

# Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School



## **Attendance Policy November 2021 Review Autumn 2024**

***All staff at Elmsleigh School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and are aware of procedures for reporting concerns.***

## **1. Mission Statement**

We value each and every Elmsleigh child and have high expectations for them to succeed in all areas of school life including their social and emotional needs. In order to do this, our mission is for EVERY single child to attend school on time on a daily basis. Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Our mission is for all children to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and purposeful experiences to provide them with the foundations in building a brighter future.

We recognise that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive where our pupils enjoy coming to school in order to learn and thrive, both academically and emotionally. Our magical learning environment and inclusive ethos strives to achieve this.

The welfare and safety of every child is held in high regard and we endeavour to ensure that all children are happy and safe. We believe that to be successful, all our learners require the highest level of access, attendance and engagement in our inclusive, high quality educational setting.

## **2. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

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

### **3. Aims**

- To make attendance and punctuality a high priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- To ensure that every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify children or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Recognise and address the needs of the individual child when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- To promote and support punctuality

### **4. Roles and responsibilities**

All members of Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

#### **The governing board:**

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensure that regular monitoring takes place. The named link Governor is Elizabeth Sanderson.

#### **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Promoting good attendance through celebration assemblies and newsletter information

### **The Attendance team**

The designated senior leader is Karen Burton who oversees the attendance team and she can be contacted via [headteacher@elmsleigh.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@elmsleigh.derbyshire.sch.uk).

The team comprises of Karen Burton (Headteacher), Tina Arckless (pastoral lead) and Elisha Flamson (Commucations and office co-ordinator) We also have a wider team including Early Help advisors from the local authority and the FASST team.

The attendance team 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

### **The Attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is Elisha Flamson and she can be contacted via calling 01283 216883 or emailing [enquiries@elmsleigh.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@elmsleigh.derbyshire.sch.uk).

She is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 the pastoral leader and early help teams to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **Class teachers**

We ask teachers to know and understand the importance of good attendance. This is achieved by:

- Encouraging good attendance through verbal praise and rewards.

- › Ensure that registers are correctly and promptly marked.
- › Set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- › Ensure that parents are informed of their child's attendance during parents consultations.
- › Continue to provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn.
- › Provide engaging and worthwhile learning experiences that encourage students to regularly attend lessons.
- › Promote the importance of a good routine and a healthy lifestyle, ie: getting lots of sleep and drinking lots of water.
- › Listen to and value children's views.

### **Role of the children**

Children have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of Elmsleigh school and to make the most of the education opportunities available. Although our children are very young, this ethos is instilled at the first opportunity in their school years.

All children will:

- › Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- › Be happy and encourage others to feel happy.
- › Develop resilience engage in learning by using the Zones of regulation to help them
- › Understand the importance of a good routine and a healthy lifestyle, ie: getting lots of sleep and drinking lots of water
- › Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

### **Role of parents**

Parents have an essential role in ensuring their child's good attendance. Parents must:

- › Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing the children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- › Praise and reward good attendance, even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- › Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- › Contact the school office by phone or letter as soon as possible to say why their child is absent, and when they are expected to return.
- › Only grant days at home for genuine illness.

- If appropriate, arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time. Ensure that medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children are wearing their P.E school uniform on the correct days;
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

## 5. Definitions

### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones the absence line (01283 216883, option 1) explain the reason for the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school and gives the reason that it was to go shopping for school shoes, this will not mean it is authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised absence:**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised is when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason.

### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- The DFE define a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at 10% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the terms progress but these pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond.

## 6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a child during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. For example, this could include a wedding of their parents. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office

<https://elmsleighinfantschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/exeptional-leave-request.pdf>

The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

**Valid reasons for authorised absence include:**

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

It is the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a child's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

## **7. Unplanned and planned absences**

### **Unplanned absence**

The child's parent/carer must notify the Elmsleigh school of the reason for the absence on the very first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the absence line (01283 216883, option 1) explain the reason for the absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. We will ask the child's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the Elmsleigh school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The office must be notified by emailing [enquiries@elmsleigh.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@elmsleigh.derbyshire.sch.uk) as soo

as the appointment has been booked. Alternatively, parents can send a letter to the school office.

We strongly encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and returned to school afterwards.

## **8. Monitoring and analysing Attendance**

### **Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School will:**

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level, using the FFT Aspire attendance tracker to identify trends.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver information and support in a targeted way to children and families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

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.

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

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

### **Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery school will:**

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Inform parents through a letter of persistent absence concerns and that a monitoring period is in place
- 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
- If meetings and external intervention does not improve attendance then Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School may issue a penalty notice (see Appendix 3).



