



ATTENDANCE POLICY

The West Grantham Church of England Primary Academy
The West Grantham Church of England Secondary Academy

Introduction

The academies are committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The academies sincerely believe that all pupils benefit from the education they provide and therefore from regular academy attendance. To this end the academies will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Aims

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law
- Many pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities

Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability.

The academies have a legal responsibility for maintaining academy registers and taking the register twice a day. The academies also have a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. We also have safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our pupils.

Pupil responsibilities

We encourage our pupils to become independent young people including taking responsibility for their attendance and punctuality when this is age appropriate.

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That they attend regularly
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day

- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To ensure their children attend regularly and punctually
- To ensure that they contact their child's academy whenever their child is unable to attend, preferably by 8.30 am
- To ensure that their children arrive well prepared for the day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact their child's academy in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from the academies:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact with parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend without providing good reason
- Recognition and reward for good attendance
- A quality education

Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the pupil or their parent, unless there is a safeguarding issue). If there are Child Protection concerns, then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.

Absence from school

There are only two categories of absences from school:

- **Authorised** = **Approved**
- **Unauthorised** = **Not approved**

Only the Head of Academies (or their delegate) can approve an absence from school. That is the law. Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education guidance on School Attendance.

Requests for absence in term time must be submitted in writing, in advance to the Head of Academies (or their delegate) who will treat every request on an individual basis and respond accordingly.

All absence, authorised and unauthorised, will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence, and each day thereafter, informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

Medical Appointments

We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.

We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a pupil having time out of the academy. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents/carers where a whole day is missed for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the academy.

Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after school time and during the 13 weeks of school holiday.

Encouraging attendance through various reward systems to motivate and recognise good and improved attendance. These rewards may involve such things as:

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- House points awarded weekly for 100% attendance and punctuality
- Prizes weekly for most improved tutor group from previous term
- Canteen vouchers given and specific reward given for mentored pupils achieving attendance targets

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- 96% and above for the term is rewarded with certificates and badges
- Prize draw
- Awards in a Celebration Assembly

Attendance procedure

**When a pupil does not attend, the academies need to respond effectively.
(Please see flowchart for details.)**

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/carers, the parents/carers will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone/text/email
- Where there is no response, there may be a visit from a member of the academy staff
- Where non-attendance continues, letters, home visits and invitations to meet will commence.
- If there is still no engagement, and unless other action is planned, the parents/carers will be invited to attend a Panel Meeting in the academy. This meeting will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school
- If there is still no improvement, parents/carers may receive a fixed term penalty notice, issued by the county, because the pupil's attendance is causing concern.

Punctuality

Pupils who arrive late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes.)

Registration times are 8.40 am until 9.00 am at the West Grantham Church of England Secondary Academy and 8.40 am until 9.00 am at the West Grantham Church of England Primary Academy. Pupils should be on academy site at least 5 minutes before these start.

Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the academy and letters sent to parents/carers. Persistent late arrival will result in parents/carers being asked to attend a meeting.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, this will be recorded as U (unauthorised late arrival). **Unauthorised sessions can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.**

Reintegration

- The return for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning.
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate.

The success of the reintegration will require the involvement of appropriate Trust staff, other agencies, the young person and parents/carers. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary

Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via pastoral meetings.

Trust organisation

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Head of Academies/Interim Headteacher:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents/carers
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To oversee the work of administrative staff
- To liaise with the staff and outside agencies
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole academy

Attendance Officer/Home School Liaison:

- To carry out first day calling
- To track persistent absentees
- To build relationships with parents/carers and provide encouragement and support

Class Teacher:

- To complete registers accurately and on time
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents/carers
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- To record all reasons for absence in the register
- To log all meetings with parents/carers
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner

Governors:

- They can play a valuable role through representation at Attendance Panels, parents/carers evenings etc.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for governor meetings

Parents/carers:

- Contact with academy on first day of absence or as soon as possible
- Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absence
- Support their child and the academies in achieving maximum attendance

Liaising with external agencies

Research has shown that schools, in partnership with the full range of support services, have a greater impact on attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the Trust. It is, therefore, vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Other agencies can be accessed where appropriate in individual cases, examples below:

- Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS)
- Educational Psychologists
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Social Services
- Early Help
- The Working Together Team
- CAMHs
- Healthy Minds
- Youth Service
- Local Police

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each academy has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents an academy sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities.

