

# Attendance and Punctuality



Approved by:	Governing Body
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## Introduction

All children of statutory school age who are registered at school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress. This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Policy Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance and punctuality, including:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled to for their age
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

## School Attendance Targets

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts is set each year by our average attendance figure and by comparing this with national attendance figures. We seek to improve our attendance figures annually and always be above national figures. **Our school target for attendance is 97%.**

Whilst 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Such attendance, where it occurs, is clearly excellent. On the other hand, attendance which falls below 90% is poor and should give cause for concern (this is known as 'persistent absence'). In order to ascertain the levels of individual attendance, we ensure that a complete register check is undertaken every day, and where there is cause for concern, appropriate action is taken, initially by speaking with parents, followed by a letter. We send out annual attendance reports to parents of all children.

## **Attendance Registers**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on this register. See next section for more details.

## **Punctuality**

The school doors are opened daily between **8.35am** and **8.45am**. Teachers are required to complete the register at the beginning of each day and submit these to the school office by 9am.

Any child arriving after the doors are closed at **8.45am** must enter school via the main entrance; this lateness is logged by office staff and these pupils are recorded in the register as being 'late before the register is closed' using an 'L' code in SIMS (School Information Management System). The time children arrive (and reasons for lateness where possible) are recorded against each child's name in the school SIMS system by admin staff. School registers formally close at 9.15am. Any child arriving at school after this time is recorded as 'Arrived in school after registration closed' using a 'U' code – this is an unauthorised absence. The school may request referral to the Education Welfare Officer where persistent lateness continues.

Where an absence is recorded, school admin staff enter the appropriate reason symbol into the register. A sickness absence may be authorised by school only if they have received a message (written or verbal). Any notes from parents received by teachers must be sent to the school office; likewise verbal messages from parents must be recorded using the SIMS system.

Where there is a definite pattern of non-attendance or where the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory, absence may not be authorised even with a message from a parent. Parents will be informed in writing if the headteacher has decided that no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence. When there is good reason to believe that a reason given for absence is not correct, the headteacher will instruct that the code recorded in the register is accurate – the reason for this change will be recorded on the SIMS system.

School admin staff enter all attendance information into the School Information Management System. Any attendance information required can be drawn from SIMS.

## **First day of absence contact, welfare visits & liaison with other schools.**

Parents are encouraged to contact school as soon as possible if their child is not able to attend. If a child is absent with no reason given, school admin staff will attempt to make contact on the first day of absence. This contact is made by telephone and aims to ascertain the reason why the child is absent and when they are likely to return. The admin staff will make further regular calls if absence is prolonged. These calls also let parents know that the absence has been noted and that the school cares about the effect this has on the child's learning. If a child is absent from school for a period of more than 3 consecutive days the school will make further contact on day 4 or 5 of the absence to ascertain if the family requires any additional support. Welfare visits to the family home may be necessary if contact cannot be made or the absence is prolonged. We will also liaise with other local schools to establish whether siblings may also require support. A record of all calls, visits and the responses received is kept using the SIMS system.

## Procedures for tackling low attendance

We will work closely and regularly with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to review the attendance of all pupils.

In order to make our procedures as clear as possible we have created a flow chart that identifies the actions that we will take as a school when a child's attendance becomes a concern (See Appendix 1). The flow chart is accompanied by a suite of standard letters that will be sent to parents when trigger points are reached. The school will keep records of these reviews and which letters have been sent. Copies of these letters and the flowcharts can be found on the school's website.

## Holidays during Term Time

Where holidays are taken during term time we will follow the procedures set out in Flowchart 2 (See Appendix 2).

Government guidance states 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 the leave is granted.'**

All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

Parents are **not entitled** to remove children for holidays, leave of absence must be applied for and the decision to authorise absence rests entirely with the headteacher. Governors have agreed that holidays during term time are generally not 'exceptional circumstances' and **HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME WILL NOT USUALLY BE AUTHORISED at Amble First School**. Parents must still request leave of absence for holidays in advance using a holiday request form available from the school office. All requests should be submitted to the school office at the earliest possible opportunity, ideally prior to booking a holiday and **at least 2 weeks before a holiday is taken**. The form gives further information about the implications and possible consequences of taking holidays during term time. School will send a response to the holiday request as soon as possible.

When a holiday is requested (or taken without a form being completed), we will follow the procedures detailed in Flowchart 2.

## Raising the profile of Attendance and Punctuality

In order to ensure that the importance of good attendance is promoted the school will take the following actions:

- Publish the previous month's overall school attendance figure and class attendance figures in the school newsletter (sent to parents and available on the school website)
- Announce the previous week's school and class attendance figures in a weekly assembly and award a 'star' to the class with the best weekly attendance leading towards a whole class treat at the end of the half term.
- Include pupil attendance figures on annual school reports.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### School Admin Staff

- Monitor registers on a daily basis and record absences.

- Make and keep a record of telephone calls to parents on the first day of a child's absence (these calls continue until an adequate response is gained).
- Accurately mark reasons for absences into registers and leave a message for teachers explaining absences.
- Ensure that all occurrences of absence or lateness are recorded onto the SIMS system in a timely manner.
- Ensure that all attendance data is entered into the SIMS system on a daily basis.
- Calculate weekly attendance percentages for the weekly assembly.
- Give daily feedback to HT concerning attendance and punctuality issues.
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer where necessary.
- Work with HT and other school staff to develop strategies to improve school attendance.

