

"Where children come first"

Attendance Policy

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APPROVAL & ADOPTION

This policy was formally agreed and adopted at a Full Governing Body Meeting held on:

20th March 2018

UPDATE SCHEDULE

Version	Date	Reason for Update
1.00	18/04/17	First Version Post de-Federation
1.01	12/03/18	Review / Minor Amendments

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Statement of Intent

Aylesham Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Aylesham Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress, and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive no later than 8.50am at Aylesham Primary School. School is open 10 minutes before this time and we would encourage all pupils to arrive at school 10 minutes before registration. All pupils' that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

At Aylesham Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Senior Leadership Team has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or 'N'. School office staff then pursue all 'N' marks. At Aylesham Primary School attendance is monitored through an attendance team meeting **twice** monthly which highlights pupils causing concern.

Attendance Officers:

School Secretary: Sarah King

Family Liaison Officer: Carole Bourne

It is the responsibility of the school attendance team to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted by phone on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, texts and/or letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed termly of child's attendance figure

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- 96 - 100% attendance – Attendance officers to investigate and notify Leadership Team of concerns
- Project 96 is in place at Aylesham Primary School – letter sent to parents (see Appendix 3)
- Up to 96% attendance – monitored through **twice** monthly attendance meetings and discussions.
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Lateness

At Aylesham Primary School the register is taken at 8.50am and 1pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). The register will close at 9.00am and 1.10pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and/or the Schools Liaison Officer (SLO). It can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the school Leadership Team, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The school Leadership Team are not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family holiday (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Leave of Absence

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

It is preferred that Applications for Leave of Absence be made at least FOUR weeks in advance of the requested date. However, the school will accept applications with a minimum of ONE week’s notice in advance of the requested date.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. Also, where leave of absence is not agreed and the pupil is out of school or the pupil is away longer than was agreed or an application has not been made in advance, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council’s Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances are:

- The parents are members of the armed forces and can demonstrate that there is an exceptional need for leave to be permitted.
- There are severe family circumstances that may require a child to be absent from school for a maximum of 2 days.
- The family is observing a religious holiday.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Appendix 1: Application for Leave of Absence of

School Child to Accompany Parents/Guardians It is necessary for the approval of the School Governors to be obtained to a child's absence from school before the absence commences.

The parent or guardian is requested to complete this form and forward it, at least **FOUR** weeks before the proposed period of absence to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher of the school attended by the child.

I wish my child / children.....Class.....

to be absent from school fromto.....

for the following reason

.....
.....

Please outline any exceptional circumstances on a separate sheet of paper.

Date.....Signature of Parent / Guardian.....

- Note
- (1) Time off school for family holidays is not a right.
 - (2) Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).
 - (3) The parents are members of the armed forces and can demonstrate that there is an exceptional need for leave to be permitted.
 - (4) There are severe family circumstances that may require a child to be absent from school for a maximum of 2 days.
 - (5) The family is observing a religious holiday.

Each case will be judged on its merits in line with the criteria outlined above.

This portion is to be retained by the school

.....✂.....

Name of child / children.....Class.....

Absence from school approved from.....to.....

Absence not approved.....

.....
.....

Signed on behalf of the School Governors.....Date.....

This portion to be returned to the parent

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IS TAKEN A PENALTY NOTICE *MAY* BE APPLIED FOR FROM THE LOCAL SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER. THE COST IS £120 PER PARENT PER CHILD REDUCED TO £60 PER PARENT PER CHILD IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS.

Appendix 2: Regular Absence Reminder Letter

CHILDREN TAKING LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

Dear Parents

Kent schools have a general policy of not permitting holidays during term time, and Aylesham Primary School adheres to this policy.

The school will now only permit authorised leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- The parents are members of the armed forces and can demonstrate that there is an exceptional need for leave to be permitted.
- There are severe family circumstances that may require a child to be absent from school for a maximum of 2 days.
- The family is observing a religious holiday.

It is preferred that Applications for Leave of Absence be made at least FOUR weeks in advance of the requested date. However, the school will accept applications from parents with a minimum of ONE weeks' notice in advance of the requested date provided that all necessary documentation is included with their application.

Parents who allow their children to take an unauthorised leave during term time will be reported to the Inclusion and Attendance Team, who may take the following steps:

- Refuse any further absences from school without medical evidence.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice to the parents. (£120 per parent per child).
- Refer the parents to the County's legal department for prosecution.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Headteacher

Appendix 3: Project 96 Letter

2018

Dear Parents and Guardians

PROJECT 96

Aylesham Primary School is part of an exciting project called Project 96 which aims to raise the attendance and punctuality of our children. We aim to raise every child's attendance to over 96%; this will in turn raise the attainment potential of each child. You may notice the posters around our premises, created beautifully by children from our school.

If your child is achieving lower than 96% attendance you may be invited to come along and meet with one our team to see how we can help raise this. Our team comprises of myself, Carole Bourne Family Liaison Officer, Sarah King Attendance Officer and our local School Liaison Officer Dayna Bruce.

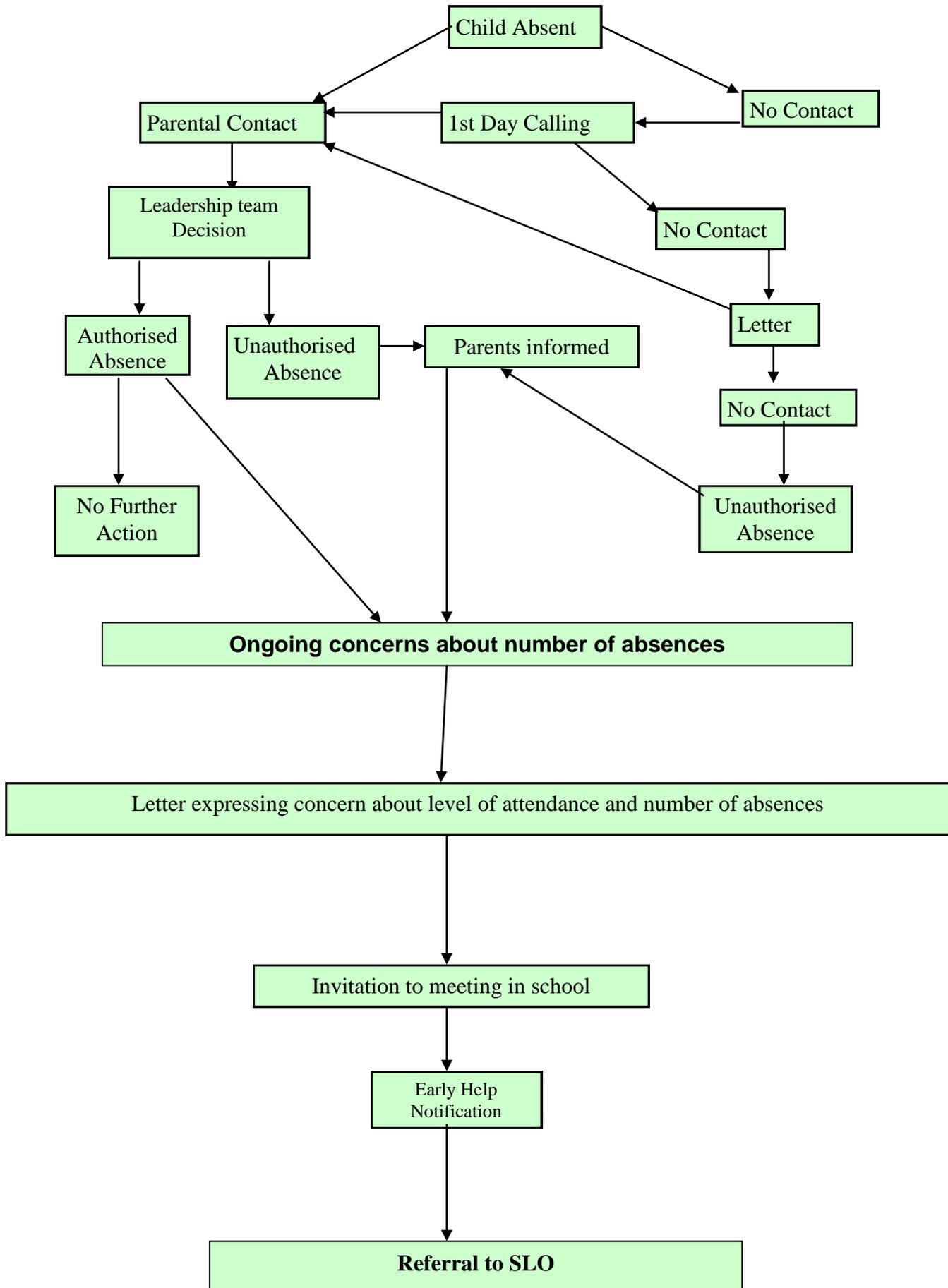
You may receive a letter from me inviting you for an initial meeting to see how we can work together to help you and your child. I would like to mention, however, that we are aware that sometimes there are good reasons why a child is absent from school and these factors will be taken into consideration.

I very much hope you will join us in this exciting new project and help to achieve our aim.

Yours sincerely

Ian Rowden
Head Teacher

School based absence intervention



Appendix 5: Kent School Referral Pathway

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

