendance remains a concern following initial contact the school will write to parents / guardians offering support and reminding them of their legal responsibility.
- Arrange School Attendance Meetings (SAM) in school between parents/carers, pupil and key staff. These meetings should develop action plans with clear and timely targets. These plans should be copied to all involved, whether they were present at the meeting or not.
- When attendance has not improved sufficiently a referral to the EWS should be made using the official referral form.
- The Governing body should nominate a lead who takes responsibility for monitoring the school attendance policy and attendance levels within the school.

All schools should operate a first day absence procedure to ensure parents are aware when their child is not in school.

2.3 PUPILS

- Have the right to maximum educational opportunity and therefore are expected to attend school regularly and punctually, with support from parents/carers, school and any agency involved to achieve this.
- They are expected to arrive on time, equipped and ready to engage in learning.
- They are expected to have due regard to the rules and regulations of the school including those relating to behaviour.

2.4 PARENTS/CARERS

- Are responsible for making sure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Should ensure their child is appropriately dressed and adequately equipped for their lessons which will help build self-esteem and confidence and therefore support attendance.
- Must inform the school on the first day of absence, wherever practically possible, of the reason for their child's absence and the predicted date of their return.
- Must inform the school prior to any planned absence in order to obtain the necessary authorisation.
- Must make every effort to support maximum attendance, by encouraging and supporting their child & working with the school.
- Should keep routine medical and dental appointments to a time outside school hours. Authorisation for absence in these circumstances may only be given when treatment or consultation is on an emergency basis.
- Should not take holidays during school time.
- In exceptional circumstances Headteachers can determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if a period of leave is granted, this having been agreed in writing beforehand and a holiday form having been signed by both parents/carers and school. The expectation is that parents/carers will support the provision of any catch-up work resulting from such absence.

3.0 STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

A. PUPIL ENROLMENT STATUS

The School's Admission Register must contain the following information for every pupil:

1. the pupil's full name
2. the pupil's gender
3. the pupil's date of birth
4. the date the pupil was admitted to the school
5. the name of the school the pupil last attended; and
6. where applicable, a statement that the pupil is a boarder

In addition the school must also record the following:

7. the name and address of every parent and carer of the pupil
8. which of these parent and carers the pupil normally lives with; and
9. emergency contact details of the parents and carers.

B. PUPIL ENROLMENT STATUS – Special Cases

Guest registration may be used for certain scenarios (*exchange students, satellite provision*) but schools must be aware of the guidance when using guest or dual registration. (*see department of education website for further guidance*). It is important that each of the establishments which a pupil attends is party to an agreement whereby they will share information.

Schools must not assume that a pupil is present at the "other school" just because he/she is expected to be. They must only use the "present at approved educational activity (B code)" when it is confirmed that the pupil was present. If the school that holds the 'guest registration' reports absences to the 'home' school it is important that the 'home' school record these absences as part of their School Census return.

C. REGISTERS

'Registration' refers to the marking twice daily of the register to clearly show whether a pupil is present or absent for the morning or afternoon session. Initially this involves symbols which merely show whether a child is present at the time the register is called. Subsequently this information is added to as reasons for absence are either sought or volunteered and the appropriate symbol must be added to clarify whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised by the school and under which category the absence may be classified.

The registration will normally happen in class at the earliest time when all pupils are due to be in place and ready to learn. A time during the afternoon must also be set aside for this purpose. In secondary schools individual teachers will be expected to take a register during each lesson period as well, but this is not used for legal purposes in the same way that the morning and afternoon registration is.

The register must be called and all pupils have a mark made against their name. The legal process of recording presence or absence in the register is the responsibility of the teacher.

Registration marks must be updated on receipt of reasons for absence and verification of whether the school has deemed the reason for absence to be authorised or unauthorised. The parents/carers' written confirmation, when obtained should be signed and kept for a minimum period of 3 years to provide an audit trail to verify the absence code.

Lateness

Lateness must be addressed as a matter of routine by schools. A pupil who enters a classroom late has often missed the principal objectives for the day and must start to catch up so will start the day from a place of disadvantage. Their late arrival is also likely to disturb the class and delay learning for all.

Lateness in Registers

The time that registers are open should be regular and consistent. Any pupil who arrives in class after the register is called is marked with code L – present mark. If the pupil arrives after the closure of the registers then code U should be entered – unauthorised absence. In these circumstances the ongoing lateness can be dealt with by legal sanctions and the school should discuss the case with the EWS.

The LA expects schools to adopt the DfE guidance that registers should be closed within 30 minutes of the start of the school day.

(** see additional guidance procedures for managing persistent lateness in EWS procedures)

D. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Authorised Absence

- Only the school may authorise an absence.
- A letter or telephone conversation does not automatically mean an absence may be seen to be authorised. A school **must** receive written confirmation from the parent or carer. Following this the school will make the decision as to whether they will authorise the absence.
- A range of criteria may be considered when a school decides whether to authorise an absence. The following may constitute a part of these acceptable criteria:
 - Sickness of the pupil, such as they are unfit to receive education or be present in the educational establishment;
 - Unavoidable, emergency medical or dental treatment or consultation;

- Days of religious observance, such days to be agreed beforehand by the Head Teacher, whereupon their observance will be respected;
- Exceptional family circumstances - such as bereavement;
- Visits to other schools, agreed in advance, for the purpose of transfers, interviews or examinations;
- The decision to authorise an absence should be made within a maximum of two weeks from the date of absence.

Unauthorised absence

The following examples are sample reasons given for absence which may constitute unauthorised absence:

- Shopping for school uniform, equipment, shoes, haircuts or any other such items;
- Looking after parent, siblings or other family members who are unwell or require childcare/supervision;
- Looking after the house or property;
- Birthdays, including parties or treats;
- Staying home to see visiting relatives - unless, in certain circumstances, having been agreed and authorised in advance with the school;
- Day trips;
- A family holiday.

(See appendix 2 for further guidance re: attendance codes)

Family holidays during term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 removes references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold for ten school days. The amendments make it clear that headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if exceptional leave is granted.

Authorised holidays are marked with code H (only in exceptional circumstances. If leave is agreed longer than 2 weeks F code should be used after 10 days) and unauthorised leave is marked with code G.

There are 175 non-school days in which holidays can be taken.

The LA expects schools **to not** grant any period of leave during term time unless sufficient evidence to support an exceptional circumstance is provided by the parent.

