



Attendance Policy

Including procedures for EWO Visits and Communication with Parents

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Approved by Chair _____

Review Date _____

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school.
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- raise the overall school attendance to be at least in line with national and to improve attendance to above the national average.

Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Procedures for Attendance

- Doors open for pupils at 8.40am
- Doors shut for pupils at 9am
- Register taken by the class teacher with pupils sitting down and following class procedures at 9am
- Pupils are either marked present, or absences should be marked as 'N' to be completed by the Attendance Officer
- Learning starts as soon as the children enter the classroom at 8.40am
- Children attending appointments during the school day will be signed out at the school office and signed back in on return.

Procedures for Punctuality

- Late pupils must enter via the main office.
- Teachers of late students after 9am must send a short email to Attendance Officer with name of child and time of arrival – message title should be 'late arrival'
- Pupils who arrive after 9am are late and recorded on the signing in system and continue to class.
- After 9:00am the Attendance officer can begin updating the MIS using the signing in system and recording further late arrivals as L with minutes late noted

Monitoring of lateness will be undertaken by the Attendance Officer, Attendance Lead and Head Teacher and reoccurring problems will lead to parents being invited into school to address the concern.

Procedures for Pupil Authorising Absence

- Authorising attendance will be conducted using an escalated approach detailed in this policy in line with Section 175 Education Act 2002 which details that school has a safeguarding responsibility to investigate unexplained absence
- It is the Parents' responsibility to inform school of absence and subsequently, reasons for absence
- Parents are required to contact school before 10:00am on every day of absence to confirm the reason of absence and its likely duration.
- NOTE: Parents who routinely fail to make contact with the school will have all absences unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been supplied parents are contacted to clarify the reason for absence
- School will commence absence queries by telephone at 9.15am.
- The school will undertake a home visit in order to establish reasons for absence.
 - This will occur on the first day of unreported absence if a pupil's attendance is below 90% by the Family Liaison Team or SLT
 - This will occur on the second day of unreported absence if a pupil's attendance is below 96% by the Family Liaison Team or SLT
 - This will occur on the third day of unreported absence if a pupil's attendance is above 96% by the Family Liaison Team or SLT
- If we are unable to make contact via home visit, we will call other contacts listed to try to establish a reason for absence and to check everything is ok.

Pupils With Attendance Which Causes Concern

Parents of children who have attendance below 96% are identified as causing concern. Attendance will be monitored along with actions taken and targets for attendance will be set. Children with attendance below 90% are considered to be 'Persistently Absent' (PA).

Where pupils' attendance is **Below 96% Absence concern (A)** the following intervention pathway will be followed

- Below 96% and is falling, parents of pupils will receive a letter stating current attendance and advising of school's concern – Trigger letter 1. This letter is sent home by post
- Monitoring of attendance is shared with parents using their registration certificate.

If attendance continues to fall over the following two weeks without justifiable reasoning, the next step in the attendance will be followed

- Letter sent to parents advising that all absences from this point will require medical evidence to be authorised. Medical evidence can include but is not limited to.
 - i. Appointment card/letter
 - ii. Prescription – pre collection
 - iii. Photocopy of named medication from chemist – must be within the absence timeframe where short illness occurs. Ongoing conditions will be subject to discretion of the Headteacher
 - iv. Forwarded text message or email from medical service

Attendance will continue to be monitored for a further two weeks. Where continuous unauthorised absence occurs:

- Meeting with attendance lead and attendance officer to discuss reasons for absence and available in school support solutions to help improve attendance
- Improving attendance plan to be created and agreed to by parent, school and where appropriate the student.
- FLT to be advised of concerns and Early Help Assessment offered.

This plan will be reviewed fortnightly to decide on next course of action. Where unauthorised absences continue to occur:

- Parent to be invited to Trust Panel meeting pre referral to EWO for legal proceedings

Continued unauthorised absence will result in referral to the Education Welfare Officer where legal action is a possibility.

