



## Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

# ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING POLICY

<b>Originator</b>	<b>Authorised by</b>	<b>Date Adopted</b>	<b>Last Review</b>	<b>Next Review</b>
J Rigby	Governing Body	26.11.15	26.11.15 PSC	Autumn 2016

# ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING POLICY

## **Aims and Principles**

We believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. The academy aims to raise standards in education and to ensure that students achieve their full potential. We recognise that this aim is not possible if they do not regularly attend the academy, or are persistently late.

Students are expected to attend the academy every day. It is the responsibility of parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at the academy attend regularly and are punctual. The academy endeavours to support parents and students in this.

Attendance and punctuality issues can have a detrimental effect on the education that a student receives. Evidence shows that missing out on lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind and the tendency for them to achieve less than those students with a good attendance record.

## **This policy operates within and fully reflects the Academy's vision of Inclusive Education.**

Inclusive education means that all children, young people and adults – whatever their circumstances – are able to learn together in the Academy with appropriate networks of support. At OBA we believe that removing barriers to learning, while welcoming, valuing and celebrating all learners, will lead to inclusive education.

Provision should be based on equality of opportunity, so all children and young people, irrespective of ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, impairment, emotional or social needs, care status or personal circumstances have an equal right to develop their skills and abilities. We believe that the majority of underachieving, challenging and disaffected students can be helped to return to and succeed in normal classroom teaching, given appropriate help

## **Aims**

- To promote equal access to all that our Academy can offer for all students
- To support the Academy's inclusion agenda by developing policies and practices that enables all families to achieve attendance levels that will secure success.
- To promote good attendance and reduce absence. Act early to address patterns of absence and poor punctuality.

## **Key principles**

The academy will keep an admission register and attendance register. The contents of which includes all students, their personal details, the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents / carers and details of the school last attended.

The academy will take the attendance register at the start of each day and then at the beginning of every lesson throughout the day. On each occasion we will record student attendance using the national codes. Students will not be marked present if they were not in during the period when the register is open. If there are any absences then we

will follow these up in order to ascertain the reason and record the absence using the correct code on the register.

The academy day starts at 8.30am. All students should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are marked by 8.35am. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

Promoting and improving attendance is the **responsibility of all staff** working in a coordinated way.

The Academy will work in partnership with parents/carers and liaise closely with other services to produce a systematic and coordinated response to attendance issues and will operate on a basis of secure data, effective communication, supportive intervention and challenge.

At OBA we believe that early intervention is vital to avoid the build-up of poor habits and patterns of unauthorised absence and authorised absence. There are many agencies who will contribute to the Academy and pupil support structures. These may include; the Academy Attendance Service, the EWO, Educational Psychologists, Health Workers, Social Services Departments, Connexions, Special Educational Needs Services, Youth Offending Teams and Youth Services etc.

It is expected that staff involved with attendance within their professional capacity, will make sure that communication is maintained and information reviewed and referred within their statutory and 'best practice' guidelines. It is recognised that multi-agency training and sharing of information provides greater opportunities to develop strategies for successful working with young people, their families and Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Principal**

- To promote, celebrate and reward good attendance.
- Hold overall responsibility for the Attendance for Learning Policy and ensure that the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- Ensure that attendance is an integral part of long term Academy action planning and receive regular reports analysing attendance patterns and trends.
- Liaise with the LA at a strategic level on issues relating to Behaviour and Attendance.
- Act as a signatory for legal proceedings.
- To scrutinise and make decisions regarding holiday requests.

### **Assistant Principal for Inclusion/Students**

- To implement fully the Academy's agreed Attendance for Learning Policy, monitor and evaluate its impact.
- To promote, celebrate and reward good attendance with students and staff.
- Advise the Principal and Governors regarding target-setting for improving attendance and be responsible for policy development and review.
- To provide leadership and direction to the Attendance Team and Year Teams and manage the policy and operational links with the LA and EWO.
- To promote good attendance across the academy and reduce the occasions of internal truancy.

- To meet the attendance officer weekly to establish attendance priorities and carry out coordinated home visits if required. To review lesson register data and discuss issues with appropriate Head of Year offering support in following up issues around attendance/punctuality routines within their team.
- Periodically review lesson attendance data, look for patterns and provide support and advice.
- Administer detentions and sanctions systems to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor identified students with physical checks on attendance in lessons.
- Monitor students noted out of lessons and on the corridors without reason and share information with the Heads of Year and Key Stage Inclusion Managers.
- Coordinate short term packages of intervention work with identified students to promote improved attendance; possibly via the Inclusion Zone or Horizons.
- Provide reintegration support to students returning after significant periods of absence.
- Provide signposting for students and parents to appropriate services outside the Academy.
- Be available to meet with parents to discuss issues of poor attendance and punctuality. Inform parents of student's late arrival to the academy; daily by text, (admin) and weekly by letter (admin). Inform parents by warning letter after the student has arrived late to school on 5 or more occasions in one term.
- To ensure the governing body, teaching staff, parents and pupils are fully informed of attendance patterns and trends by student groups.