Authorised or unauthorised absence:

Authorised absence is where the academy has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available
- Days of religious observance
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated
- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas

Government regulations state that when it comes to dealing with requests for leave of absence, schools are no longer permitted to authorise family holidays or time off for other family occasions, as they are not classed as exceptional circumstances. The law also states that parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for leave of absence during term time. Schools can use Section 444B of the Education Act 1996 to issue Fixed Penalty Fines for nonattendance.

Examples of absences that will **not** be authorised:

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time
- Minding the house or looking after siblings
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified
- No reason given
- Absence from work experience without explanation
- Staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid

Removal from the academy roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the academy roll. These are detailed in Circulars 1099 and 111/99 and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). **Removal from the academy roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal**

- Where an academy has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the academy and the parent/carer(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at the academy.
- Where the Trust has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend the academy.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Head of Academies/Interim Headteacher has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with outside agencies to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Head of Academies/Interim Headteacher has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where a pupil in the nursery class has not transferred to a reception class at the primary academy.

- If a pupil has not returned within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory schools age before the academy next meets and has been notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

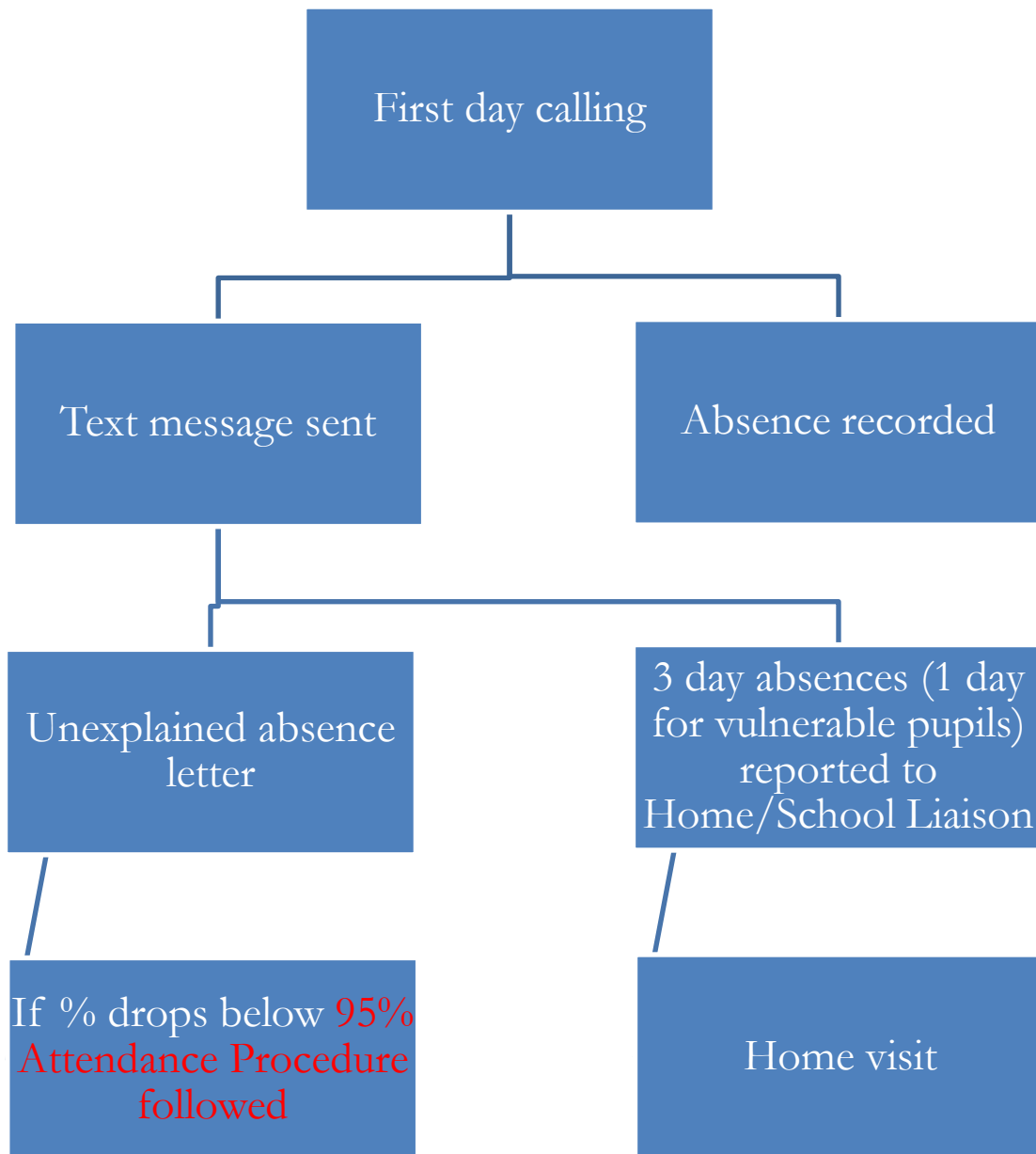
Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The academies are committed to intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children, including those missing from education, to help prevent poor outcomes. Academy staff will therefore share information appropriately with parents/carers, other schools and local authorities to ensure that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. In order to fulfil their statutory duties, the academies will work to the guidelines provided in the DfE's Children missing education; Statutory guidance for local authorities (September 2016).