Exceptional circumstances are not:

- a trip to work in the family business
- cost
- seasonal work
- work commitments (exception given to armed forces)
- family get together
- 'once in a lifetime'
- birthdays
- weddings

This is not a definitive list and when reaching a judgement of whether an exceptional circumstance has been met, headteachers can discuss with EWS as necessary.

Where leave is not granted but taken by the family the absence must be unauthorised and the school implement the Penalty Notice procedures.

E. ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

Where the pupil's home cannot be contacted by telephone, after 3 days of unexplained absence a letter should be sent requesting an explanation. If the first letter elicits no response from the parents/carers, further contact should be made within 3 days, either by telephone, letter or home visit / referral to EWS using a CME referral form. ***(If there are safeguarding concerns regarding the child / family – immediate referral should be made to Children's Social Care / EWS)***

Where a child continues to have unexplained absences and/or is developing poor attendance patterns schools should make contact with parents to alert them of their concerns, where there is no significant improvement schools should invite parents to a School Attendance Meeting (SAM). If school attendance does not improve then a referral to EWS should be made using the appropriate referral form. ***(See appendix 3 for flow chart on School Attendance procedure for managing absence).***

F. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

Where a child is not attending school and no contact has been made with parent or where a school believes the child may have moved and has not received notification from a parent a school must act immediately to discover the child's whereabouts and ascertain they are safe. Head Teachers and agencies involved with the school or young person must make every effort to gain information at the earliest opportunity. Factors in assessing risk are length of absence, level of concern and level of perceived risk to the pupil.

Even without specific concerns the school MUST contact the Education Welfare Service (EWS) if a child's whereabouts are not known. EWS will make further contacts with other agencies such as Social Care, Local Housing Offices and Education Welfare Offices in possible destination location.

It may be appropriate for agencies to approach possible sources of information such as relatives or neighbours. In cases where concern is specific, action to gain information and alert agencies and/or police must be swift in order to protect vulnerable parties.

CME referrals will always be given a high level of priority by EWS
Investigations must be undertaken by both the school and the local authority (EWS) to try and trace the child. If the child is not found the EWS will advise the school to delete the pupils name from their registers and upload the pupils common transfer file (CTF) to the Lost Pupil Database/s2s site
(Please refer to Children Missing Education Policy & Procedures for full details of procedures.

G. PUPIL TRACKING

It is the duty of all who work in the education service to secure the safety of children in their charge.

The maintenance of registers is governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Deletion from role must follow strict guidelines and procedures.

Where a child is known to be moving, the existing school should contact the school the child is moving to so they can confirm the date the pupil will be put onto their register (agreed admission date, NOT the date the child arrives at school). The existing school should remove the pupil from roll on the previous school day to the date the child is put on the register at the new school.

If a child stops attending school and usual procedures to contact the parent/carer get no response, the school should contact the EWS (and complete a CME form) as a matter of urgency for pupil tracking procedures to be implemented.

If any professional has good reason to suspect that a crime against a child may have been committed they should immediately contact the police.

H. REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

All attendance data, whether handwritten or computerised is expected to be held by the school office, within thirty minutes of registration. Any changes to the data may therefore can be monitored centrally and also guarantee centralised access in the case of an emergency.

Schools should keep their attendance registers secure and retain them for three years from the last date of entry. This includes electronic registers.

Senior school staff should check registers regularly to ensure that they are being completed in accordance with the legislation and the school's policy. They should also analyse the data to identify any patterns of absence which have not already been picked up.

All schools should operate a first day absence procedure to ensure parents are aware when their child is not in school.

(See appendix 3 for flow chart on School Attendance procedure for managing absence).

4.0 EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

The work of the Education Welfare Service aims to support schools in developing and setting up effective systems and structures to deal with non-attendance at an early stage. They will support and advise schools regarding in-school systems as required and challenge practice that is in contradiction to legislation & guidance and work closely with them to change and reflect good practice.

The EWS has responsibility for the enforcement of school attendance and tracking Children Missing in Education. Other areas of responsibility include child employment and child licensing.

The EWS :

- Will support and advise the school in the process of developing and reviewing their attendance policy;
- Will advise the school with regard to effective strategies for promoting attendance and addressing levels of absence;
- Will inspect school registers once each school term and offer advice and support in regard to forward management of individual pupils;
- Will attend school attendance meetings (SAM's) when requested to do so (given sufficient notice);
- Will accept and allocate appropriate referrals from schools to an EWO, should the referral fall within the eligibility criteria and be a valid and appropriate referral. The referrer will be contacted if the EWS are unable to accept the referral;
- Will facilitate 'Parenting Contract Agreements';
- Will undertake legal action against parents/carers who are seen to be failing in their legal responsibilities;
- Will administer the Penalty Notice system and undertake prosecutions for unpaid fines;

- Will liaise between schools and other agencies as appropriate;
- Will engage in multi-agency working to support pupils at schools across the Island;
- Will develop and implement truancy sweeps across the Island, working alongside police, raising awareness of good attendance throughout the community.

The EWS will become involved in individual casework once a formal referral form has been completed and accepted as appropriate

Role of EWS in referred cases

Once a written referral has been received by the EWS the case will be allocated to a named officer who will arrange to visit the family and undertake a formal assessment. This will include identifying the reasons for absence, informing parents / carers of their legal responsibilities and agreeing action to resolve absence where possible. Feedback will be given to the school.

If the assessment indicates that the reasons contributing to the child's absence from school is not a single agency issue then a CAF will be undertaken. The school will be advised and included in a decision to undertake a CAF.

Following an agreed period of monitoring the case will either be moved on through EWS procedures or if improved, referred back to the school to continue to monitor (should the attendance decline within the following 15 weeks the case can be re-referred to EWS without the use of new referral form).

If attendance has not shown sustained improvement within 4 weeks of the initial assessment consideration will be given on a case by case basis as to whether a parenting contract would assist in improving the absence levels. Completion of this will be dependent on the level of engagement and cooperation of the parent(s) and the level of unauthorised absence. Where a parenting contract is not completed or a parent declines this step a legal warning letter will be issued giving the parent(s) a strict 2 week period to improve their child's attendance.

Following the first stage legal warning letter if there are further unauthorised absences during the review period, the parent and child will be invited to attend a pre-court panel meeting where a decision will be made as to what further action is required.

The School Attendance Enforcement Panel (SAEP) is chaired by the Team Leader of EWS who is supported by a representative from schools (Senior Management Level) and the Council's Legal department. The EWO/A submits a detailed report to the panel of the interventions that have taken place to date.

