

St Matthew's CE Primary School

Attendance Policy



ST MATTHEW'S
CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Introduction

St Matthew's C of E Primary School believes that If children are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. St Matthew's C of E Primary School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, where children are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality, we will work with families to identify the reasons and try to resolve any difficulties.

The UN convention on the rights of a child, Article 28:

"You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can."

St Matthew's C of E Primary School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents. We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of St Matthew's, supported by our policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, Anti-Bullying Policy, Positive Relationships and Behaviour and SEND. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children'

Working together to improve attendance

Following statutory guidance, successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires St Matthew's and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families.

All partners working with our families should work together to:

Expect

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

Monitor

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

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them. Facilitate support Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

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

Enforce

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

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and respond to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent for at least 8 sessions (4 days) from the school / academy for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised.
- A pupil has accumulated at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, St Matthew's CE will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

Trafford Team Together (TTT)

St Matthew's is a Trafford Team Together School. With a family's agreement, through our school TTT Co-ordinator we may bring together Trafford Family Services to support a family issue with attendance. Our TTT Co-ordinator will provide a personalised plan enabling the family to navigate through life's challenges, often including support for parents and carers as well as their child(ren) to improve their attendance.

Early Help Offer

If a pupil is experiencing difficulties in school, including with their attendance, parents at St Matthew's CE Primary School will be offered support. This may be in the form of an Early Help Assessment completed with families to identify any barriers to attending school and to provide support tailored to the child and or family's needs, with a focus on outcomes for children. Parents can also request early help support by speaking to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Categorising absence

When a pupil is recorded as absent, the register must show whether this absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received. When marking the official registers, St Matthews CE Primary School will follow DfE guidance: [Working Together To Improve Attendance, 2024](#)

Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone/parent app absence from on the first day of absence, and provide the school with an expected date of return. If the child is absent for more than one day, parents should contact the school on this morning of each day of their absence. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer and/or medical evidence where possible.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by [the close of the morning register](#) to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by [telephone call](#) as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

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

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

Where a pupil is absent for more than [three](#) school days in a row, or more than [10](#) school days in [one term](#), the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

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

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the designated safeguarding lead and/or Education Welfare Officer. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

ALL Staff are aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly, and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. In cases where there are safeguarding concerns related to persistent or prolonged periods of absence staff will refer to the safeguarding and child protection policy and refer to the designated safeguarding lead.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, the designated safeguarding lead will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

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

Authorised absence

Illness	Parents / carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to illness (3 times in a term), for extended periods of absence (5 or more days) or where attendance becomes a concern. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, named and dated prescription / prescribed medication or a Doctor's note.
Medical appointments	Medical appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is unavoidable, absence will only be authorised for the session missed. Medical appointments cards should be provided to the school office to authorise the absence.
Religious observance	Advance notice must be given to authorise absence for religious observance (up to a maximum of 3 days).
Exceptional circumstances	The Head teacher will use discretion when authorising leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. Regular contact must be maintained with school.
Traveller absence	<p>When in or around Trafford, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. St Matthew's C of E Primary School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families.</p> <p>Absence will be authorised when a traveller 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. Parents must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and - inform the school regarding proposed return dates. <p>Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the child is on roll and attending another visited school; - undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service; - the child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced.
Leave of absence	Leave of absence will <u>not be authorised in term-time</u> unless there are exceptional circumstances. In line with Department for Education guidelines and advice from the National Association of Head Teachers, leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances for a maximum of 10 days. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will result in the absence being unauthorised.

	<p>Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Headteacher using the official request form available from the school office, or complete a request form on the parent app. This must be completed in full to be given consideration. A response will be provided outlining the conditions of the leave if granted.</p> <p>If a pupil fails to return to school on an agreed date and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off roll in compliance with both national pupil registration legislation and the Local Authority's Children Missing Education procedures. This means they will lose their place at this school. Where there is a concern for welfare a referral may be made to children's social services.</p> <p>If a child is unavoidably unable to return to school on agreed date, the parent must contact school immediately to discuss the reason for this.</p>
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Unauthorised absence

Term-time holidays	If permission to take leave is not sought or granted and a leave of absence is recorded without prior written permission from the Headteacher, this will be recorded as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate's court.
Absent and no reason provided	Absence will not be authorised unless parents or carers have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted by the Head teacher. Failure to provide a reason for the absence will be marked as unauthorised. See Appendix 3.
Arriving after the official registers are closed	Pupils arriving after the close of register at 9.15am will be recorded as taking an unauthorised absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate for compulsory school age. See punctuality.
Absence that is a concern	Where there are concerns about attendance, absence can-not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided. See Appendix 3.

Authorising parental absence requests

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

Leave of absence

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

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

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

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

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

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **97 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

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

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

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

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

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

SEND- and health-related absences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.

- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **six years**.

Punctuality

The register is taken twice a day. Once at the beginning of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session. Each school day therefore counts as two sessions.

Parents are requested to make sure their child is on site and ready to come into school at least 5 minutes before the morning register is taken. The classroom doors are opened at 8.40am and the register is taken between 8.40 and 8.50am.

Pupils arriving after the 8.50am must immediately report to the school office to ensure school can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. They will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The registers will remain open for 25 minutes.

The register will close at 9.15am prompt. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as taking an unauthorised absence for that school session (U) and statutory action may be taken where appropriate for compulsory school age.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that school can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Absence from registration will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation can be provided. For example, attendance at a medical appointment. Appendix 2 outlines the school's procedures late arrivals and arrivals after the close of register.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system

- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil has left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

Children at Risk of Missing Education

St Matthew's C of E Primary School must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. St Matthew's C of E Primary School will follow Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts are unknown and have appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions.

Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for a minimum of **two people**. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Doing so provides additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education. St Matthew's C of E Primary School must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. St Matthew's C of E Primary will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Elective home education

If a parent makes the decision to home school their child, written notification of this is required to the school, addressed to the Headteacher. On receipt of written notification St Matthew's C of E Primary School must inform the local authority that the child is to be deleted from the admission register.

Roles and Responsibilities

St Matthew's C of E Primary School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

The Governing Body will support the school in promoting good attendance by:

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

The **Senior Leadership and Management Team** aim to ensure that there is a whole school approach, which reinforces good attendance.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that the whole school is involved in reinforcing good attendance through:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to take responsibility of the attendance role. This is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Disseminating the Attendance Policy to all staff

- Promoting the importance of good attendance to parents and students through regular whole school letters and information sent home and by issuing a parent friendly copy of the attendance policy.
- Seeking to promote the importance of good attendance to students and parents during assemblies and at parent events.
- Ensuring a safe and structured learning environment for students.
- Delivering informative lessons that are set to students' needs.
- Providing extracurricular activities.
- Encouraging parental involvement in school life.
- Promoting and rewarding good attendance.
- Reviewing the Attendance Policy annually and updating all staff at regular meetings.
- Ensuring the attendance team receives support, guidance and the appropriate resources to fulfil its day-to-day duties.
- Ensuring the school has in place strategies for collecting and analysing attendance data
- Report back attendance data to the Local Authority, DFE and the school Governing Body as required.
- Encourage the sharing of good practice between staff for good attendance
- Keeping attendance high profile within school and at staff meetings
- Undertaking Pupil Progress meetings with class teachers

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** has strategies in place for recording, monitoring and responding to students with attendance concerns. The courses of action for responding to students with unexplained/unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality can be viewed in full in the **Appendices**.

The **attendance team (which includes Pastoral Team, Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Officer)** will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers
- First day calling
- Authorising Absence where appropriate
- Assessing requests for leave of absence in term time
- Penalty Notice Procedure
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance
- Discussing with pastoral staff individual Action Plans for pupils causing concern
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes
- Inviting parents/carers in for attendance panels to discuss relevant support
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies and the Local Authority as required

- Regular meetings with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss on track PA pupils and pupils whose attendance is cause for concern

School Attendance Champions

This is an ongoing responsibility of the senior leader responsible for attendance, the Headteacher and Our Attendance Lead, Ms Bennett. The champion is expected to:

- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence
- Have a strong grasp of absence data
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress

The **Teaching and Support Staff Team** will support and promote good attendance by:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.
- Ensuring accurate records are kept, such as pupil registers
- Ensuring positive communication between home and school regarding attendance
- Highlighting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Leadership Team any pupils causing concern
- Talking to their class about the importance of good attendance
- Promoting whole school initiatives, reward schemes and celebrations
- Delivering a diverse curriculum in a child centred learning environment

The **Parents/Carers** of our students are asked to support the school and instil the value of education and regular attendance by:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Talking to their child about school life and taking a positive interest in their child's educational progress.
- Contacting the school if their child is absent to let us know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Avoiding unnecessary absences – wherever possible making medical appointments outside of school hours and providing medical appointment cards

- Asking the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties and informing the school of any circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Ensuring their child attends punctually everyday
- Engaging with intervention strategies provided by the school if their child's attendance becomes highlighted as a cause for concern
- Supporting the school; taking every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encouraging routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keeping their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoiding taking their child on holiday during term-time; where this may be an exceptional circumstance, a written leave request must be sent to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday

The school informs parents/carers and students about their expectations in respect of punctual and regular attendance through distribution of parent friendly communication. The school website, Weduc and this policy inform parents about their legal responsibilities.

Strategies for promoting good whole school attendance

- Updating the whole school community about attendance matters through the school website and Weduc
- Celebrating good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements (displays, certificates, personal letters who have excellent attendance)
- Rewarding achievements through class assemblies, certificates rewards and extracurricular activities
- A whole-school integrated reward initiative
- An 'Attendance Banding' system which reinforces the school's positive attainment ethos (**see Appendix 1**)

Using Attendance Data

Our school aims to ensure that all personal data collected about staff, pupils, parents, governors, visitors and other individuals is collected, stored and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the expected provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) as set out in the Data Protection Bill.

This policy applies to all personal data, regardless of whether it is in paper or electronic format.

In accordance with St Matthew's C of E Primary Data Protection Policy:

- Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
- Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- St Matthew's C of E Primary School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.
- All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Every half-term the Attendance team will provide all class teachers and SLT with attendance data for that period for each pupil in that class or area of the school. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attenders at the top; every pupil will be colour coded as indicated in **Appendix 1**.

Support Systems

School recognises 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 should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

St Matthew's C of E Primary School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used could include:

- First response contact each day
- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Early Help offer

- Referrals to support agencies
- Pastoral support
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Positive relationships
- Opportunities to share concerns and worries
- Pastoral Support Plans
- PSHE curriculum
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Temporary reduced timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

If at any time school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, St Matthew's C of E Primary School will consider the use of legal sanctions and, where necessary, referrals to children's social services.

Legal Sanctions

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for at least 8 sessions (4 days) for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accumulated at least 10 sessions (5 days) of irregular unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve (A formal written warning of a Penalty Notice will have been issued to both parents and a period of 15 school days given for the situation to be improved.)

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with [Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#).

Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months. Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Referrals to the Education Welfare Service

All unauthorised absence is reported to the school's Education Welfare Service so additional advice and support can be offered to parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is persistent, sanctions may be imposed to include warnings, penalty notices, and prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

Where a child or family is away from home, including abroad, and unable to return home, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to the whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates. Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in the local authority issuing a Penalty Notice (please refer to our main Attendance Policy).

Leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. Holidays in term time are not viewed as exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

Where the school and the Education Welfare Service have failed to locate the child/family within 20 school days, the child will be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education Pupil Tracking Officer (CME officer) who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing. Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service, which will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

Safeguarding

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

- Children in need
- Looked after children
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of persistent absence which can be found within the 'Support Systems' section of this policy.

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

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with the relevant agencies and follow the local Strategic Safeguarding Partnership procedures.

Appendix 1: Attendance bands and Escalation of intervention

GREEN	pupils with attendance between 100% and 97%
AMBER	pupils with attendance between 96% and 90%
RED	pupils with attendance below 90%

GREEN pupils with attendance between 100% to 97%

Pupils will be rewarded in line the school's strategies for promoting good whole school attendance.

AMBER pupils with attendance between 96% and 90%

Class teacher will speak to the pupil to:

- Welcome the pupil back to school
- Update the pupil on other work they have missed and support any catch up required

In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred, a letter will be sent to parents advising of concern and outlining the parents' responsibilities.

Where improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve
- Parenting contract agreed
- Penalty Notice 15 school day monitoring period commences if applicable
- Agree a review date

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence if the criteria has been met.

The attendance lead will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be shared by a member of the Senior Leadership Team every week at the Pastoral Support Meeting. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and may also have links to appraisals.

RED pupils with attendance below 90%

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are considered to be persistently absent from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, pupils will be grouped in to one of the following categories:

- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
- Previously-LAC
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Long term non-attendance
- Parental support/needs e.g. parental drug use, young carers, domestic violence
- School-based issues e.g. bullying, offended or have an Anti-Social Behaviour Order
- English as an Additional Language
- Ethnic minority
- Mid-Year Admissions
- Other

The pastoral team will:

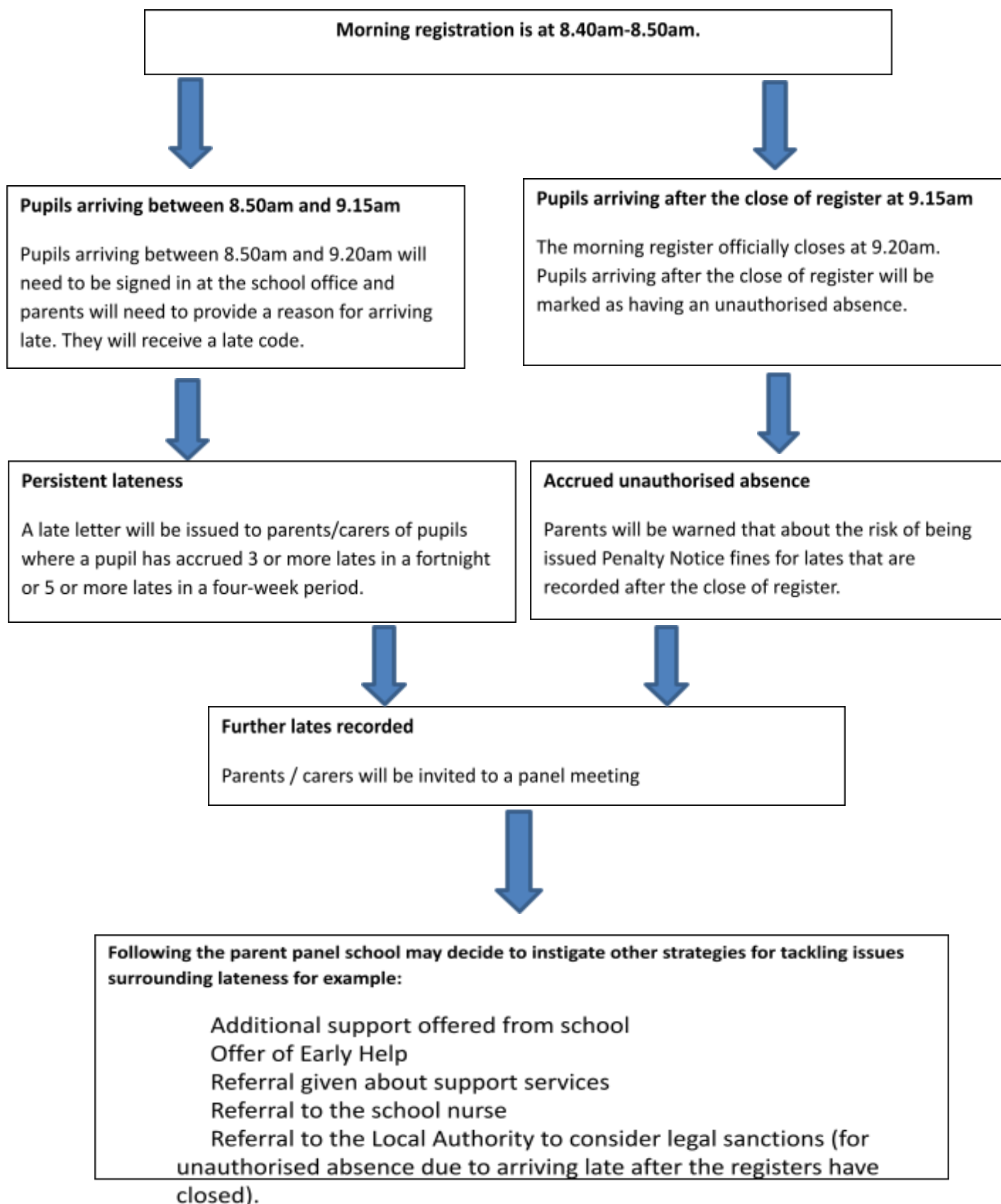
- Obtain records of previous contact and interventions as set out in PINK and escalate accordingly
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil that will see the pupil move to the band above
- Review existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the pupil's attendance and any additional needs
- Be the key contact person for any external agency working with the pupil
- Input into whole school strategies to address the needs of pupils within their group

Attendance staff will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to the Headteacher half-termly.

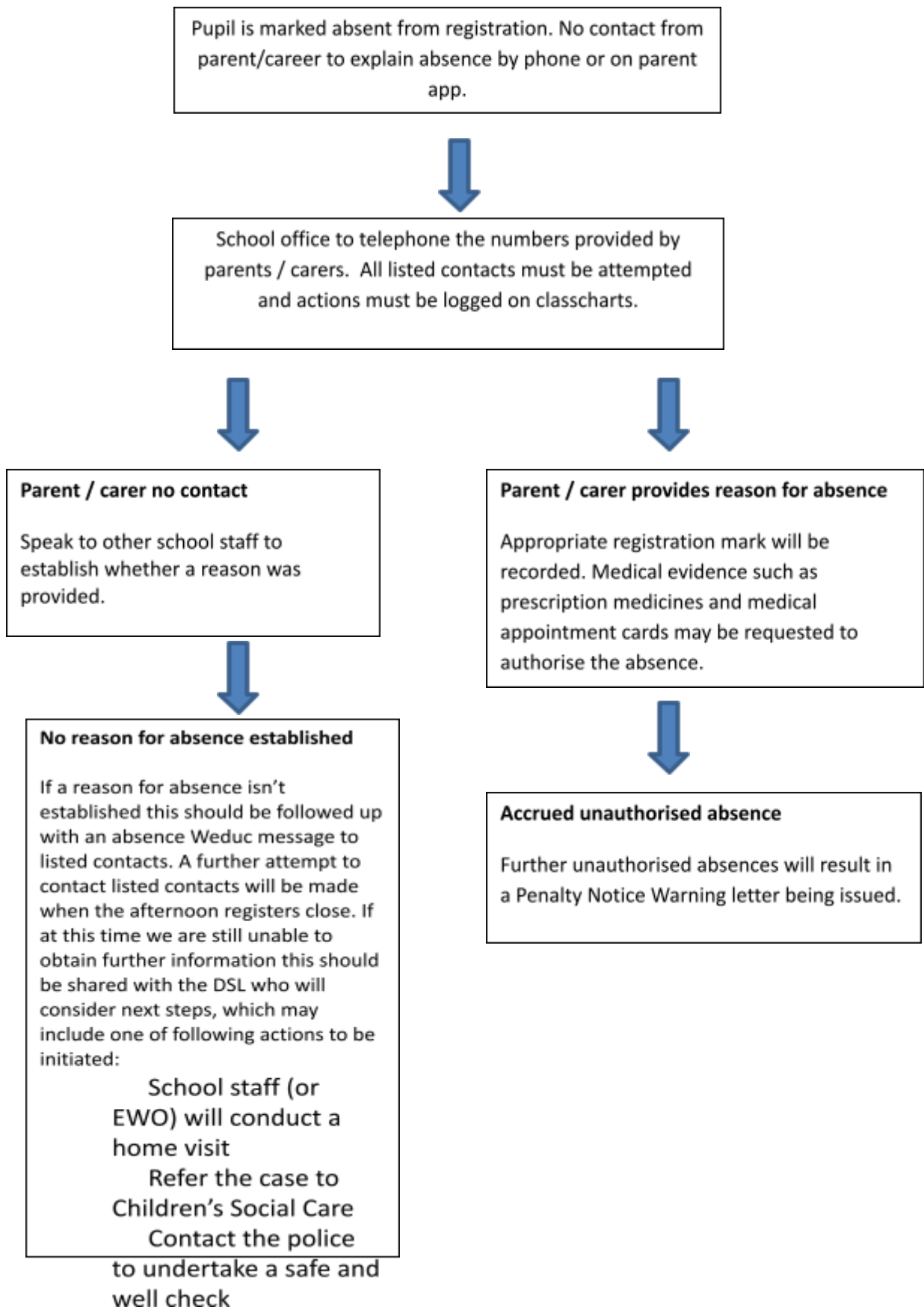
Attendance will be a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership and Management Team meetings (within each Key Stage) where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and may also have links to appraisals.

The Headteacher will report termly to the Governing Body about Attendance.

Appendix 2: Responding to pupils who are Late at St. Matthews Primary School



Appendix 3: Unexplained Absence Procedure



Appendix 4: Model Letters

Addressee

Address

Date

Punctuality Concerns

Dear

Re: Child's Name, DoB 00.00.000 a registered pupil at St Matthew's CE Primary School

I am writing to advise you that **Pupil Name** has been late **X** times since the start of the school year. I have enclosed a print out for your information and draw your attention the **L** (and, if appropriate, **U**) codes.

I am sure that you wish to support the teachers in setting high standards for your child. Their prompt arrival will ensure they have the same opportunity of success as other pupils whilst also creating good habits for the future.

We would like to work with you to address this and help to ensure that **Pupil Name's** punctuality improves to a level that will better support academic progress.

School doors open **at 8:40am** and we expect your child to be in class by 8:50am. Children who arrive after 8:50am must report to the school office where they will be registered with the late mark. Parents will be expected to sign them in and provide a reason for their late arrival.

Any pupils who arrive after the close of the register at **9.15am** must also report to the school office where they will be asked to provide a reason for the late arrival. If no satisfactory reason is provided (such as a medical appointment) this will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Please note that you are at risk of a penalty notice or prosecution should your child repeatedly arrive late after the close of the register.

We will be monitoring punctuality across the school and will be contacting the parents of pupils arriving to establish the reasons why and offer support and advice to help improve their time keeping. It is essential that we work together to prevent the situation escalating any further and if you would like to discuss this letter you can contact me directly via email or through the school office on 0161 865 1284.

Yours sincerely,

Addressee

Address

Date

Unexplained absence

Dear

Re: Child's Name, DoB 00.00.000 a registered pupil at St Matthew's CE Primary School

<Pupil name> was absent on <date> and we did not receive a reason for absence. The Department for Education states that schools cannot leave the official registers blank and therefore if a reason for absence is not provided pupils must be marked in the register as having an unauthorised absence. I must make you aware that accrued unauthorised absences could result in the Local Authority instigating legal sanctions against you.

It is vital that you contact school whenever your child is absent. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 makes clear that schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish reasons for absence to safeguard the pupils within their care. Therefore, if your child is absent and we haven't heard from you, we may contact you by phone, conduct a home visit, make a referral to children's social care or a request a safe and well check from the local police.

I appreciate your co-operation on this matter, but if you would like to discuss this further, please contact me on 0161 865 1284 or make an appointment through our school reception.

Yours sincerely,

Addressee

Address

Date

Attendance Concern: Monitoring Attendance/Punctuality

Child: XXX XXX DOB: XX/XX/XX Registered pupil at St Matthew's CE Primary School

Attendance: XX%

Dear **Parents/ Carers**

St Matthew's CE Primary School expects all pupils to strive towards achieving 100% attendance wherever possible and to support pupils in doing this, their attendance and punctuality is closely monitored.

I have recently reviewed your child's records and note that his/her attendance is XX% and is causing concern. XXXX XXXX has been absent from school for X sessions and X of these have been marked as unauthorised. I enclose a copy of the registration certificate that highlights these absences.

This level of attendance means that your child *is classed as a persistent absentee/ if further absence is accrued your child may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee. (Delete as appropriate)*

Please note that if your child's level of attendance does not improve a referral may be made to the Local Authority to give consideration to instigating statutory action against you. You are therefore advised to contact me on 0161 865 1284 or by making an appointment at the school office to discuss this issue and how we may support you in securing an improvement.

Yours sincerely,

Addressee

Address

Date

Dear

Child: XXXX XXXX, DoB 00.00.000, a registered pupil at St Matthew's CE Primary School

Due to concerns about **Name's attendance/punctuality** at school, I would like to invite you to a meeting on the **Day, Date 20## at Time** to consider an Early Help Assessment.

An Early Help Assessment involves a conversation to help identify what things are going well and any things that are not going so well for your family. It should help you and others to see what support could be put in place to help improve circumstances for you and your **child/children**.

If you wish, you may bring a friend or other representative along to the meeting. Please find enclosed further information about Early Help and Early Help Assessments that I hope you find helpful.

If you have any questions or if for any reason this appointment is not convenient, please contact school on 0161 865 1284 to discuss this.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Addressee

Address

Date

Attendance Concern: Medical Evidence

Child: XXX XXX DOB: XX/XX/XX Registered pupil at St Matthew's CE Primary School

Attendance: XX%

Dear **Parents/ Carers,**

I am writing to raise my concern about XXX XXXXX's attendance at school. Good school attendance is very important and will ensure that your child gets the best start in life.

I have noted that XXXX XXXXX has accrued XXX sessions (XX days) of *unauthorised/authorised* absence. This means that XXXX XXXX's attendance is now XX%.

I am writing to make you aware that our Attendance Team is available to support you with your child's attendance at school. The school nurse is also available should you have any concerns regarding your child's health. (Further details are available from the school reception).

We will require medical evidence (e.g. appointment card, prescription or doctor's note) for all future absences, without this, the absences may be marked as unauthorised.

We will continue to monitor XXXX XXXXX's attendance and we may invite you to meet with us at school if your child's attendance continues to cause concern.

I would like to offer our support and if you would like to discuss this further please contact me on 0161 865 1284 or make an appointment through our school reception.

Yours sincerely,

