



Kennet Valley CofE VA School

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy agreed (date):	September 2024
Policy published (including on website) (date):	September 2024
Next review (date):	September 2025
Senior Attendance Champion Name: Katie Mallinson Email address: head@kennetvalley.wilts.sch.uk OR 01672 861643	
The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is: Name: Ruth Marsh Email: office@kennetvalley.wilts.sch.uk OR 01672 861643	
If any parent/pupil wishes to speak to a member of staff about more individual support they should contact the headteacher. Name: Katie Mallinson Email address: head@kennetvalley.wilts.sch.uk OR 01672 861643	

Inspired by the parable of the mustard seed, we believe that by cherishing every member of our small school and nurturing their talents we will grow and flourish together; achieving more both as individuals and as a community. Just as the mustard tree provides a safe perch for all the birds of the air, Kennet Valley School is inclusive and welcoming to all members of our diverse community.

At Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School, we understand that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. School is the foundation for preparing children and young people for life as adults.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually. Parents and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

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This policy represents our commitment to support pupils to achieve 100% attendance. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake; strategies to improve attendance and rewards and benefits of good attendance. The sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Aims

- Ensure that children and young people make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning
- Emphasise a commitment to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality
- Establish a consistent framework to improve attendance for all pupils
- Ensure that everyone within the school community understand the issues and procedures for attendance
- Fulfil the statutory duties in relation to school attendance
- To encourage, recognise and reward good attendance

We believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents, and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Kennet Valley CofE VA Primary School we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through regular communications on our website, Class Dojo and via the Newsletters.
- Include attendance information in reports about your child's performance in school and how any absence may be affecting their attainment
- Discuss attendance during Parent's evening meetings
- Reward each day's attendance with a raffle ticket, to be entered into a termly draw
- Reward any class with 100% attendance for a full week with an extended playtime the following week
- Work with you and your child to achieve maximum attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission and, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;

At Kennet Valley CofE VA Primary School we expect:

- Children to arrive at school every day, on time and ready to learn
- Parents to work with the school to ensure their child attends regularly

Attendance: The Legal Framework – Roles and Responsibilities

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents this means

registering their child at a school. Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school may be referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for a formal legal intervention.

To avoid this happening we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance.

Authorised absences are those that have been agreed by the headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those where no valid reason has been provided for absence or those absences which the headteacher has not agreed.

Partnership Working- Roles and Responsibilities

Do you know these facts about absence and attendance?

Research suggests that a pupil who misses 17 days of school a year will drop 1 GCSE grade in attainment. (DfE)

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year

90% equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year

80% equates to one whole day off every week in a school year

A secondary age pupil whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school

"Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education." The National Audit Office.

At Kennet Valley CofE VA Primary School attendance is the business of everyone in our school community.

The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

School Responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for improving and maintaining good attendance. In addition, in their capacity as the Senior Attendance Champion, they are also responsible for managing attendance and maintaining the profile of good attendance through:

- collective worship,
- staff meetings,
- monitoring
- registration probes
- target setting across classes and cohorts
- liaison with the EWO

- targeting support meetings
- parent/carer contact
- School Attendance Meetings (SAM)
- Attending Local Authority Attendance Meetings (LAAM)

Class Teachers are responsible for accurate registration, follow up notes, parent/carer contact and monitoring individual pupils attendance

Collectively, **Governors** are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this policy. Additionally, the **Governor with Responsibility for Attendance** is responsible for working closely with the Senior Attendance Champion.

Office staff are responsible for making first day contact with parents/carers when a child is absent without prior notification. They are also responsible for the production of weekly attendance data.

Parent/carers Responsibilities

Parent/carers are responsible for ensuring their children arrive at school everyday, on time, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (i.e. not too tired or too hungry).

Parent/carers are expected to work in partnership with the school to help their child(ren) gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly and to take an active interest in their child's education.

Additionally, parent/carers are expected to work with the school, and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance.

Pupil Responsibilities

Pupils are responsible for ensuring they follow the teacher's expectations for answering the register when called so that it is completed accurately. If they are late in the morning, they should enter school via the office to have their attendance registered.

New Pupils Joining a School - Expected First Day of Attendance

Pupils join the school roll from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend and must be listed in both the admission and attendance registers from that day. If a pupil has accepted a place at the school and fails to attend on the agreed date, school must follow up the absence to ensure that the pupil does not lose their place and that any safeguarding and missing from education concerns are addressed.

Wiltshire Local Authority has a responsibility:

- To promote excellent attendance in all Wiltshire schools
- To provide a Service Level Agreement, by the Education Welfare Service, with several consultation visits
- To work in close partnership with the school, the Education Welfare Officer visiting termly and more often if needed, for Pastoral Support meetings

Lateness or Absences

Our school attendance target is 98%.

This means that we are expecting each pupil to have 100% attendance. Pupils who miss just 3 days of school in a school year will contribute to the school not achieving the attendance target set by the governing board

Legally the school register must be taken twice a day. The register is taken at 8.45am (morning registration time) and once during the afternoon session at 12.55pm. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Pupils arriving before registers close will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised absent. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be considered if any legal action is taken. (See appendix 2)

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

- A pupil's attendance falls below 95%,
- A pupil has more than 3 weeks where they haven't achieved full attendance in a term (In Wiltshire there are 6 terms in an academic year)
- A pupil has more than 4 recorded lates in a term
- A pupil has a regular pattern of absence

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent, and the parent/carer has not advised that the child will not be in school. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an un-notified absence. A member of the office team will initially phone parents within 30 minutes of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers, then we will contact nominated emergency contacts in the order listed to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff, to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.

All unexplained absences are recorded as unauthorised in the register.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school office by 9.00 am every day that a child is absent from school. Parents should contact the school office and leave a message on 01672 861643 or alternatively email office@kennetvalley.wilts.sch.uk.

Parents should:

Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school

Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours unless there is urgent need for an appointment.

Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival.

Only request leave of absence in term time if it is for an exceptional circumstance, please note that a holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable, and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents
- Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (**after** the close of registration)
- Death of a pet

Collecting your child from school

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3.15pm. If parents are unable to collect their child as usual, then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school. We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of.

If children remain uncollected from school the protocol is for them to join Dragon Club while staff try to make contact with nominated emergency contacts in order. If staff remain unable to make contact, the school will contact the IFD in line with safeguarding procedures.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who live with long-term medical conditions, who have special educational needs and disabilities, or have other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We will discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support advice from external partners, where appropriate.

Monitoring attendance

Weekly monitoring of the registers will be made by the Headteacher, to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), Severe Absence (SA) patterns and levels of broken weeks, lateness, authorised absence and unauthorised absence and reasons for absence.

Monitoring also involves the analysis of attendance data to identify cohorts most at risk of PA/SA. Among the cohorts monitored, we include those entitled to Pupil Premium, children with SEND, children below statutory school age, children with English as an additional language and those children who belong to more than one of these cohorts. Additionally, we look at familial patterns of absence, which for safeguarding purposes may involve working with other schools, and patterns of absence for families who depend on transport provided by the local authority. This is because we know that there are historic patterns of persistent absence within these two groups.

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year and as a severe absentee if they miss more than 50% of schooling for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a pupil by creating gaps in his or her learning. The Headteacher will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially we will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers, and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an attendance meeting with the Headteacher. **However**, if the pattern continues the school may make a referral to the Local Authority for interventions that may include penalty notices and court action.

Requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education guidance, leave of absence from school including for holidays in termtime, may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested.

Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require **2 weeks' notice** unless the absence is related to an emergency.

We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.

Requests will be considered by the headteacher, and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.

Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school.

Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

Consequences of persistent absence

At Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School, we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns. If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority.

1) The National Framework for Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has issued a national framework and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which govern how and when penalty notices may be used.

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours.

In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Suffolk Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

This means that whenever a pupil accrues 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period a school must consider whether a penalty notice should be issued. The unauthorised absence can relate to unexplained absence, absence that the school has not agreed to including for a holiday in term time or a pupil being late after the register closes.

Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time we may issue you with a Notice to Improve. This will provide you with an opportunity to engage with support to improve your child's attendance. If support is not working then we will refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice to you.

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period as a result of a holiday taken in term time the absence will be notified to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Each parent can receive a penalty notice for each child that has unauthorised absence. For example 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3 year period.

The first penalty notice issued in respect of an individual child will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 2 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued in respect of the same child within 3 years shall be in the sum of £160.

If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

2) The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

or

3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Strategies for improving and maintaining good attendance

At Kennet Valley CofE VA Primary School we take every opportunity to promote excellent attendance for all pupils. We will celebrate attendance by giving each child who is on time in the morning a raffle ticket to enter into a draw at the end of the term (as Wiltshire schools have 6

terms a year, there will be 6 raffle opportunities). Additionally, classes where there has been 100% attendance all week will receive additional playtime the following week.

Compassion is one of our core values as a school and so the needs of all pupils are carefully considered. The school provides and promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that pupils feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

If there are specific issues which might impact on a child's attendance it is important that parent/carers talk to us so that we can support the family. Parent/carers can speak to the class teacher, headteacher or ELSA by contacting the office and requesting a telephone call or meeting.

There may be times when we ask other agencies to become involved to help us understand and work with families to encourage regular school attendance. If we feel that this would be helpful, we will discuss this with you first.

We are very keen to listen to the views of children and parents with regard to attendance matters and we welcome any feedback which helps us to shape how we work with families to address attendance issues and reward excellent attendance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of procedures and strategies within this policy, it needs to be monitored on a regular basis. Therefore, the attendance policy will be reviewed at least annually by governors and school staff to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community.

In addition, the school will ensure that the policy reflects current DFE and Local Authority guidance so that parents may be assured of the standards that we strive to achieve.

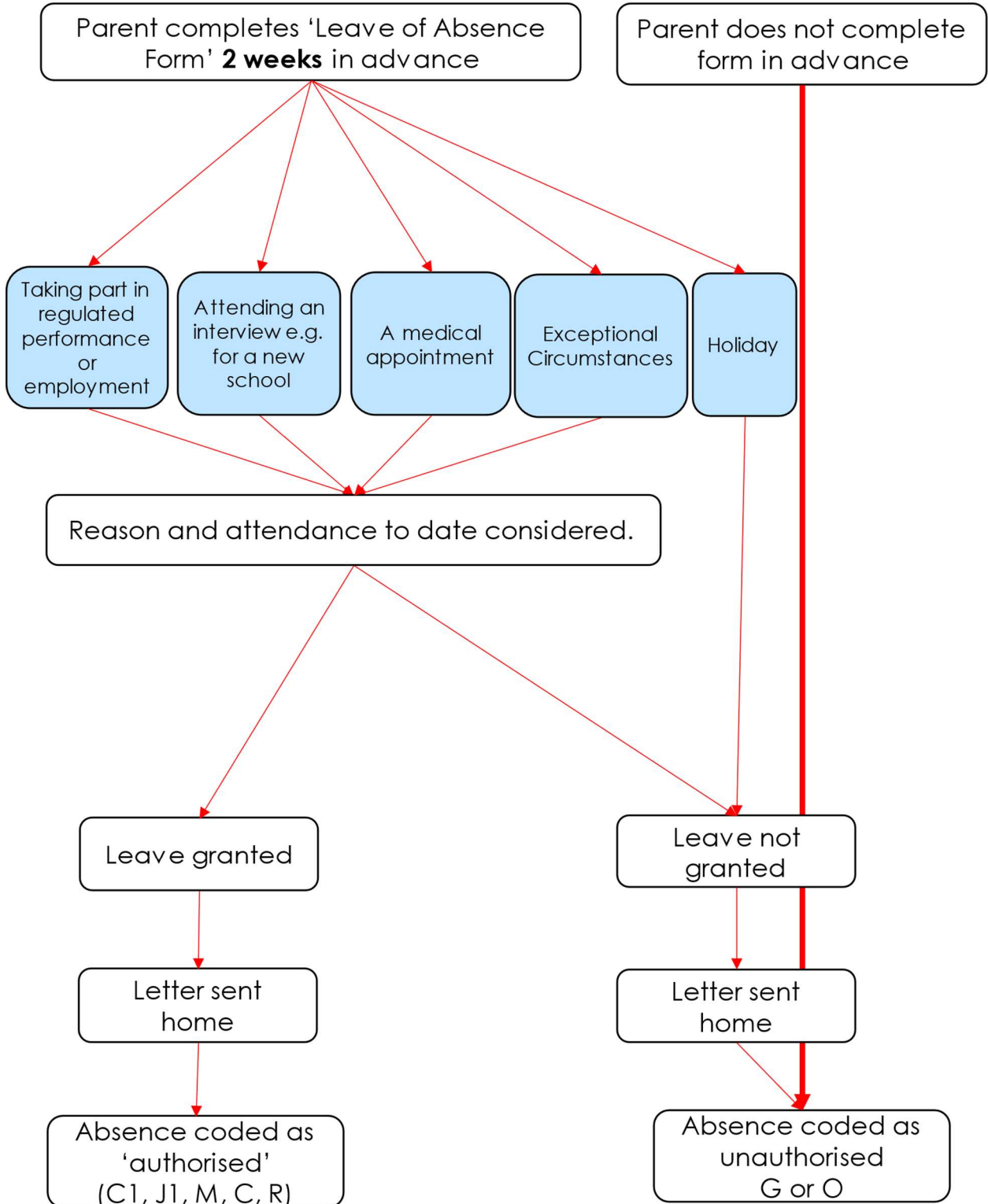
Communicating the contents of the Attendance Policy

All new parents are introduced to this policy and information on attendance in the school welcome pack. It is also accessible on the school website.

School attendance will feature in the school newsletter and we will advise parents of any changes to policy and procedures.

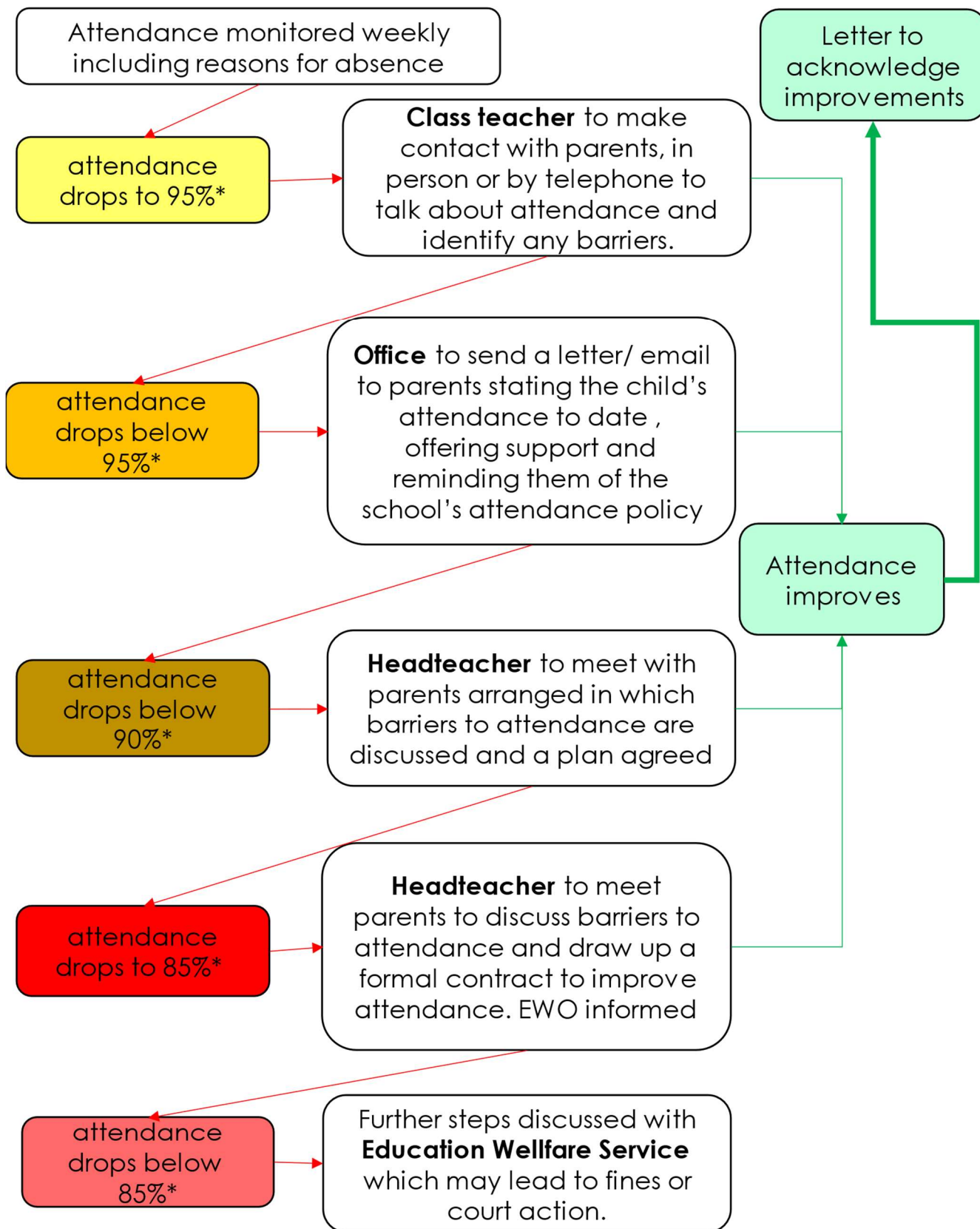
Appendix 2

Leave of Absence flowchart



Appendix 3

Persistent Absence flowchart



*This process will always be applied with consideration of the reasons for absence. The best interests of the child will be foremost at all times.