



PARKLEE COMMUNITY
PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATHERTON

Attendance Strategy 2018 - 2021

It is widely recognised that the educational outcomes and future life chances of children can be significantly impacted upon by periods of absence. In order for a child to reach their full educational potential, a high level of attendance is essential and therefore every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Please read alongside COVID Risk Assessment and other relevant policies.

Principles

Regular attendance is important because:

- Every child has a right to an education
- There is a direct link between under achievement and poor attendance
- It helps to ensure children are appropriately safeguarded
- It encourages social as well as academic progress
- School routines become easier to follow
- Children become more engaged as active learners

This strategy will aim to:

- Demonstrate a strong attendance ethos that improves the overall attendance of pupils and reduces the number of persistently absent pupils
- Develop a framework which identifies roles and responsibilities of the whole school community
- Establish a clear attendance banding system and escalation of intervention model as part of a non-bureaucratic system for monitoring and promoting attendance (appendices 1 & 2)
- Support safeguarding through its unknown absence procedure (appendix 3)
- Create a clear structure for promoting excellent attendance and tackling absence
- Encourage the use of attendance data and other information to improve school and pupil performance
- Promote the general importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents and carers
- Enable early intervention when a pupil's absence gives cause for concern
- Put support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance
- Promote effective partnerships with external support agencies and the Local Authority

Regular and punctual attendance is subject to education law and this strategy is written within that context.

School Attendance Policy

Schools are expected to maintain their own school attendance policies that support this strategy and provide additional school specific detail including, but not limited to: Start and end of day procedures that cover breakfast/after school club information, gates opening/closing, arriving late, registers, collection arrangements. They should also include school attendance protocols, absence reporting arrangements and timings for lateness.

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Strategies for promoting excellent attendance:

- Updating the whole school community about attendance matters through displays, newsletters and the school website
- Celebrating excellent attendance by displaying individual and class achievements in classrooms, hallways and /or the internal foyer
- The whole school integrated reward initiatives - Inter-class competitions, individual reward stickers and certificates, class certificates, tombola raffle, gift vouchers, and extra-curricular activities including non-uniform days
- An Attendance Banding system which reinforces the school's ethos and targets
 - 98% and above = Gold (excellent)
 - 95-97.9% = Green (good)
 - 90-94.9% = Orange (poor)
Attendance at this level is a concern and may trigger an intervention
 - 89.9% and below = Red (unsatisfactory)
Attendance at this level is a serious concern and may trigger a referral to outside agencies for intensive intervention

Actions for schools to take:

Devise a school improvement plan for attendance, in line with an agreed format, that targets the improvement in whole school attendance and the reduction in persistent absence. Suggested Actions:

- Action plans to highlight specific daily, weekly and half-termly tasks
- Actions to be escalated after generic interventions fail to bring about necessary improvement
- All staff to be responsible for highlighting concerns in attendance to the wider team
- Implement Parent Information Boards
- Make use of regular communications such as a newsletter to promote attendance initiatives and updates
- Attendance banding letters to be sent home on a regular basis with supporting text message highlighting the importance of good attendance
- Include attendance date in pupil attainment reports
- School attendance policy and Parent/Carer Information leaflet to be updated each year and made available on the school website
- Provide medical top tips on an Information Board and seek support from other stakeholders in managing non-attendance ie. Adverts in local GP and Dental practices
- Weekly stakeholder meetings to be scheduled where updates will be shared and progress monitored. E.g. School attendance lead(s) and a member of SLT, family support worker.
- School Attendance Lead(s) to update wider team on any changes to legislature, best practice and recent developments in the field of education welfare

