



The John Colet Liaison Group

Local Schools Working In Partnership for mutual benefit

Wendover CE Junior School

*Through living our Christian values, everyone at WCEJS has the opportunity to flourish as individuals.
We nurture the curiosity to learn, the courage to lead and the compassion to care.*

Building solid foundations (Mathew 7: 24-27)



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date approved by Governing Body	Autumn 2024
Date to be reviewed	As required

Introduction

High rates of attendance and punctuality are an essential part of children flourishing in their education. We recognize that good attendance enables children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, and capable adults. As a school, we follow guidance from the DfE about matters of school attendance.

We work in partnership with our parents/carers to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education. Where we have concerns about a child's attendance, we will contact parents/carers to determine how barriers can be overcome.

We are therefore committed to:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure children have the support in place to attend school

Aims

This policy outlines our intention to work alongside families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and to find positive resolutions. This policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement and achievement supported by additional policies such as Safeguarding, Behaviour and Relationships and SEND Policy. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000. It also encompasses the principles included in [DfE guidance on Working together to improve school attendance](#) August 2024.

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.

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register and place all children onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session. Children must arrive in school by 8:50 am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.05pm.

It will mark whether every child is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Categorising Absence

Unplanned Absence

The child's parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible. When reporting an absence parents will need to advise us of the child's name, class and detailed reason for absence. This can be done in one of two ways:

1. Calling the school absence line - **01296 696822**
2. Emailing the school – admin@wendoverjunior.co.uk

Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking Parents/Carers/carers. Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by Parents/Carers. To ensure an absence is authorised, Parents/Carers must provide a satisfactory reason for absence.

What should I do if my child is unwell?

If your child is experiencing mild symptoms such as a snotty nose, headache, feeling tired or hayfever, please send them into school. These are not valid reasons to miss an entire day of education; children can access our medical team at any point, and if it is felt that they need to be sent home, we will contact parents and carers.

If your child has been sick/has diarrhoea, has an injury or is genuinely unwell and not able to attend school, please ensure that you contact the school by 9am on the first day of illness and **on each individual day of the absence**. This can be either by e-mail or by telephone.

In the event of continuous absence due to illness the school is obliged to request medical evidence; the school may ask the child's parents/carers 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 school is unable to validate the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence/Medical Appointments

If your child needs to attend a medical/dental appointment during school hours, parents/carers should notify the school in advance of the appointment, whenever possible, this will be marked as an authorised absence if a copy of the confirmation of the appointment is provided to school. If this is not provided there is a possibility that this absence will be marked as unauthorised.

We strongly encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours, however we appreciate this is not always an option. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child's parents/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness: In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents/Carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents/Carers must show evidence (appointment card, letter, forwarded text message / email).

Other Authorised Circumstances: This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part-time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package or a specific intervention for individual children.

Excluded (no alternative provision made): Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher or member of SLT will arrange work to be sent home.

Late Arrival: The gates are open from 8:40 to 8:50am, allowing plenty of time for the children to make their way to the classroom for registration. All children who arrive after the gates have closed at 8.50am must immediately report to the school office to register and will be marked as late (Code L). Registers are closed at 9.20am (30 minutes after opening at 8.50am). Pupils arriving after 9.20am will be marked as unauthorised (Code U) and this will count as an absence for that session and will affect their attendance percentage.

The absence will only be **authorised** if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment (Code M). The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** (Code U) if the pupil has arrived after 9.20am without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless Parents/Carers have provided a satisfactory explanation which has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of **unsatisfactory explanations** include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform and/or shoes
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Parent's non-critical illness
- Looking after the house
- Looking after other family members
- Illness of another family member, i.e., pupil kept off school when sibling unwell
- Day trips
- Unwell pets

Family Holidays and Extended Leave: Parents/Carers are not permitted to take holiday during term time. Parents/Carers do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

If a child needs to be absent from school for a period for extenuating circumstances, a meeting with the Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher needs to be arranged. The Headteacher can grant discretionary leave if there are compelling mitigating reasons.