#### **Assistant Principal for Data**

- Responsible for supporting the Attendance Officer over technical and operational matters regarding SIMS and other Attendance Information Systems.
- Ensure that accurate data is correctly transmitted to external agencies, including the LA and DFE.

#### **Data Administration Team**

- Respond to anomalies reported regarding class lists and amend as necessary immediately.
- Assist staff with queries regarding the SIMS registration system.
- Add new students to SIMS.net in a timely and accurate manner and inform LA Admissions Section. Assist Heads of Year and Key Stage inclusion Managers in developing timetable for new students.
- Remove students who have left the Academy in a timely and accurate manner and inform LA Admissions Section.

#### **Attendance Officer**

- To implement fully the Academy's agreed Attendance for Learning Policy.
- To consistently and rigorously operate the Phase Model of referral as outlined at the end of this document:
- To promote, celebrate and reward good attendance. To consider a range of rewards for pupils with good and improved attendance.
- Responsible for managing attendance issues and supporting the work of the form tutors.
- Transmit attendance data to the DFE, liaising with the Assistant Principal for Inclusion/Students.

- To monitor lateness to the Academy at the start of each session in regard to those students arriving late and support the member of the senior leadership team with appropriate detentions.
- Responsible for levels of attendance and reporting to the Principal and Assistant Principal for Inclusion/Students.
- Responsible for monitoring the quality of registers and ensuring that agreed guidelines and procedures are followed.
- Keep the Principal and Assistant Principal for Inclusion/Students abreast of issues raised by tutors.
- Be available as a point of contact and work with parents to assist them to promote their child's attendance at the Academy.
- Support families experiencing difficulties with their children on a range of issues including attendance.
- Liaise with external agencies on issues relevant to promoting good attendance e.g. EWO
- Liaise with local police and EWO regarding truancy sweeps.
- Report on attendance issues to leadership team and governing body and provide Heads of Year with the required data and information.
- Attend parent review evenings, open evening and induction evenings to engage with the parents/carers of all students.
- Upon receipt of Holiday Request operate the agreed strategy. Where necessary send letter indicated on Holiday Form to parent/carer, coordinate PN with the EWO where appropriate. Keep a log of those absent due to holidays.
- To review current attendance procedures and make improvement/suggestions. Undertake casework to resolve issues around individual pupil's attendance and follow up on students who have received an attendance letter to monitor and check if their attendance has improved.

#### Operation Guidelines - Daily:

- Follow up issues of non-compliance with SIMS registration procedures and ensure all registers are sent on time. Pursue any missing registers and ensure they are entered onto the system. Distribute to the Principal and Assistant Principal for Inclusion/Students lists of staff who; have not completed am or lesson 5 registers. Identify and seek information to resolve 'missing marks' on system. Update SIMs from paper registers, when required.
- Create list of first day absences. Ensure all pupils absent are contacted by telephone by 10am. If contact cannot be made by telephone then a text message may be sent. As far as possible make a home-visit on the first day of absence for any students in receipt of free school meals.
- Enter any information authorising absence onto the system and any concerns over the validity of authorisation to be referred to the EWO to pursue response. Records to be kept of who has been contacted and the outcome of the call, this is linked with the administration services to set up an automatic letter system for communicating key information to parents, eg PN notifications, invitations to meetings, warnings and rewards etc. Follow-up daily student absence. Insist on return to Academy sheet completion for absent students.

#### Operation Guidelines - Weekly:

- To scrutinise attendance data and respond to patterns and trends at individual and group level. Use this information to monitor and amend the intervention phases.
- Meet with Heads of Year to discuss attendance issues and progress and respond to issues raised. (This may well happen informally on a daily basis).

- Meet with Assistant Principal for Inclusion/Students to provide advice and challenge on year group and individual attendance data. Provide and print off cumulative attendance and punctuality data.
- Email updated attendance and punctuality data each week to inform Heads of Year in readiness for weekly assemblies and also provide the information as house data to be used as part of the inter house championships. Print off weekly attendance and punctuality data (i.e. for current week only) and distribute to Heads of Year; update records.
- Update weekly attendance summary giving the number of students in each attendance category (percentage brackets see absence procedure flowchart). Update tracking spreadsheets.
- Monitor attendance of students educated off-site.
- Work through attendance history and send attendance letter to parent/carer of those alert list pupils– copy to Heads of Year/EWO (see new standard letters for processing PN, FTA, Holidays etc)

#### Operation Guidelines – Half Termly:

- Attend year group RAP meetings to support academy strategic improvement.
- Provide the Principal and Assistant Principal for Inclusion/Students with a continuously updated profile of attendance across the Academy.
- Set attendance targets for students.

#### Form Tutors

- To implement fully the Academy's agreed Attendance for Learning Policy.
- To promote, celebrate and reward good attendance.
- To challenge absence and poor punctuality. Assist with the implementation of detentions/sanctions for late comers to the academy.
- Follow up absence by completing return to academy pro forma's with the student and chase up any outstanding notes. Pass notes on to the Attendance Officer.
- Be responsible for maintaining accurate registers and for implementing attendance routines.
- To work closely with the Attendance Officers, Heads of Year and SLT; by referring any issues at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.
- To set individual student and Form improvement targets; under the direction of the Attendance Officers and Heads of Year and to monitor progress towards them on a daily basis.
- To use data to monitor the attendance of individuals and whole tutor group and to respond to issues and patterns.

