



GUILSBOROUGH ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Name	Attendance
Committee	Standards and Curriculum
Owner	Vice Principal (Raising Standards – Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes)
Statutory	Yes
Authorisation	S&C Trustees to ratify

Date Ratified	Review Date
May 2026	May 2028

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Introduction

'Parents/carers in England are responsible for ensuring that their child receives an appropriate full-time education. When a child is registered at school, parents are responsible for securing their child's regular attendance'.¹

Guilsborough Academy expects its students to have $\geq 96\%$ attendance.

Promoting positive behaviour, including excellent attendance, is the responsibility of the whole school community. Students themselves and their parents/carers are integral to this process.

Attending school punctually every day is crucial to success by maximising every learning opportunity. Educational curriculums are sequential, which means that each lesson links to a wider scheme of learning. Therefore, missing days or individual lessons, either in succession or separately across an academic year, places students at a significant disadvantage to their peers. The table below details the correlation between attendance and GCSE outcomes at Guilsborough Academy during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Attendance (%)	Outcomes compared to their peers
95+	Half a grade higher in each subject
90 – 95	Equal grades
85 – 90	Half a grade lower in each subject
80 – 85	Three quarters of a grade lower in each subject
Less than 80	One and a half grades lower in each subject

In addition to the impact on learning, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. The law makes it an offence for a parent/carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school in which they are registered to attend without good reason or the agreement of the school to be absent.

Guilsborough Academy expects its students to have $\geq 96\%$ attendance. The table below demonstrates the amount of school days and weeks absent a child will have been across an academic year by percentage thresholds.

Attendance during one academic year	Amount of school days absent	Approximate amount of school weeks absent
90%	19	4
80%	38	8
70%	57	11.5

It is important for parents/carers to understand the following definitions provided by the Department for Education:

- Persistent absentee – a pupil with less than 90% attendance

¹ House of Commons Library (2024) *School attendance in England* (p.5). Available at <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9710/CBP-9710.pdf> [Accessed 23.04.24].



- Severely absent – a pupil with less than 50% attendance ²

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Guilsborough Academy will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and students' successes in achieving these elements will be recognised via the Academy's rewards system.

On occasions, children can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend school, we request the parents/carers are honest with the school to enable us to work collaboratively. Additionally, we urge parents/carers not to give in to pressure to excuse their children from attending school as this inadvertently gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and can create a challenging cycle to stop.

Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent/carer. Following the single consistent national threshold, if you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (90%) within a rolling 10 school week period, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action. The sessions do not need to be consecutive and can span terms or school years. The 10 sessions of unauthorised absence may be a combination of different types of unauthorised absence. Legal action from the Local Authority could include:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine without further reference to you for a Penalty Notice this warning is valid for 12 months.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Additionally, we have a duty in law to refer any continual absence of 10 days or more where we have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the School Attendance Support Service (SASS). The school may also look at possible safeguarding concerns for prolonged periods of absence.

We are required to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified as either authorised or unauthorised. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. Due to this, it is imperative that parents/carers provide information about the cause of each absence, preferably in writing. The definitions of 'types' of absence are:

- Authorised absences - mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illnesses or other unavoidable causes.
- Unauthorised absences – when a child is absent for reasons that Guilsborough Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. For example:
 - Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences that have never been properly explained.
 - Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark on the register.

² House of Commons Library (2024) *School attendance in England* (p.7). Available at <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9710/CBP-9710.pdf> [Accessed 23.04.24].



Holidays/absences in term time

The criteria for issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised term time absence changed from September 2016. As detailed above, if you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (90%) within a rolling 10 school week period, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action. The sessions do not need to be consecutive and can span terms or school years. Legal action from the Local Authority could include:

- First offence – A Penalty Notice of £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 within 28 days if unpaid
- Second offence (within 3 years – A Penalty Notice of £160 to be paid within 28 days
- Third and subsequent offences – Direct prosecution, no Penalty Notice

Should a first or second offence be issued and unpaid, the case may be referred to the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices are also issued for:

- **Non-school attendance** - To issue a Penalty Notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period.
- **Term time absence** - To issue a Penalty Notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more of consecutive unauthorised absence.

Parent/carer requests for time off in term time

Parents/carers may write to the Principal and request time off for their child(ren) from school that may be granted by the Principal. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and this will not include holidays in term time.

Parents/carers should always try to arrange medical/dental appointments out of school hours.

