



## Attendance Policy

<b>Subject Leader:</b>	Headteacher and Governing Body
<b>Policy first written:</b>	Summer 2010
<b>Review dates (and amended if required):</b>	2010; Summer 2013
<b>Last adopted by the Governing Body:</b>	Summer 2013

### Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their



attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments if we have concerns;

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual achievements termly;
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and awards.
- Carry out transition work with pupils moving between nursery and reception, and before leaving for high school;
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

#### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher



Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription or appointment card or similar.

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 best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to reception

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;



- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our in-school Attendance Lead and/or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority School Attendance Team where appropriate as per Local Authority protocol.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **In-School Strategies to Improve Attendance/Punctuality (see appendix):**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality. This includes:

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils, pastoral staff and the Headteacher;
- Parenting contracts;
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority School Attendance Team)
- Attendance panels
- Penalty notices

### **The Local Authority School Attendance Team:**

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST). They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist the case may be referred to the Court Officers, who can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.



## **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.55 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.10am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or a member of the pastoral support team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## **Leave in Term Time:**

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any



time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:

When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. SATs or any other public examinations.

- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 95% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Readmission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

### **Religious Absence:**

The school will authorise one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.



## **Roles and responsibilities for attendance matters in this school:**

### **Parents:**

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Contact school on 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence
- Avoid any leave in term time and apply in advance using form
- Attendance at meetings in school
- Participation in Parenting Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies

### **Pupils:**

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtime
- Attend school/registration punctually
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

### **School Attendance Lead – Deputy Headteacher:**

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision
- Where there may be ambiguity regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process

### **Designated Staff:**

- First day response: Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided
- Input and update the attendance registers
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, following Absence Flowcharts 1, 2 and 3 (see appendix), and using



## Parenting Contracts where appropriate

### **All School Staff:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To see pupils' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures

### **Governors**

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures
- Work with the Headteacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent

### **School targets, projects and special initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 94% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the area.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in newsletter and we ask for your full support.

