



# GEORGE FENTHAM ENDOWED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2018/19

Please note that this policy has been amended to reflect:

- the individual school's expectations, processes and procedures.
- The relevant Local Authority Code of Conduct/ thresholds for legal action.

# **CSAWS Model School Pupil Attendance Policy**

## **Introduction**

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

## **Aims**

- To improve the overall attendance of children at school.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- a welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environment;
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential;
- high expectations of our pupils and all staff;
- a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
- recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life;
- equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life;
- high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies;
- a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning;
- provide experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding;
- support, guidance and training for all those who teach and work with our children;
- foster and maintain links with our wider community

## **Legislative Framework**

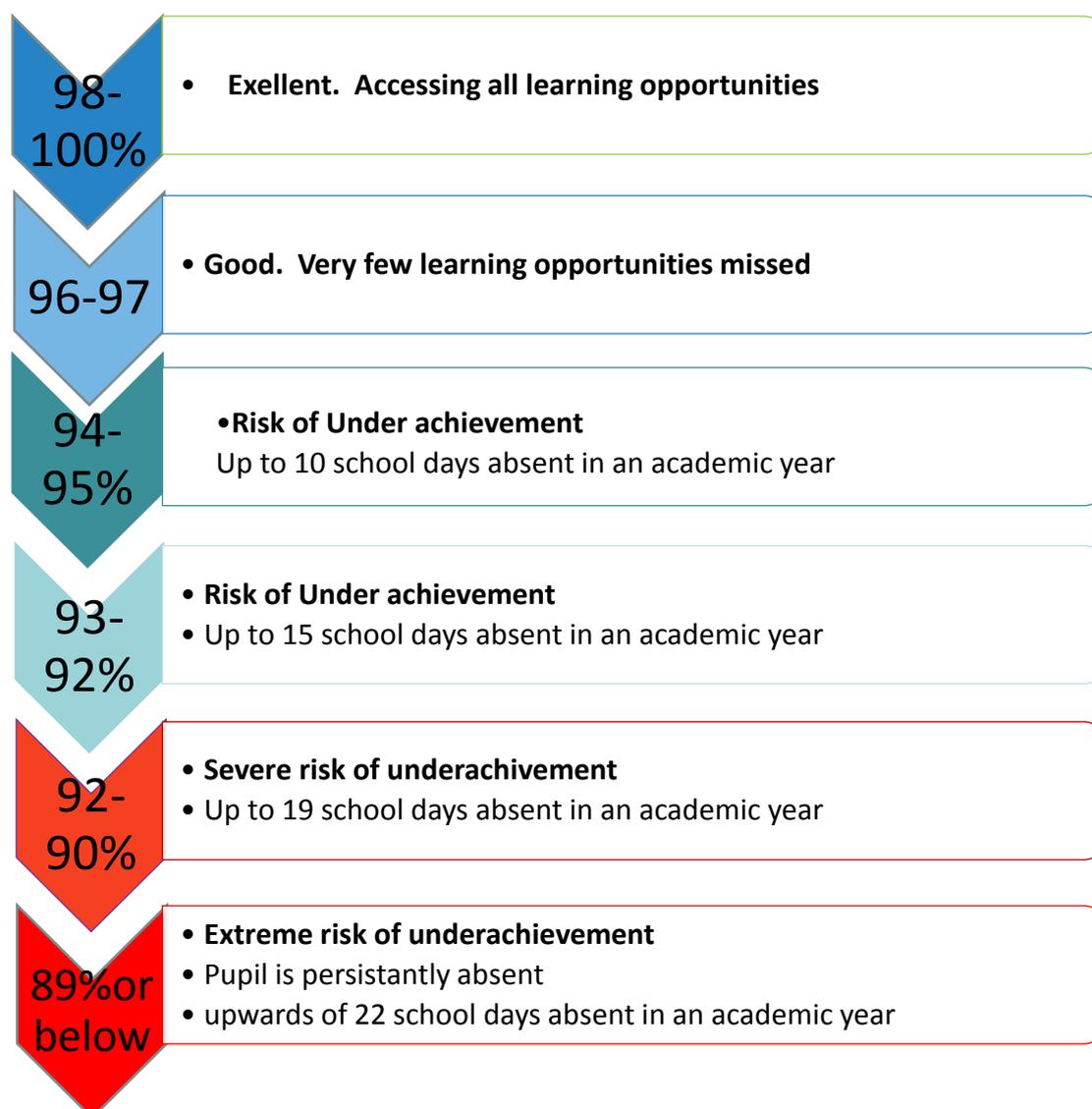
Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

## Expected Levels of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

At George Fentham Endowed School we expect all children to achieve attendance that is at least 96%.



