



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Policy reviewed, approved and adopted</b>	<b>January 2024</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Review frequency</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>October 2024</b>
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>

	Section
AIMS AND RATIONALE	1
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY	2
EQUALITY	3
GRANTING LEAVE OF ABSENCE	4
SCHOOL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES	5
CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL FOR LONG PERIODS DUE TO ILL HEALTH	6
PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM	7
CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION	8
REMOVING A PUPIL OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE FROM THE REGISTER	9
HOME EDUCATED CHILDREN	10
PART TIME TIMETABLES	11
SHARING INFORMATION AND WORKING COLLABORATIVELY	12
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	13
MONITORING OF THIS POLICY	14

Appendix 1 – School Procedures for managing absences

Appendix 2 – Relevant Legislation and associated information relating to this policy

## 1.0 AIMS AND RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of the school communities of the Ascent Academies' Trust of the following:

- How our schools encourage and enable good attendance
- How our schools monitor and review attendance
- How our schools monitor punctuality and lateness
- How authorised and unauthorised absences are managed
- How leave of absence in term time is managed
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

Some young people find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, our schools and their partners should work with young people and their parents/carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with our schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including effective use of the pupil premium funding. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single colleague, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching colleagues in school, our Trust Board, our local authorities and other local partners.

All our schools comply with the DfE guidance on school attendance - Working together to improve School Attendance: guidance for maintained Schools, Academies and Local Authorities (Department for Education – applies from September 2022)

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

## 1.1 WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent and carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

*The Education Act 1996 states that: S.576: "Meaning of "parent". In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person— (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him." S.7: "Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable— (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational*

*needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.” S.444: “Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”*

*A child becomes of ‘compulsory school age’ on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.*

For the most vulnerable young people, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Therefore, we will also ensure that we have high expectations of those children of non-compulsory school age (those in reception or earlier and those in post-16 education. Although there are no supported enforcement routes for this cohort, we recognise that the young person has an Education Health Care Plan that we have a legal requirement to meet.

## **1.2 AIM**

The aim of the policy is to promote the ‘most effective education for young people. Our Trust consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance in school, sets high expectations for every young person, communicates those expectations to parents and systematically analyses their data to identify patterns to target improvements in attendance. Each school recognises that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundations of attendance begin with a sense of belonging and a supportive school environment where young people want to attend. Therefore, all schools in our Trust are expected to;

- Have an accurate and up to date admissions register where attendance is recorded. This must include the young person’s name, date of birth, date of admission, name and address of parents/carer and details of the last school attended. *(A pupil’s name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies)*
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have consulted upon and shared the school attendance policy which all colleagues and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers on our Trust MIS (twice daily - morning and afternoon) and have effective day to day and within the school day processes in place to follow-up incidents of absences or lateness.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify young people or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families (and other relevant organisations) to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and our Trust recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. A positive view of attendance is an integral part of our Trust’s ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance, leaders are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside behaviour and safeguarding, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting young people with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged young people (including use of pupil premium).
- Ensure that the curriculum addresses attendance positively in the context of learning and progress, employability and social relationships and routines.

## 2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and each academy has a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.

This responsibility lies within the role of **Deputy Head Pastoral;**

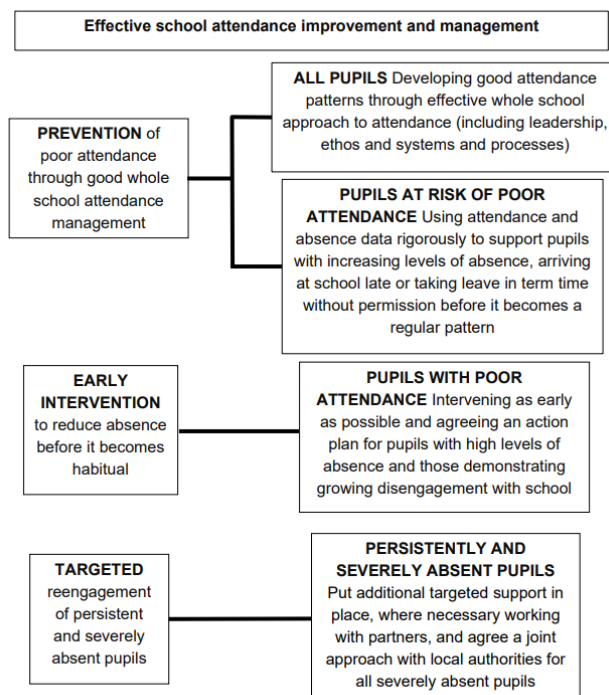
Ash Trees Academy - Lauren Banks, lbanks@ascenttrust.org

Barbara Priestman Academy – Carolyn Bird cbird@ascenttrust.org

Hope Wood Academy - Anne Marshall anmarshall@ascenttrust.org

Portland Academy – Karen Hart khart@ascenttrust.org

Responsibilities for this role will include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement at all levels to ensure good attendance through the model below.