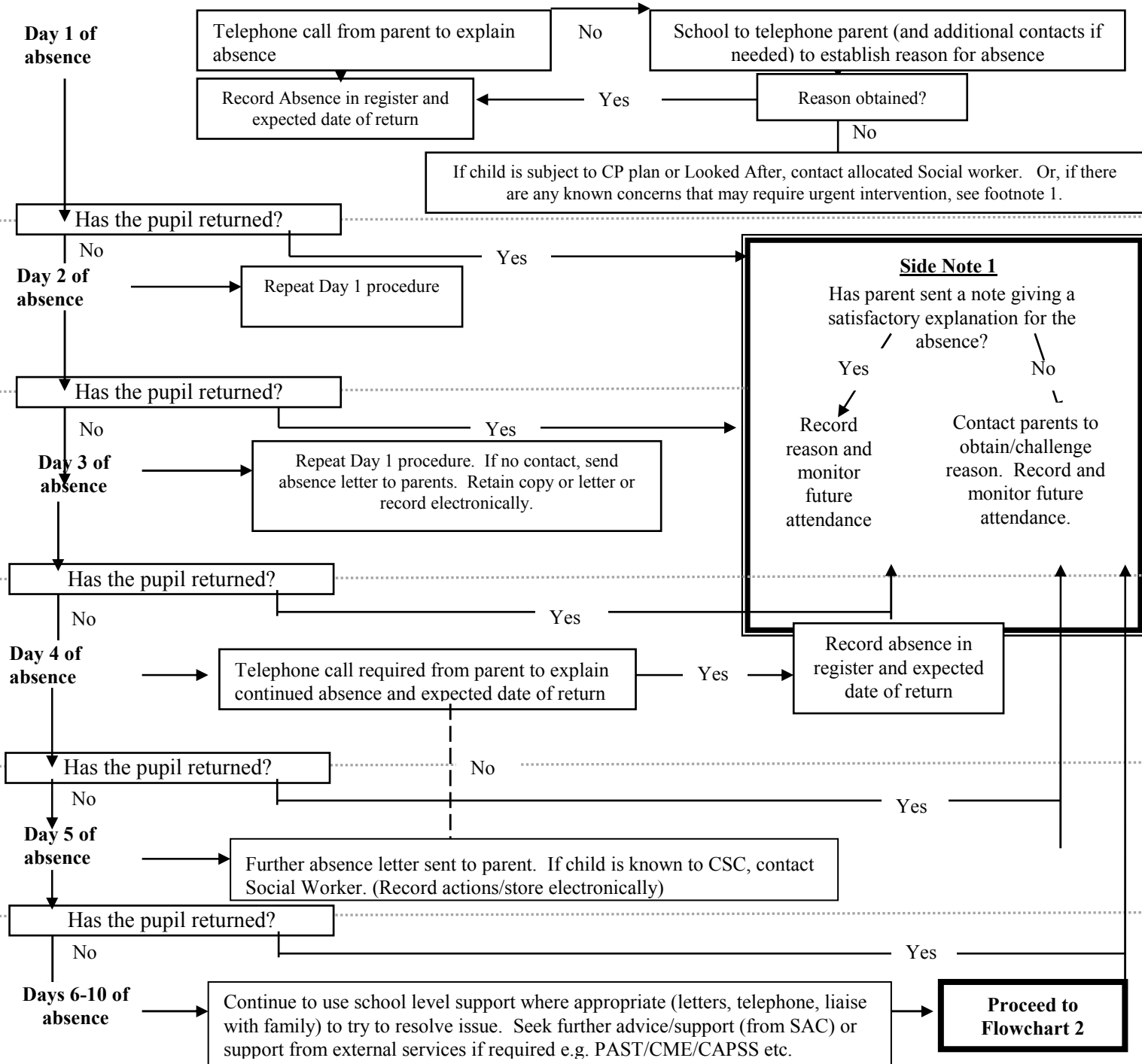
### **Summary:**





The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**FLOWCHART 1: PRIMARY SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES – DAYS 1-10**