### **Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher**

- Ensure that attendance and punctuality receive high profile in the school through newsletters, social media, school reports, home/school communications, assemblies and rewards.
- Report to Governors on whole school attendance on a termly basis
- Communicate with parents where concerns exist about attendance or punctuality.
- Liaise on a daily basis with school admin staff regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Complete statistical returns for the LA.
- Offer support to parents on attendance and punctuality issues.

### **Class Teachers**

- Have high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classes.
- Complete registers on a daily and weekly basis following agreed procedures.
- Develop and share strategies to improve class attendance.

## **What can parents do to help?**

- Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring that children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly and are punctual to their lessons.
- Let the school know as soon as possible why their child is absent from school, usually on the first day of absence.
- Try to make appointments and book holidays out of school time.
- Do not allow their child to have time off school unless it is absolutely necessary.

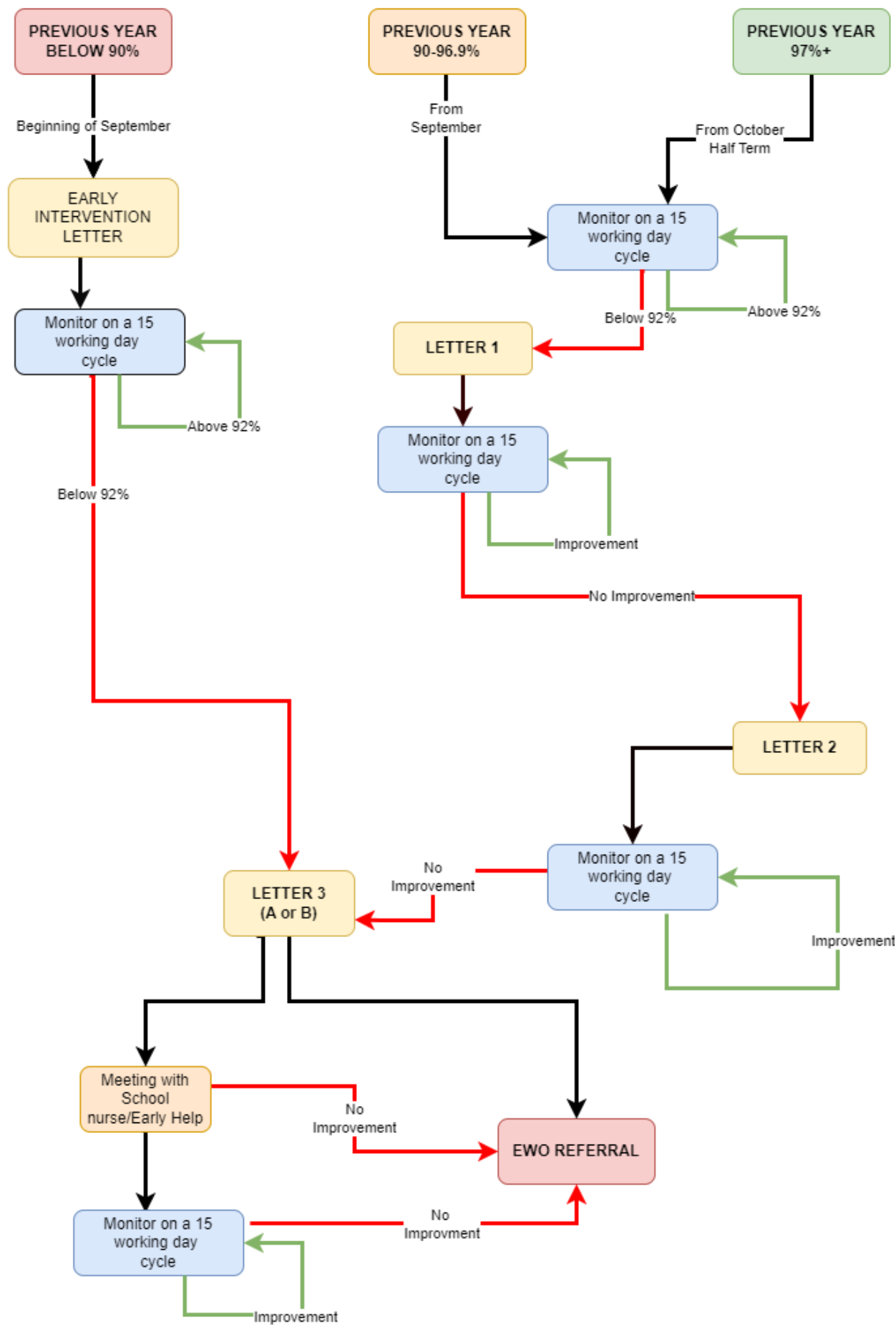
## **Review**

This policy should be reviewed at least every 2 years or sooner where necessary.

**THIS POLICY IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT IF REQUIRED**

Appendix 1

FLOWCHART 1 - ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND ACTION PROCEDURE



Appendix 2

FLOWCHART 2 - PROCEDURE FOR HOLIDAYS TAKEN DURING TERM TIME