Where pupils' attendance is **Below 90% Persistent Absence (PA)**

- Below 90% School action is followed up by the EWO.
- The school also informs the school Nurse if absences are authorised.
- Letter is sent to both Parent/Carer's by post advising of referral to EWO
- If the EHA is refused or has no response and unauthorised absences continue legal proceedings will take place.
- Regular meetings take place involving the school and EWO to monitor attendance and discuss cases.
- The Head of School will regularly update the governors with overview of attendance and formally report to the governing body termly.

Procedures for Monitoring and Promoting Attendance

School uses a tracking system to monitor weekly attendance of all pupils on roll. The tracker will update each Monday by the Trust Data Manager to enable the attendance team to see concerns as they begin. Interventions will be tracked in a way to evidence the work carried out to support pupils and their families in improving their attendance. The information gathered within this tracking system will facilitate the decisions made in managing attendance.

School Support & Rewards

There are a number of in school support mechanisms available to promote attendance and prevent persistent absenteeism. At Northwood Park these include but are not limited to:

- School Minibus – see Appendix 1
- FLO support
- Early Help Assessment
- Breakfast club
- Modified Timetable
- Improving Attendance Plan
- Individual Attendance Poster – Rewards based
- Whole class rewards
- 100% attendance certificates
- Bronze, Silver & Gold attendance badges – term based
- Rewards fun days at end of term

Early Help Assessment

The Early Help Assessment (EHA) is a local assessment that is used by all agencies working with children and their families within the community, it aims to agree what extra help may be needed to support a child or young person at an early stage to prevent escalation of concerns.

There are many children that can be supported via the Early Help, however this support will only be provided once consent is sought by the adult responsible for the child. When attendance becomes a concern, children can be supported via an Early Help plan to encourage attendance to school. The Attendance Officer or the Family Liaison Support Worker can become the named lead to deliver the Early Help, (Refer to trigger point 2) this will be introduced within the earliest stages of communication. Dependant on the personal circumstances and support required, the lead will be appropriately allocated to advocate and create an action plan that best fits the needs of the child. At this point the lead will make contact with the parent/carer to discuss what offer of support is required in order for the child and family to receive the best opportunities they deserve. The Early Help will be regularly reviewed with parents/carers including the child to evidence progress and any further support required.

Please refer to the Early Help Policy for further information.

Trust Panel

As part of SHINE Academies, support is available to school from the Trust to promote good attendance. The Trust Panel is comprised of the Family Liaison Lead, Deputy Family Liaison Lead, and the Data Manager.

Where attendance continues to fall with unauthorised absence, despite following the intervention pathway, the Trust Panel will convene to meet with parents/carers to discuss their barriers to good attendance. This will be a formal meeting and parents advised that information shared will also be shared with school. Agreed actions will be filed and stored for review purposes.

Failure to attend the Trust Panel meeting by parent/carer will lead to referral to EWO services for legal support.

Leave of Absence

The school follows the local authority procedures when parents apply for leave of absence. All applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis and the norm for one application may not be for another.

Application for Leave of Absence

- Parent/carer collects Local Authority Leaflet from school
- Parent/carer returns completed application form which is dated at the school office
- Attendance Officer attaches attendance information and forwards application to Headteacher
- Headteacher applies approval criteria
- Application forwarded to Attendance Officer who informs parent of outcome by appropriate letter
- Applications are processed within five working days

Leave of absence that is approved – authorised absence

Leave of absence that is not approved – unauthorised absence

The Headteacher and governing body approve leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness, and significant events such as a family wedding or cultural/religious reasons. As decided by the governors of the school, the Headteacher, apart from highly exceptional cases, can only authorise up to 5 days leave of absence in an academic year. Any further leave of absence in that academic year will not be authorised.

If any further leave of absence exceeds 5 days in succession the school will contact the Education Welfare Service who may serve a penalty notice.

Exceptional Circumstances

The government and schools realise that it is more expensive to go on holiday during the school holiday period than at other times of the year. However, it is the view of the DfE that a child should be in school for the 39 weeks of the academic year and that holidays in term time in whatever form are not considered to be 'exceptional' circumstances.

Holidays are not a good enough reason for taking a child or young person out of school.