## **9. Intervening with Attendance Concerns:**

Where we have concerns around a child's attendance we may intervene in one or more of the following ways:

- The Attendance team will review the attendance of all the children at least every four weeks.

Any children identified as a cause for concern or less than 95% attendance will be reviewed on a more regular basis.

- A letter will be sent to the parents/carers of any child identified as having attendance issues, informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending.
- Where patterns are identified, a phone call or meeting between the parent pastoral lead may take place to discuss the pattern and resolve any issues preventing attendance.
- The child's attendance will be closely monitored and if there appears to be no improvement, the family will be considered for an attendance review meeting.

### **Legal Sanctions**

Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **Prosecution**

Requests for prosecution may be made if all of the forms of intervention, including early help support and an issue of penalty notices has failed to improve a child's attendance in school. (See appendix 4).



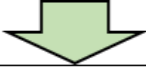

## APPENDIX 1

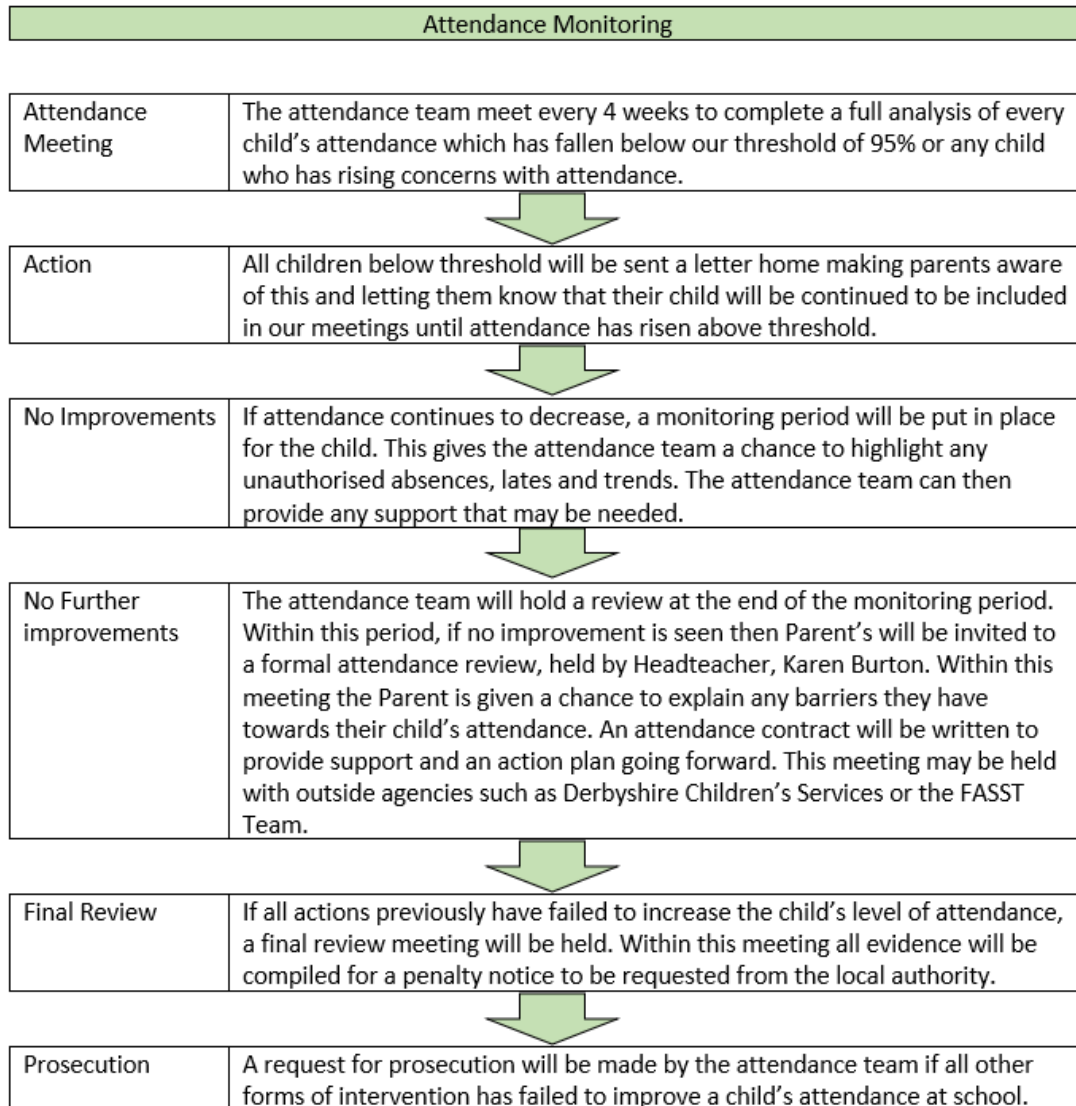
## Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School Attendance in Snapshot

### Attendance Overview

Attendance Records	Class teachers will record attendance electronically via Integris at 9:00am each morning and 1:00pm each afternoon.
Late Arrivals	Pupils arriving between 9:00am and 9:30am will be recorded as arriving late before the close of registration (L). Thereafter, pupils will be recorded as arriving late after close of registration (U). Parents must sign in their child on the school InVentry system, located in the foyer, this accurately records the time and parents reasons for lateness.

### Pupil Absence from School

Absence Reporting	Parents must report absence by 8:30am each morning via the absence line. 0123 216883 press option 1 and clearly state, child's name, <u>class</u> and reason for absence.
	
1 <sup>st</sup> Action	All parents who have not contacted the school regarding their child's absence will be reminded by the school office to notify of a reason via text by 9:30am
	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Action - No Response	If there is still no response by 10am the office will contact using main emergency contact numbers. A voicemail will be left if there is no answer.
	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Action – Still No Response	If no contact can be made by 10:30am, all the emergency contacts will be contacted. The Pastoral Lead will be informed.
	
4 <sup>th</sup> Action – Appropriate Action	The Pastoral Lead (Tina Arckless) and DSL (Karen Burton) will consult and decide what the appropriate action will be. If concerns remain Social Services may be informed. Attendance code for that day will be marked as an unauthorised absence and will go against the child in attendance monitoring.



## APPENDIX 2

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

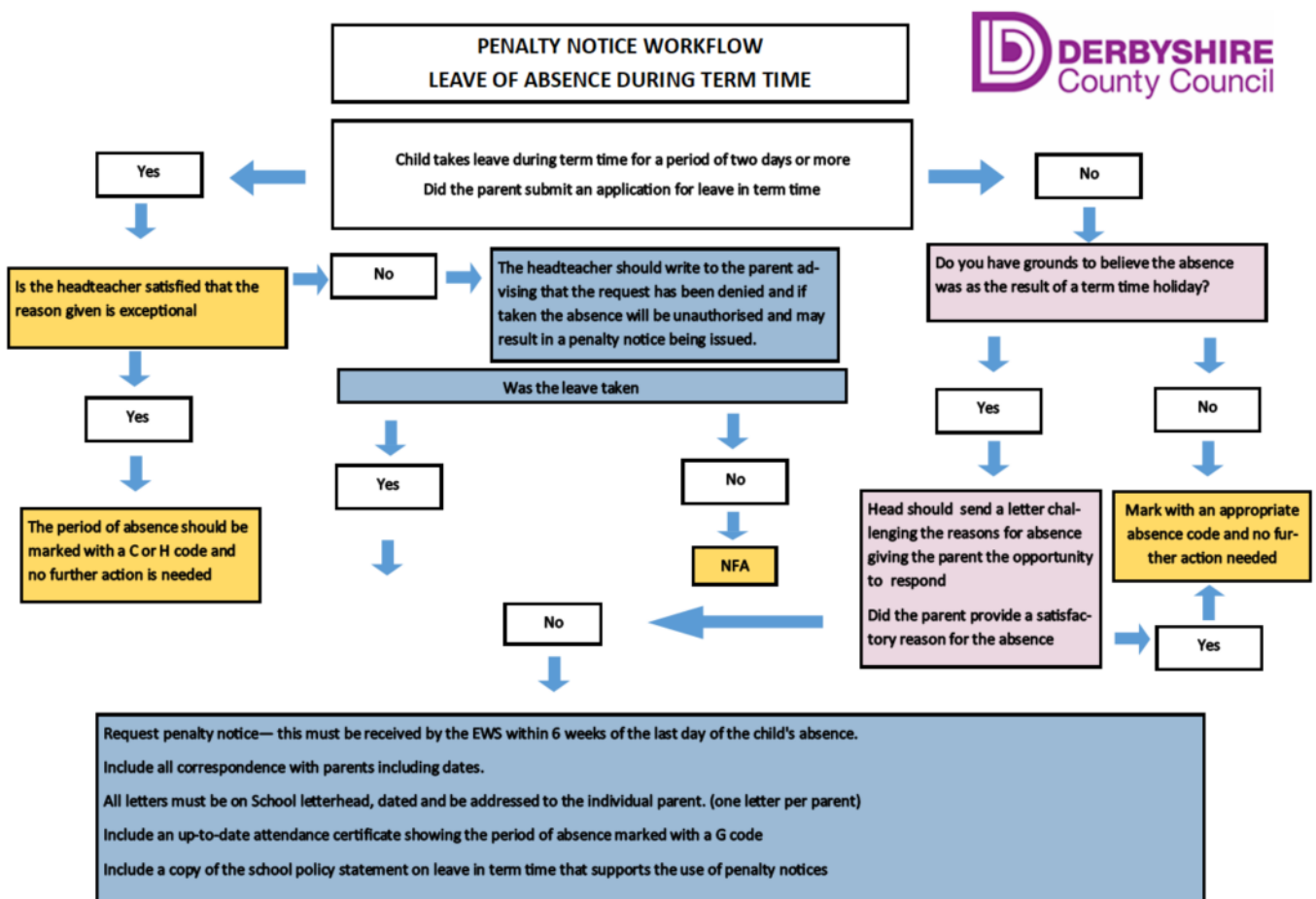
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site