The DHT Pastoral should;

- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support colleagues (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Be clear with parents and young people about attendance expectations and the short- and long-term consequences of poor attendance.
- Ensure our language around non-attendance recognises the complexity of each family-there are no simple reasons as to why young people are not attending. They are not simply 'school refusers' or 'persistent absentees'.
- Monitor attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance and trends for groups/individuals before they become an issue.
- Listen to parents and young people to understand barriers to attendance and try and resolve them.
- Facilitate any necessary support and understand when these need to be made more formal should attendance not improve. (This may include 'early help')
- Enforce attendance through necessary routes, considering whether there are safeguarding avenues to pursue.
- Work in partnership with a range of professionals to support good attendance patterns for example the LA School Attendance Support Team.
- Attend termly **Targeting Support Meetings** with the LA so they can identify, discuss, and agree joint targeted actions for young people who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so. This should include agreeing what support the LA will provide and which (if any) other statutory or voluntary services should become involved.

Each Academy in our Trust publishes its start and finish times on their website. Registers close at 9.30am in all academies but Ash Trees which close at 9.40am.

Please see individual academy websites for further information on how good attendance is supported and how unexpected absences are managed. (These can also be found in appendix 1)

The Deputy Heads Pastoral (named above) are responsible for chairing the SEND team meetings in schools. These meetings are held at least fortnightly and discuss any child who is deemed to be vulnerable in terms of their attendance, behaviour, safety (safeguarding concerns), health or mental health. In terms of attendance, they should;

- Monitor the attendance data from the previous week(s) and identify any patterns/trends, and plan interventions for individuals
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of young people and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.

- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include young people in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for young people eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide updates for teachers on attendance issues for individuals and cohorts
- Identify young people who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Gather information to fully understand the reasons for poor attendance
- Arrange suitable support for individual young people and work with the person and their families to plan for improvement. (This may be with the class teacher, support colleagues, Children's mental health team, family liaison workers, etc)
- Plan a support package for a return to school for long term absentees.
- Identify any children missing from education

The Deputy Head Pastoral is responsible for creating attendance reports for their academy's Local Advisory Body (LAB) on a termly basis. These reports will provide an overall benchmark for the Board of Trustees.

## **2.1 DSL RESPONSIBILITY**

Where barriers to attendance for a pupil or family are complex and signposting to services is not sufficient, schools should work together with social care, the LA and other local groups to provide more intensive whole family support to address them as soon as it becomes clear they would benefit from it. It is expected that there will be an agreed joint approach for all severely absent young people.

The DSL will also have a clear picture of any other safeguarding issues that may be linked to the attendance issue.

Multi-disciplinary support should build on the existing early help offer rather than requiring additional resource. In line with early help principles, the family should receive a single assessment, plan, and where necessary, a single lead practitioner. This should be from the team or service best placed to support the family and their needs, which may be the school, a local authority team or service or another statutory partner such as a health professional. For example, in the case of a pupil experiencing barriers to attendance because of a housing issue, the lead practitioner may more sensibly be the family's housing officer. 29 78. Rather than holding sign.

The DSL, along with the DHT pastoral should ensure that SEND meetings include data on attendance of children with a social worker. Nationally, absence for young people with a social worker has been historically higher than for other young people, with a quarter of children who have ever needed a social worker persistently absent compared to less than 10% of those who had never been in need. Each school should decide whether they need a separate target for this group within their attendance action plan. The DSL should inform the young person's social worker if there are unexplained absences.

Where all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate support have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. DSLs should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Where young people are deemed to be 'missing from education' the DSL should take reasonable steps to locate them (see section 8.0 of this policy)

## **2.2 TEACHERS' & SUPPORT COLLEAGUES RESPONSIBILITY**

Teachers should monitor their classes' attendance and report any concerns. They should create an ethos around 'attendance matters' and encourage positive attendance patterns and punctuality by;

- Completing class and lesson registers accurately in line with academy guidance and ensuring that business support colleagues are aware of any communication with home/bus escorts re a young person's attendance.
- Being consistent in their communication with young people and parents, developing respectful relationships with parents and carers that can be a foundation for good attendance.
- Ensuring they receive the training and professional development they need.
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all young people and communicate these regularly to young people and parents through all available channels.
- Helping parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at an individual level.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Be curious as to patterns in attendance or why a young person might not be in school.
- Recognise that young people missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Ensure the benefits of good attendance is communicated through the curriculum and is seen as a key employability attribute.