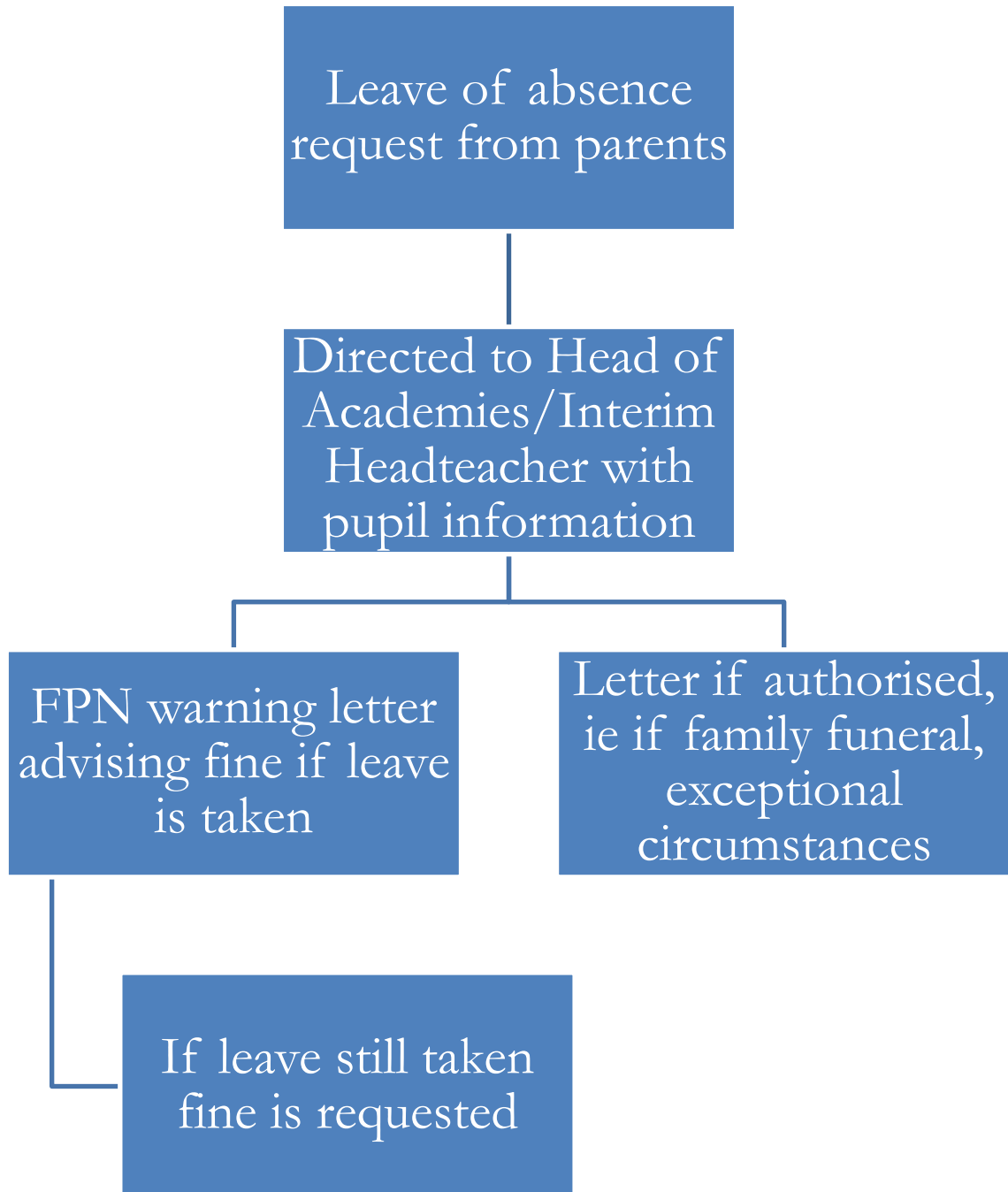
Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

