



# Attendance Policy

Last Review: October 2022

*At Patcham High School we are committed to being a school for all and consider ourselves a proactive community who promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity. We are an Anti-Racist School who endeavour to create an environment which allows all our pupils and staff to thrive and learn from each other's differences; experiences, cultures, backgrounds, identities and abilities. It is our intention to ensure that all students are supported to be proud of themselves, respect each other and ultimately succeed as young adults. We are particularly conscious of the need to ensure the identities of those from minority groups are acknowledged and celebrated – in every field, at all times, every day - whether students of colour or LGBTQ+ we have an overall aim of providing equal opportunities for all by having One Team and One Dream.*

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## **Introduction**

All children by law are entitled to receive a “suitable” education. Regular and punctual school attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all students have access to the full curriculum and it is the business of all staff and stakeholders belonging to the school to ensure every child has the best possible attendance. Studies show that there is a direct link between attendance and attainment, with students that attend school regularly by far outperforming their peers. In addition, good attendance has a strong correlation with good mental health and general well-being and social and emotional development. It also encourages and promotes good habits that will be invaluable to students when they leave us as young adults, ready to make their way independently in the wider community and beyond. We, at Patcham High School, are committed to ensuring that we uphold and fulfil our duty to ensure this for every child to the fullest extent, as outlined by this policy.

By enrolling your child at Patcham High School, you are entering into a legal contract that states that you will ensure your child attends school regularly and punctually. Students should be in school on time every day the school is open. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent. It is only the Head Teacher that can authorise an absence.

We pledge to apply this policy consistently, and fairly, while taking into consideration the specific needs of our pupils and their families.

### **The aims of this policy are:**

- To improve the school’s overall attendance.
- To raise the awareness of the importance of good school attendance clearly.
- To ensure that attendance and punctuality remain a priority for the school, all those that work here both in the classroom and support staff and those students attending the school.
- To set out agreed roles and responsibilities and to ensure everyone is clear of their own personal responsibility.
- To ensure consistency across the school.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to students and encourage them to take an active role in their attendance.
- To provide advice and guidance with the aims of helping parents/ carers uphold their legal responsibility to ensure their child has access to their education.
- To maintain positive and consistent communication between the school and parents/carers for the purposes of good attendance.

## **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), (September 2022) and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures (January 2015).

## **The Attendance Team:**

**Headteacher** – John McKee

**Director of Student Support** – Kerry Hallett (Rebecca Dyche – Maternity Cover)

**Attendance Manager** – Jess Gamain

**Student Services Administrator** – Claire Black/ Sarah Tobli

**Heads of Year** – Helen Emerson (7) Chloe Gale (8) Chris Vafeas (9) Emma Niland (10) Ryan Irvine (11).

**Advocates** – Hannah Baker (7) Cameron Finlay (8) Jenna Wilson (9) Jamie Guiver (10) Ashley Molas and Marly Zohrehie (11)

**Truancy Team** – All of the above, plus Safeguarding Team.

## **Registration**

The school is required by law to take the register twice daily. For each registration a present or absence mark is given either authorising the absence or giving an unauthorised mark.

## **Authorised absence**

Authorised absence is where a student is absent from school and the parent has provided good reason for the absence such as illness, religious observance or an unavoidable medical appointment. The school should be made aware of this absence before it occurs wherever possible. Parents / carers may be asked for medical evidence to support the authorisation of the absence.

In the event of a parent/carer requesting a leave of absence, this needs to be put in writing to a child's Head of Year at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence. The school may only grant leave during term time where evidence of **exceptional circumstances** has been provided.

## **Unauthorised absence**

The school will not authorise time off from school where they believe the parent has not provided reasonable justification for the absence. For example, holidays taken in term time, days off for a worryingly high level of illness and where there has been no contact from the parent. All unauthorised absence will be followed up by the school and could potentially lead to legal proceedings being taken by the local authority.