## **2.3 BUSINESS SUPPORT COLLEAGUES' RESPONSIBILITY**

Business support colleagues manage the attendance registers and have a key part to play in terms of holding positive conversations with parents and carers and also ensuring young people are safe. They should;

- Manage the registers in line with statutory guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67111/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance.pdf) Section 7
- Add new young people to the registers
- On close of registers make 1<sup>st</sup> day phone calls to parents where we have not had a reason for a young person's absence.
- Inform teachers or support colleagues when parents have phoned in to communicate their child's absence from school.



## **2.4 PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Adults have a primary role in ensuring the attendance of young people. Good examples of attendance and timekeeping by colleagues and parents provide role models for young people. Parents are expected to;

- Contact the school when their son or daughter is absent to explain the reason, otherwise the school will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided.
- Ensure that the school has more than one emergency contact number for their child. This is good practice to give the school additional options to contact a responsible adult.
- Attend meetings with the school if their child is persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement.
- To promote school positively and be clear about their high expectations for attendance.

School attendance parental responsibility measures 2015 describes the legal measures that schools, Local Authorities and the police have in enforcing attendance. Please click on the link below for further information.

[Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

## **2.5 RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young people who are able, should ensure that they foster good attendance and punctuality habits so that they are building skills for adulthood and having the best learning opportunities.

## **2.6 HOA RESPONSIBILITY**

The HOA should have a clear overview of school attendance and regularly meet with the DHT Pastoral to understand any changing picture. They should;

- Review the attendance action plan with the DHT pastoral.
- Review any safeguarding concerns linked to attendance with the DSL.
- Ensure that teachers are carrying out their responsibilities in line with this policy.
- Make decisions around exceptional requests for LOA.
- Demonstrate understanding of specific family circumstances where there may be attendance issues, for example, where there are family members with significant autoimmune disease that may result in a young person's absence.
- Ensure that SEND meetings are impactful in setting out and reviewing actions for young people at risk due to poor attendance.
- Challenge LA transport where there are significant issues causing missed educational provision.

## **2.6 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Our Board is responsible for publishing and sharing the attendance policy so that it is easily accessible.

The Board will ensure that there is a consistent focus on attendance and effective approaches to ensure that children attend well. They will;

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the schools' ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help Trust and school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual person or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure all colleagues receive adequate training on attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Set high expectations of all leaders, colleagues, our young people, and parents.
- Ensure attendance is prioritised in wider improvement strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Ensure the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for young people who require it most by prioritising the resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all young people, but that processes, and support are adapted to the individual needs. This includes those with long term illnesses, complex special educational needs and disabilities, those with a social worker and those from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of their schools' processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of young people as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve.
- Review attendance action plans for our Trust schools and ensure that good practice is shared.
- Where there are specific concerns about attendance in a school or schools the Board of Trustees should ensure that there is an attendance action plan in place.

We have a Link Trustee for the welfare of young people- Caroline Green.

## **2.7 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY**

All local authorities are expected to have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in its area (regardless of type). There is no requirement for a specific service delivery model or name, but each local authority is expected to provide the 4 core functions (Communication and advice, Targeted support meetings, Multi-disciplinary support for families and Legal intervention listed below) free of charge to all schools. They will also monitor the attendance of children with a social worker through the virtual head. These core functions should not, therefore, be traded or require service level agreements from schools.

As a minimum, however, all local authorities are expected to:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the young people, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):
- Communication and advice: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
- Targeting Support Meetings: hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify young people and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those young people.

- Multi-disciplinary support for families: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
- Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School

### **3.0 EQUALITY**

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education, and high attendance expectations should be set for all young people. Our Trust recognises the specific and sometimes very complex needs of certain young people and cohorts. Leaders will ensure that they apply the attendance policy fairly and consistently but will always consider the individual needs of individuals and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of our policy, school leaders should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **4.0 GRANTING LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. However, it is up to the Head of Academy to decide if a leave of absence is approved. Examples may include situations where there is an important family celebration such as a wedding, or where a young person has a life limiting condition and there may be limited opportunity for the family to be together. Requests for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Head of Academy, detailing the exceptional reasons for absence. The CEO will regularly check that we are being consistent in our practice. Absence for the observance of a religious festival will be authorised for a maximum of two days per school year. The Board of Trustees has delegated this responsibility to the Head of Academy.