Following a period of unauthorised or persistent absence, any parent/carer may be considered for a penalty notice. This is issued through the courts to both parents/carers and any fine is paid to the local authority directly.

Attendance Flowchart

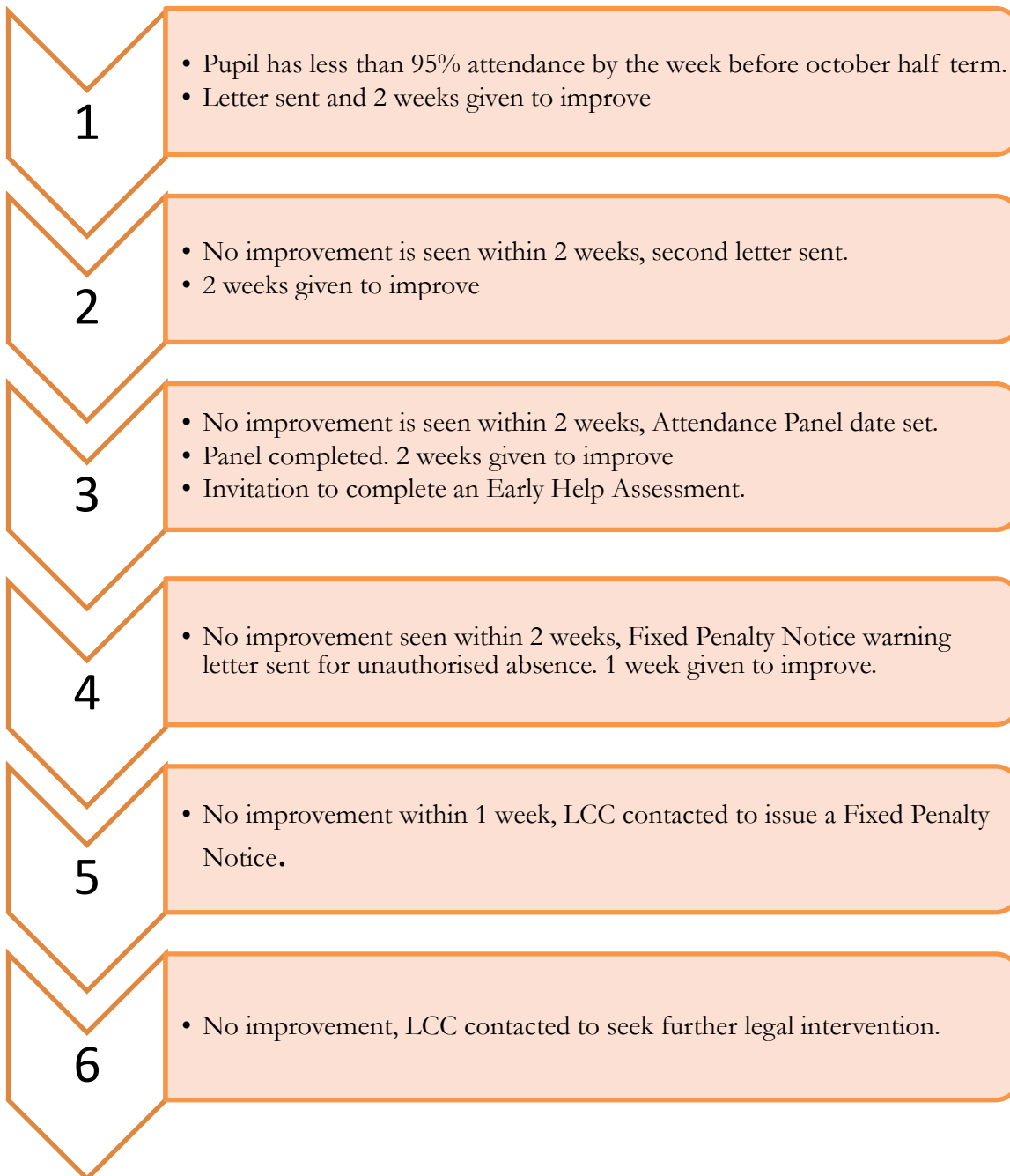


Leave of Absence Flowchart



ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

This procedure is designed to be followed in a linear pattern. If an improvement is seen at any step, then the process will freeze. If the improvement is not sustained it will continue to the next step.



This procedure, although in place, can be used with discretion by the Senior Leaders

SAMPLE ATTENDANCE LETTERS

Dear «salutation»

FIXED PENALTY FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»

DATE OF BIRTH: «date_of_birth»

PUPIL REGISTERED AT:

This letter is a **Fixed Penalty Warning** and is being sent to you because you have requested a period of absence from school for your child during term time.

The period you have requested from (date) to (date) , is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and therefore will be coded as unauthorised absence. If you choose to ignore this warning, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for the above period of absence.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following framework:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents/carers a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school, the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the school on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Head of Academies/Interim Headteacher

Dear «salutation»

ATTENDANCE

We are concerned about «forename»'s attendance. They have fallen below 95% for the academic year so far and are heading towards the legal threshold of 90%. When a child's attendance falls below 90% it is now Government legislation that parents/carers are issued with a £120 fine.

It is important that your child is in school to ensure they are not missing out on vital learning time. We urge you to send your child to school every day unless they are seriously ill and have seen a doctor. We can assure you that we will contact home if your child is poorly during school hours.

We are keen to help our pupils and parents/carers to ensure Lincolnshire County Council have no cause to issue these fines. If we have valid reasons for your child's absence and we can see it improving, we can make sure this does not happen.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Jo Glover, Home/School Liaison Officer, on 01476 405 200.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Head of Academies/Interim Headteacher