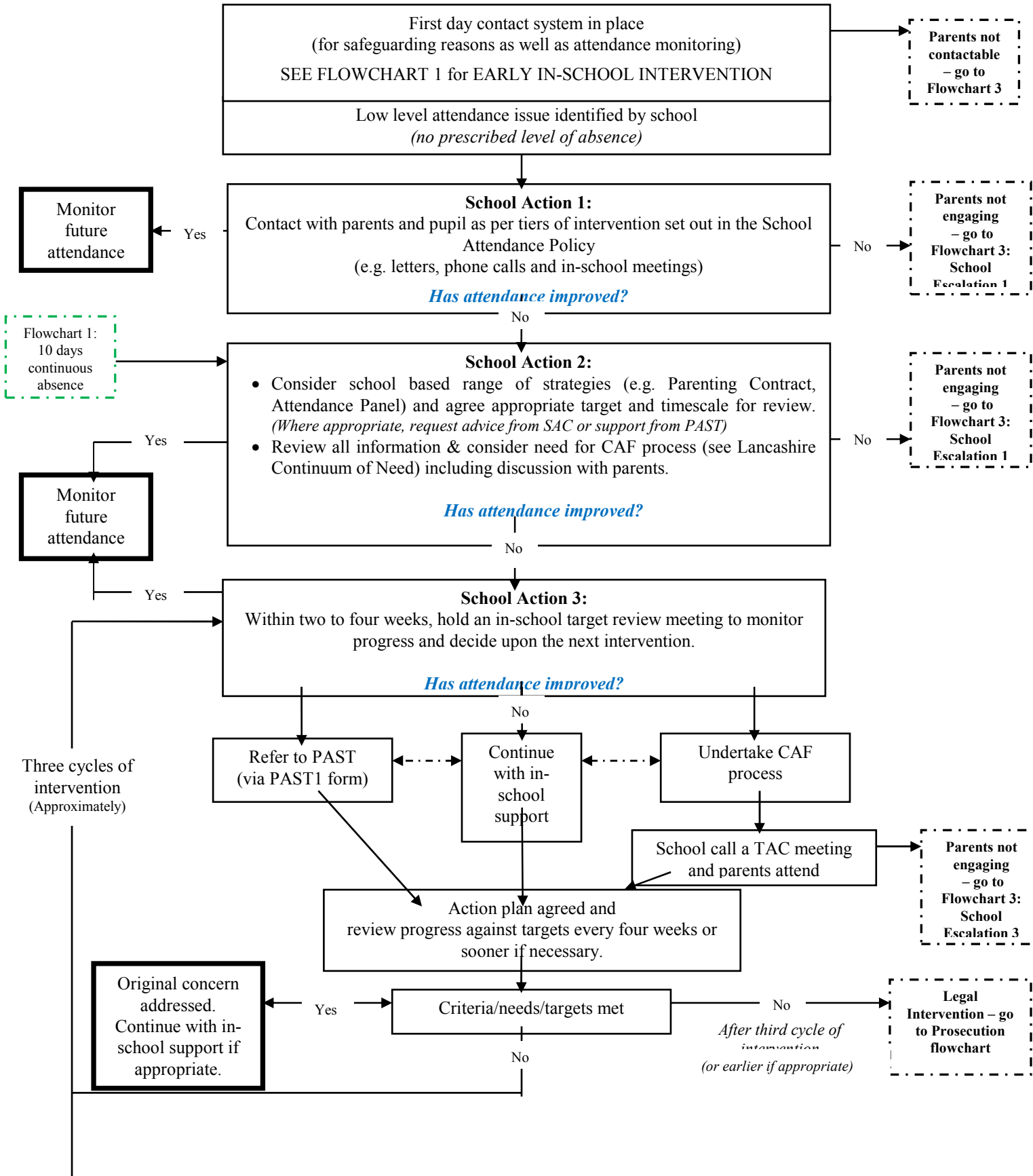


**If at any point there are concerns about the safety or welfare of the pupil, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.**

<sup>1</sup>In some instances, more urgent notification to the local authority may be appropriate if contact with parents/carers is problematic e.g.

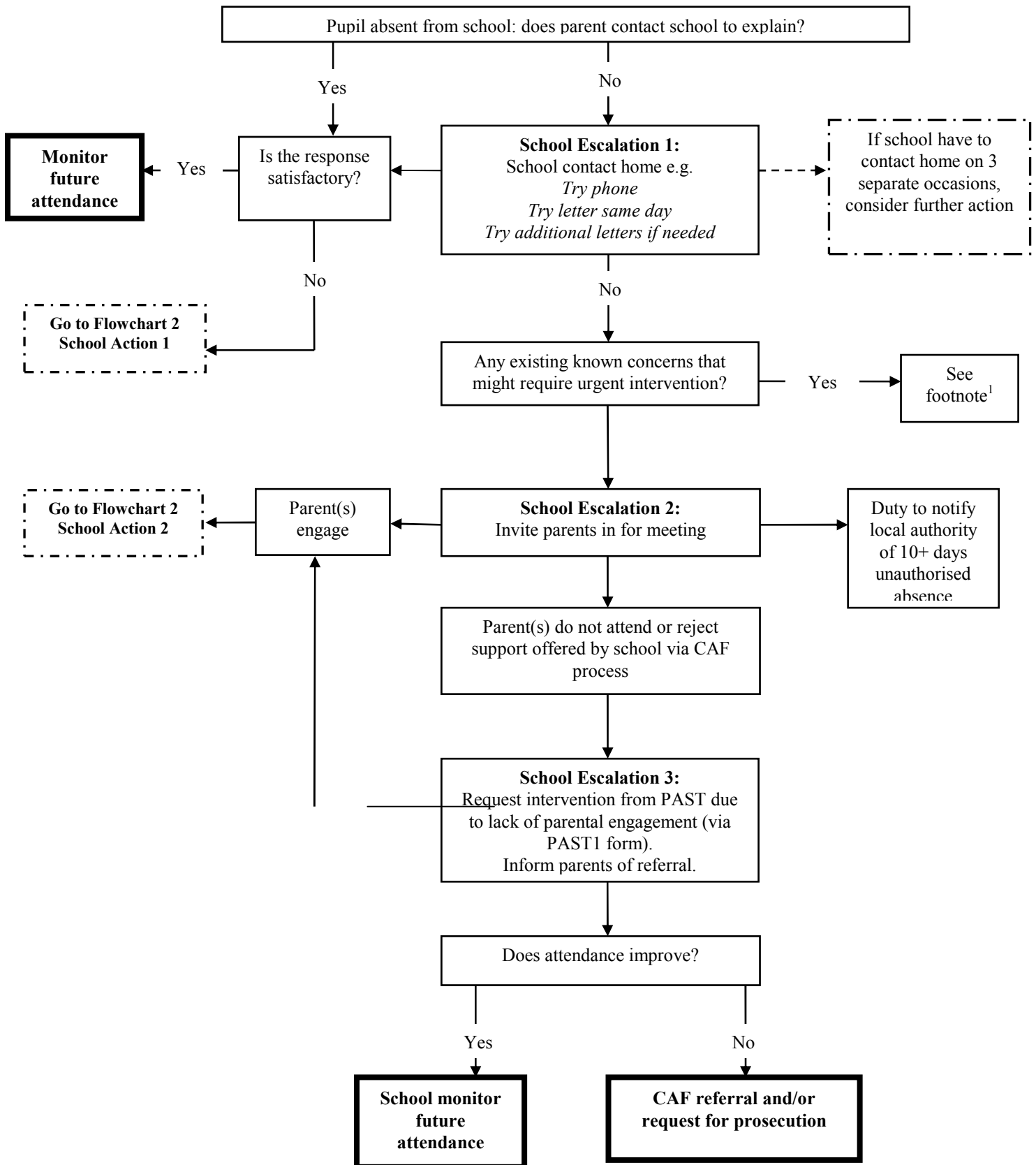
- Children Looked After – schools should notify the CLA Service Manager
- Children subject to a Child Protection plan – schools should notify the named social worker
- Children in situations of known domestic violence – schools should consider whether safeguarding/child protection procedures should be followed.
- Advice can be sought from the School Attendance Consultant at any time if this is required.