- Daily absence procedures to be followed with interventions recorded on SIMS or CPOMS – refer to school attendance policy and unknown absence procedures for details
- Telephone calls and escalating letters to be utilised
- Parent/carer meetings and action plans to be utilised
- Pupils with 10 or more unauthorised absences or attendance below 90% to be referred to school attendance lead(s)
- Late arrival calls to be implemented on a daily basis requesting parents to provide reason for late arrival
- Whole school information to be included in newsletters emphasising punctuality
- Staff presence at morning gates, interacting with parents and encouraging improvements
- Staged and escalating letters to be sent home for late pupils
- Referral to school attendance lead(s) for all pupils recording 5 or more late marks in two consecutive half terms
- Action plans and parent meetings to be utilised for persistently late pupils
- All pupils on time for a full week receive an award/acknowledgement such as a sticker; all term receives an awards such as an extra play time and all year receives an award such as a book voucher
- Individual certificates and rewards presented at assemblies
- Interclass attendance competition – trophy to be awarded with certificate at weekly assemblies
- Star class of the week announced and displayed on information boards
- Award such as a voucher presented to all pupils achieving 100% attendance for the year
- Award such as a sticker awarded to every pupil with 100% attendance for the week
- Classes with 100% attendance for the week rewarded, such as with a non-uniform day the following Monday
- School Attendance Lead(s) to work alongside SEND Co-ordinator and feed into One Page Profiles
- Referral to be made to School Attendance Lead(s) for all pupils with 10 or more unauthorised absences in any term and/or overall attendance below 90%
- Action plans and parent meetings to be utilised for all persistent absentee pupils
- Home visits to be carried out for any pupil identified as a cause for concern on first day of an unknown absence
- Analyse half-termly attendance figures
- Analyse and report on end of term attendance figures for Autumn, Spring and Summer
- Analyse and report on end of year attendance figures
- Review and revise half termly the attendance action plan so that measures that make the most impact are consistently applied
- Stakeholders such as School Attendance Lead(s), a member of SLT and Learning Mentor to discuss pupils causing concern on a weekly basis

Roles and responsibilities

Parklee Community School believes that achieving outstanding levels of attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of the whole community. Each and every person has a distinct part to play whether as a pupil, parent or carer, member of staff, governor.

The **Local Governing Board** will support the school in promoting excellent attendance by:

- Reviewing whole school and persistent absence data at half termly meetings

- Undertaking an annual review of the Attendance Policy and targets
- Providing funds to enable the implementation and maintenance of a school reward system for excellent or improved attendance
- Identifying a nominated member to lead on attendance matters who will take an active part in Attendance Panel meetings

The **Senior Leadership Team** will ensure there is a whole school approach to reinforcing excellent attendance by:

- Disseminating the Parklee Attendance Strategy to all staff
- Disseminating the School Attendance Policy to all staff
- Reviewing the Attendance Policy and updating all staff of amendments at regular meetings
- Ensuring the school has in place strategies for collecting and analysing attendance data
- Ensuring the school attendance lead(s) receives support, guidance and the appropriate resources to fulfil day to day duties
- Promoting the importance of excellent attendance to parents and pupils through regular whole school and targeted letters as well as other communications such as the school website
- Issuing a parent friendly information leaflet for attendance that identifies the main points of the school strategy and school policy
- Seeking to promote the importance of excellent attendance to pupils and parents during assemblies and at parent events
- Ensuring a safe and structured learning environment for all pupils
- Undertaking Pupil Progress meetings with class teachers
- Providing appropriate extracurricular activities

The **Teaching and Support Staff Team** will support and promote excellent attendance by:

- Completing registers accurately in line with DfE regulations, the school strategy and school attendance policy
- Highlighting to the Senior Leadership Team any pupils causing concern
- Talking to their class about the importance of excellent attendance
- Promoting whole school initiatives, reward schemes and celebrations
- Delivering a rich, diverse and engaging curriculum within a high-quality learning environment
- Delivering lessons that are matched to all pupils' needs
- Implementing cross curricular attendance drives
- Support the school attendance lead(s) in implementing attendance strategies

The **Parents or Carers** of our pupils will be expected to support excellent attendance by:

- Talking to their child about school life and taking an interest in their child's educational progress
- Avoiding unnecessary absence such as holidays in term time (leave of absence)
- Contacting the school when their child is absent and providing a reason for the absence
- Ensuring their child attends punctually everyday
- Engaging with intervention strategies provided by the school if their child's attendance becomes highlighted as a cause for concern

- Attending meetings and parent's evenings
- Making appointments for outside the school day or during holidays where possible
- Providing up to date and accurate contact details
- Encouraging consistent routines at home to support school life such as regular bedtimes, completion of homework, preparation of school bags and uniforms the evening before

The **Pupils** will be expected to support excellent attendance by:

- Attending every day
- Being on time and ready for registration every day
- Monitoring own attendance levels and being aware of their current band
- Speaking to adults if situations arise that may have a negative impact on their attendance
- Cooperating with interventions and support when offered
- Adhering to consistent bedtime routines, completing homework in good time and making sure equipment is ready the evening before where age appropriate

The **School Attendance Lead(s)** will support excellent attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data to inform practice
- Undertake weekly attendance meetings to identify pupils causing concern
- Manage individual pupil casework files
- Initiate attendance and punctuality action plans for pupils causing concern
- Carry out first day calling and following up on reasons for absence
- Conduct home visits
- Take an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes
- Make referrals to appropriate external agencies and the Local Authority as required
- Challenge reasons for repeated periods of absence or late arrival
- Regularly update all parents or carers of their child's current attendance band
- Implement strategies (alongside teaching staff) for promoting excellent whole school attendance and tackling unsatisfactory attendance as detailed below

Strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance

- First day calling and text messaging procedures
- Late Gate and Blitz day initiatives
- Discussion with pupils
- Informal discussions with parents or carers to raise awareness
- Standardised and escalating series of school warning letters
- Home visits
- Tailored support and Individual Action Plans
- Referral to external support agencies
- Caseworking of identified pupils/families
- Referrals to Early Help
- Attendance Panel meetings leading to Parenting Contracts with agreed targets
- Referral to a School Nurse/ Health Visitor where medical issues are a concern
- Issuing of Penalty Notices
- Referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action

School targets

The Local Governing Board will establish attendance targets each year. These targets will be shared with the wider community through staff training and regular communications to parents or carers, such as newsletters. Throughout the academic year we will monitor pupil absence and punctuality to highlight where improvements can be made.

Parklee Community holds an aspirational target of 100% for individual pupil attendance because we know that excellent attendance is the key to unlocking each and every child's true potential.

Legal framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 parent is guilty of an offence.

At Parklee Community School regular attendance means 95% or above in line with our banding system. Attendance below 95% is classed as irregular, particularly if any of these absences are unauthorised.

Categorising absence – authorised and unauthorised

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and cannot be authorised by parents and carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents and carers should advise the school by telephone or in person by 8:30am on the first day of absence and provide an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent or carer on the child's return. You must do this even after you have telephoned us.

Illness

Absence due to illness can be authorised by the Headteacher if parents and carers follow the correct protocol for reporting absence as detailed. Parents and carers may be asked to provide

medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. They will be informed of this by letter. Failure to provide medical evidence when requested will result in unauthorised absence.

Medical and dental appointments

Absence for medical and dental appointments may be authorised by the Headteacher on occasion but parents and carers are advised, where possible, to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day or during holiday periods. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for as much of the day as possible. Parents and carers should show an appointment card to the school to confirm the appointment. Failure to do so may result in absences being marked as unauthorised.

Other authorised circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. In order for such absence to be authorised the parent or carer must liaise with the Headteacher.

Leave of absence

Leave of absence is not a parental right and every effort should be made to avoid holidays during term time. Parklee Community School acknowledges all absence results in lost learning and directly affects a child's education. As such, **applications for leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances**. The law stipulates that the cost of a holiday is not reasonable grounds for claiming exceptional circumstance.

Applications should be made in writing using the Leave of Absence request form (appendix 4), with a minimum notice of 2 weeks and only where a pupil's attendance for the previous academic year reached the school target. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

It is noted that a pupil who takes 10 days holiday will only be able to achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance for the full academic year. This is a poor level of attendance which would leave the pupil in our Orange attendance band.

In cases of unauthorised leave of absence the school may request that a Penalty Notice be issued.

A Penalty Notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid after this time but within 28 days. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger a fast-track prosecution under the provisions of Section 444, 1996 Education Act.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol (appendix 5).

Additionally, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2013, pupils may be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies

- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the local authority and the school have tried to locate the pupil or
- The pupil has failed to attend within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was granted

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol (appendix 6), when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Religious observance

Parklee Community School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising leave for religious observance in line with officially identified days. Parents and carers are requested to give advance notice if they intend for their child to be absent for this reason.

No more than one day may be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival and no more than three days will be considered in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised and in such cases the school may request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Traveller absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity or dual registered when:

- The child is on roll and attending another school or academy
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Punctuality

At Parklee Community School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the academic year. If a pupil fails to arrive by the expected time the school will follow its unknown absence procedure.

Repeated arrival after the close of registration without valid reason will result in referral to the school attendance lead(s) and may also result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings.

Persistent Absence

The Department for Education has stated that a pupil becomes categorised as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops below 90% for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions or 19 days.

Children in this category will be identified as Red in our attendance banding system and parents or carers will be expected to fully cooperate with an intensive level of support which could include the establishing of a targeted action plan. Absence at this level is regarded as doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

All pupils who are categorised as persistent absentee's (or are considered at risk of becoming so), will be referred to the school attendance lead(s) for targeted support. They may also be referred to appropriate external agencies as part of our escalation of interventions strategy.

Failure to engage with support that results in a pupil consistently remaining in the PA category may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failure to secure their child's regular attendance under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence and a £2500 fine and up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent/carer. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to the family and is intended to offer support to families and resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

Education Supervision Order

The local authority must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting parents. A local authority may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. The order is placed on the child and the local authority is appointed by the court to supervise that child's education, either at a school, or at home for a specified period of time.

School Attendance Order

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

Appendix 1

Parklee Community Primary School Attendance Banding System

98 – 100% GOLD

This is excellent attendance and pupils within these parameters will be congratulated and receive positive encouragement to maintain high levels of attendance. Whole school incentives will be utilised as a reward including a weekly award for every pupil with 100% attendance that week. Other incentives include the 'Attendance Cup', non-uniform days, letters of praise, certificates and gift vouchers

95 – 97.9% GREEN

This is a good level of attendance that gives a child a firm basis on which to build. Feedback to pupils and parents will be positive and encouraging. The attendance incentives will be used to encourage further progress and pupils and parents will be kept informed via the termly banding update letter.

90 -94.9% ORANGE

Attendance at this level is becoming a cause for concern. Early intervention measures will be used to prevent more significant patterns of absence developing. The community team will have a key role in ensuring communication with parents. Concern letters will be issued and parents will be invited in for an informal meeting where they will be given advice and support to ensure the child's' needs are met. Home visits may be conducted and legal action warning letters may be issued for unauthorised absences. A referral to the School Attendance Lead(s) will be made and referral may be made to the Local Authority for prosecution or penalty notice if improvement is not secured.

Below 90%

89.9% and below RED

Attendance at this level is a serious cause for concern both in terms of safeguarding and missed learning. The pupil is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) under DfE guidelines and therefore the School Attendance Lead(s) will take a lead role (alongside key stakeholders) in working with parents to ensure they support an improvement in their child's attendance. Actions at this stage will include those identified in the Orange band but will be more intensive. This may include attendance action plan meetings, targeted casework, and referral to the school nurse / health adviser service or the Local Authority. Where high levels of unauthorised absence are recorded legal action will be considered.