#### Head of Year - supported by Assistant Head of Year and KS Inclusion Manager

- To implement fully the Academy's agreed Attendance for Learning Policy.
- To promote, celebrate and reward good attendance. Weekly reward in assembly, rewards through house celebration assemblies, 100% attendance and punctuality linked in with the PRIDE award and also gain weekly merits in the academies new reward system.
- Be a point of contact for parents and pupils relating to attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that the year team has access to appropriate data on lesson attendance and that the team responds effectively to it. Emphasize links between good attendance and academic achievement.
- Lead on the development of team policies and practices to effectively re-engage students returning from absences of varying lengths.

- Follow up with tutors post registration truancy data, missing information such as notes, reasons for student late arrival and any unexplained absences. Interview students who return to the academy after a significant period of absence or who have a high proportion of historical absence.
- To support the Attendance Officer when requesting work from staff for absent, excluded or isolated students.
- Scrutinise attendance across their year group and keep it as high profile in assemblies and team meetings. Monitor closely those students at risk of falling into the persistent absence category.
- Monitor identified students with physical checks on attendance in lessons.
- To monitor lateness to the Academy at the start of each session in regard to those students arriving late. Assist with the operation of detentions for late arrival to the academy.
- Be available as a point of contact and work with parents to assist them to promote their child's attendance at the Academy.
- Support families experiencing difficulties with their children on a range of issues including attendance.
- Apply policies to support the reintegration of non-attenders, previously permanently excluded students from other Academies, students who transfer during the year and those on negotiated transfer.

### **Head of House**

- To promote, celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality within the house particularly through the House Championship.
- Reward all students achieving 100% attendance and/or 100% punctuality.
- Termly prize draw for individual rewards for those with top attendance and punctuality.

### **Classroom Teacher**

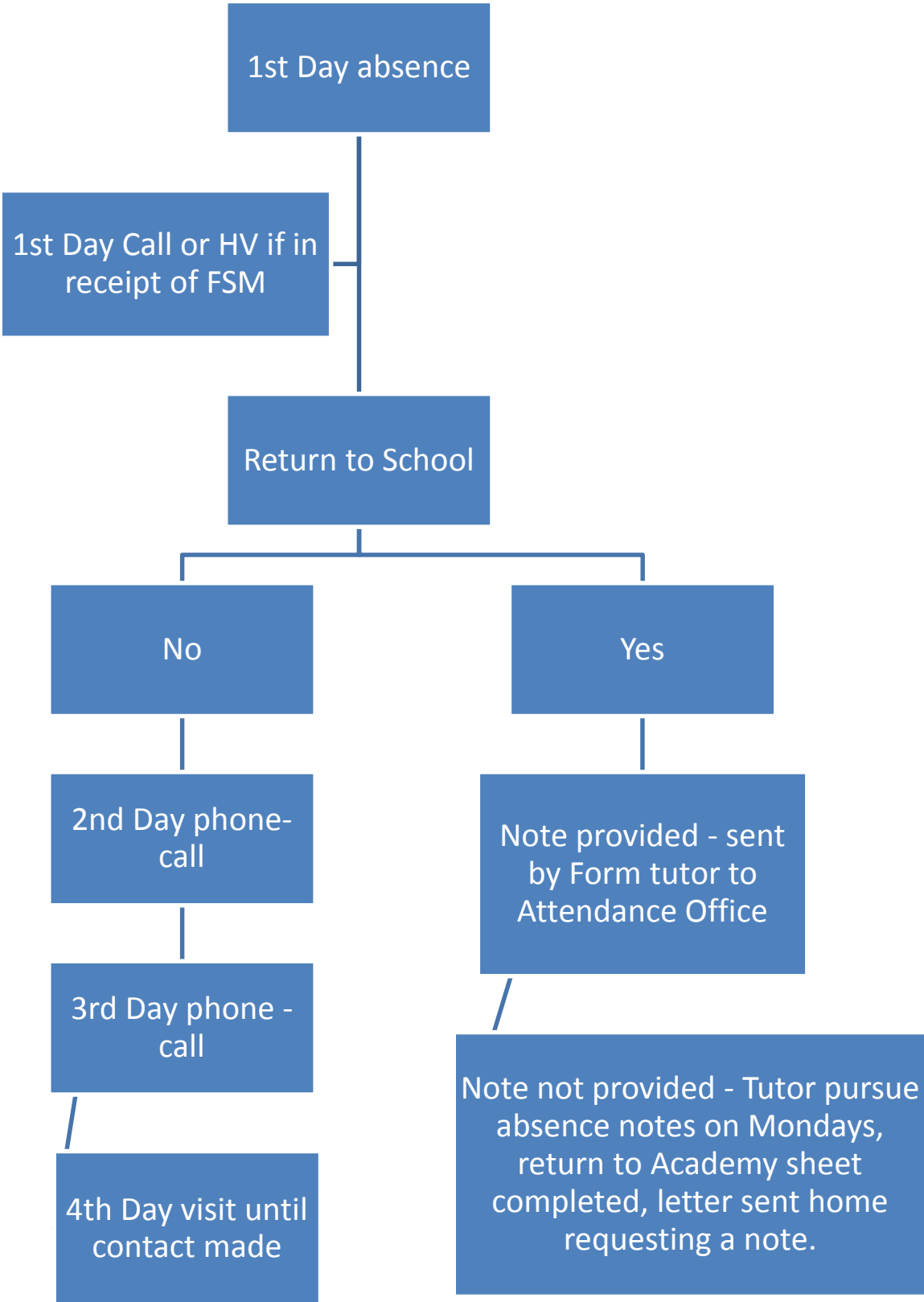
- To implement fully the Academy's agreed Attendance for Learning Policy.
- To be responsible for maintaining accurate records of attendance to lessons using agreed procedures. Ensure that accurate SIMs registers are completed within 10 minutes of the start of each lesson.
- Reopen registers as necessary when students appear part way through lessons and record any lateness to lessons on SIMs by minutes. Issue and administer detentions/sanctions for unexplained lateness to lessons.
- Administer a 10 minute detention at the end of lesson 5 for those students highlighted on SIMs as arriving late to the academy that morning.
- Report any technical issues with SIMs registers to the Attendance Officer and Steven Jones (IT). Where necessary complete a paper register and send to the attendance office.
- Work closely with the Attendance Officers, Heads of Year, Heads of Faculty and Inclusion Managers on issues regarding poor attendance or punctuality to lessons.
- To develop strategies in liaison with the Inclusion Teams in order to re-connect with and support students who have returned after absences of various lengths and for various reasons.
- To swiftly provide work for any absent, isolated or excluded students when requested by the Attendance Officer or Inclusion Teams.