**FLOWCHART 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES**





**FLOWCHART 3: PRIMARY SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE**  
**ISSUES**  
**HARD TO ENGAGE PARENTS**





## **Register Codes**

<b>/</b>	<b>Present (AM)</b>
<b>\</b>	<b>Present (PM)</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Educated off site</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Other authorised circumstances</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Dual registered</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Excluded but alternative provision made</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Agreed extended Family Holiday</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Family Holiday (not agreed or in excess of agreement)</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Agreed Family Holiday</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Illness</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Late (but arrived before register closed)</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Medical or Dental appointment</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>No reason yet provided for absence</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Unauthorised circumstances</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Approved Sporting Activity</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Study leave</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Traveller absence</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Late and arrived after register closed</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Educational visit</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Work experience</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils</b>
<b>Z</b>	<b>Pupil not on roll yet</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>School closed to all pupils</b>



Dear Parents and Carers

### **Absence/Late Arrival Letter**

Earlier this week I met with our School Attendance Support Officer who has told me that I must remind everyone that it is extremely important that the children are in school as much as possible as well as being in on-time. There is clear evidence from across the country that children whose attendance is poor and children who do not arrive in school on-time tend to achieve less than others. Therefore I am writing to ask you to help us in making sure your child gets the best education possible whilst they attend Trumacar Primary.

#### **Opening times:**

The school grounds are opened at 8:40am and I would suggest that all children are aiming to arrive for that time in order to be in school for the *start of the day at 8:55am*. This is the time that school officially starts and any child who arrives at school after this time may be recorded as being late. *The register closes at 9:10am every day*. Anyone arriving after this time will be marked as absent on the school register and this will be entered onto the Local Authority figures as an absence.

School then finishes at 3.00pm, unless clubs are being held, and all children should be picked up on time. Further details on the clubs we offer can be given if you contact the school office.

#### **Absence and late arrival because of clear reasons and ill health:**

If your child is unwell or you know of a reason for a possible absence then please can you contact the school office and let them know as soon as possible that he/she will not be in that day. Ways to contact school are by phone (leaving a message if need be), by email or by popping into the school office. All absences **must be** followed up with a letter or email when your child return's to school. This letter/email is then kept on record.

#### **Regular absence or late arrival:**

All schools now have to closely monitor attendance and the arrival of pupils, and should a concern arise then we have to notify the Local Authority and arrange a meeting with parents.

Some parents have already received a letter regarding this. This is Step 1 of the following 3 step process.

#### Step 1:

A letter will be issued to inform you of the school's concern over your child's attendance or regular late arrival. **This will be sent if your child has arrived late regularly (i.e. more than 5 times) or if your child's attendance figure is 85% or lower during any period of time during an academic year.** Should the letter not lead to an improvement in attendance or punctuality then the school will move on to Step 2.

The first of these letters will be sent out next week to remind parents and carers that as a school we take high absenteeism and lateness very seriously.



Step 2:

A meeting will be called and you will be invited to explain the reasons for the regular absence or late arrival of your child. The meeting will aim to agree a way forward to ensure your child is in school on time and as much as possible. Should this not lead to an improvement then the school will move on to Step 3.

Step 3:

A further meeting will be called involving the Headteacher, parents and the School Attendance Support Officer from the Local Authority. During this meeting a Common Assessment Framework Form will be completed indicating that there are concerns over your child's education due to poor attendance or late arrival. The School Attendance Support Officer, together with the school, will then regularly monitor any improvement in the attendance or punctuality of your child.