Absence from school under exceptional circumstances is slightly different from taking a holiday in term time. In deciding whether or not to grant a leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances,' the following s considered:

- What is the normal pattern of attendance for the child(ren) whose parent is asking for a leave of absence?
- What is 'exceptional' for one family might be the norm for another family.

If the request for a leave of absence is not approved by the Heateacher but the parent takes their child away, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, and the Head of School may refer the matter on to the education welfare service. The parent is then at risk of receiving a £60.00 fixed penalty notice per child per week per parent. If this is not paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice the cost rises to £120 which must be paid between 21 and 28 days of receipt of the notice. All penalty notices will be delivered by hand or first-class post. If the notice has not been paid in full by 28 days of receipt, the council must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice. Once issued a penalty notice may only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Proof has been established that the penalty notice has been issued to the wrong person.
- The notice ought not to have been issued e.g., where it has been issued outside the terms of the code of conduct or no offence has been committed.

This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school not for non-payment of the fine.

Prosecutions are brought under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

Parents/carers need to be mindful that a conviction for this offence can result in a criminal record.

Non-Return from Leave of Absence

It may occur that a child does not return within the stated period of leave of absence. Initially normal school absence procedures are followed.

If the child has not returned within five days subsequent to the stated period of leave of absence the following procedure is followed:

- Case referred to the EWO by the Attendance Officer.
- Home visit undertaken by the Attendance Officer.
- Letter is sent by post to parent

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- all pupils leaving with permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school in case of being stopped by Truancy Patrol.
- if a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.*

Truancy Patrol

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers.

Education Welfare can also commence legal proceeding against parents under section 444 Education Act 1996 or apply to family proceeding court for an ESO to secure regular attendance.

Modified Timetable - MTT

Where a child is considered to need a shorter day for a brief period of time, a modified timetable can be considered. The authorisation of the modified timetable lies with the Headteacher.

- All MTT's are at the agreement of the parent and their consent can be withdrawn at any time
- Once agreed verbally, School must inform Family Liaison Lead, Deputy Family Liaison Lead and Data Manager by email.
- A MTT is not a long-term solution but rather a short term 'relief' to find a better solution to the situations presented. Once begun, they should be reviewed with parents weekly by telephone with paperwork signed to acknowledge the agreement and after four weeks in a formal minuted meeting.
- FLT to complete home visits to assure work is completed whilst at home
- MTT contract and Risk Assessment must be signed by parent/carers and school and uploaded to CPOMs
- If a child is present for part of the session agreed, they will be marked as '/ - present' however, where the MTT makes the child absent for a whole session, they will be marked as 'C - other authorised circumstances'
- At the end of the MTT agreement, return to school reintegration paperwork to be completed by FLT and stored on file and CPOMs. Trust staff listed above to be advised.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the school as soon as possible.

Pupils are expected to continue attending the school until admitted to a new school. If pupils do not attend during this period, the EWO will be notified.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Education Welfare. If any pupil who is going to be removed from the school roll for any of the 15 reasons given under Section 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the school will inform the Local Authority.

When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority must include:

- (a) the full name of the pupil,
- (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides,
- (c) at least one telephone number of the parent,
- (d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and

(e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register

This should be done by completing the local authority off registration form. The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion.

In respect of Reception children who do not take up their allocated place schools should contact the parents to see if they still want the school place. If parents confirm they do not want the place, schools should not put the pupil on roll and notify school admissions.