		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

APPENDIX 3



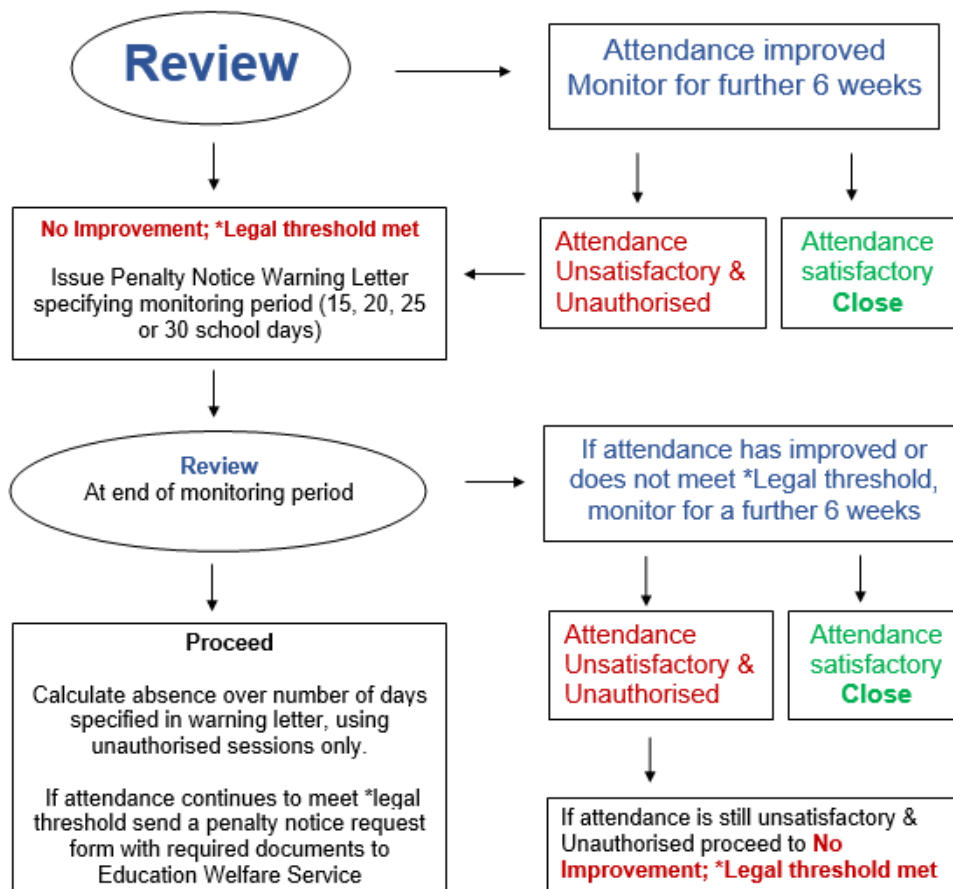
APPENDIX 4

### PENALTY NOTICE WORKFLOW

To be used in conjunction with the guidance notes for requesting the issue of a penalty notice.

#### Emerging Attendance Concern

- Identify a key worker where possible
- Undertake and record preventative work including Early Help Assessment, home visits, support meetings, reasonable adjustments for evidentiary purposes.
- Ensure parent is informed of their parental responsibility via Parental Responsibility Letter



APPENDIX 5

**PROSECUTION WORKFLOW**

To be used in conjunction with the guidance notes for requesting the prosecution of a parent

**Ongoing Attendance Concern – \*Legal Threshold Met**

- No improvement or repeated cycle of short-term improvements linked to penalty notice process.
- All prior considerations as per guidance notes have been undertaken and can be evidenced.