Whilst I appreciate that this 3 step approach may sound severe, I am sure that all parents understand that the school must do everything to ensure that the children receive the education they are entitled to at all times possible. As you may already know, all schools are being asked to tighten up on the potential risk of Persistent Absenteeism of pupils - in other words, any pupils who have an attendance of less than 90% must be followed up by the school.

I am hoping that by following the Local Authority guidelines for attendance and late arrival that we can reduce our figures but please do rest assured that if your child is unwell or needs to be absent for a specific reason, as long as the school knows about it then this **will not** lead to the 3-step approach outlined above.

Should you wish to discuss any of the contents of this letter then please do not hesitate to contact me further either by telephone, by calling in or by email. I truly believe that by working together we can make a big difference in the future and for the education of your child.

Yours sincerely

Paul Slater  
Headteacher





### **Important information regarding Holidays during term time:**

Could I please remind all parents that holidays during term time can have a serious effect on a child's educational progress and can sometimes create difficulties for them in their return to school as social groupings can easily change and they will have missed essential parts of the curriculum.

Whenever possible, family holidays should be arranged during school holidays. Schools do have discretion, in special circumstances, to grant up to 10 days leave during term time, but before doing so we will consider your child's situation carefully. In considering a request, the school will take into account your child's age; the time of year of the holiday; the nature of the visit and parental wishes; your child's stage of education and progress; your child's overall attendance record. Any absence believed to be unreasonable in the view of the school will not be authorised. Any request for absence must be requested on the official request form (available from the office) at least two weeks before the holiday. Only in *exceptional* circumstances will I be able to grant leave of more than 10 days during term time and this will be done in consultation with the Governing Body and the School Attendance Consultant.

It is vital that no children are on holiday during the test periods throughout the year. The main tests for all year groups are during May, with the Year 6 tests during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of that month. Any pupil who is on holiday during public examinations is automatically recorded as unauthorised and therefore will have recorded results of below average.



## Step 1 Letter

To the Parents/Carers of \_\_\_\_\_

As the end of the term approaches, the school has been checking its attendance data for all of our pupils. This is something which the school does termly. As you already know from previous newsletters, the school is duty bound to improve the overall attendance rate of pupils and we want to ensure that children attend school as much as possible, as a high absence rate can result in lower attainment within the curriculum.

It has come to my attention that \_\_\_\_\_'s current attendance figure is \_\_\_\_\_%. This is below the expected level of attendance and, although it should not come as any surprise to you, means that the school must now keep a daily track of any future absences.

Absences may have been for a number of reasons and all absences are recorded on the school register according to the information supplied by you as parents/carers. If you have not notified the school of the reasons for your child's absences, then these absences will have been counted as unauthorised and will remain on your child's school record. I am obliged to remind you of the importance of sending your child to school to benefit from the education provided therein.

Therefore, should your child's absenteeism continue at this rate, or increase, then the school will be obliged to share this data with the Local Authority and a formal meeting will need to be called to discuss how we can support you in raising your child's attendance resulting in an action plan or referral which the school would be duty bound to implement.

Should you wish to meet with me to discuss your child's attendance, then please contact the school office. I hope that by working together we can raise the attendance of all pupils.

Yours sincerely,

Ceri Hamer  
School Attendance Officer



## Step 2 Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am very sorry to write to you once again about \_\_\_\_\_'s absences from school but following the meeting with you last term, there has been little improvement in attendance and this has now become a cause of concern for the school.

Therefore I would like to invite you to a meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ where we can work out how the school can support an improvement in \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance and arrival on time. In attendance at this meeting will be yourselves, \_\_\_\_\_'s classteacher and me.

Should you not be able to attend the meeting on this date then please contact the school office and we will arrange another date and time.

As I stated at the beginning of the letter, I am sorry to have to move to Step 2 of our agreed Attendance procedures but attendance and late arrival are carefully monitored in school and by the Local Authority to ensure that all children have access to the quality education we provide at Trumacar, as is their right.

If, following this meeting, an improvement is not seen then the school will have no option than to move onto Step 3 of our process and involve the Local Authority's Attendance Officer.

I look forward to meeting with you on the \_\_\_\_\_ and hope that this will pave the way for \_\_\_\_\_'s future attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

Ceri Hamer  
School Attendance Officer