If legal sanctions are not appropriate further consultation will follow and consideration will be given again to undertaking a CAF. This may result in continued intervention

with a lead professional holding the case, which may or may not be a member of EWS.

EWS staff will receive regular supervision by their line manager that will be case work focussed and offer opportunities to review and assess strategies. If no change occurs a decision will be made within an agreed period of time (usually 10 – 12 weeks) about sanctions to be applied.

(See appendix 4 for EWS procedures re: non-attendance management)

5.0 LOCAL AUTHORITY POWERS / SANCTIONS FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5-16) receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (The parent can choose to educate their child at home). If it appears to the LA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, the LA can apply for a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

The Educational Welfare Service on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council has the power to take legal action against parents / carers either in the Magistrates Court or the Family Proceedings Court if their children do not attend school regularly and all interventions to improve attendance have been unsuccessful. In addition under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 EWS can impose Fixed Penalty Notices and Parenting Orders. Parenting Contracts are recommended as a means of supporting parents and avoiding the need for legal action.

Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced further LA powers to help children's behaviour in school.

Parenting Contracts are a voluntary contract between the school/EWS and the parent of a child. Their purpose is to help parents take responsibility for their child's behaviour by setting specific requirements and support which are agreed by all parties concerned.

If this contract is not agreed or not adhered to by the parent, EWS in consultation with the school may decide to apply for a Parenting Order. This order will require the parent(s) to attend parenting classes. The order will also specify other directions that will assist with improving behaviour.

If a parent fails to comply with a parenting order, this could form the basis of a prosecution, a parent may then be liable to a fine of up to £1000

Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders should be considered in all cases where a pupil has received 2 or more exclusions. ***(See Appendix 5)***

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices were introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. They give the EWS, Head Teachers and the Police the power to apply for a notice in cases of persistent truancy or unauthorised absences (including holidays in term time) of a pupil. In addition they can be applied for when pupils excluded from school are found in a public place without reasonable justification.

Fixed Penalty fines are £120 (reduced to £60 if paid within 21days) and are issued to each parent / carer within the child's home. If the fixed penalty remains unpaid after 28 days the parent will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of Education Act 1996.

Education Supervision Order (ESO)

An LA must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting a parent (Children Act 1989, Section 36). An LA may apply for an ESO through the Family Court instead of or as well as prosecuting the parent.

An ESO is designed to aid families who are trying to parent/ensure their child gets their education but is having some problems, which with the help of the LA will improve the situation. The LA is granted parental responsibility in regard to education to assist with this.

Section 444(1) of Education Act 1996

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. This offence carries a maximum fine of up to £1000

Section 444(1A) 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 to attend (Education Act 1996, Section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). This offence requires proof that the parent knew of their child's non-attendance and failed to act. Under this aggravated offence a warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction can lead to a custodial sentence.

Section 444(ZA) of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 116 of the Education Act 2005) will extend the circumstances in which a parent can be prosecuted for failing to ensure that a child for whom he is responsible attends regularly to include alternative provision that has been made for the child.

APPENDIX 1

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

A FRAMEWORK FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

MISSION STATEMENT

_____ School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives _____ School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – AIMS

1. To adopt a zero tolerance approach to school absence by effectively supporting, monitoring and challenging absence of pupils to ensure children and young people reach their full potential.
2. To improve the overall percentage of pupils at school.
3. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
4. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
5. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.

6. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
 7. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
 8. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
 9. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
 10. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
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AIM NO 1

To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
 2. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
 3. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
 4. Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.
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AIM No 2

To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for All Those Associated with the School Including Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Governors

1. Use staff/school handbook prospectus of DfE literature.
2. Make reference to policy and practice at parent meetings.
3. Produce termly/annual reports to parents/governors.
4. Produce newsletters.
5. Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff.
6. Display materials at focal points – form rooms etc.

7. Discuss attendance issues in Education Welfare Service/Pastoral staff evaluation meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings (eg attendance review meetings).
8. Introduce award systems, including badges, trophies, certificates, chocolates, end of year prizes, etc.

AIM NO 3

To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
2. Make phone contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
5. Appoint an Attendance Co-ordinator with appropriate time set aside.
6. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
7. Timetable staff to meet with Education Welfare Service..
8. Have clear procedures prior to referral to Education Welfare Service..
9. Review attendance regularly.
10. Be familiar with the Education Welfare Service's referral and recording system.

AIMS NO 4

To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils

1. Highlight attendance in:
 - PSE
 - Assemblies
 - 'Bully line'
 - Staff available to talk to pupils
 - School counsellor

- 'Mentors' system
 - Making use of available resources
 - Homework clubs
 - Breakfast clubs
2. Public support offered by schools.
 3. Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
 4. Seek improved communication with parents eg when parents ring in.
 5. Produce 'problem page' for pupils in Year 7.
 6. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
 7. Involve parents from earliest stage.

AIM NO 5

To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance

Related Data

1. Standardise recording of:
 - authorised/unauthorised absence
 - educational activity
 - presence
2. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
3. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness of individual pupils and take prompt and appropriate action to address this.
4. Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
 - governors
 - pastoral staff
 - other school staff
 - parents
 - pupils (individual or groups)
 - education welfare service

AIM NO 6

To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication between Home and School

1. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents
2. Initiate first day absence contact.
3. Make full use of computer generated letters (SIMS Handbook).
4. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Aim 2).
5. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
6. Encourage all parents into school.

AIM NO 7

To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions

1. Identify finance for a system of rewards.
2. Actively promote attendance and associated reward and effective sanctions.
3. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
4. Involve pupils in system evaluation.
5. Make use of imaginative and immediate sanctions.
6. Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, eg. Education Welfare Service, parent, Behaviour Support Service.

AIM NO 8

To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other Services and Agencies

1. Designated key staff for liaison with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Welfare Service.
3. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
4. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Welfare Service referrals and casework.
5. Hold termly attendance review meetings with key school staff and Education Welfare Service.
6. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
7. Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community eg community police contact officer.
8. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
9. Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

AIM NO 9

To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Pupil When Planning Reintegration Following Significant Periods of Absence

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff in/or reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.

4. Consider peer support and mentoring.
5. Involve parents as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include Education Welfare Workers, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.