Parents/carers are asked, where possible, to make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours, but we acknowledge that hospital and more specialist appointments that our young people need may be more difficult to achieve. Absences will not be authorised retrospectively.

Our Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature in some of our school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### **5.0 SCHOOL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its colleagues receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice. Attendance codes can be found via this link:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. Medical evidence may include an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication etc.

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every young person is:

- present
- attending an approved educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Morning registers close at 9.20am (or 9.40am at Ash Trees Academy) except on days of particularly inclement weather, when the Head of Academy may declare that the school should close registers later. Afternoon registers close 5 minutes after the start of the afternoon session. Class teachers should carry out ongoing monitoring of both attendances. First day absence calls are made by business support colleagues as soon as the registers have been completed. The register is then amended to show the reason for the absence. A message will be left on the home phone/mobile phone if colleagues are unable to speak to parents about their child's absence. If no contact is made with the parents by the second day a "Safe and Well" visit will be made. If no one is at home every attempt will be made to find further information i.e. from neighbours and Emergency Contacts. If no progress is made colleagues will contact the missing children team and report the child as missing.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance. Schools in our Trust use Arbor (an electronic management information system) to keep their attendance and admission registers to improve accuracy, speed up the process of sharing and analysing information, and make returns to local authorities and DfE easier. Registers are legal records, and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry. As the attendance register is a record of all young persons present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.

5.1 If a young person returns to school, where no contact was able to have been made during the absence, the parents will receive a letter from the Head of Academy reiterating the school procedures for pupil absence. Regular attendance reports are shared through the SEND team.

5.2 If a parent contacts the school to say a child is ill and will be off for a week the school will do a "Safe and Well" check after the third day.

Where children are admitted to hospital, we will contact the family and will provide liaison to enable the pupil to return to school as soon as they are well enough to do so. Where they are able to complete school-based work or attend virtually, this should be provided.

5.3 Young people who arrive late at school because of difficulties with organised transport (taxi or minibus) will be marked as present but late. Where patterns of consistent late running

by contractors occur, the LA transport team will be informed. Young people who arrive late in school will be required to report to the school office where their late mark will be recorded.

5.4 When classes go off site during school time details of children leaving site and those remaining in school must be recorded on the appropriate form in the school office.

5.5 Returns of school data are made termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our schools within local and national contexts.

5.6 A small number of young people in our Trust are independent travellers and some parents/carers transport their child to school. Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will discuss directly with the young person directly and/or make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Academy will write to the parents/carers about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer.

## **6.0 YOUNG PEOPLE OUT OF SCHOOL FOR LONG PERIODS DUE TO ILL HEALTH**

Some young people face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include young people who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have complex special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other and therefore the attendance ambition for them should be the same as they are for any other young person in mainstream. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these young people face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This should include:

- Holding sensitive conversations with families to support healthcare needs and consider whether additional support from other services may be needed.
- Ensuring the support listed in the EHCP can still be accessed where appropriate if the child is absent long term with a medical condition.
- Ensuring that during a long-term absence the child retains contact with the school, their teachers and peers and where possible they keep up to date with as much of their schoolwork as possible, within the limitations of their illness.
- Young people with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority.

Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

In all cases, colleagues need to be sensitive and avoid stigmatising young people and parents, and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

## **7.0 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM**

Where absence escalates and young people miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), our Trust will put in place a programme of targeted support in collaboration with a range of professionals and inform the LA. This will identify any barriers to attendance and consider how schools might reengage these young people. In doing so, colleagues will always sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching for punitive approaches. If there are

medical reasons for absence, then colleagues should refer to the DFE guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and statutory guidance on ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/941900/health\\_needs\\_guidance\\_accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/941900/health_needs_guidance_accessible.pdf)

Focus should be given by all partners to young people who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent young people may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and, where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Given the challenges many families face, and the strong relationships our Trust aims to foster with them, it would be extremely rare that legal intervention would be used. However, this should always be kept in mind as a last resort.

The average level of persistent absenteeism across special schools nationally has risen steadily and in autumn 2022 had risen to 40.9%. Our Trust aims to be below this rate and has a key performance Indicator(KPI) of <30%, but has aspirations for this to be lower. Understandably the pandemic has impacted negatively on attendance rates.

## **7.1 CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS**

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps. It will be imperative that these most vulnerable children are monitored during their absence either by the school, or in written agreement with other agencies.

## **8.0 CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the Local Authority missing children team.

### **8.1 Reasonable steps to be taken by school colleagues include:**

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered

- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc through school contacts

All communication should be recorded on CPOMS.