Wolverhampton School Admissions – 01902 551122

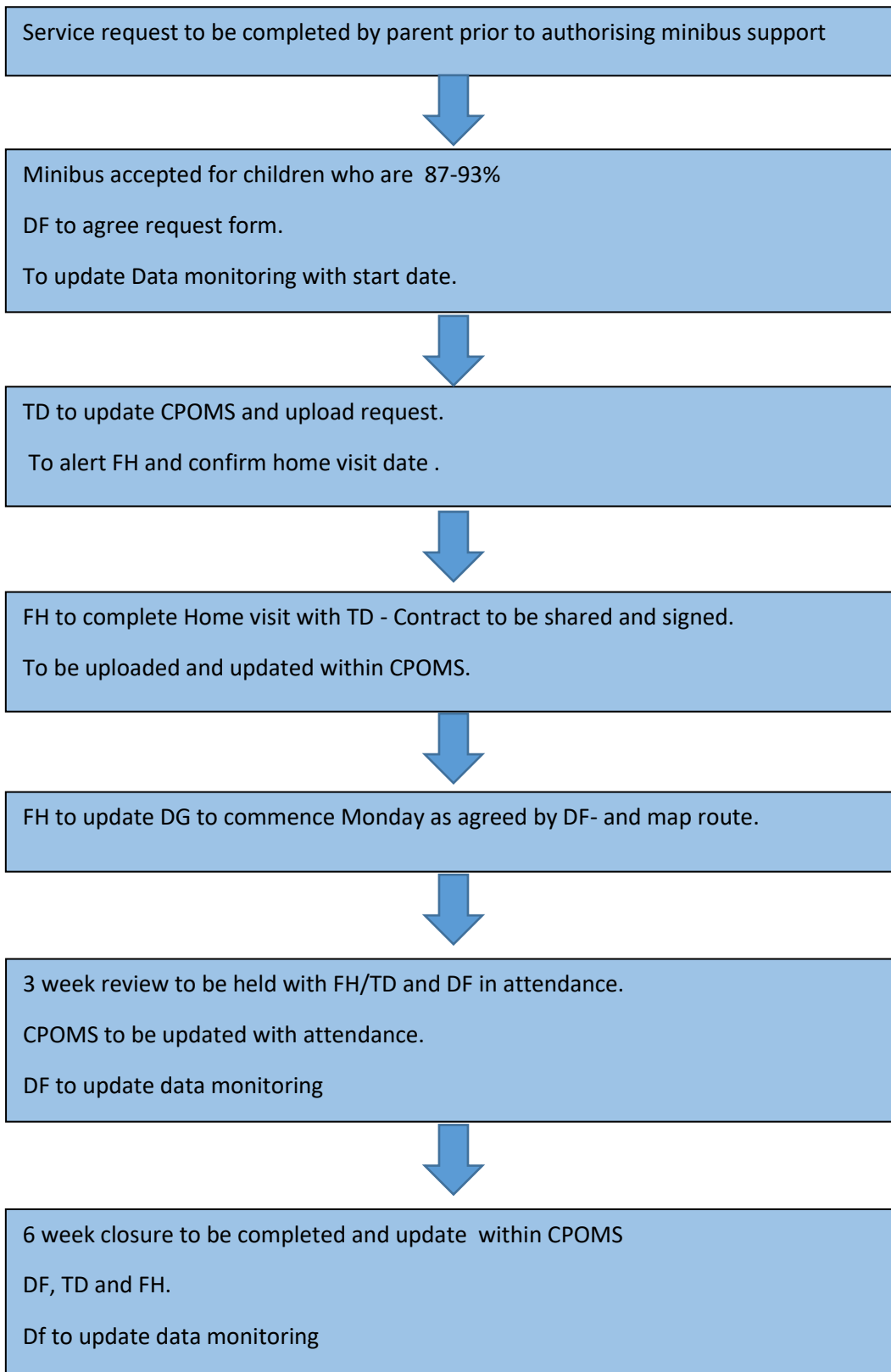
Pupils joining school

All schools must also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. For schools that exchange their data with the LA, this will happen automatically.

Children Missing in Education

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the LA before deleting the pupils' name from the register. Schools should use the Child Missing Education Enquiry Form to support this, and it should be sent to Education Welfare Officer

Accessing the Minibus Service



Appendix 2

Attendance Officer Timetable

8.30 – 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Checking registers• Absence line retrieval• Lates• Absence phone calls• Safeguarding concerns to FLT
10.30 – lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update tracker• Home visits with FLT• Identify necessary actions on tracker
Lunch cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time in main office to cover other admin staff lunch breaks where needed
After lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry out administration tasks from attendance tracking• Meetings where necessary• Emails to professionals regarding attendance

EWO meeting – Thursday PM weekly.