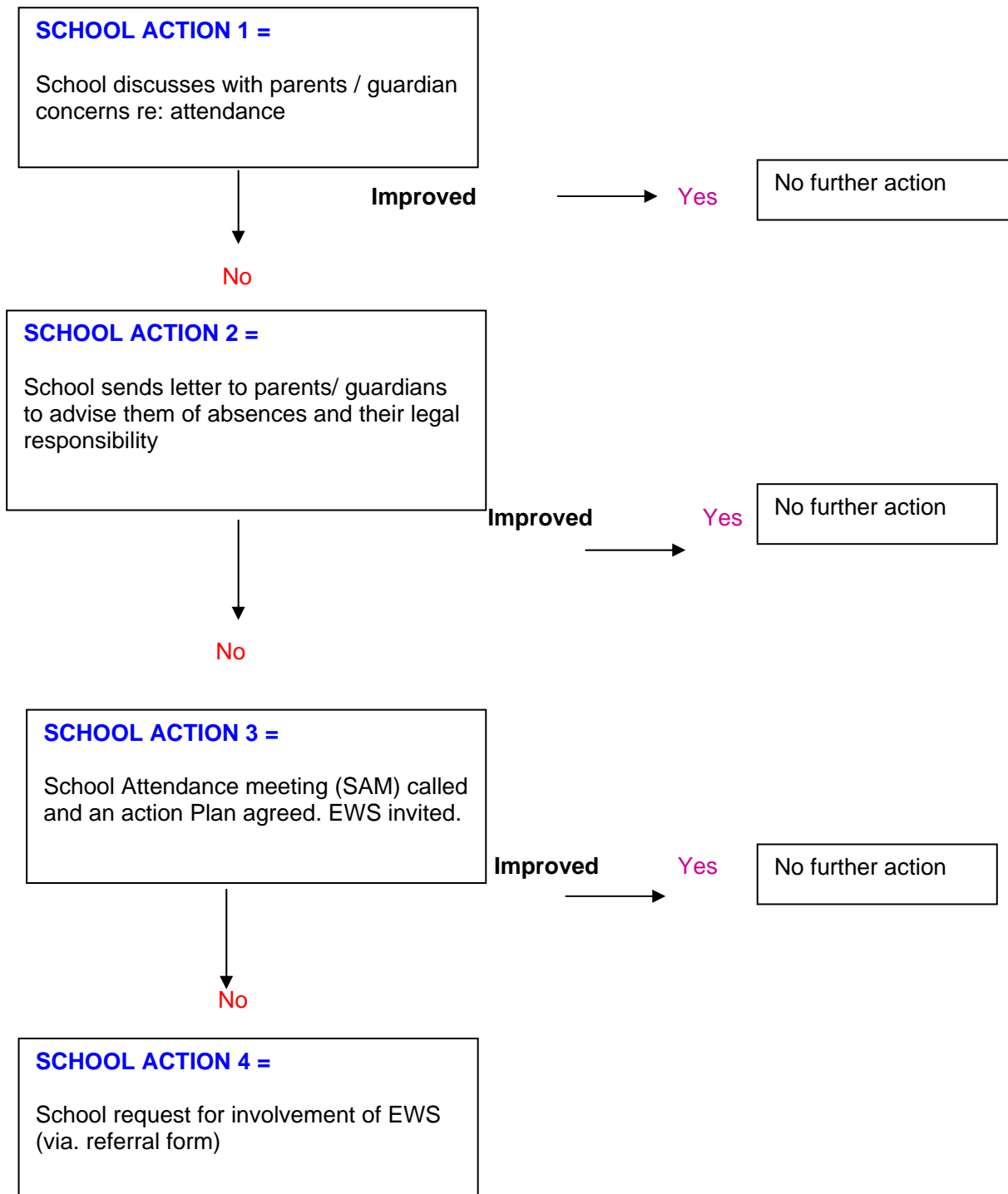
APPENDIX 2

ATTENDANCE CODES

Code	Description
/\	Pupils on the admission register who are present at the start of each session
B	Educated off site (not dual registered) at a supervised activity approved by the school. Must not be used for children working at home
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code) Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence and each request should be viewed individually. E.g. public performances, young carers in a genuine crisis until alternative arrangements can be made, maternity leave (maximum of 18 weeks), part-time timetable.
D	Dual registration – the school where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed) – this code is used following 10 days of H code and only in exceptional circumstances
G	Family holiday not agreed or days in excess of agreement
H	Family holiday agreed – Can be used for exceptional circumstances where headteacher agrees amount of leave authorised
I	Illness – only authorised where written confirmation of absence received from parent
J	Interview
L	Late before registers close – registers should close within 30 minutes after the start of the session
M	Medical / Dental appointments – sight of a medical card must be seen
N	No reason yet provided – this code should not be left on the register for more than 2 weeks. If no reason has been given for absence the code should be changed to O
O	Unauthorised absence – no reason given, unreasonable explanation e.g. birthday, shopping, up late, closure of a siblings school
P	Approved sporting activity – the activity must be supervised by a person authorised in that behalf by the Head teacher or the school
R	Religious observance - n.b. days off linked to religious festivals but not set aside for religious observance must not be marked R
S	Study Leave – should be used sparingly and only for Yr 11 pupils during mock and public examinations
T	Traveller absence -
U	Late after registers close -
V	Educational visit or trip supervised by the school
W	Work experience – work experience undertaken as part of an alternative curriculum/provision should be coded B
X	Non compulsory school age
Y	Forced or partial closure

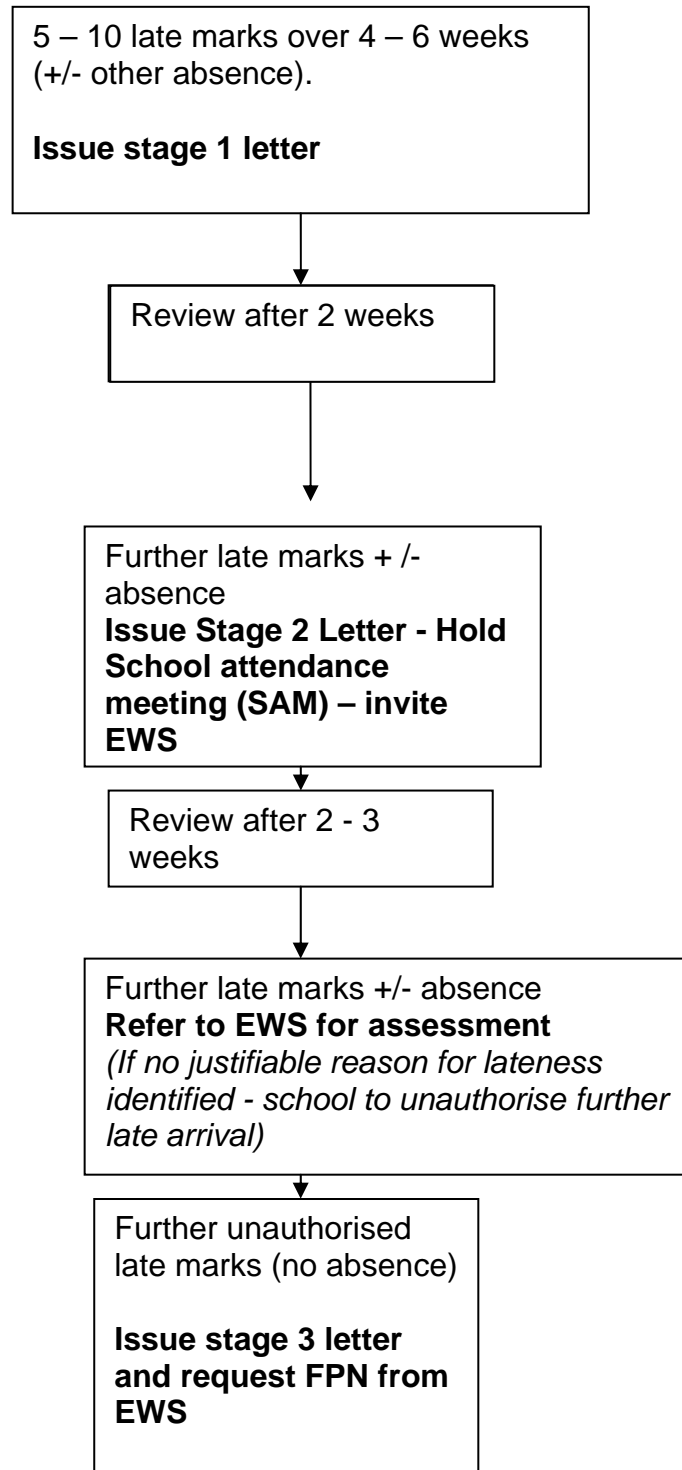
APPENDIX 3

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES



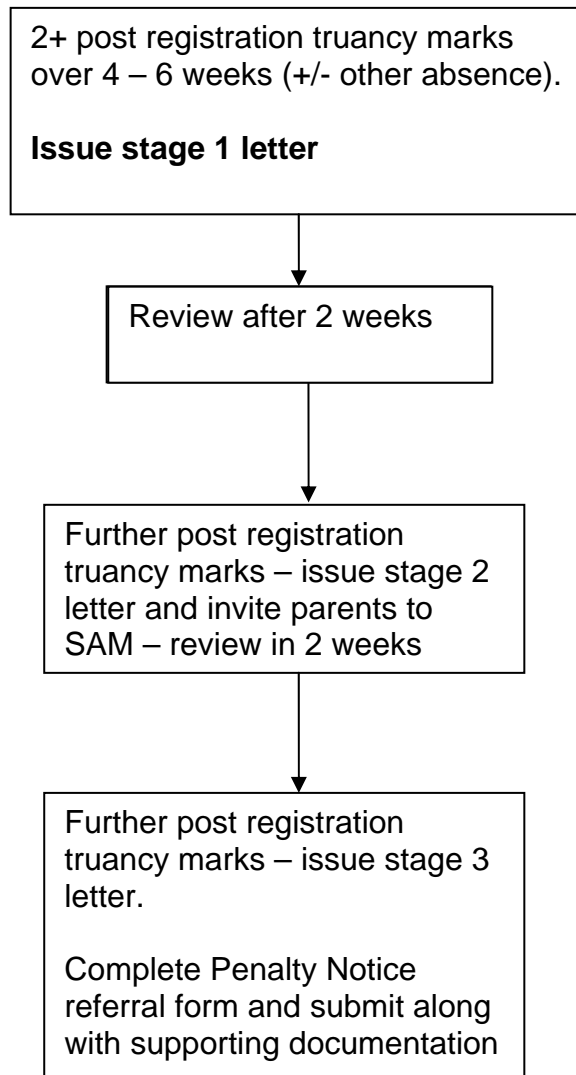
APPENDIX 4

SCHOOL PROCESS FOR MANAGING PERSISTENT LATE ARRIVAL



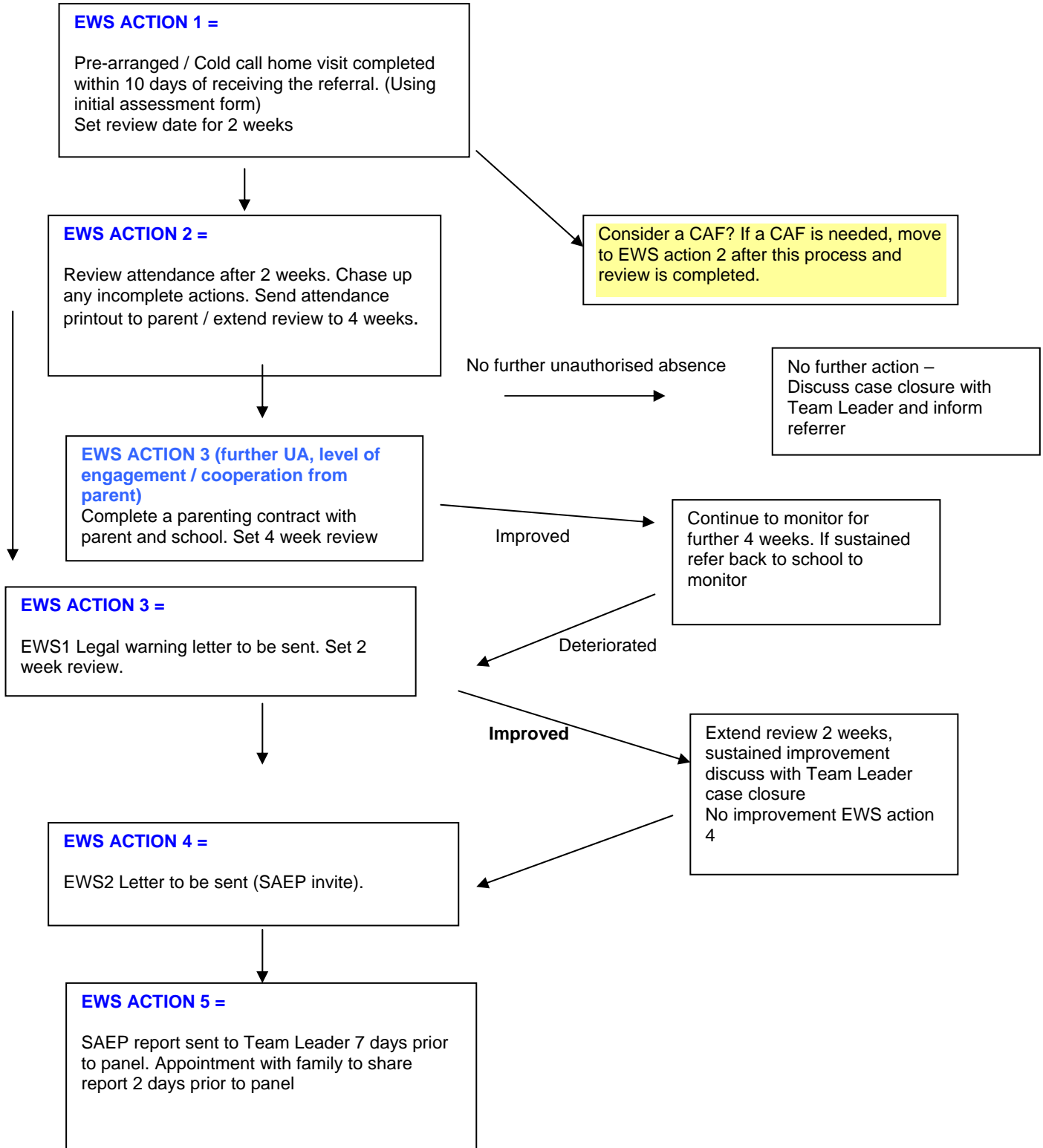
APPENDIX 5

SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING POST REGISTRATION TRUANCY



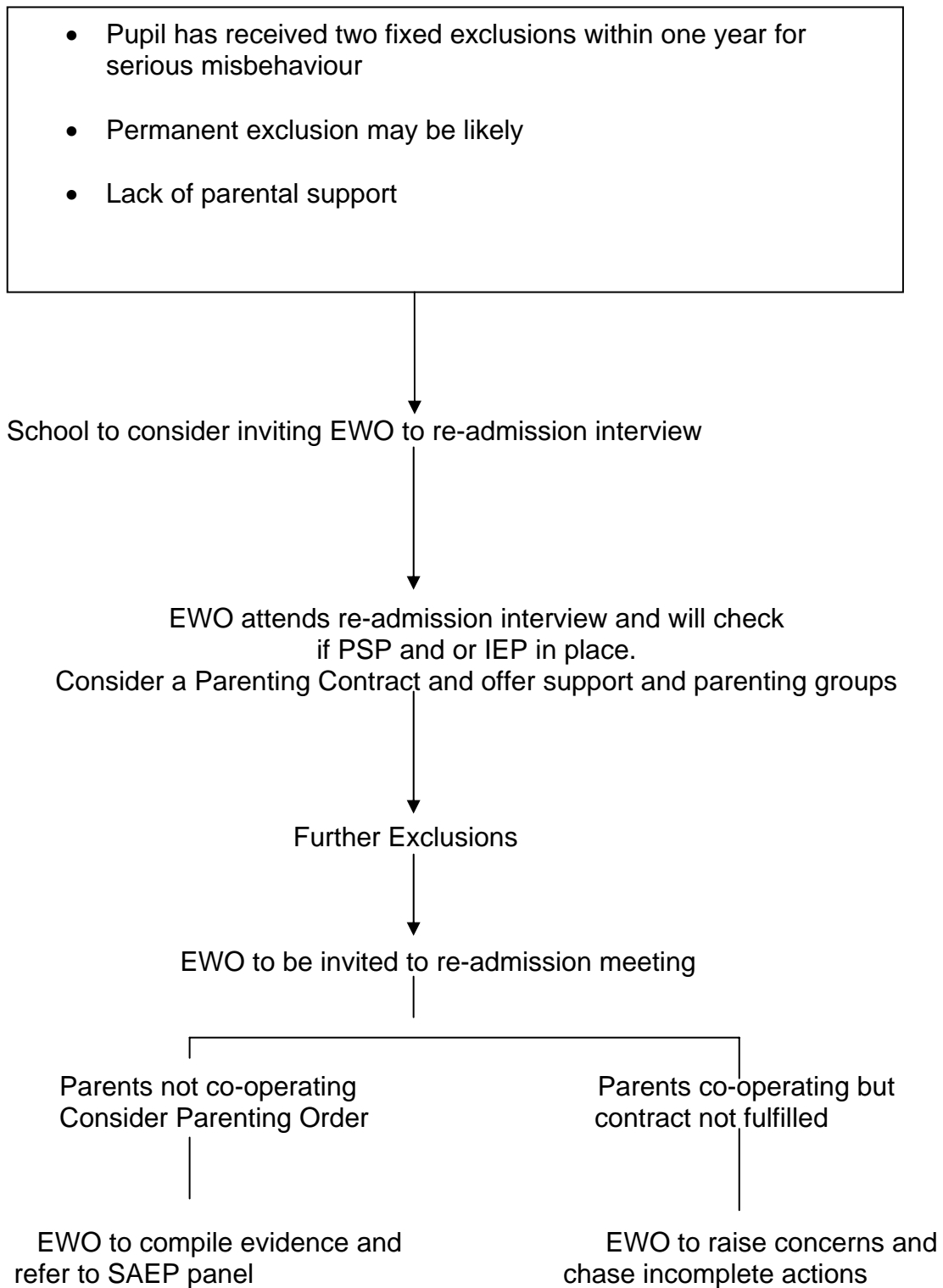
APPENDIX 6

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES



APPENDIX 7

PARENTING CONTRACTS AND PARENTING ORDERS IN CASES OF SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS



APPENDIX 8

MANAGING ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL - BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

The following framework has been developed to clearly identify best practice with managing attendance in school