## **9.0 REMOVING A PUPIL OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE FROM THE REGISTER**

No child shall be deleted without the consent of the local authority, or, if the LA refuses to give consent, without a direction from the Secretary of State, unless:

*A young person has died.*

A pupil's name should only be deleted from the admission register when the school is informed of the death. This would normally come from the pupil's parent but it is possible that notification comes from another source, such as relatives, social care or the police. Once the school receives the information it should immediately delete the pupil's name to prevent inadvertent and unnecessary contact with the family about the child.

*A young person has been permanently excluded.*

*A young person has been registered at the school as a result of a school attendance order, and the order has been revoked for some reason.*

## **10.0 HOME EDUCATION**

On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the local authority that the young person is to be deleted from the admission register. Our Trust will never seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record, neither will it seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system.

## **11.0 PART TIME TIMETABLES**

Young people of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet individual needs e.g. where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part time timetable must be agreed by the Local Authority, parent/carers and any other involved professionals. Part time timetables should never be used as a response to manage challenging behaviour. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school has agreed to a young person being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

## **12.0 SHARING INFORMATION AND WORKING COLLABORATIVELY**

Our Trust will work collaboratively to help to remove barriers to attendance experienced by families. This may mean sharing attendance data for individuals with health care workers, the local authority or social care.

Local Authorities have school attendance teams available that are free of charge and therefore each academy will have a point of contact in their LA.

## **13.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Deputy Head Pastoral is responsible for monitoring attendance within school on a weekly basis and reporting concerns to the SEND team. The Head of Academy is also responsible

for monitoring overall attendance within the school and these will report each term to the Local Advisory Body and the Board of Trustees. The CEO will monitor attendance and rates of persistent absenteeism through the LAB and report headline data, trends, analysis, and strategy to the Board termly.

#### **14.0 MONITORING OF THIS POLICY**

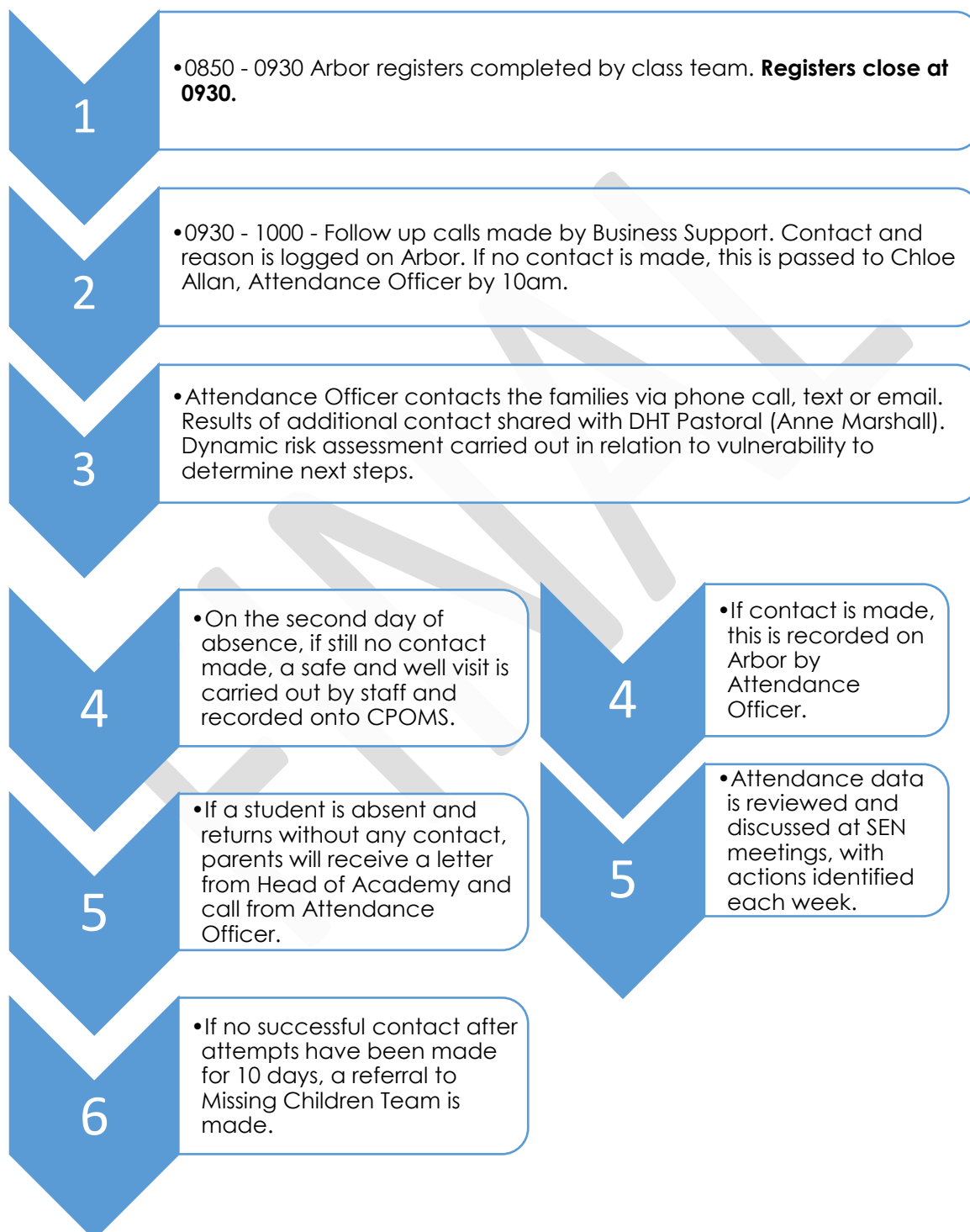
This policy will be reviewed annually by the CEO, or more frequently if required. Resulting aspect of good practice will be incorporated in updates to this policy. Effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through annual quality assurance activity.