### **Governors**

- To monitor attendance and punctuality through the Curriculum and Standards Committee

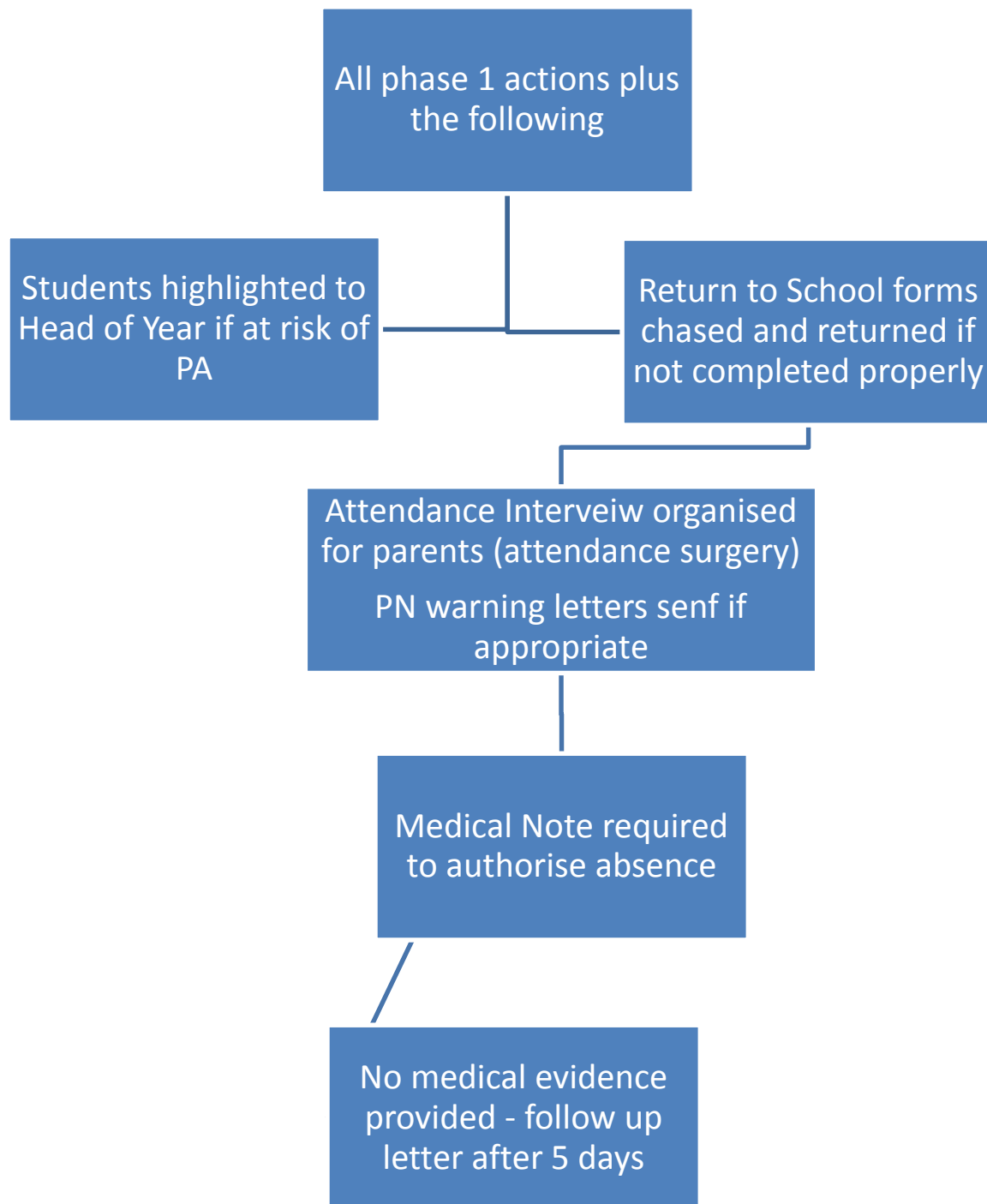
**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