Parents/Carers wishing to take their child out of school for a fixed period need to complete an absence form (appendix 3) and return it to the school office at least 10 days prior to the leave commencing. Retrospective requests for absence from school will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Urgency of the absence

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return and the reason the absence was authorised
- That Parents/Carers must contact school should any delays occur (Parents/Carers should be prepared to provide evidence of any delay)

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will absence be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases, granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases, Parents/Carers must justify why the holiday must be taken during term time. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday for example, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the County Attendance Team (CAT), who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance: We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends, and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance (Code R).

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to allow their children not to attend school on a day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's/carers religious body. It is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year.

Parents/Carers/Carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for these reasons. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence: The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. The school will work closely with the family to help ensure continuity of education for pupils when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes. The school will encourage the child to attend school elsewhere i.e. dual registered at an additional school for the period the family is travelling.

To protect Traveller Parents/Carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e., 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve Parents/Carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

Following Up Unexplained Absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents/carers to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parents/carers daily until an explanation is given
- If we are unable to contact a parent, the additional contacts provided will be used to contact parents to notify them of their child's absence and to receive an explanation
- If the school cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the school may do any or all of the following:

Within First 48 Hours – 5 days

- Check with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with
- Check with the child's friends
- Telephone calls made to any numbers held in the school records
- Attempt telephone contact with all known emergency numbers
- Send emails to all known email addresses
- Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family e.g. social care/ Youth Offending Service
- Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll
- Conduct a home visit if we have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.
- The police and/ or social services may be contacted

Within days 5-10

- Write to address of emergency contact (if known)
- Speak to the County School Attendance Officer for advice:
countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Inform the parents/carers of the child in writing that we are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to the Children Missing Education Team may be required if no response is provided
- Repeat a home visit if we have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.
- When all reasonable enquiries have been completed the school will refer to the Local Authority's 'Child Missing in Education' team.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, Parents/Carers, pupils, and the wider school community.

All staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their Parents/Carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and Parents/Carers

SLT will:

- Ensure that the curriculum is active across the school and that all teachers are providing good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Ensure that everyone feels welcome in our school and that attendance is not hindered by discrimination or intolerance
- Regularly analyse data and investigate reasons for persistent absence
- Report children's attendance at least termly to parents/carers
- Parents/carers may be notified of their child's attendance at any point should it be cause for concern
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Class teachers and LSAs will:

- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation by completing their registers by 8:50am each morning and as soon as they return to class after lunch (by 1:10pm at the latest)
- Check cloakrooms, toilets and shared areas for any absent children before submitting their register
- Encourage the children in their care to be curious and develop their love of learning so that children want to come to school
- Follow-up any absence with a conversation on the child's return to see if future absences of this nature can be avoided
- Address persistent absence with Parents/Carers and offer support to help improve attendance in the future

Administration support will:

- Monitor registers every morning to check for unexplained absences
- Call Parents/Carers of any child who is unexpectedly absent. If no answer, leave message reminding them to call school to explain their child's absence
- Follow up with sending an email to Parents/Carers
- Call first contact for any child whose absence is still unaccounted for by 9.30am

The attendance officer will:

- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data and work with the senior leaders & DSL to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Support pupils and their families, including letters, calls and meetings
- Advise the headteacher when fixed-penalty notices may need to be issued
- Submit information returns and referrals to county attendance team as directed by headteacher and work with the team to improve pupil attendance
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions

The DSL's - Designated Safeguarding Leads will:

- Analyse attendance as part of weekly DSL meetings
- View attendance as part of the school's Mental Health pathway
- Liaise with agencies where necessary
- Liaise with Social Care as necessary if the child has an allocated Social Worker
- Carry out a home visit (after dynamic risk assessment) to establish the whereabouts of any child who is still unaccounted for
- Report as a missing child to police (101) any child who is still unaccounted for despite attempting all contacts and a home visit