All parents will receive a Banding Notification letter at the end of the school year or termly if required.

Appendix 2

Parklee Community Primary School

Escalation of Intervention and Decision Making Protocols

All parents are expected to play their part in securing excellent attendance at Parklee Community School information will be made readily available via the main office, display boards, newsletters, parents evening's, banding update letters and the website. A parent friendly information leaflet and 'Top Tips for Attendance' should be made available at the school reception and on the website.

Pupil identified as **GOLD** – Whole school initiatives and reward schemes will be utilised. Parents to be kept informed via termly Banding Notification letter, parent's evening appointments and pupil reports. Pupils are rewarded via awards, assemblies, attendance displays, certificates, non-uniform days and end of term events.

Pupil identified as **GREEN** - Whole school initiatives and reward schemes will be utilised. Parents to be kept informed via termly banding update letter, parent's evening appointments and pupil reports. Pupils may be rewarded via awards and will be encouraged to secure further improvement at assemblies and through attendance displays.

Pupils identified as **ORANGE** – Concerns will be raised through the School Attendance Lead(s) who will contact parents via phone calls, letters, home visits or informal meetings. Pupils will be informed of concerns and asked if anything is preventing them from attending regularly. Reasons for absence will be explored and support will be offered to families. A referral may be made for any appropriate external support.

Pupil identified as **RED** – A system of intervention will be set-up in consultation with the School Attendance Lead(s) who will oversee all pupils in this category. Parents will be invited to attend meetings to discuss issues and action plans will be devised, setting targets for improvement. Warning letters will be issued and referral for statutory action measures will be considered if parents fail to engage or fail to secure adequate improvement.

If pupils hit the Persistent Absence threshold of 90% then referral may be made to specialist external agencies for intensive support. It would be expected that at this point parents are expected to engage with this process.

Where concerns are raised the following protocol will be followed:-

- The School Attendance Lead(s) will review the child's registration certificate to investigate patterns of absence and they will set up an individual pupil file
- The child's attendance will be monitored weekly and parents will be informed of this via a phone call, letter or informal discussion
- A pupil meeting will take place where the child will be asked if they have any concerns or issues that are affecting their attendance
- Concerns letters will be issued to parents as appropriate to raise the profile of this issue
- A home visit will be carried out based around the Top Tips information sheet and the Parent Information leaflet