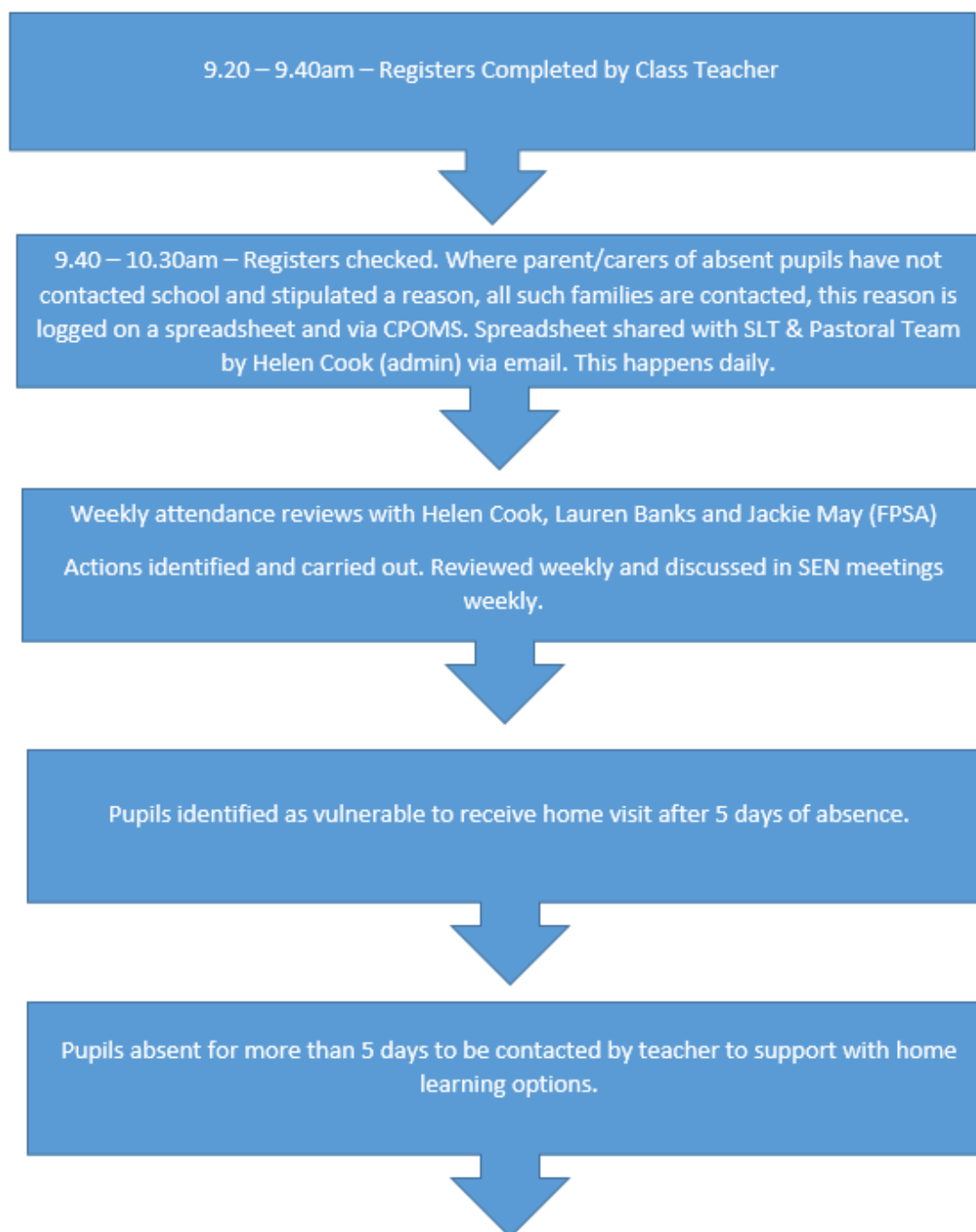
This policy will be shared with Trustees each autumn term.