Greatest impact	Some impact	No impact
The headteacher has attendance on the SLT agenda at every meeting and has a report each week	The headteacher raises attendance at termly intervals with SLT	The headteacher asks about attendance at irregular intervals
A member of SLT has direct responsibility for attendance	A member of SLT has an overview of attendance	SLT is not involved in managing attendance
A well structured policy is shared with <u>all</u> staff and each person, including supply staff, understands their role	The policy is sound overall & makes reasonably clear the respective responsibilities	The policy lacks clarity over respective roles for improving attendance or is not followed appropriately
All key players are aware of their roles and responsibilities for attendance and absence follow up and implement actions efficiently and this is monitored effectively at appropriate times	Key players are aware of roles and responsibilities but do not fully implement actions swiftly or consistently	Key players are not fully aware of the roles and responsibilities and do not consistently follow actions through
All attendance responsibilities are fully met & there is consistent & robust use of attendance data to inform school practices & policies	Adequate steps are taken to meet all attendance responsibilities	Not all attendance responsibilities are met
The school has an effective strategy for promoting attendance which is understood and well integrated into all relevant key plans	The school strategy for promoting attendance is sound and specific actions are incorporated into key plans	There is no clear strategy for improving attendance
Specific consideration is given to improving attendance of certain vulnerable groups e.g. children in public care, traveller children and resources are targeted	The targeting of specific vulnerable groups is not comprehensive	Improving the attendance of specific groups is not addressed
Specific causes of absence are identified and tackled e.g. bullying, harassment, sickness, holidays	Specific causes of absence are identified but there is not a comprehensive strategy in place to resolve the issues	Specific causes of absence are not identified

DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Request for EWS attendance involvement

Name of pupil		D.O.B.	M/F	Attendance %	School
Year/tutor group	Ethnic origin/ first language	Date of request	School contact , title & number		
Does he/she have SEN			Yes	No	
Does he/she have a Statement of needs			Yes	No	
Is this child looked after (public care)			Yes	No	
Is there a current CAF			Yes	No	

Address and contact details	
House number/name	
Street	
Town	
Post code	
Home number	
Mobile number	

Any known siblings:

Name of pupil	D.O.B.	M/F	Attendance %	School & year group

Parent/carer details:

Full name of parent/carer	Relationship to child	Parental responsibility (please tick)			
		Yes	No	Yes	No

Please outline the steps taken by the school to address attendance issues.

Please provide details of any child protection issues past and present which the EWS/attendance service should be aware of:

--

Please provide details of any information past or present which the EWS/attendance service should be aware of (including health and safety risks):

--

Please provide details of any other agencies you know to have been working with this child in the past or present:

Name of organisation	Name of contact	Contact number

Evidence to be submitted with referral	Yes	No	Date
Attendance certificate			
School Attendance Meeting			
Minutes of SAM attached			
Initial discussion with EWO			
Letter/s to parents/carers			
Any health and safety issues			
Any child protection issues			
CAF			
Current school progress report			

Details of referrer/contact:

Print name	
Date	
Position/role	
Contact address	
Contact number	
Signature	

Please email completed form to: ewsreferrals@iow.gov.uk

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

Unauthorised absence and persistent lateness may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice to each parent / carer, for each child for the period of absence from school.

The Penalty Notice is £60 per pupil, per parent/carer if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per pupil per parent/carer if paid within 28 days.

Failure to pay the notice within the specified time will result in its withdrawal and will result in a prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act for the non-attendance where the maximum fine is £1000.

Please note there is no provision for payment of the penalty notice in instalments.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMPLETING PENALTY NOTICE REFERRAL FORM

Parents / Carers should be informed either through a staged process for unauthorised truancy and / or unauthorised lates or at the time of taking a leave of absence that a Penalty Notice will be applied for through the Local Authority Education Welfare Team.

Completion of the Penalty Notice referral form should be done promptly and forwarded to the Team Leader of Education Welfare Service (EWS). Delays in processing the application may lead to the notice not being issued as there is a statutory time frame of 6 months from the date of the absence to the whole process (including any court summons) to be completed.

The Penalty Notice referral form must be completed accurately to include:

- Name of child
- Any parent / carer to whom the notice should be issued (N.B. this must be any parent / carer who has had day to day care of the child during the unauthorised absence)
- Accurate address/es of the parent / carers to whom the notice should be issued
- Reason for the request for a notice to be issued e.g. unauthorised holiday / following a staged warning procedure to manage truancy / lateness

All applications must be accompanied by a school register signed by the Head teacher and copies of correspondence sent to the parent carer. In cases of post registration truancy a copy of the lesson printout is required. In cases of persistent lateness a SIMS printout detailing the minutes late is required.

Any applications received without the required documentation will not be processed and may lead to unnecessary delay

EWS administration will inform schools via email when notices have been processed.

EWS Team Leader or a designated member of the EWS team will contact the referrer directly if the notice is not issued and give the reason why and any actions needed to ensure the application is completed.

Please note once a notice is issued it can only be retracted if:

- **evidence shows it has been issued to the wrong person**
- **it can be evidenced there is a material error in the information supplied**

There is no right for a parent to appeal a notice and if the notice remains unpaid the EWS will pursue a parental prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act for the absence

If you have any queries about the process please seek help and advice from EW

Penalty Notice Referral Form

School / Police / EWO <i>please delete</i>	Name of Referrer	
---	------------------	--

Establishment <i>e.g. school name / police station</i>	
---	--

Full Name of Child		
<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>

Full Name of Mother	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>
---------------------	-------------------	------------------

Full Name of Father	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>
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Address	Postcode	
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Period of absence for which a penalty notice is requested	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
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Specific reasons for believing a penalty notice is appropriate:

I certify that during the period indicated above, the school was open for ?? sessions during which time the named pupil attended for ?? sessions.

?? of the ?? absences were unauthorised by the school. *(School and EWO Referrals only).*

Name.....Signature.....

Position.....Date.....

Please return completed forms (along with supporting documentation – school register / letters to parents etc) to:-

Ms Karen Potheary - Team Leader, Education Welfare Service, Thompson House, Sandy Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 3NA ☎ 821000 ext 133

Example Letter/s

Ref: Absence stage 1

Date

Dear

Re:

(Insert child's name) current attendance is **(insert %)** which is below the school target of **(Insert %)**.

At **(Insert name of School)** we consider regular attendance extremely important and any missed time can have a detrimental effect on your child and their future life chances. Support and guidance is available if you wish to discuss this but in legal terms it is the duty of the parent/carer to ensure satisfactory attendance at school.

(Insert child's name) attendance will continue to be monitored by the school and if there is not a significant improvement in attendance you will be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss this matter.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or require support in improving your child's attendance please contact me directly on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Example Letter/s

Ref: SAM

Date

Dear

RE:

(Insert child's name) current attendance is **(insert %)** which is below the school target of **(Insert %)**. **(Insert child's name)** has had further absences since my previous letter sent to you on **(insert date)**

You are now invited to attend a meeting at the school on **(Insert date and time)** to discuss **(Insert child's name)** absences. As a school we wish to offer you support and guidance to improve your child's attendance and ensure they achieve their full potential.