Governors will:

- Request regular updates on attendance data and analysis
- Hold leaders to account for their attendance data, including variations in attendance of vulnerable groups
- Challenge leaders on their strategies for improving attendance and their plans for overcoming barriers to attendance

Parents/Carers:

Through our home/school agreement, Parents/Carers meetings and information on our website, we request that Parents/Carers will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there, taking a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress

- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Contact the school if their child is absent to share the reason and the expected date of return.
- Avoid unnecessary absences at all costs. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child or family is experiencing difficulties – do not wait as the school will do all they can to help.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance or well-being
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routines at home, for example, appropriate bedtimes, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Children are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Attendance Monitoring

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using Data to Improve Attendance

All attendance below 95% is monitored. If attendance falls below 90%, we will:

- Organise/send a letter to parents informing them of the low attendance and that the school will continue to monitor over a 5-week period. (If attendance is low or not improving, leading up to the end of the academic school year (July), then attendance will be monitored for a 5-week period on the child's return to school in September and a letter will be sent to Parents/Carers informing them).
- If there is no improvement, a second letter to be sent and if after another period of a few weeks (this will depend on the individual child) parents will be invited to a support meeting.
- At the meeting a plan of support will be agreed (if required) and a target for attendance for the next 5 weeks set.
- If there is no improvement after a 5-week monitoring period (**or Parents/Carers do not attend the support meeting**), a letter will be sent explaining that any further absences may not be authorised without supporting evidence. A letter will also be issued inviting Parent/Carers to attend an **Attendance Contact Meeting (PCM)**, where the Local Authority CAT may attend. If Parent/Carers do not attend this scheduled meeting, the matter will be referred to the CAT, who may consider issuing a penalty notice as an appropriate course of action.

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

The school will:

- Monitor attendance weekly across the school and at an individual child-level, providing an analysis half termly.
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Child-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

Children can fall into the persistently absent category for many varied reasons. Investigating what these are and addressing them as soon as possible is an important part of our attendance policy

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- We may use some of the following early intervention strategies:
- Meetings with parents and child when concerns first emerge to discuss concerns and agree actions to improve attendance
- Documented conversations with parents and child which agree actions

- Referrals to external professional
- Closer monitoring
- Communicating with parents with agreed plans to improve attendance

In more complex and longer-term cases of poor attendance and persistence absence, interventions may include:

- Multi-agency meetings and action plans
- Requesting medical information or information from other services
- Use of local authority enforcement processes and procedures
- Home visits
- Direct work with children and parents to address root causes of absence
- Engaging specialist
- Consideration for an education, health and care plan
- Considering options for an alternative form of educational provision

Support Arrangements

We recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/ carers should make the school aware so that they identify any additional support they may offer.

Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with Parents/Carers and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Reward Systems
- Personalised support plans (PSP)
- Time limited reduction in school hours
- Re-integration support packages
- Communications with parents regarding importance of school attendance
- Education on importance of attendance

Penalty Notice/Legal Sanctions (See Appendix 4: Term-time leave of absence flowchart)

If you take leave which is not authorised by the school the school is required to refer the matter to the Local Authority who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) are issued to each parent and per child. A FPN is £80 if paid within 21 days, and £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine is not paid, the local authority may refer the matter to the magistrates' court and could receive a fine of up to £1000 (per parent) and a criminal record.