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname» «reg»

Following our previous correspondence «forename»'s attendance at school has not improved. Since the beginning of September «his_her» attendance is now «percentage_attendance»%.

We shall formally be referring the situation regarding «forename»'s non-attendance and shall be putting «forename» forward towards an Attendance Panel meeting. Failure to improve attendance after this meeting could also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice fine of up to £120.00.

If you have any concerns regarding this and would like to arrange a meeting, please contact xx on 01476 405200, or via email to [xx](#); so we can schedule an appointment to discuss «forename»'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Head of Academies/Interim Headteacher

Dear «salutation»

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»

Following our previous correspondence on [date of first letter] and [date of second letter], I would like to invite you to a meeting to further discuss your child's attendance with me on the following date:

[agreed date]

Please contact the academy office if this is not convenient and we will rearrange the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Home/School Liaison Officer/Attendance Officer

Dear «salutation»

«chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»

We are very disappointed that you missed the attendance meeting on <<DATE >> that you were advised you of in our letter dated <<DATE>>.

We will be tracking «chosen_forename»'s attendance closely and failure to improve will result in further action. This may include a formal attendance panel with the possible consequence a fine of £120. Continued poor attendance could ultimately lead to a court appearance.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to rearrange your meeting and to discuss «chosen_forename»'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Home/School Liaison Officer/Attendance Officer

Dear «salutation»

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES: «forename» «surname»

After reviewing attendance figures, I am concerned to find that «chosen_forename» has «total_unexplained_sessions» absences. I have listed these sessions below:

«periods_of_absence»

Please complete the attached slip giving reasons for «chosen_forename»'s absence and return it to me in Pupil support.

Failure to provide a valid reason for these absences will result in them being declared unauthorised and I may then have to involve our Home/School Liaison Officer.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer