



Attendance Policy

Date: September 2022

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Bridging Policy while Witton le Wear Primary completes academy conversion to
the Advance Learning Partnership

Contents

Statement of intent.....	4
1. Legal framework	7
2. Definitions	7
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	8
4. Attendance expectations	9
5. Absence procedures	10
6. Attendance register	11
7. Authorising parental absence requests	12
8. SEND- and health-related absences	13
9. Absence in exceptional circumstances.....	14
10. Truancy.....	14
11. Lateness and punctuality.....	15
12. Missing children	15
13. Attendance intervention.....	16
14. Working with parents to improve attendance.....	17
15. Persistent Absence (PA)	17
16. Reducing persistent and severe absence.....	18
17. Legal intervention.....	19
18. Monitoring and analysing absence	19
19. Training of staff	20
20. Monitoring and review	20
21. Safeguarding	21
22. Complaints.....	21

23. Equality and Diversity.....	21
Appendix 1: attendance codes	22
Appendix 2 – ALP Attendance Escalation Process	25
Appendix 3 – Flow Chart.....	26
Appendix 4 – Template Letters	27

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

Please note this is not an exhaustive list and doesn't include all school specific policies.

Statement of intent

Advance Learning Partnership believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in areas such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium can have on improving pupil attendance.

This policy is applicable to school children of statutory school age and above, 5 upwards. However, we do encourage and promote good attendance levels in preparation for school amongst nursery children. Each school reserves the right to withdraw a nursery place where there is no contact from parents and/or persistent absence.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer details are available on each of the school websites under the Safeguarding section. Staff, parents and pupils are expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as

evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best SATs and GCSE results.

Here's what the data shows:

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Legal framework

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:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

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

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- Truancy

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

3. Roles and responsibilities

Click on the links below to view each schools attendance details:

Staindrop	Dene	Parkside	Wolsingham	Whitworth Park	Hartside
Bishop Barrington	Howden-le-Wear	Brandon	New Brancepeth	Moorside	

Trustees and Governors have overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role – In secondary
- Appointing a PSA/Attendance Officer in a Primary
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The Attendance Teams across ALP Schools (Designated Senior Lead and Attendance Officer) are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Attending Network meetings
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with relevant third parties to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers

The Attendance Officer details are located on the Safeguarding page of each school website

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

4. Attendance expectations

ALP Schools have high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every lesson (timetabled in secondary).

At the start of the school day pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site at least 5-10minutes prior to the start time. Pupils will have a morning break, and a lunch break and are expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning.

ALP schools that record absences for each lesson period will take informal registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Please refer to the school details for times of the school day and times for registration

Staindrop	Dene	Parkside	Wolsingham	Whitworth Park	Hartside
Bishop Barrington	Howden-le-Wear	Brandon	New Brancepeth	Moorside	

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative/Office staff will contact the parent via telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school may request medical evidence as supporting evidence for illness from the 5th school day of a child's absence. The school also reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there are ongoing or persistent absences.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance register

ALP Schools use an electronic management information system to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

ALP Secondary Schools - The first registration entry will be taken at the beginning of the lesson or tutor time where applicable and will be kept open until 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time.

The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the lesson and will be kept open until 30 minutes after lesson started.

ALP Primary schools – The first registration entry will be taken at the beginning of the lesson and will be kept open until 10 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register in line with the data retention policy, IRMS toolkit.

Class teachers/Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis. Office/Reception staff will take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system. Call will also be transferred to the delegated staff member for more detailed support on attendance if required.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Parents must notify the school if a child has an appointment during the school day, with a minimum 24 hours notice where possible. All children must be collected by the agreed school contact, where this is not the case a password will be provided to the school by the collecting adult. NB: In a primary school where a child has permission to walk home, the child must be collected for any appointments.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment. If appointments are needed during the school day, we request that they are made as close to the end of the school day as possible.

Where a child falls ill during the school day, the child must be collected by the agreed school contact, where this is not the case a password will be provided to the school by the collecting adult. NB: In a primary school where a child has permission to walk home, the child must be collected.

Performances and activities

Parents must request leave of absence to the school where a child has an appointment during the school day for a performance or activity at least two weeks in advance of the event. Each request will be reviewed by the Headteacher who will confirm if the leave can be granted.

Various factors will be taken into consideration for this type of request.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to this community and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

ALP Schools recognise that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with Trust/School Policies.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Absence in exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance and there is no public transport available.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

10. Truancy

A secondary-age pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return. Primary-aged pupils must be collected by a parent/carer during the school day or by another authorised adult and are not permitted to sign in/out from school.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected parents will be contacted in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance for primary-age pupils, attempts will be made to contact parents/carers via telephone. Where this is not successful, school will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure the safety and appropriate supervision of the child(ren)
- In the first instance, for secondary schools a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.

- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

11. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

ALP School will monitor punctuality issues and may put in place the following:

- Issue a parental letter highlighting issue of regular lateness
- Arrange a parental meeting to discuss issue of regular lateness
- Implement measures to support to achieve good punctuality
- Liaise with Local Authority

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence, **ONLY** after the relevant local authority team have been informed and have given written confirmation to the school to remove from roll. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Staff will refer to the Children Missing from Education policy.

12. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Any changing rooms
 - Any libraries

- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's Tutor/SLT/staff responsible at the time for the child will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

13. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure ALP Schools have effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Signpost to wider agencies if support is required at home e.g. One Point
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a weekly attendance review.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance focus groups.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the Monitoring and analysing absence section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

ALP Schools will aim to improve attendance in the overall school cohort by acknowledging good attendance. This may be done in the following ways:

- Rewards
- Postcards home

- Teacher/Tutor recognition
- Termly letter

School trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

14. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access the support that they may need.

15. Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- GRT pupils
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

ALP Schools will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

16. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10 percent or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50 percent or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the

admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

17. Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after six weeks, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

18. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

Governors will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the required school staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

19. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The Designated Senior Lead for attendance will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Enhanced attendance training will be provided to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

20. Monitoring and review

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence

data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

ALP School attendance targets are set at 97% percent.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

21. Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children as the safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to everyone in this school. We work hard to create a culture of vigilance and at all times we will ensure what is best in the interests of all children.

We believe that all children have the right to be safe in our society. We recognise that we have a duty to ensure arrangements are in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by creating a positive school atmosphere through our teaching and learning, pastoral support and care for both pupils and school personnel, training for school personnel and with working with parents. We teach all our children about safeguarding.

We work hard to ensure that everyone keeps careful watch throughout the school and in everything we do for possible dangers or difficulties. We want all children to feel safe at all times. We want to hear their views of how we can improve all aspects of safeguarding and from the evidence gained we put into place all necessary improvements.

If a member of staff has any concerns in relation to the child's welfare/wellbeing the member of staff should log this on CPOMs and speak with Designated Safeguarding Lead, or appropriate team member. Further guidance can be found in the safeguarding policy.

22. Complaints

All complaints should be raised with the school in the first instance.

The details of how to make a formal complaint can be found in the School Complaints Policy.

23. Equality and Diversity

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of age, race, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, sex, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, religion/ belief or political/ other personal beliefs.

We believe that this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010, as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality across the Trust.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

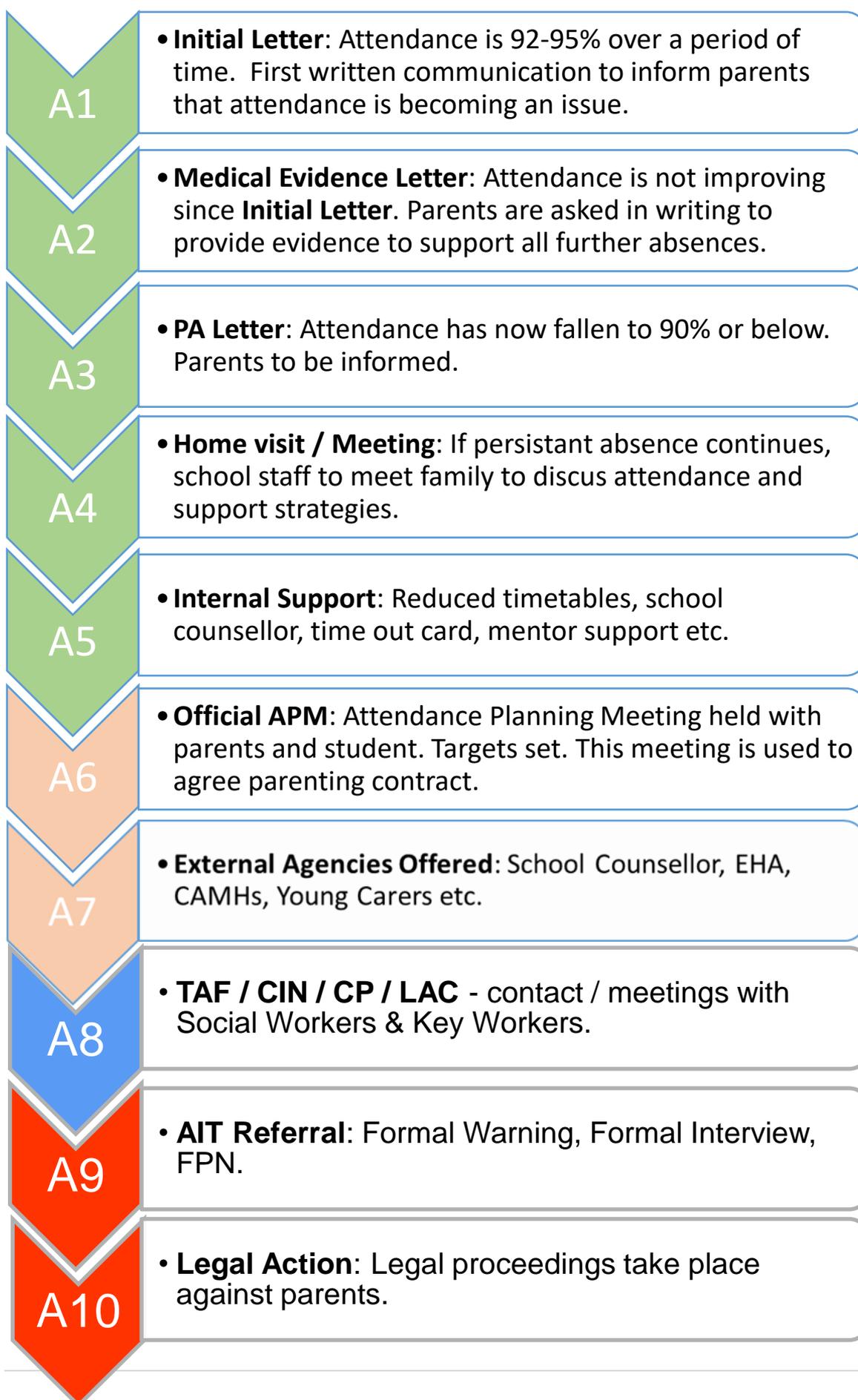
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

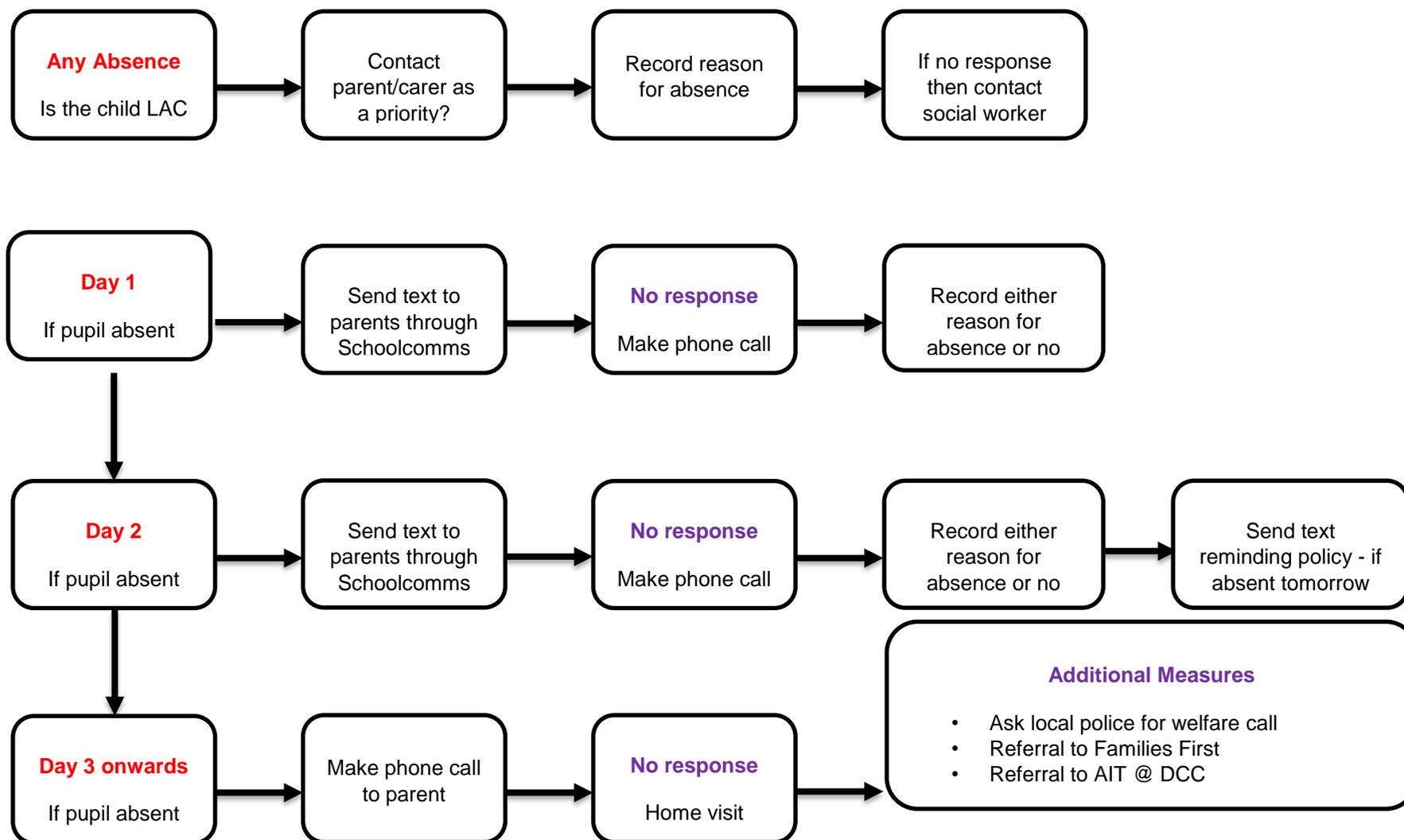
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 – ALP Attendance Escalation Process



Appendix 3 – Flow Chart



Appendix 4 – Template Letters

Letter 1 – A1 – Initial Letter - Below 96%

Date

Parental Salutations

Address

Attendance Notice

Dear Parent / Carer Name,

As you can see from the enclosed Registration Certificate, pupil's name's current attendance stands at ##%. The government target for school attendance is 97%. We, at school, are concerned about pupil's name's level of attendance.

There is a direct link between excellent school attendance and good academic achievement. For every school day your child misses, they miss 5 hours of learning. This term your child missed ## days of school which equates to ## hours of lost learning.

We understand that there may, at times, be unavoidable and / or genuine reasons for absence. On these occasions, it is important that school are informed as early as possible on the first day of absence.

Irregular school attendance can have a serious impact on your child's academic progress and social wellbeing if it is allowed to continue. You, as a parent, are legally responsible for ensuring your child has regular and punctual attendance.

If any support in school is needed to raise pupil's name's attendance, or you would like to discuss the issue further, please do not hesitate in contacting me at school.

Yours Sincerely,

Attendance and Engagement Officer

Date

Parental Salutations

Address

Attendance Notice – Medical Evidence Required

Dear Parent / Carer Name,

I wrote to you previously regarding school concerns around pupil's name's attendance. As you can see from the enclosed Registration Certificate, pupil's name's current attendance stands at ##%. This is significantly below the government and school target of 97%.

There is a direct link between excellent school attendance and good academic achievement. For every school day your child misses, they miss 5 hours of learning. This term your child missed ## days of school which equates to ## hours of lost learning.

All future absences must be supported by medical evidence, until attendance rises to School Name's expected attendance of 97%. The school will no longer authorise absences without supporting medical evidence. This evidence may be in the form of a doctor's appointment card, hospital appointment letter or proof of medication etc.

I would therefore ask that you provide the required medical evidence within 5 school days for any future absences. Failure to provide medical evidence may mean we refer you for enforcement action which could involve prosecution.

Should you wish to discuss this any further, or feel any support is needed in school to help improve pupil's name's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours Sincerely,

Attendance and Engagement Officer

Date

Parental Salutations

Address

Attendance Notice – Persistent Absence

Dear **Parent / Carer Name**,

As you can see from the enclosed Registration Certificate, **pupil's name's** current attendance stands at **##%**. This is significantly below the school target of 97%. The government deem anything less than 90% to be persistent absence.

School are extremely concerned about your child's attendance. There is a direct link between excellent school attendance and good academic achievement. For every school day your child misses, they miss 5 hours of learning. This term your child missed **##** days of school which equates to **##** hours of lost learning.

Due to the level of absence on **pupil's name's** record, school may have to consider submitting an Early Help Assessment, or a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Team. Referrals to the Attendance Improvement Team could result in prosecution. You, as a parent, are responsible for your child's regular and punctual school attendance.

Please remember that all absences must be reported as early as possible on the first day, and be supported by medical evidence.

Should you wish to discuss this any further, or feel any support is needed in school to help improve **pupil's name's** attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours Sincerely,

Attendance and Engagement Officer

Letter 4 – A6 – APM / Parental Contract – When School See Fit

Date

Parental Salutations

Address

Attendance Notice – Attendance Planning Meeting

Dear **Parent / Carer Name**,

Due to **pupil's name's** continued unsatisfactory attendance, currently standing at **##%**.it is now necessary to hold an Attendance Planning Meeting. This will take place at school on **date and time**; **pupil's name's** and you will be expected to attend.

Should you be unable to attend the meeting for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible so that it can be re-arranged.

May I emphasise that it is the duty of those with parental responsibility to make sure their children attend school regularly. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

During the Attendance Planning Meeting, a contract will be drawn up to outline expectations school require you and **pupil's name** to meet. Should these expectations not be met, we will have no alternative but to refer for enforcement action which may involve prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance and Engagement Officer