## **Persistent and Severe Absence**

Persistent absence is defined by the DfE as attendance below 90%. Across the school year, this equates to 19 missed school days across the year. Severe absence is anything beyond this, and could have a serious impact on a student's attainment, wellbeing and social development. It could also be a trigger for safeguarding concerns. The school will be in touch with you before your child falls into one of these categories, and honest and timely co-operation with the school upon first contact is the first step towards ensuring your child does not become a persistent or severe absentee. Other strategies could include, but are not limited to: liaising with outside

agencies, arranging online support between your child and trusted key member of staff, home visits, Educational Supervision Orders, Parenting Contracts

### **Punctuality**

All students are required by law to be in school on time. Just 15 minutes of lateness every day equates to two full school weeks of lost learning across the year, therefore punctuality is taken as seriously as attendance and absence.

If a student arrives for school past the close of registration then in the eyes of the law they are absent for half a day, which will affect their overall attendance. These incidents of severe lateness will be coded 'U'. Six 'U' codes in a six-week period will trigger a letter of concern from the Attendance Manager, and further U codes will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

It is very unsettling for a student to walk into class late, both for the latecomer and the students who were in the lesson on time, it is considered disruptive to learning and, in most circumstances, will carry a sanction.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Patcham High School will monitor school attendance following the system outlined:

- Six registers will be taken per day, one for every lesson your child attends.
- Absences to Lesson 1, without prior contact from home will be followed up by the school. See Appendix 4.
- Failure by a student to attend a lesson, following a present Lesson 1 mark, and without prior reason, will be raised with the 'truancy' team.
- The truancy team will look for your child for up to 15 minutes before you will be alerted by text or phone call to let you know your child is unaccounted for.
- Tutors, Heads of Year, The Director of Student Services and the Attendance Manager will track attendance, punctuality and truancy to identify patterns and attempt to address any barriers with your child, in school, in the first instance. This may include, but is not limited to: check ins with key and trusted members of staff, time out cards, changing timetables, discussions with class teachers, referrals to our in-house well-being team, punctuality reports.
- Tutors will consistently promote positive messages around attendance during form time, and carry out relevant duties assigned to them by Heads of Year to track and improve attendance of students in their tutor groups.
- Every student's attendance is monitored weekly using the attendance spreadsheets. The Attendance Manager will identify any concerns/trends to the relevant Head of Year, who will take appropriate action.
- Once attendance begins to give greater cause for concern the parent may be contacted by school staff on an escalation basis. This may involve calls from your child's Tutor, the Attendance Manager, Student Services Administrator, Head of Year or Director of Student Support.
- Parents will be invited in to a meeting with their child's tutor, the Attendance manager, Head of Year and/ or Director of Student Support when issues

- surrounding attendance are giving increasing cause for concern.
- Where attendance is not improving despite school intervention the school will have no option but to refer to the Local Authority.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The **Head Teacher** will ensure that the policy is fully implemented and that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and that they are acted upon appropriately.

The **Director of Student Support** will be assigned to be responsible for attendance.

The **Director of Student Support** will be responsible for the day to day management of the attendance, including:

- Analysing attendance data and checking monitoring documentation
- Producing reports for staff and governors on attendance and absence figures.
- Setting up and maintaining effective systems for registration, lesson registration, the follow-up of absence and referral.
- Ensuring all staff are clear about their responsibilities and providing training and support where necessary
- Working with the Attendance Manager and Heads of Year to ensure monitoring and tracking of attendance is consistent and that the appropriate interventions are being implemented.

**The Attendance Manager** will:

- Be responsible for and maintain the attendance systems of the school.
- Collect attendance data and producing regular reports for the Director of Student Support and other staff.
- Be a direct link for staff, students and parents on matters of attendance.
- Liaise with external agencies when necessary.

**The Heads of Year** will:

- Drive whole school improvements in attendance by directing tutor teams to engage with tracking, monitoring the attendance of their tutor groups, and, where necessary, implementing interventions to improve attendance.
- Promote good attendance across the whole school
- Be a direct link for staff, students and parents on matters of attendance.
- Be responsible for and maintain the attendance monitoring and intervention systems of the school within their year group.
- Liaise with external agencies when necessary.

**The Advocates** will:

- Promote good attendance across the cohort of students they work with
- Work with the Head of Year and Attendance Manager to support and improve attendance across the cohort of students they work with

**Teaching and Tutoring Staff** will:

- Take class and form time registers within 10 minutes of the lesson starting.
- Alert truancy if a student is missing, and follow up on this absence in either their capacity as a class teacher or tutor.
- Update registers and alert the truancy team if a student arrives once they've been reported missing.
- Uphold the messages of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Involve parents whenever possible, encouraging and maintaining contact with them, and raising expectations of attendance.
- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning students following a period of absence.
- Identify and report any developing patterns of absence to relevant Heads of Year, and Head of Curriculum area where this absence is localised to a subject.

**All parents/carers will:**

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and are punctual to school. Inform the school immediately if a student is unable to attend either by phone, email, writing or Study Bugs.
- Support any sanctions that are put in place in relation to poor attendance or truancy. These sanctions could include, but are not limited to: lunch/break time detentions, after school detentions, a set period of time in our Behaviour for Learning Unity, withdrawal from sporting events/ performances/ trips.
- Not authorize their child to leave school without having spoken to a member of staff at school, preferably their Head of Year, Student Services Administrator or the Director of Student Support.
- Work with the school to resolve any problems concerning unauthorised absence.
- Write to the Head Teacher at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence when requesting absence during school time.
- Provide Medical Evidence, where possible, for medical appointments that fall within the school day.

**Students will:**

- Attend school regularly and be punctual to school.
- Attend all lessons and tutor time.
- Be punctual to all lessons and tutor time and understand that lateness causes disruption to the whole class.
- Talk with a member of staff and/or the Attendance Manager if they have any issues with their attendance at school.

**The Governing Body will:**

- Set and review annual targets for attendance
- Understand the work of the agencies supporting attendance and the constraints they work under
- Keep the policy under review

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Local Authority will receive termly reports detailing attendance figures and referrals to external agencies.



## **Appendix 1 Details of Roles and Responsibilities of Specific Staff**

### **Head Teacher.**

- Designate a senior member of staff (Director of Student Support) to monitor attendance with appropriate time set aside for this task.

### **Director of Student Support**

- Maintain clear procedures for statutory registration.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the staff regarding attendance and ensure they are compliant.
- Hold regular meetings with key school staff to discuss attendance issues.
- Provide INSET training for staff.
- Involve / inform all staff of the agreed reintegration process of students returning from alternative provisions.
- Produce reports to parents / governors
- Devise and implement new strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Model good attendance and punctuality.
- Make referrals to Front Door for Families, if they don't already have involvement with the family, if a child's attendance drops to a concerning low level. This is likely to be around the 50% mark but could be before this if the drop is drastic or underpinned by safeguarding concerns.
- Implement Student Voice feedback around attendance, twice a year.
- Liaise with Heads of Years to create a robust and meaningful Attendance Focus on the tutor programme.

### **Heads of Year**

- Monitor the attendance of the students within their year groups.
- Work with tutors within the year groups to ensure they monitor the attendance of their students.
- Direct tutors to have conversations with tutees who have had one or more N the following day, and log this conversation on the Attendance Marksheet.
- Monitor the use of the Attendance Marksheet by tutors and ensure compliance.
- Provide the tutors with attendance data and be clear in their directive about how to use this data to inform interventions.
- Communicate clearly and effectively with teachers of students who are experiencing issues with attendance.
- Be familiar with the referral and recording systems used by all agencies.
- Gather and record relevant information to assist these agencies.
- Highlight attendance and its importance in assemblies and provide clarity to students and their parents/carers
- Follow up on unexplained absences, particularly those that occur for longer than 3 consecutive days.
- Actively promote good attendance.
- Work with teachers and Heads of Curriculum areas in the event of poor attendance being localised to subject areas.
- Make use of imaginative and immediate sanctions for habitual truanting that

- causes disruption around the building.
- Carry out initial enquiries / intervention / action before referring to Attendance Manager and/ or Director of Student Support.
- Arrange Attendance Support Meetings (ASM) with parents to support them with their child's attendance.
- Attend fortnightly meetings with the Attendance Manager and come to them having looked at, and updated, the Attendance Marksheet for the year group.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Focus on the weekly tutor programme
- To work alongside the year group advocate where appropriate

### **Attendance Manager**

- Maintain clear procedures for statutory registration and lesson registration.
- Oversee standardised recording of authorised / unauthorised absences
- Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures
- Respond swiftly to lateness ( in respect of both pupils and parents )
- Make full use of council approved attendance letter templates.
- Establish and maintain a list of named contacts within the local community
- Use supporting agencies to make home visits where contact is problematic.
- Alert Heads of Year and Safeguarding via CPOMs when an absence has been reported that causes concern for the child's safety and wellbeing.
- Make referrals to the Child Missing in Education panel if a child misses 20 consecutive days of school or is absent immediately following a holiday or half term break.
- Make referrals for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued, in agreement with the Director of Student Support and Heads of Year where other measures have not been successful or engaged with.
- Implement Student Voice feedback around attendance twice a year.
- Request medical evidence for all medical appointments that fall within the school day.

### **Student Services Administrator**

- Monitor the registers as they are taken throughout the day.
- Chase registers that have not been taken, or need updating.
- Liaise with the Attendance Manager and Director of Student Support to implement an agreed upon system for recording absence during Year 11 exam season, Year 10 exam season and other events and anomalies that impact attendance.
- Send nudge texts to parents/carers if a student has not been marked in by the close of AM register (before 9.30) and no reason has yet been provided. This will be repeated at the start of the PM register (from lesson 5) if contact has still not been made.
- Sign in students who are late to school, after the register closes, with the time the student has arrived.
- Log reasons for absences on SIMs using the correct code.
- Liaise with Heads of Years and follow up on unexplained absences.

- Liaise with Heads of Year (or Director of Student Support where the Head of Year isn't available) when a student comes to student services asking to go home due to a medical issue.
- If agreed that a student can go home, make contact with home and make arrangements, before signing them out.

### **Tutors and Teaching Staff**

- Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently
- Attend training and INSET deliveries on Attendance
- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality
- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum
- Involve parents as far as possible from earliest stage if attendance becomes a concern.
- Use standardised recording of authorised / unauthorised absences and presence
- Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness and take appropriate action to resolve any issues
- Encourage parents to discuss attendance issues with the school.
- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning students following a period of sustained absence.
- Take the class register within the first ten minutes of the lesson using SIMS.
- Alert 'Truancy' immediately if a student is not in the lesson, and again if the student arrives.
- Ensure lateness is registered correctly on SIMS, adding the minutes late.
- Monitor the attendance of students in your classes and take appropriate action if a student is persistently truanting a particular subject, in liaison with HOYs and form tutors.
- Provide work for students on long term absence where it has been agreed that a child is incapable of coming in to school.
- Liaise with the relevant member of staff over issues of persistent student absence from your class.
- Challenge lateness to your class and set appropriate sanctions.
- Teachers/cover supervisors have a legal duty to ensure that when they take the register accurate codes are entered into the system. This is a safeguarding requirement

## **Appendix 2: Penalties for Parents**

Patcham High School works to the Brighton and Hove City Council Code of Conduct in relation to school attendance. This can be found on the Council's website and there is also a link on the school's website on the Attendance page.

It is the legal responsibility of all parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school as much as possible. Therefore, parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, then the school may refer the child to the Local Authority.

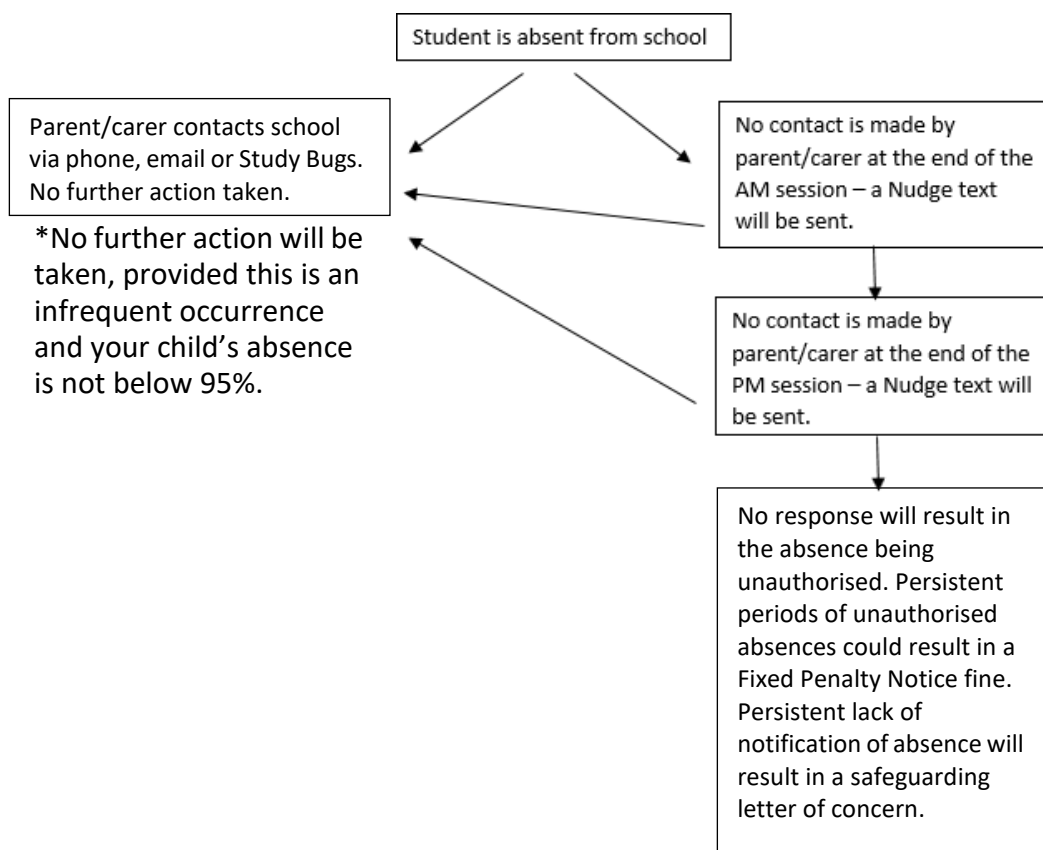
Punitive measures will always be a final resort; the school will try and resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of improving the student's attendance have failed and your child's absences are unauthorised, the school may request that the Local Authority issues a penalty notice of £60 per parent per child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale, the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, you may be prosecuted.

### **Appendix 3: Outline of Agencies (as mentioned in the above):**

The Local Authority (Brighton and Hove Council)  
Child Missing in Education Panel  
EOTAS (Education Other Than At School)  
Virtual Schools  
BHISS (Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support)  
BHWS (Brighton and Hove Welfare Service)  
FDFF (Front Door for Families)  
ITF (Integrated Team around Family)  
EHE Team  
Hidden Children Officer  
PMHW (Primary Mental Health Worker)  
Social Care  
SEN Caseworkers  
School Nurse  
Educational Psychologist  
CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)

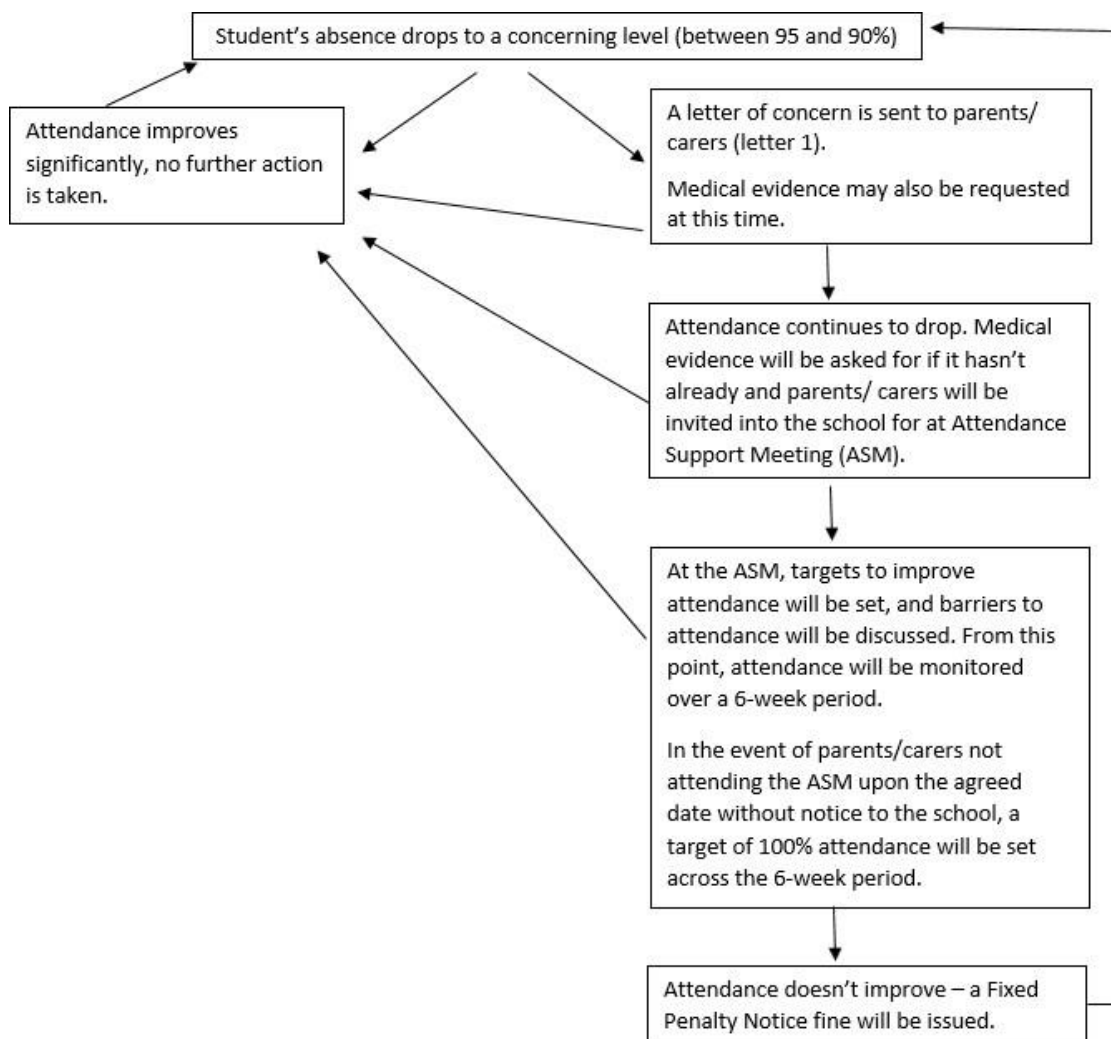
#### Appendix 4: Flow diagrams of how the school will deal with absence

We understand that from time to time, your child will feel too unwell to come to school. We would urge that, wherever possible, you still send your child in and we will make contact with you if we feel they are no longer well enough to be in school. The below flow chart illustrates what will happen on the, hopefully, odd occasion that your child is too unwell to come in for the start of the day.



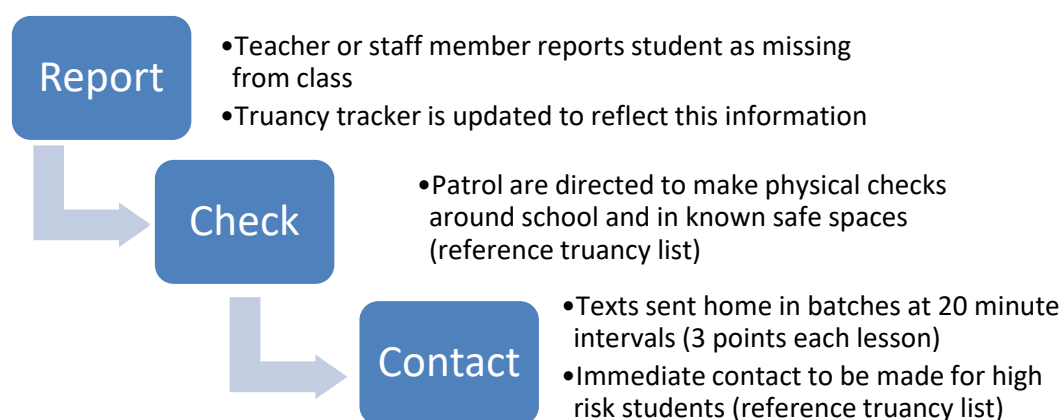
If poor attendance becomes habitual, your child's attendance could drop below 90%, which is classified by the Local Authority, and Department for Education as persistent absence. Anything below 90% is classified as severe. In an attempt to prevent your child becoming a persistent or severe absentee, the school will take the steps outlined in the flow diagram below when your child's attendance drops to 95% or below. This excludes reasons for a sudden decrease in attendance such as holidays, long periods of illness, or any other period of absence that the school has been made aware of.

**Flow diagram of how the school will deal with absence over the academic year:**



In the event of attendance not improving, but parents/ carers demonstrating very clear engagement and co-operation with the school to encourage and support their child to attend, the school may choose to exercise its discretion and not refer for a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

## Appendix 5: Truancy Process



Key documents associated with process:

- Truancy tracker
- Truancy list identifying students at high risk, known safe spaces and students where **calls home** will be required

Truancy team (\*supporting in absence of other staff):

- Director of Student Support – Rebecca Dyche (Kerry Hallett)
- Inclusion Manager and Inclusion Administrator – Andi Edwards, Issy Khayal and Anwara Ahmad
- Heads of Year – Ryan Irvine (11), Emma Niland (10), Chris Vafeas (9), Chloe Gale (8) and Helen Emerson (7)
- Attendance Team\* – Jess Gamain and Claire Black
- Admin Support – Sarah Tobli and Jayne Newman\*

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### **Director of Student Support**

- Ensure the relevant processes are being followed
- Daily monitoring of truancy tracker to identify patterns of truancy
- Identifying students that need additional support and make the relevant referrals

#### **Heads of Year**

- Daily monitoring of truancy tracker to identify patterns of truancy
- Referral to HCAs if subject specific or behaviour team if a sanction is required
- Contact home to discuss patterns of truancy, if not subject specific
- Referral to Director of Student Support if a student needs additional support

#### **Inclusion Manager and Inclusion Administrator**

- Direct patrol to make physical checks for students



- To send out safeguarding emails regarding missing students where necessary
- Make contact home for high-risk students as a priority
- Make contact home via text at 20-minute intervals (3 points during the lesson)
- To update the truancy tracker to reflect when contact has been made home
- To input information from truancy emails to the truancy tracker including updates on arrival of students as and when received by teaching staff

### **Attendance Team**

- To ensure registers reflect the most updated information
- To record appointments on the registers when requested by other staff

### **Admin Support**

- To input information from truancy emails to the truancy tracker including updates on arrival of students as and when received by teaching staff

### **All Staff**

- To report students if they do not arrive to their lesson and update the email if the student arrives

### Contingency

In event of staff absence, responsibilities will be shared between the truancy team listed above.