If a second period of leave is taken within 3 years (same parent/child) then the fine will start at £160 payable in 28 days. If there is a third offence in 3 years (same parent/child) then the matter will be prosecuted in the magistrate's court.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and at least annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Appendix 1: School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	Present during registration
B	Educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	Attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	Arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Approved sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	Other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence - Regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence due to part-time timetable
D	Dual registered
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	Job/school/college interview
M	Medical or dental appointment
Q	Unable to attend because of a lack of LA access arrangements
R	Religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	Study leave
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	Holiday (not agreed)
N	Reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Late after register has closed
Z	Pupil not yet on register
#	Planned whole school closure (e.g. holidays, insets, and polling station days)

Appendix 2
Attendance Contract Template

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
School:	

Present at meeting:	
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Discussion Topics: <i>The pastoral support template will be used to assist the meeting</i>	<i>bullying; Anxiety, Home issues; Transport; Academic; Relationships;</i>
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Action agreed
EXAMPLES OF ACTION AGREED: • <i>Pupils will arrive at school by 8.30 a.m. every day.</i> • <i>Parents will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence and provide a note upon pupil's return.</i> • <i>Parents will provide medical evidence for every sickness absence a pupil may incur.</i> • <i>Are any issues preventing pupils from attending regularly, school staff will be informed?</i>

Attendance target:	100%
Timescale for improvement:	

Date for review meeting:	
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I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed to by all present.

Signed:

... Parent/carer

... Pupil

... School Representative

... Other Agency

WENDOVER CE JUNIOR SCHOOL REQUEST FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE



Include all children that the request relates to, including siblings that attend another school (give details)

Name(s):	Class(es):
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Leave is requested:

From:	To (inclusive):
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Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances. Routine medical appointments should be made out of school hours. Leave for the purpose of a holiday is rarely granted.

The reason for the request is:

Supporting evidence:

Parents and carers have a legal duty (Education Act 1996) to ensure their children receive suitable education. Regular school attendance is essential for academic and social success.

Headteachers can only authorise term-time absences in **exceptional circumstances**, defined as rare, significant, unavoidable, and short.

Unauthorised absences may be reported to the County Attendance Team, which could lead to a penalty notice or prosecution, in line with Section 444 of the Education Act, Local Authority Guidelines, and the School Attendance Policy.

I confirm that the above information is correct and has not factual omissions. I understand that any authorised absence may be unauthorised at a later date if it is found that I provided inaccurate information.

By signing the application you are confirming that you have read and understood the information above.

Signature (parent/carers):	Date:
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OFFICE USE ONLY:

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

Pupil details:				
Name	Class	Attendance rate	Unauthorised absence (10 wks)	Unauthorised absence (last year)

Leave of absence requested		
From:	To:	School Sessions:

☐ Checks have been made with sibling schools to ensure consistent decisions

☐ This absence request has been accepted providing attendance remains above 95%

☐ This absence request has been refused because:

- Your child has already had one leave of absence request this year
- The request covers all/part of an internal/external assessment period
- Insufficient notice has been given (10 school days required)
- Attendance is less than 95% and/or there are lateness issues
- There are previous concerns regarding attendance, including unauthorised absence
- The reason is not considered exceptional
- Insufficient reasons for the request have been provided

☐ If leave is unauthorised, parents have been notified in writing that if leave is taken the school may refer to the County Attendance Team to request a fixed penalty notice.

Signature (Headteacher):	Code:

Attendance Officer monitors child’s attendance below 95%

↓

1st letter to be sent informing low attendance – will monitor for 5 weeks. If attendance reaches 90%, 2nd letter or support meeting to be arranged.

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INVITE BOTH PARENTS/CARERS TO A SUPPORT MEETING

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Parents/carers attend the meeting

↓

At the meeting – use the support meeting form. Where appropriate, referrals and an individual healthcare plan should be agreed and actioned

↓

Monitor the child’s attendance for 5 weeks (no absences should be authorised without evidence)

↓

If there is no Improvement, please send a 1a letter

If there is an Improvement, please send a 1b letter

Parents/carers do not attend the meeting

↓

Parents/carers do not attend the meeting

↓

If parents would like to rearrange the meeting, please invite them using the rearranged template letter

↓

If parents do not attend rearranged meeting, send a 1a letter and make a referral to the County

Parents do not respond to the invitation

↓

Parents do not respond to the invitation

↓

If there is no response, please send a 1a letter and make a referral to the County Attendance Team