## **Attendance Partnership Expectations**

### **We expect the following from all of our pupils:**

- To attend school regularly.
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day, having eaten breakfast.
- To tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

### **We expect the following from parents and carers:**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure contact is made with school, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day, having eaten breakfast.

### **Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

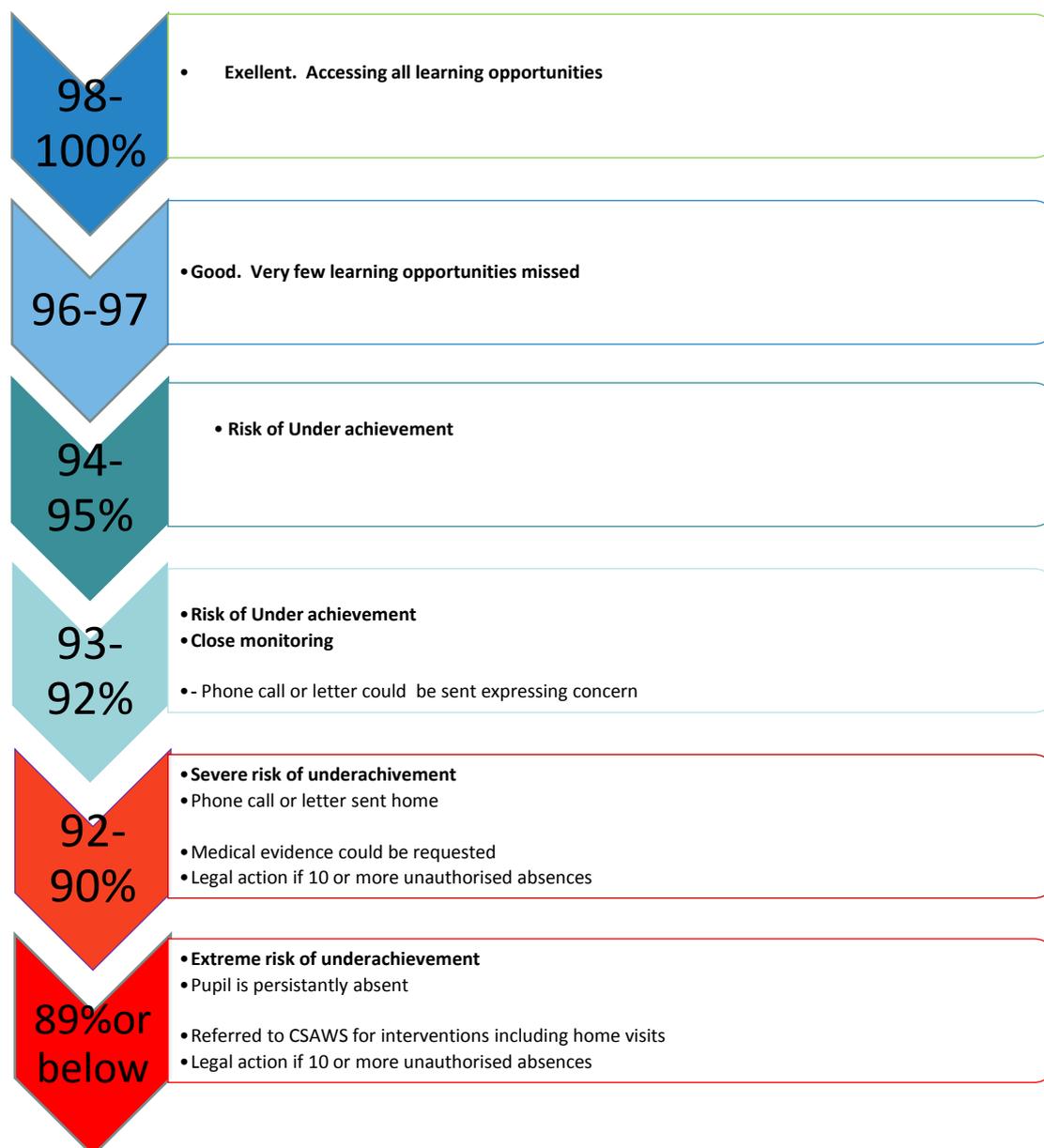
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Follow up support if needed.

## **Roles and Responsibilities for attendance**

- George Fentham Endowed School has a named member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.
- Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school.
- Attendance matters are reviewed by the head and members of the senior management team.
- Attendance is reported on, on a minimum termly basis, to the Governing Body.
- School uses Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS) to support the school with the processes associated with children's attendance at school. School employ CSAWS to provide the legal monitoring services and support that will help reduce the number of persistent absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.
- We believe that through attending school every day on time children and young people will get the best possible start in life.

## Procedures

We award 100% attendance certificates on a termly basis to encourage and reward high attendance.



Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of absence, a number of unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns raised a referral may be made straight to CSAWS. Referrals will be made to the Education Enforcement team for the issue of penalty notices where pupils have 10 or more unauthorised absences.

## **Absence**

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30am school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given.

School staff will phone parents to ascertain a reason for the child absence from school.

If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to telephone messages they will follow the process in detailed in Appendix 1. This includes further telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated ( DFE Attendance guidance 2018)

**It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school.**

**Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child ( KCSIE 2018) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.**

### **Illness:**

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school they should follow the above absence process.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

School will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

### **George Fentham Endowed School may request medical evidence if:**

- Attendance is less than 92%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- There is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

### **Medical appointments**

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment. Parents may be required to provide a copy of the appointment letter or card prior to the day of the appointment.

### **Other reasons for absences:**

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances)**

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

### **Procedure for requesting a planned absence:**

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (Appendix 2) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific

timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.

- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 2). There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher.
- Where the head teacher is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupils attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer (*appendix 3 : model pro forma*)
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised a letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent. The letter provided in this guidance (appendix 4) must be used.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Enforcement Team for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

### **Punctuality**

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every-day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



*5 Minutes Late 10 Minutes Late 15 Minutes Late 20 Minutes Late 30 Minutes Late*

(Over one academic year)

To access the most of the school day we ask parents to ensure that their children arrive between 8.45am and 8.55am.

Children arriving after 8.55 am will be late for school and have to report to the school office. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 9.30am

The registers are monitored daily to identify pupils who are arriving late. Regular late arrival for school will be challenged as not acceptable. Pupils who have 10 or more U codes will be referred to the Education Enforcement Team for the issue of a penalty notice.

### **Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed

to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### **Truancy within school**

George Fentham Endowed School monitors attendance to each lesson period of the school day using the registers, in order to ensure all pupils are safe in school and whereabouts known. If a pupil does not present to scheduled lessons/activities, the Attendance Officer is informed and staff alerted to find missing pupils. If pupils cannot be located and are suspected of leaving school premises, parents will be informed and the police notified of a missing child.

### **Alternative Education Providers**

On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at George Fentham Endowed School. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored and reflected on school registers. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with George Fentham Endowed School.

### **Registers**

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the Head Teacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the head teacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks. School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categorise absence (Appendix 5).

### **Use of Attendance Data**

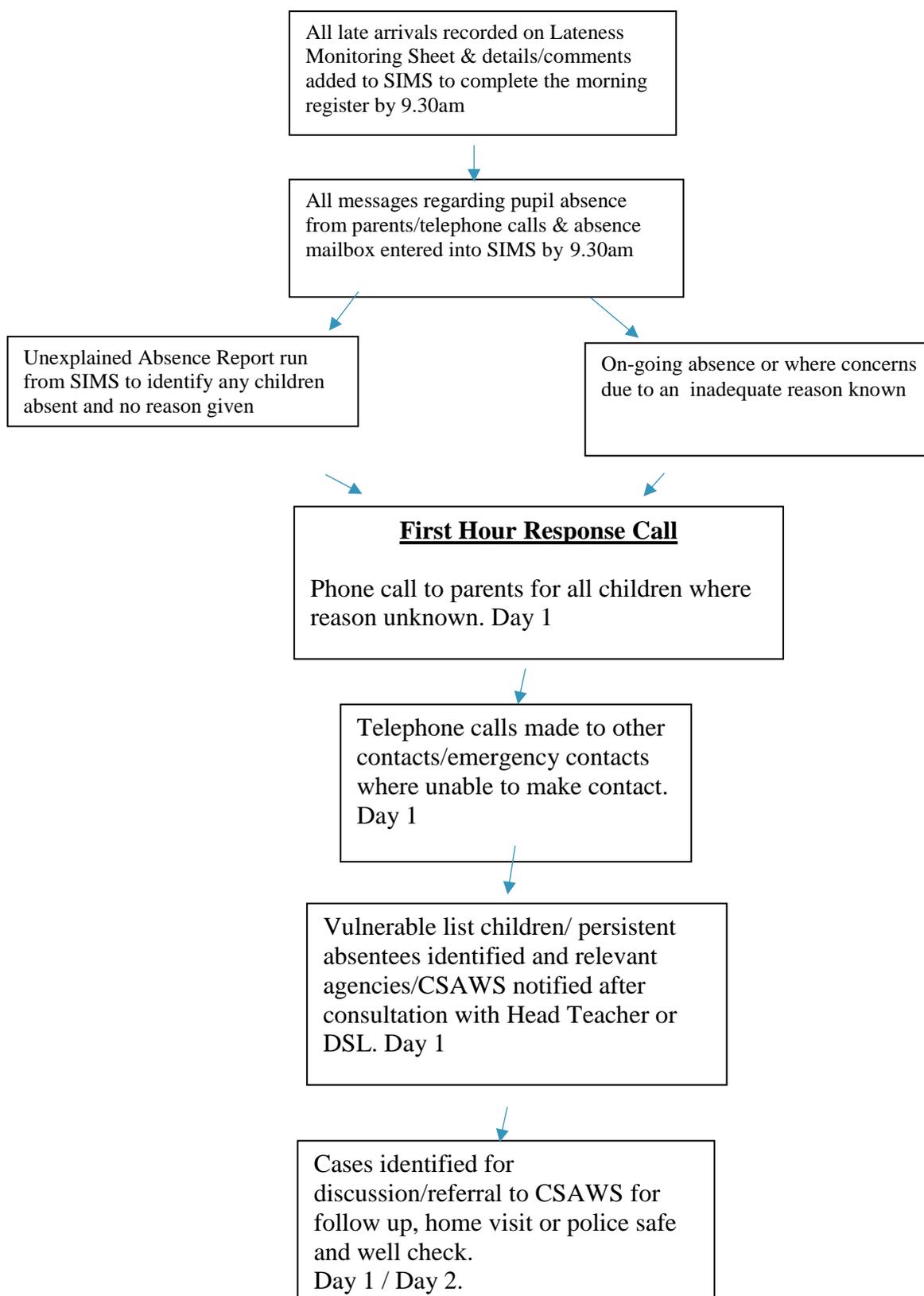
All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with CSAWS during regular attendance meetings held at school. CSAWS then follow up attendance concerns with parents and carers on school's behalf.

## Appendix 1

### School Absence Procedure



Appendix 2 **GEORGE FENTHAM ENDOWED SCHOOL  
ABSENCE REQUEST FORM**

Form to be returned to the school office with a minimum of two weeks' notice

**Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Name of Pupil .....  | Class ..... |
| Date of birth .....  |             |
| Please detail below the <b>exceptional circumstance</b> why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with the Headteacher (please attaché your supporting evidence)<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....<br>..... |             |
| Address.....   |             |
| Leave of absence from date... to date .....  |             |
| Number of schools days that your child will be absent from school .....  |             |
| Signature .....  | Date .....  |
| Name of Parent/Carer .....   |             |

**Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised. These may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration which could result in a Penalty Notice.**

**For School Use:**

Previous requests for leave of absence Yes / No Attendance .....  
%

Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance Yes / No

Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer Yes / No Date & time  
.....

**Authorised**

**Unauthorised**

**By Headteacher**

**Appendix 3** Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard Letter

**Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard Letter**

TO THE PARENTS OF:-

Dear Parents

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

I write to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Requests for leave of absence are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have accepted your reason and evidence for the exceptional circumstance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc Class Teacher/File

Appendix 4 – Unauthorised Leave of absence letter

TO THE PARENTS OF:

*Dear (inset name of parent. An individual letter should be sent to each parent, for each child as each is potentially a separate offence and a penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each fine)*

**Re Leave of absences request for (pupil name dob)**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

On this occasion, I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

**Section 444 of the Education Act 1996** states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.

If you decide to go ahead with your proposed leave of absence, *(pupil name)* absence will be marked as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences are referred to Solihull MBC and this may result in a Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine for failure to comply with the law.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact myself or the Education Enforcement Service on 0121 779 1737

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. Class Teacher/File

## Appendix 5

### ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

| CODE     | DESCRIPTION  | MEANING                             |
|----------|--|-------------------------------------|
| /        | Present (AM)   | Present                             |
| \        | Present (PM)   | Present                             |
| <b>B</b> | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>C</b> | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>D</b> | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)                         | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>E</b> | Excluded (no alternative provision made)   | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>G</b> | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)                    | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>H</b> | Family holiday (agreed)  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>I</b> | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)                                    | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>J</b> | Interview  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>L</b> | Late (before registers closed)   | Present                             |
| <b>M</b> | Medical/Dental appointments  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>N</b> | No reason yet provided for absence   | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>O</b> | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)                     | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>P</b> | Approved sporting activity   | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>R</b> | Religious observance   | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>S</b> | Study leave  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>T</b> | Traveller absence  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>U</b> | Late (after registers closed)  | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>V</b> | Educational visit or trip  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>W</b> | Work experience  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>X</b> | Non-compulsory school age absence  | Not counted in possible attendances |
| <b>Y</b> | Enforced closure   | Not counted in possible attendances |
| <b>Z</b> | Pupil not yet on roll  | Not counted in possible attendances |
| <b>#</b> | School closed to pupils  | Not counted in possible attendances |