Expectations:

We expect that our **pupils** will:

- Regularly attend Guilsborough Academy according to the published session times – ensuring that they arrive at the Academy in time to be registered at the beginning of the morning session at 8:45 am.
- If pupils arrive late to the Academy, they will enter sign in via Student Reception and be marked as late.
- If absent for a valid reason, parent(s)/carer(s) hold responsibility to inform the Academy on the first day of absence and to provide a written note or send an email explaining the absence upon their child's return to the Academy. If absent, students should make every effort to access and complete any work they have missed.
- For Post 16 students, attendance is required from 8.45am until 3.15 and all students are expected to fully engage with tutor time, timetabled lessons, supervised study and independent study periods. Appointments (including driving lessons) should be scheduled for outside of these hours.
- From Term 2 onwards of Year 13, students may be authorised to study at home where their timetable allows. This will be at the discretion of the Director of Sixth Form. Students will only be eligible for home study if they have excellent attendance and punctuality, are making good progress in line with their target grades and are complying to all Sixth Form Policies (including dress code and wearing lanyards).
- If Sixth Form students are absent for a valid reason, confirmation of this from Parents/Carers is still required.

We expect that our **parents/carers** will:

- Uphold the Home-School Agreement to ensure regular attendance.



- Ensure their child attends the Academy according to the published dates and session times, and that they are equipped for all lessons.
- If your child is unable to attend the Academy, you must contact the Academy through the student absence line at the earliest opportunity to explain the reason why. When your child returns to the Academy, provide a written explanation for the period of absence. If proof is not shown your child will be given an unauthorised absent mark on their attendance record.
- Avoid any absence from school for routine medical appointments during term time. Students having medical or dental appointments must bring an appointment card or note from their parents/carers, which should be authorised by the Form Tutor. Where possible, every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside of our Academy hours, especially for ongoing treatment.
- Not arrange holidays or leave of absence in term time. If there is a need for a student to take time off during term time, then the student's parents/carers should write to the principal to request the leave of absence. The Academy will only grant leave during term time in exceptional circumstances, in line with statutory regulations.

Note: Parents/carers who remove their child during term time without authorisation from the principal risk incurring a financial penalty.

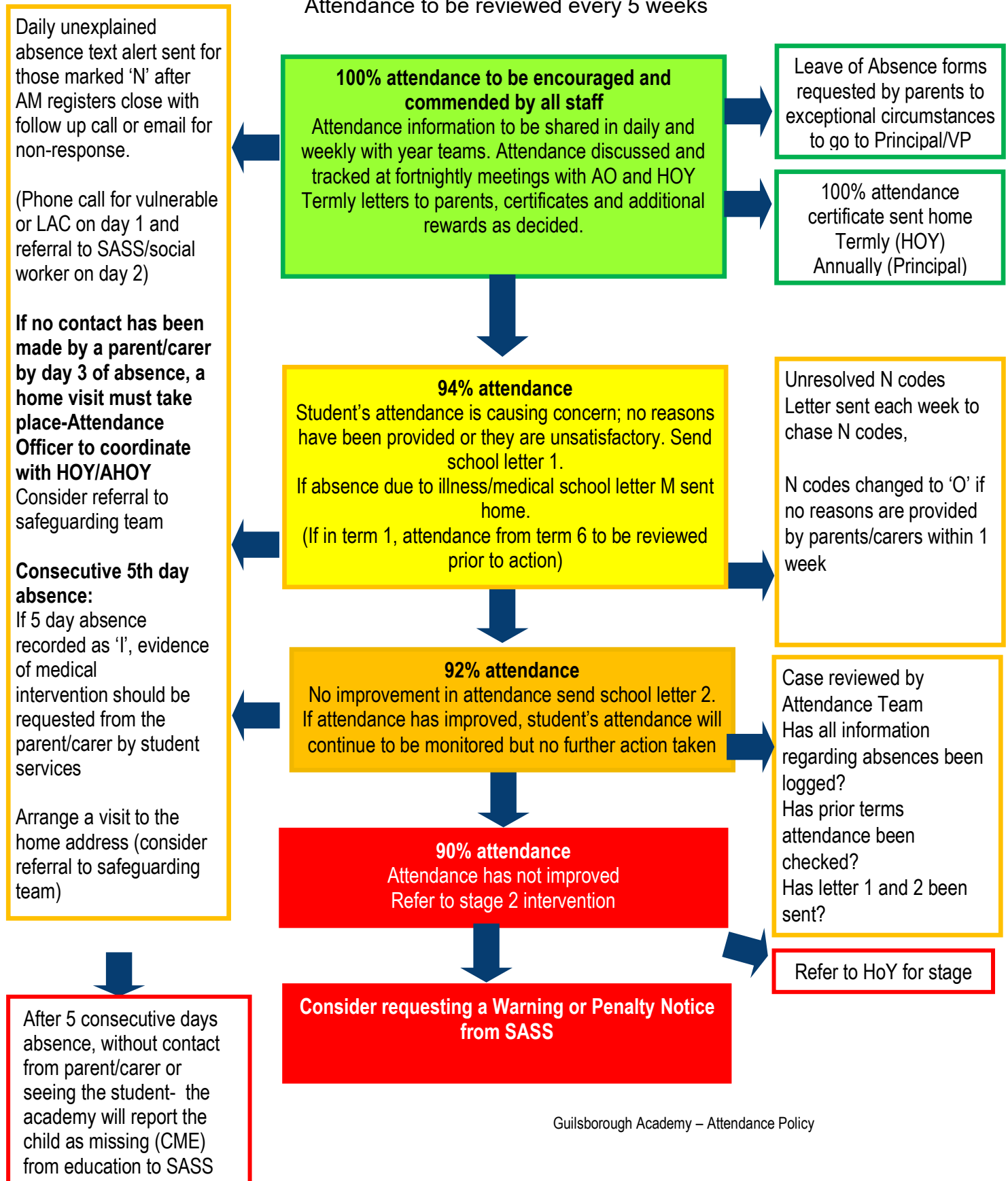
The **Academy** will:

- Accurately record the attendance and any absence of a student through a system of registering students in lessons and regular spot checks.
- Send an email/text message if your child is absent and we have not heard from you, asking that you please contact the Academy to explain the absence.
- Phone home on the first day of absence for vulnerable children and looked after children. We ensure that any absence of two days without satisfactory explanation is referred to the SASS and/or Social Worker.
- After 3 consecutive days absence without contact from parents/carers, a home visit will be conducted.
- After 5 consecutive days absence due to illness, request medical evidence from the parent/carer. This will inform the need for a home visit.
- After 5 consecutive days absence without contact from parents/carers or seeing the student, the Academy will report the child as 'missing in education' (SASS).
- In the case of known long term absence (with a medical note) where appropriate, provide work for the student at home and take action to achieve the successful reintegration of the student on their return. The school may seek permission from the parent/carer to seek advice from a medical professional.

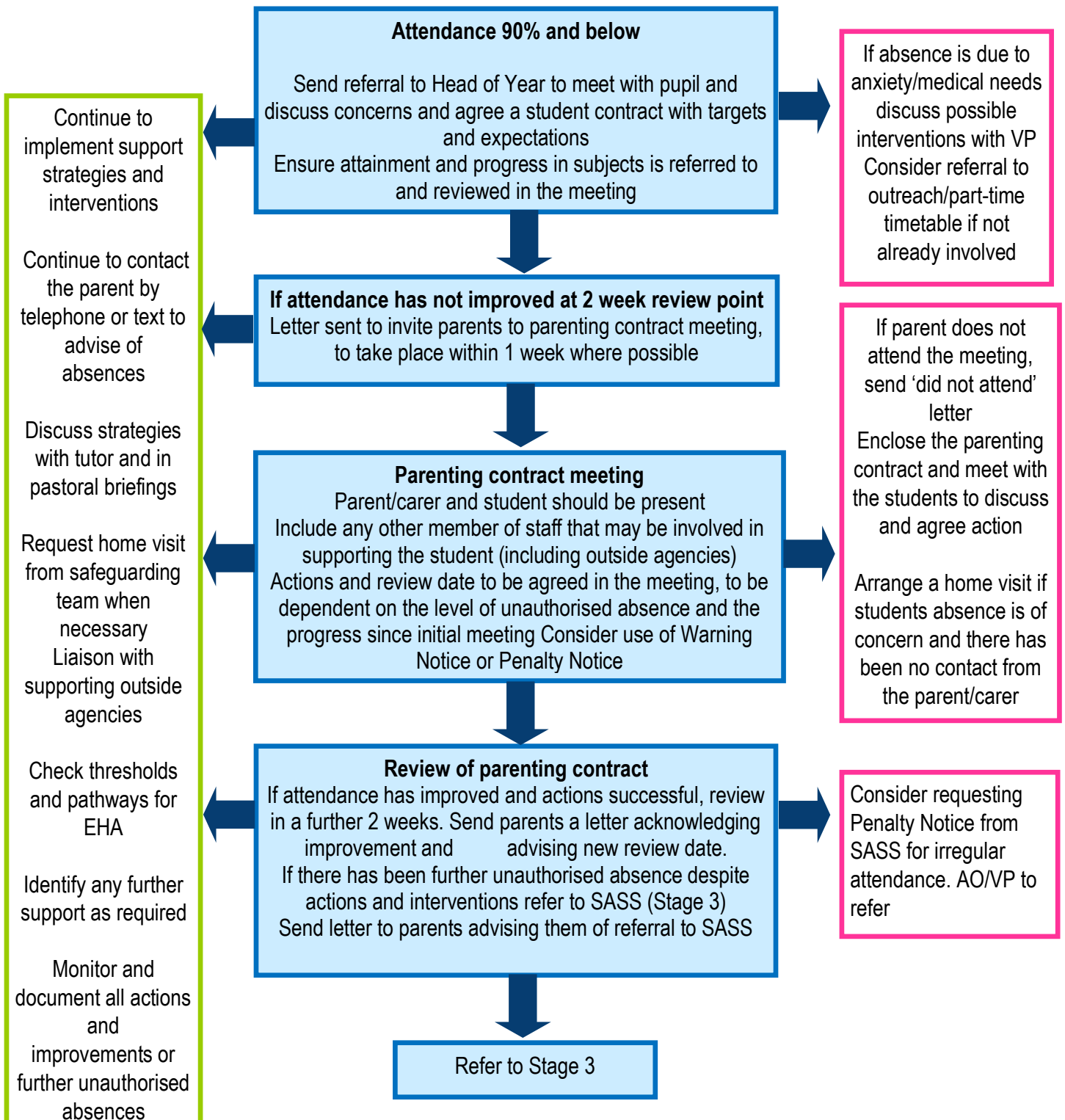
The following flow diagrams illustrate the information above.



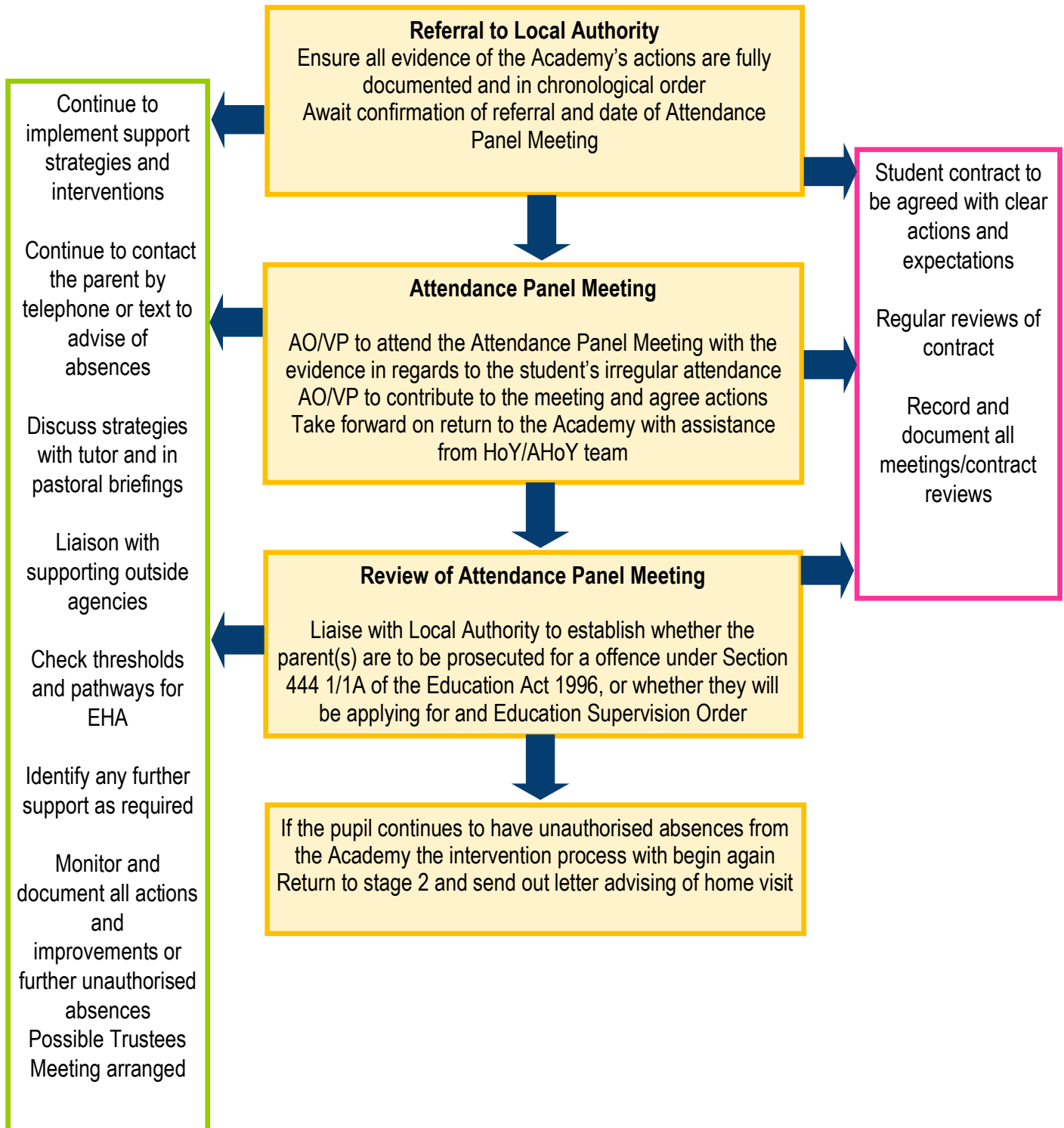
Attendance intervention flowchart – Stage 1 Managed by the Attendance Officer and year teams Attendance to be reviewed every 5 weeks



**Attendance intervention flowchart – Stage 2
Managed by Heads of Year**



**Attendance intervention flowchart – Stage 3
Managed by Attendance Officer/Vice Principal/SASS**





When problems of attendance arise:

A staged approach (above) is taken that includes letters and meetings with staff such as members of the pastoral team, Head of Year, Senior Leadership Team and Trustees. If attendance does not improve following reviews or continues to deteriorate, the following actions will occur:

- Parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence and appointment cards.
- The academy will contact SASS for further support.
- A referral to the SASS for prosecution may be necessary if attendance falls below 90% and does not improve.
- All pupils with a strong attendance are rewarded in line with the Academy Rewards Policy.

Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school as soon as possible and work together with academy staff in resolving any problems. We recognise there are many reasons as to why a student may struggle to attend school and open and regular communication is key to us working together to identify issues and put a plan in place to resolve them.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent/carer may refer the child to a member of the SASS from Northamptonshire County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed. The SASS are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available by contacting Northamptonshire County Council.

Home Visits

Home visits take place for a number of reasons. They are usually conducted when we have been unable to contact a parent or carer for 3 consecutive days. The purpose of the visit is to conduct a welfare check and to work with families to remove barriers to non-attendance.

Children Missing in Education

If we have been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a student for 5 consecutive days, they will be reported as a Child Missing in Education (CME). Contact with other agencies such as SASS and the Police may have been contacted or involved prior to this.

References

Further information regarding attendance is published on the Academy website.

This policy has been written with reference to the following documents:

- DfE - [working together to improve school attendance](#)
- DfE - statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).
- DfE - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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](#)

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Vice Principal

The designated senior leader is 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

Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 Principal
- Working with the Family Support Worker and external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-Penalty Notices

Family Support Worker

The Family Support Worker is responsible for:

- Maintain regular communication with specific parents/carers and provide personalised support for families through issues as they arise regarding non-attendance to school
- Put interventions in place to encourage parents/carers' involvement in supporting pupils' development and progress
- Keep up to date on the latest services available in the local area so you can promote and signpost parents/carers to these via a range of communication channels (e.g. social media, newsletters, in meetings, etc)
- Carry out home visits, where required
- Implement and monitor progress of action plans, working with parents/carers to make adjustments to support as necessary
- Support parents/carers through the application process for accessing local services and help them attend relevant meetings
- To run supportive parenting groups for vulnerable families or targeted groups

Other staff responsible for attendance are:



- Heads of Year
- Assistant Heads of Year
- Tutors
- Student Reception

Summary

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