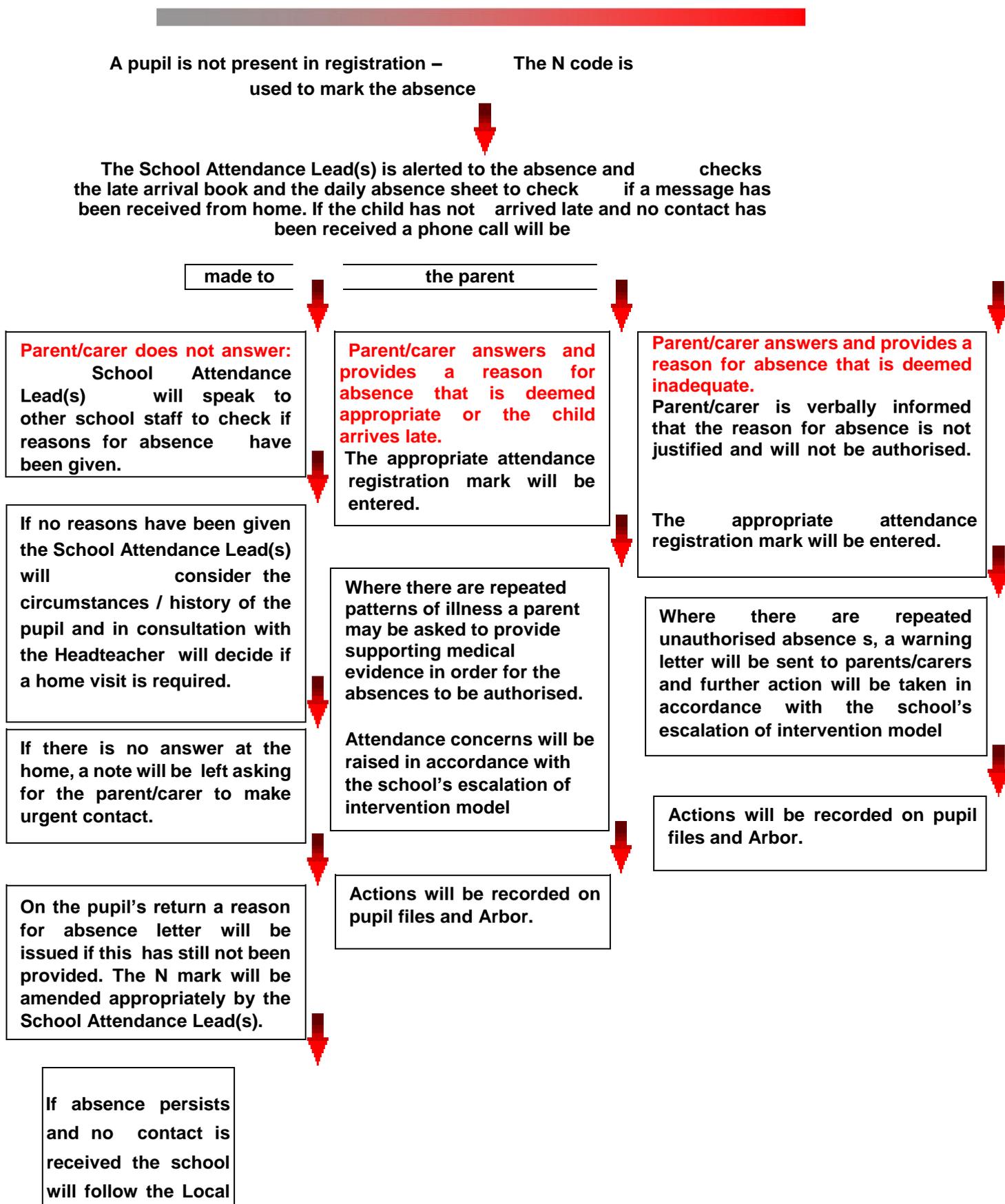
- If attendance improves at this point a congratulatory letter will be issued and the pupil will be monitored through whole community procedures

If attendance fails to improve and further absences are recorded then the level of intervention will be escalated

- The child's attendance will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher and the School Attendance Lead(s) and any external advisor who will now take an active lead
- A Statutory Action Warning Notice will be issued and the child's attendance will be monitored on an ongoing basis
- Consideration will be given to a Penalty Notice request as an early intervention strategy (in line with the Local Authority's protocols)
- Parents will be invited to a formal meeting where targets will be set and an action plan will be created to support these
- A review meeting will be held termly
- If the parent fails to attend the meeting a second appointment letter will be issued and a record of attempted intervention will be kept. The parent will be warned that this may be used in evidence if the Local Authority were to seek a prosecution at a later date
- If poor attendance continues and the parent is not engaging with the school a referral may be made to a specialist external agency for intensive intervention
- By this stage the parent will be requested to agree to a referral for Early Help if this is deemed appropriate
- Failure to secure regular school attendance at this stage may result in a referral to the Local Authority to take statutory action under the provisions of Section 444, Education Act 1996
- In order to fulfil its legal obligations school representatives and/or their agents may make a written statement and appear as a witness for the prosecution in any subsequent legal case

Appendix 3

Parklee Community School Unknown Absence Procedure



Authority's CME
procedures and the
pupil

may subsequently be taken off
roll.

Actions will be recorded on pupil files and SIMS