If you are unable to attend this appointment, please contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time

Yours sincerely

Example Letter/s

Ref: Stage 1

Date

Dear

Re:

(Insert name) has been late / truant after the school register closes on (insert number of occasions + other absence if relevant) between (insert dates)

At (Insert name of School) we consider regular attendance extremely important and any missed time can have a detrimental effect on your child and their future life chances. Support and guidance is available if you wish to discuss this but in legal terms it is the duty of the parent/carer to ensure satisfactory attendance at school.

The school operates a 3 stage process to manage absence from school and will review (insert child's name) on (insert date). If there is not a significant improvement in attendance at this time you may be liable for further steps to be taken by the school in order to secure regular attendance.

Yours sincerely

Example Letter/s

Ref: Stage 2(a)

Date

Dear

Re:

(Insert name) has been late / truant after the school register closes on (insert number of occasions + other absence if relevant) between (insert dates)

The school operates a 3 stage process to manage absence from school. (insert child's name) has now reached stage 2 of this procedure. At (Insert name of School) we consider regular attendance extremely important and any missed time can have a detrimental effect on your child and their future life chances

You are invited to attend a meeting at the school to discuss (insert child's name) attendance on (insert date and time).

The aim of this meeting is to resolve any issues that may be affecting your child's regular attendance at school.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Example Letter/s

Ref: Stage 2(b)

Date

Dear

Re:

Following the meeting on (insert date) to discuss (Insert name) schools attendance.

I have reviewed (insert name) today and note that (Insert name) has been late after the school register closes on (insert number of occasions + other absence if relevant) between (insert dates)

In line with the school absence procedures I have now made a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service. The Education Welfare Service will contact you directly in order to try and support you with improving (insert child's name) school attendance.

I must remind you that as parents it is your legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time. You need to be aware that the likely consequence of your child's continued late arrival will be that the school will request the Local Authority to issue you with a fixed penalty notice of up to £120 per parent, for each named child. If this penalty notice is not paid, it will result in prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to secure your child's attendance.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Example Letter/s

Ref: Stage 3

Date

Dear

Re:

Since my previous letter to you on (Insert date) (Insert name) has been late on (insert number of occasions + other absence if relevant) **between** (insert dates)

Therefore, as parents you have failed to regularly secure your child's school attendance which is a requirement under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act.

The school operates a 3 stage process to manage absence from school and this letters put you at stage 3 of this process

Consequently, this letter is to confirm that I have now passed the case to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service for the issuing of a penalty notice under the provisions of subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, as indicated in my previous two letters.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to contact myself on the number above.

Yours sincerely

ABSENCE SLIP **Name of School:**

Name of Pupil:

Dates of Absence:.....

Reason for Absence:.....

Was medical advice sought for this absence? Yes / No

If yes GP appointment / phone contact / Beacon centre / A & E

Signed: Parent / Carer

✂

ABSENCE SLIP **Name of School:**

Name of Pupil:

Dates of Absence:.....

Reason for Absence:.....

Was medical advice sought for this absence? Yes / No

If yes GP appointment / phone contact / Beacon centre / A & E

Signed: Parent / Carer

✂

ABSENCE SLIP **Name of School:**

Name of Pupil:

Dates of Absence:.....

Reason for Absence:.....

Was medical advice sought for this absence? Yes / No

If yes GP appointment / phone contact / Beacon centre / A & E

Signed: Parent / Carer

SCHOOL AND EWS INTERVENTION PLAN 2013/14

All absences must be supported by written explanation from parent (this could be an email / letter) – absences not supported by written explanation should be unauthorised

Absences of 5 days or more schools can request the absence be supported by medical evidence (this could be an appointment card / proof of prescription). Where there is reason to suspect the absence is not genuine (e.g. may have gone on holiday) schools should contact EWS and request an immediate visit.

Attendance above National Average		Within 0.5% of National Average		More than 0.5% below National Average	
Initial visit by EWO and EWA in first ½ term to review attendance policy and identify key actions and set targets for 2013/14		Initial visit with EWO and Team Leader in first ½ term to review attendance policy and identify key actions and set targets for 2013/14		Initial visit by Team Leader and EWO in September 2013 to review attendance policy and identify key actions and set targets for 2013/14	
EWA to review action plan with member of SLT and Attendance lead once per term		EWO to review action plan with member of SLT and Attendance lead once per term (more frequently if attendance targets not met)		EWO to review action plan with member of SLT and Attendance lead once per term (more frequently if attendance targets not met)	
Register review once a term by EWA		Register review every 6-8 weeks by EWO		Register review at least every 4 weeks by EWO	
School	EWS	School	EWS	School	EWS
Step 1 Notify parents each ½ term if children's attendance falls below 92% in first ½ term** and below 95% after first ½ term		Notify parents each ½ term if children's attendance falls below 92% in first ½ term** and below 95% after first ½ term		Notify parents each ½ term if children's attendance falls below 92% in first ½ term** and below 95% after first ½ term	
Step 2 (a) Arrange a School Attendance Meeting	EWA to attend SAM meeting	Step 2 (a) Arrange a School Attendance Meeting	EWO/A to attend SAM meeting	Step 2 (a) Arrange a School Attendance Meeting	EWO/A to attend SAM meeting

(SAM) with parents if further absences following step 1 - invite EWA and agree actions with parents		(SAM) with parents if further absences following step 1 - invite EWA and agree actions with parents		(SAM) with parents if further absences following step 1 - invite EWA and agree actions with parents	
Step 2 (b) Arrange a SAM meeting with parents where children have a poor pattern of attendance e.g.had 3 or more separate absences within a rolling 8 weeks	EWA to attend SAM meeting	Step 2 (b) Arrange a SAM meeting with parents where children have a poor pattern of attendance e.g.had 3 or more separate absences within a rolling 8 weeks	EWO/A to attend SAM meeting	Step 2 (b) Arrange a SAM meeting with parents where children have a poor pattern of attendance e.g. had 3 or more separate absences within a rolling 8 weeks	EWO/A to attend SAM meeting
Step 3 Further absences refer to EWS for home visit	Home visit undertaken within 7 working days	Step 3 Further absences refer to EWS for home visit	Home visit undertaken within 7 working days	Step 3 Further absences refer to EWS for home visit	Home visit undertaken within 7 working days