F E M N A L



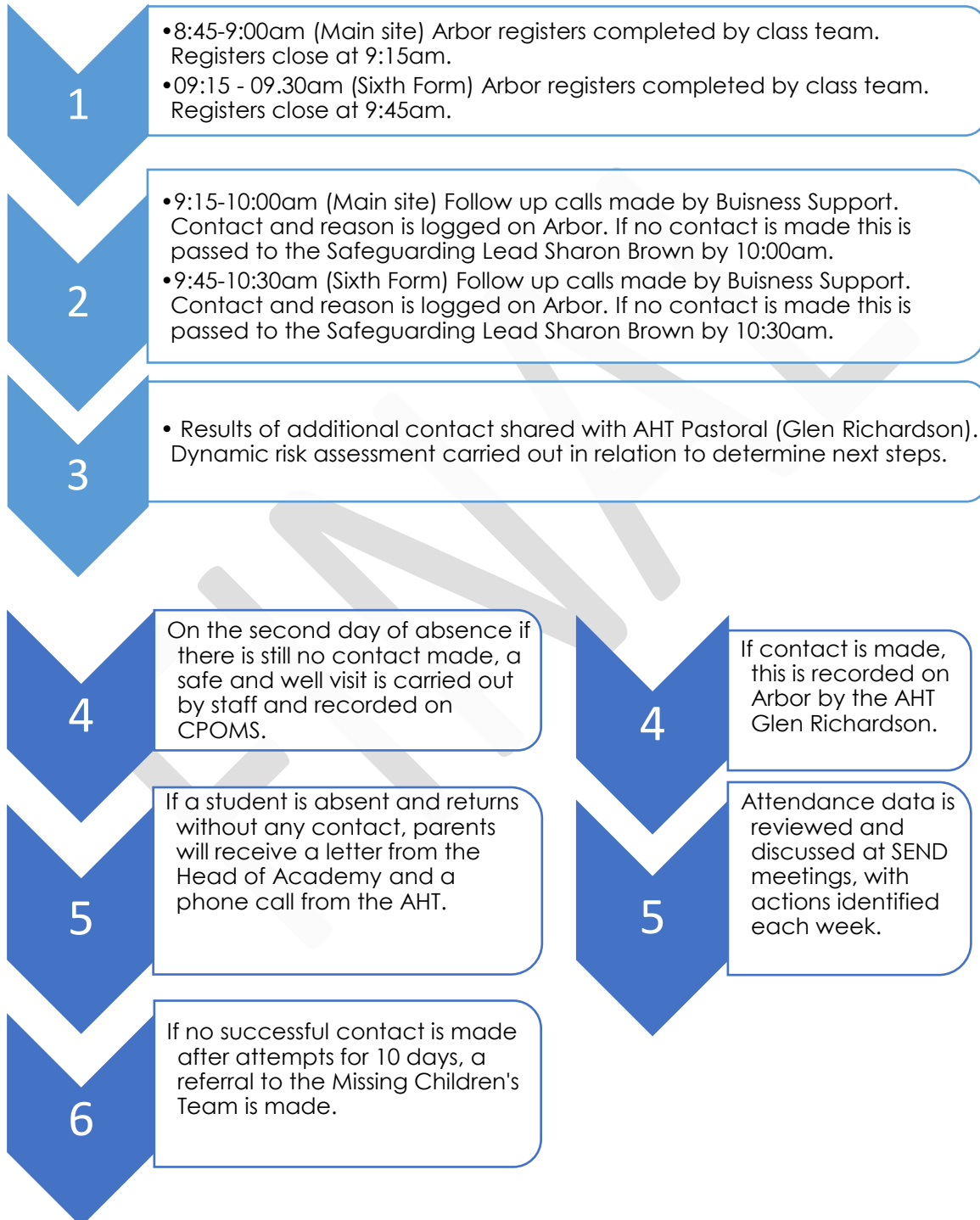
## APPENDIX 1A HOPE WOOD ACADEMY-ABSENCE PROCEDURES