**Absence Procedures Flow Chart – Phase 1 – Pupils above 96% Attendance**

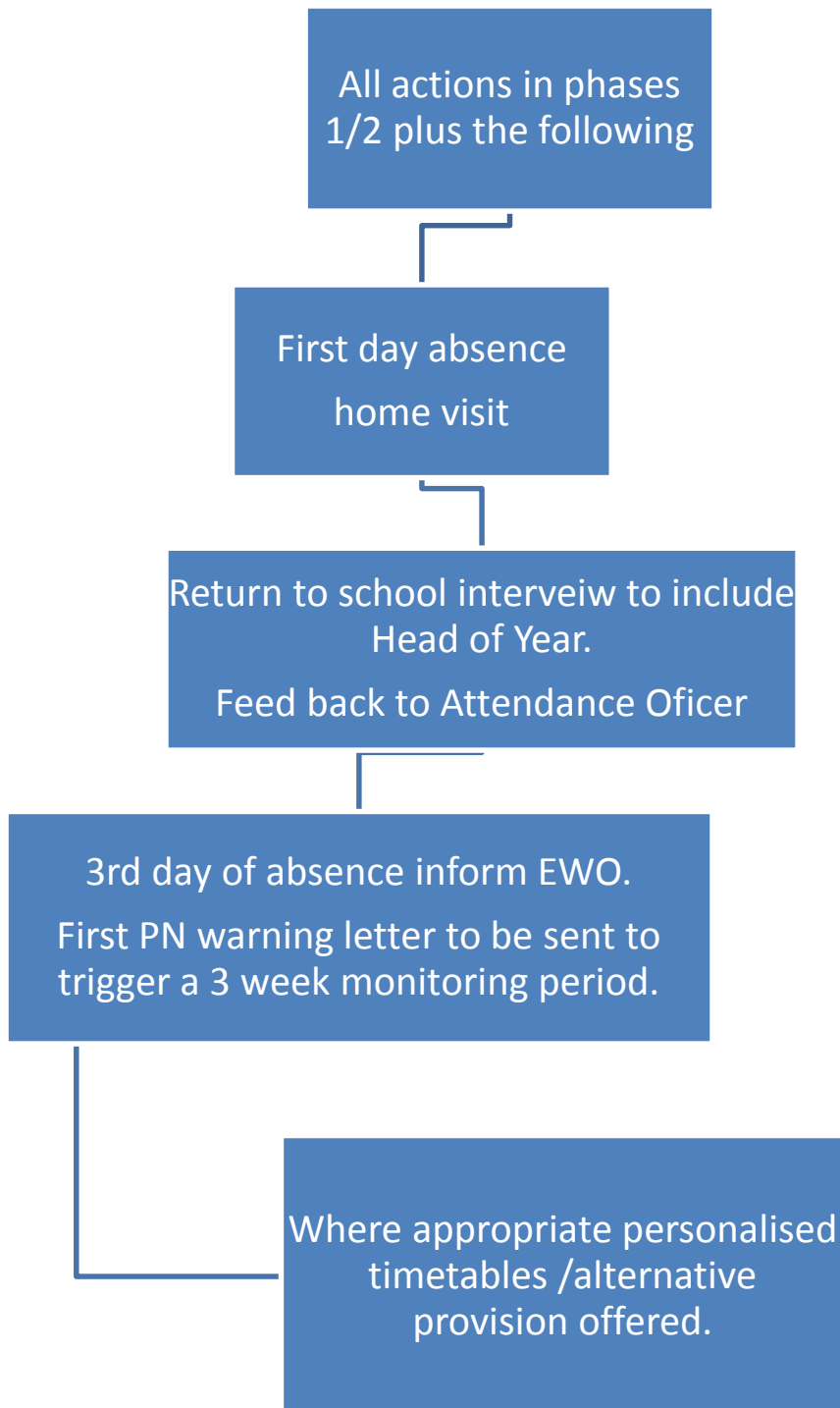




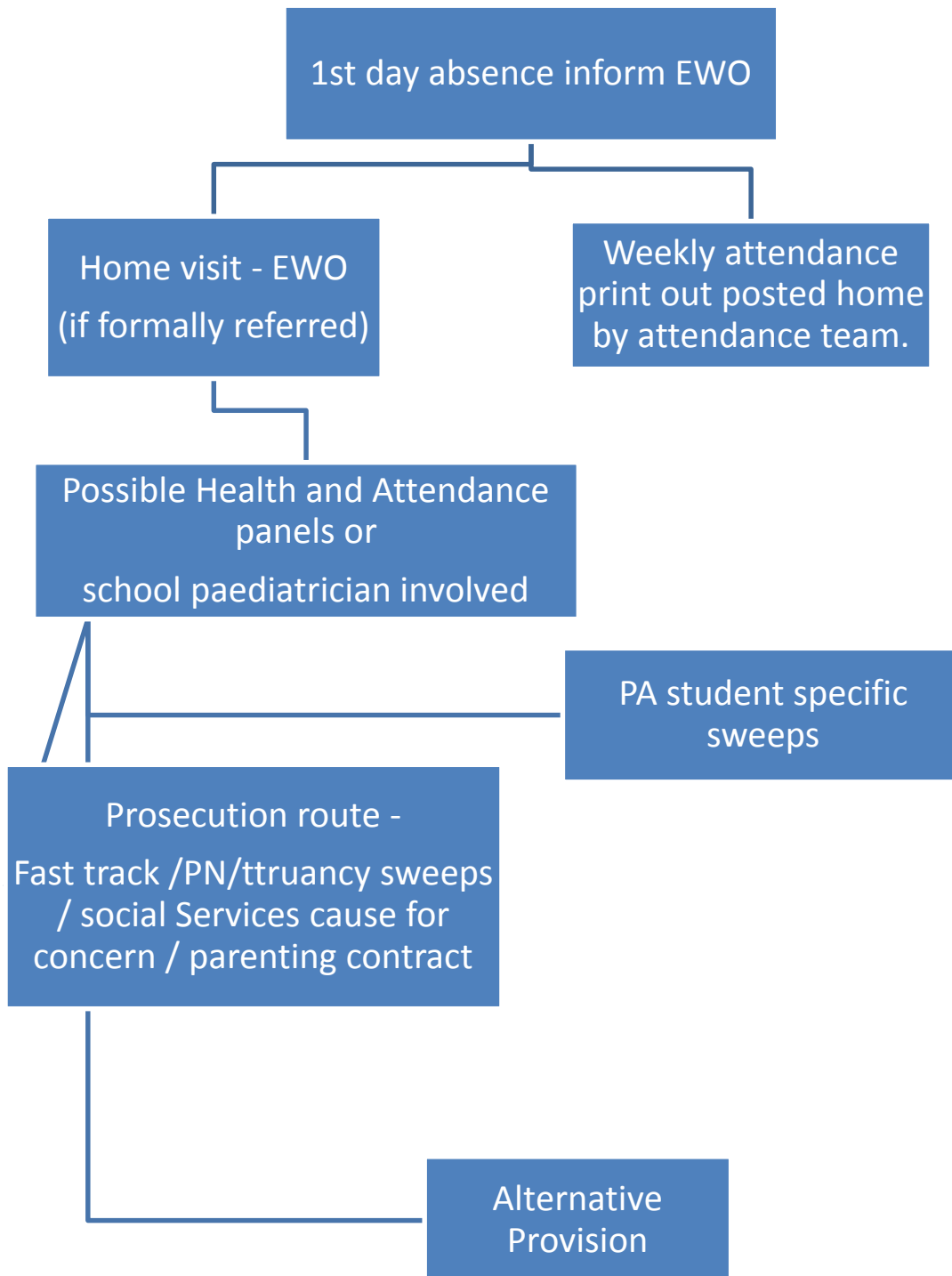
**Absence Procedures Flow Chart – Phase 2 – Pupils 96-92%**



**Absence Procedures Flow Chart – Phase 3 – Pupils 92-88%**



**Absence Procedures Flow Chart – Phase 4 – Pupils 88-75%**



## **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

As an Academy it is our task to decide when an absence is authorised / unauthorised. A telephone call or letter from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence; only the Academy's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter authorises the absence. The following examples illustrate the distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence:

### **Authorised Absences**

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointment
- Days of religious observance (agreed with the Principal beforehand)
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement and funerals of close family members
- Going to other providers such as a Secondary School for visits, interviews or Examinations etc

### **Unauthorised Absences**

- Shopping for shoes, uniform or any items or haircuts etc
- Looking after parents, brothers, sisters or family members who are unwell. (Unless an unavoidable emergency when one or two half-day sessions may be authorised.)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays, including parties or treats
- Day trips – unless agreed as a holiday by the Principal beforehand.
- Medical/dental appointments should, wherever possible, be made outside of Academy hours
- Parents do not have the right to take a child out of Academy during term time to share a family holiday.

### **Appointments**

As far as possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of the academy day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the academy prior to the appointment. Students must attend the academy before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the student's record.

### **Religious observations**

Parents must inform the academy in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The academy will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made.

## **HOLIDAY IN TERM TIME**

Government and Academy policy do not condone students taking holidays in school time because of the impact it has on student learning, progress and ultimately examination performance. The Academy will, therefore, **not** authorise a holiday in term time except in **the most exceptional circumstances. It is crucial that all parents and carers understand this to avoid any problems.** In such circumstances, a written application must be made to the Principal **at least one month prior to the expected date of the holiday**. An appropriate response will then be sent to you in writing. Weddings and family events are **not** classed as exceptional circumstances and cannot, therefore, be authorised.

Parents / Carers **MUST** take holidays in the 13 weeks of the academy holidays or they will receive a PN and the student mark will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

## **MISSING CHILDREN**

### **Statutory Responsibilities**

It is the duty of all who work in the education service to secure the safety of children in their charge. The maintenance of registers is governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, as amended. Deletion from roll must follow strict guidelines and procedures as detailed below. Where a child is known to be moving, the Secretary of State would expect staff to establish the name and address of the ongoing School, also the start date. This should be confirmed by contact between the Schools – either written, or orally when the pupil file is requested.

If any professional has good reason to suspect that a crime against a child may have been committed they should contact the police directly. Possible avenues to pursue for further information may include:

- an approach to housing who should hold records for any School-age child who is involved in a housing transfer or crisis move
- contact with the Health Authority – which may be made by the Academy through the School nurse.

The police may contact the Department of Social Security for access to confidential Child Benefit information in circumstances where there is reason to believe a crime may have been committed.

### **Multi-Agency Protocol**

Where a child is withdrawn or “disappears”, principals and agencies involved with the academy or young person must make every effort to gain information at the earliest opportunity. This may include EWS, Social Services, Connexions Personal Advisers etc. Factors in assessing risk are length of absence, level of concern and level of perceived risk to the pupil.

Even without specific concerns liaison must be sought between the Academy and agencies who may have contact or information. These may include Social Services, Connexions Personal Advisers, local Housing Offices and Education Welfare Offices in area of absence and possible destination. All cases must automatically be considered for referral to Social Services (who may refer on to the police), the Education Welfare Service or Connexions under their responsibilities for the Young Runaways Strategy. It may be appropriate for agencies to approach possible sources of information such as relatives or neighbours.

In cases where concern is specific, action to gain information and alert agencies and/or police must be swift in order to protect vulnerable parties.

Such concerns may include:

- A record of poor attendance
- Evidence of poor or inappropriate parenting
- Child’s health/general development
- Certain categories of special educational need
- Child and/or siblings on the Child Protection Register (Unexplained, continued absence of any child on the Child Protection Register must automatically be treated as high priority and procedures set out in the multi-agency Procedures for Working with Children in Need must be followed.)

## **Deletions from Admissions Register**

The following information is to be used as a guide when considering whether children should be removed from the Academy roll. The Academy will always use **extreme caution** when making a decision to remove, and will consult with the Education Welfare Service if in doubt.

**It is vital for child protection reasons that children do not ‘disappear’ from the system.** If a child has not been admitted to another School and is removed from the last School roll they can slip through the safety net. If a child is not on a School roll the LA cannot prosecute for non-attendance.

This guidance has been devised in accordance with the 1995 Pupil Registration Regulations and the Amendments contained in the 1997 Regulations. The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory School age shall be deleted from the admission register:

- Permanent Exclusion (PEX): where the Discipline Committee have upheld a decision to PEX and either the 15 day appeal limit has expired, the parent notified the Academy in writing that they do not intend to appeal or if the parent has appealed and the decision of the Panel is known.
- After 4 weeks continuous absence, as a direct result of a final detention, Court Order or Order of Recall. (This does **not** include the issuing of a Parenting Order or an Education Supervision Order for non-attendance).
- Where a parent makes a **formal** written request to the Principal and the LA to educate their child ‘otherwise than at the Academy’. (This is **not** the same as a parent withdrawing a child from the Academy due to a decision made by the Academy that they are at odds with).
- Where a child has been certified by educational health as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend School.
- When a child, for whatever reason, leaves to attend another School. Confirmation that the child has attended and gone on to another School **must** be obtained before removal.
- This is also the case where the LA ‘names’ another School in Part IV of a pupil’s Statement of Special Educational Need. Confirmation that the pupil has been admitted must be obtained before removal.

In all of these six instances the pupil before removal will have been confirmed to be on another School’s or LA roll thus ensuring the safe passage of children between providers. If confirmation has not been obtained by the Academy that the pupil is on another School or LA roll, then they will not be removed from our roll.

## **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

It is recognised that there are particular problems attached to the underachievement of looked after children. It is expected that there will be regular and open communication between the Academy’s designated Looked After Children Teacher, the EWS, Social Services, ECLAS and other relevant parties.

Early intervention, following indicators of change or problems are vital, at OB Academy we will identify changes in attendance and respond by swift information-seeking,

planning and action. Where appropriate, other involved parties should be involved in the early discussions and reactions/responses.

### **PENALTY NOTICES (PN)**

A Penalty Notice (PN) may be issued where a student has an unacceptable level of unauthorised absences - i.e. 10 or more unauthorised absences - when the previous 13 week span in the Academy register is examined, giving attendance of 90% or less in this period.

PN's may be issued when:

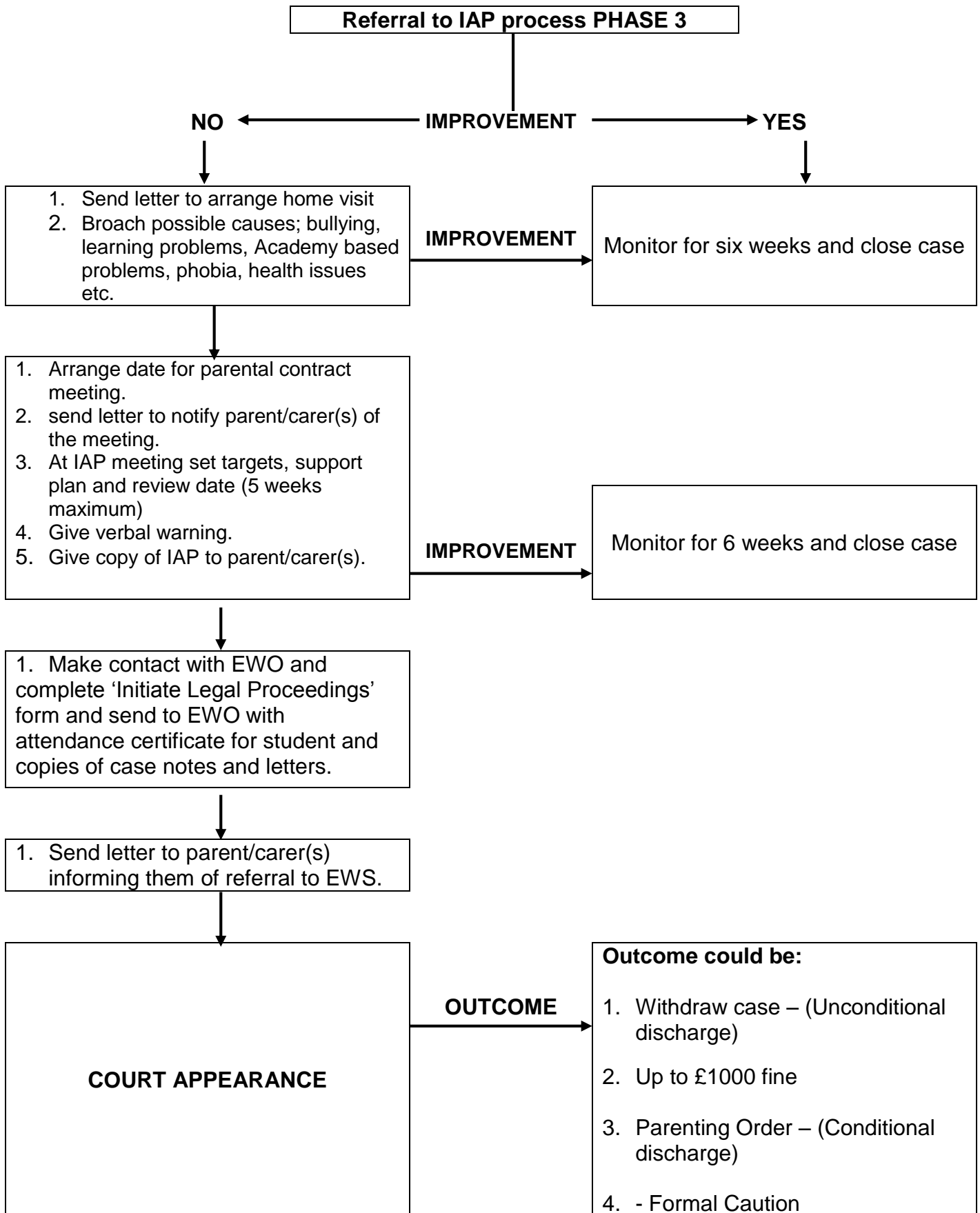
- A parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation, especially where the absence will lead to the child missing public examinations e.g. GCSEs;
- Where following a Truancy Sweep, enquiries show that the Academy has recorded the student's absence for that session as unauthorised and there are an additional 10 unauthorised absences within the previous 13 week span.
- In cases where students are persistently late for the Academy after the register has closed.
- In cases where a student's parent (s) fail to work with the Academy and the EWS to improve attendance (and the 10 unauthorised criteria is met); attendance has to be below 90% to issue a PN.
- The Police during the course of their enquiries may also make a request to the EWS for the issuing of a PN if the student has been identified as truanting. The EWS will investigate the circumstances before a decision is made.
- A PN may be issued where a student has 10 unauthorised absences when the previous 13 week span in the Academy register is examined.
- PNs may be issued to any or all parents as defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

A written warning of the possibility of a PN being issued will be sent to the Parent / Carer advising of the number of absences and giving 15 academy days to effect an improvement. There is no limit to the number of warning letters that may be issued.

If attendance does not improve over the 15 day warning period then a PN will be issued by EWS if the absence of pupils meets the criteria.

Payment in full discharges the parent/carer's liability. However, prosecution may be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the PN (a minimum of three months evidence is required after the Penalty Notice has been paid). If full payment is not received the LA is required under the Education Act 1996 to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of the student's poor attendance.

## PROCESS OF REFERRAL TO EWO (LEADING TO PROSECUTION)



### Definitions



A student is classed as **absent** if they arrive at the academy after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason.

An **authorised absence** is:

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the academy day for which the academy has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

An **unauthorised absence** is defined as:

- Parents keeping children from attending the academy unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Leaving the academy for no reason during the day

The academy defines **persistent absenteeism (PA)** as missing 90% or more of schooling across the year **for whatever reason**.

Updated by Mrs Wallace  
September 2015