APPENDIX 1B ASH TREES ACADEMY-ABSENCE PROCEDURES

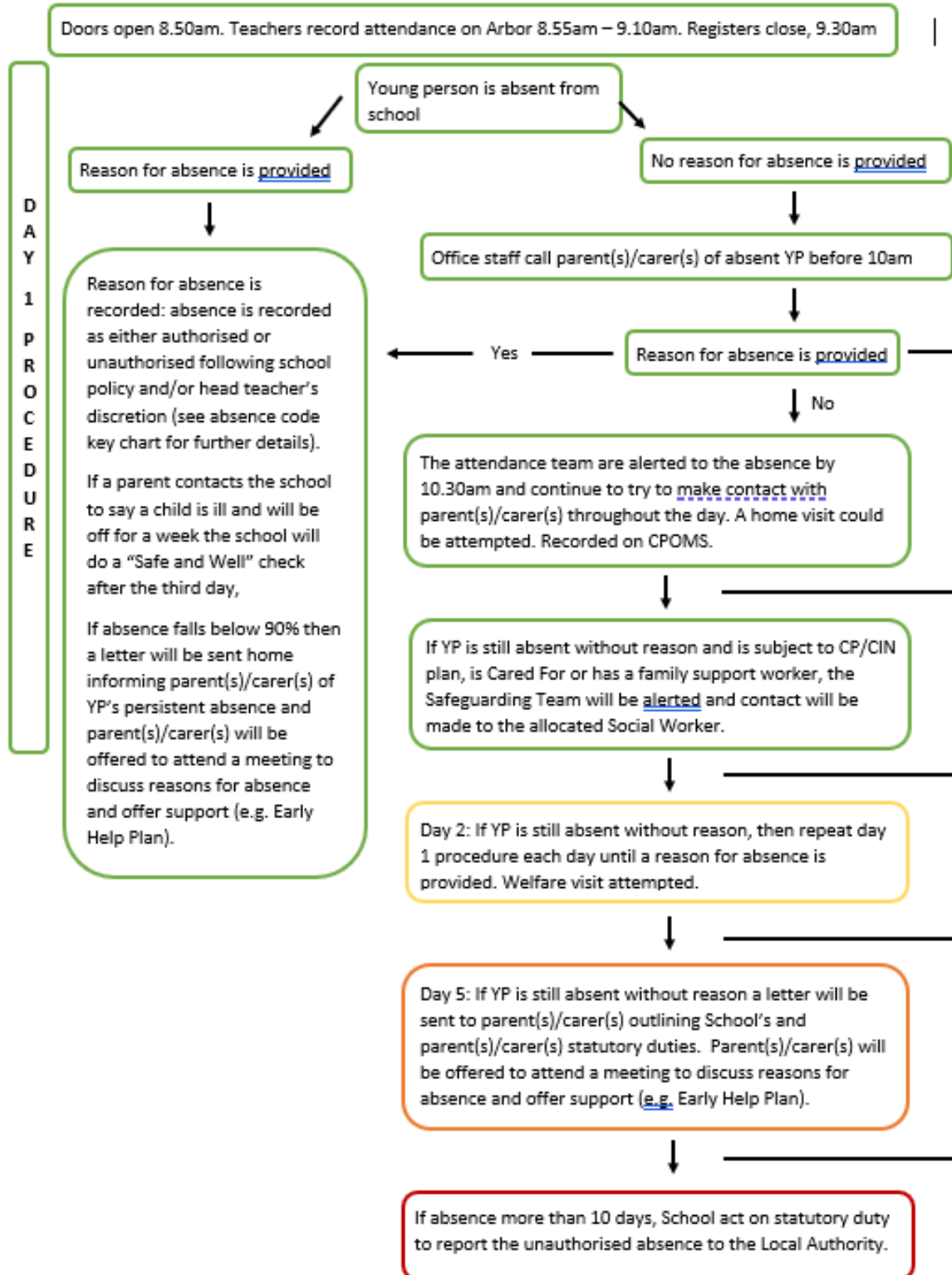
## APPENDIX 1C BARBARA PRIESTMAN ACADEMY-ABSENCE PROCEDURES



APPENDIX 1D-PORTLAND ACADEMY-ABSENCE PROCEDURES

DRAFT

### Attendance Flow Chart



### **Relevant legislation**

The Education Act 1996

The Children Act 1989

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) 2007

The Education (pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006

### **Relevant government Guidance**

Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour

Children missing education

Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022

Working together to safeguard children

Elective Home Education

Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England

Supporting children at school with medical conditions

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Promoting and supporting mental health and well-being in schools and colleges

Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying