



WHOLE-SCHOOL PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY - 2020

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, termly and annual certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.



Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold we will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

PA pupils and their parents will be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to reception

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Assistant Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority School Attendance Team where appropriate as per Local Authority protocol.



Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

A mobile telephone number is preferable so that we can contact you through groupcall text messaging service.

In-School Strategies to Improve Attendance/Punctuality (see appendix):

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality. This includes:

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils, staff and the Headteacher;
- Parenting contracts;
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority School Attendance Team)
- Penalty notices

The Local Authority School Attendance Team:

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST). They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist the case may be referred to the Court Officers, who can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **08:55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.



Leave in Term Time:

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:

When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. SATs, GCSE or any other public examinations.

- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Readmission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

Parents may also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss educational opportunities for their child whilst on extended leave and complete the application for absence from school form (Appendix A)

Religious Absence:

The school will authorise one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.



Roles and responsibilities for attendance matters in this school:

Parents:

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Contact school on 1st day of absence
- Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance using form
- Attendance at meetings in school
- Participation in Parenting Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies

Pupils:

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtime
- Attend school/registration punctually
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

Headteacher:

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision
- Where there may be ambiguity regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process

Designated Staff:

Office Staff

- Update SIMS with details from registers
- Record messages and applications received from home with regard to absences

Class Staff

- Input and update the attendance registers

Attendance Leads

- First day response: Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided
- If contact made inform office staff of details for update to SIMS
- If no contact made inform Assistant Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher

- Take further action as appropriate to identify reason for absence and non-contact from home - record on SIMS
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, following Absence Flowcharts 1, 2 and 3 (see appendix), and using Parenting Contracts where appropriate



All School Staff:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To see pupils' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures

Governors

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures
- Work with the Headteacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered.
This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the area.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in newsletters and we ask for your full support.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

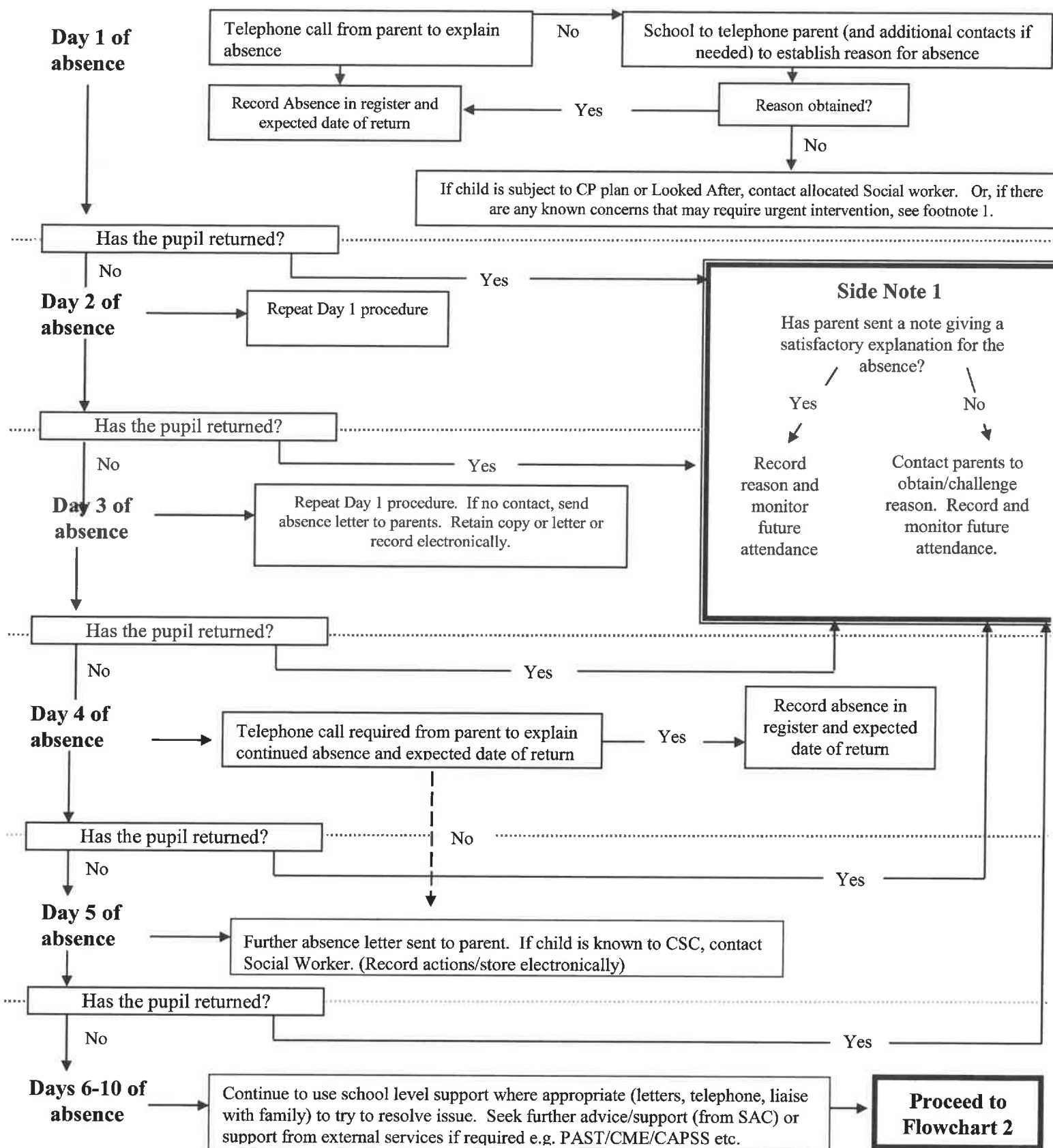
All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Approved by the Full Governing Body of Morecambe Road School on 15th July 2020

Signed:.....Chair of Governors

Signed:.....Headteacher

FLOWCHART 1: SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES – DAYS 1-10

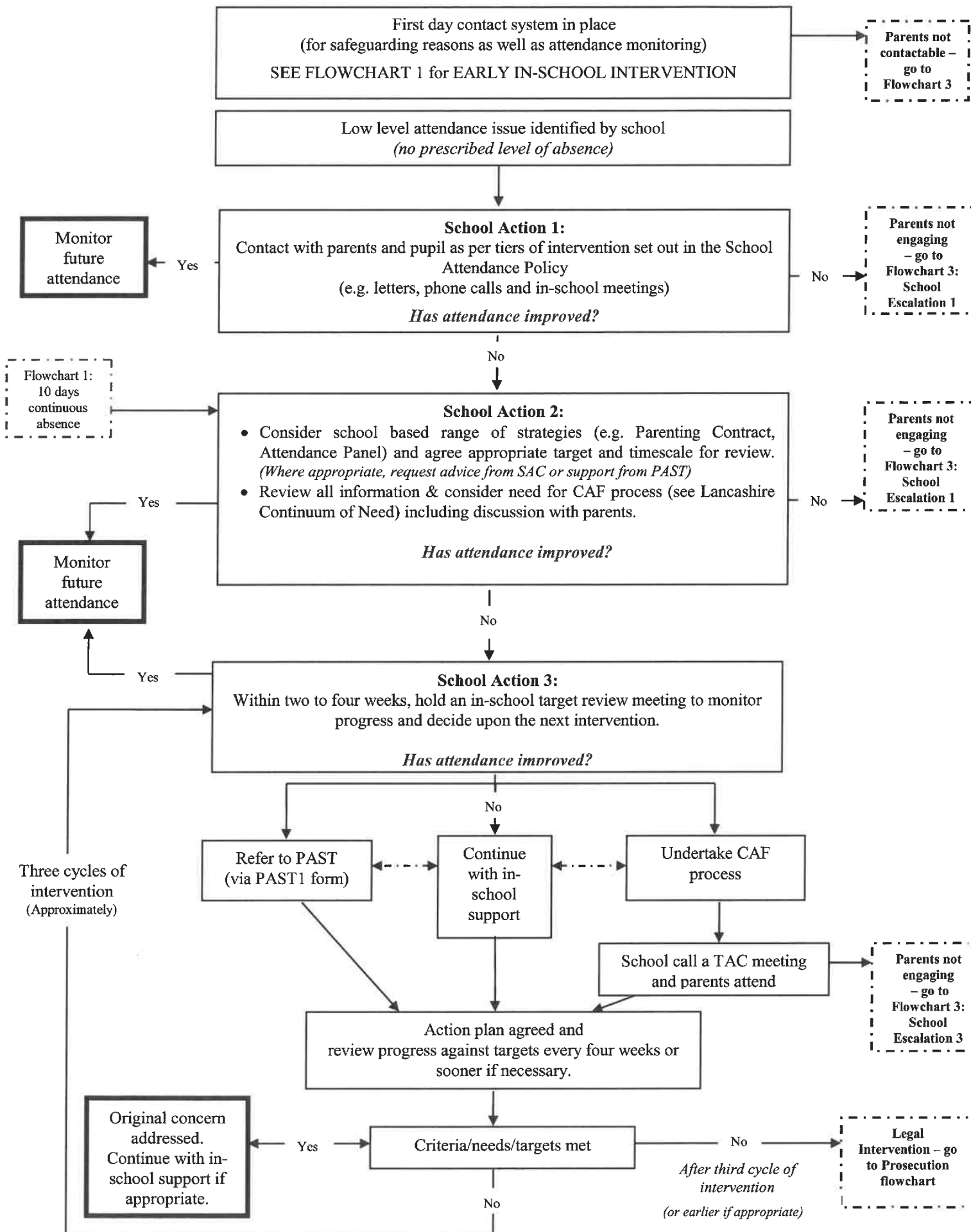


If at any point there are concerns about the safety or welfare of the pupil, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.

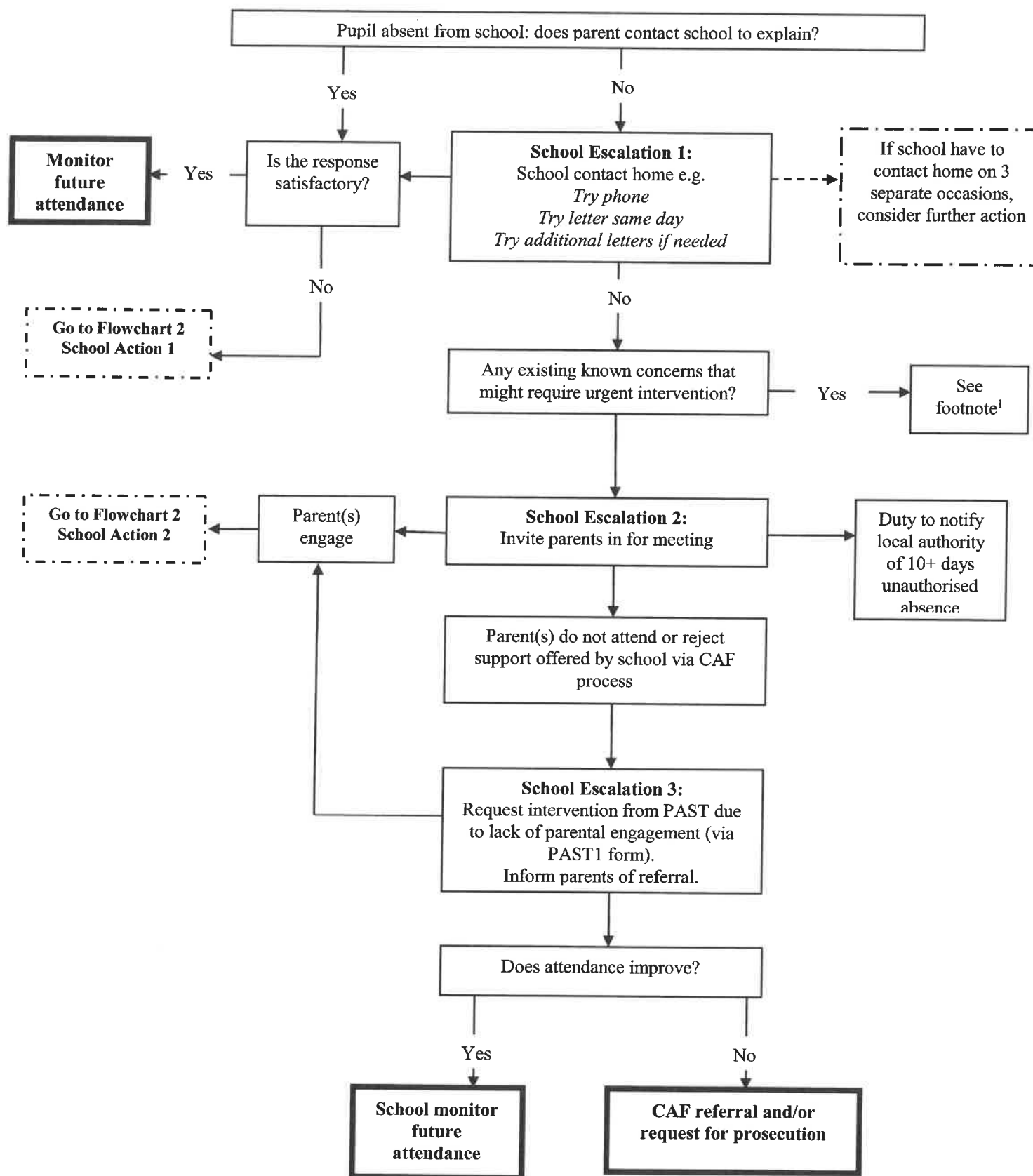
¹In some instances, more urgent notification to the local authority may be appropriate if contact with parents/carers is problematic e.g.

- Children Looked After – schools should notify the CLA Service Manager
- Children subject to a Child Protection plan – schools should notify the named social worker
- Children in situations of known domestic violence – schools should consider whether safeguarding/child protection procedures should be followed.
- Advice can be sought from the School Attendance Consultant at any time if this is required.

FLOWCHART 2: SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES



FLOWCHART 3: SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES **HARD TO ENGAGE PARENTS**



¹In some instances, more urgent notification to the local authority may be appropriate if contact with parents/carers is problematic e.g.

- Children Looked After – schools should notify the CLA Service Manager
- Children subject to a Child Protection plan – schools should notify the named social worker
- Children in situations of known domestic violence – schools should consider whether safeguarding/child protection procedures should be followed.



Parenting Contract

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Name of Young Person		D.O.B.	
School			
Year Group/Class			

Name of Parent 1		D.O.B.	
Address of Parent 1			
Parent 1 Contact Number			
Emergency Contact Number			

Name of Parent 2		D.O.B.	
Address of Parent 2			
Parent 2 Contact Number			
Emergency Contact Number			

THE REASONS FOR THE PARENTING CONTRACT

(Brief history of events leading to the contract)

PARENTING CONTRACT AGREEMENT

The following has been agreed between the School Morecambe Road School and the parent (insert name).

(a) The School, Morecambe Road School, has agreed to:

- Make sure that a member of staff contacts **(insert pupil's name)**'s parents immediately if **(he/she)** is not at school when the register is taken;
- Be available after school if there is anything parents wish to discuss in person;
-
-
-
-
-

(b) The parent, (insert name), has agreed to:

- Let school know if there are any problems that might affect attendance;
- Contact school ASAP if **(insert pupil's name)** is to be absent that day;
-
-
-
-
-

Is the child, (insert pupil's name), of an appropriate age to comply with any expectations set in this contract?

- If yes then parents agree to support the child in achieving the expectations set out on the accompanying appendix.

TARGET:

Over the next 2 / 4 / 6 weeks / half-term (whichever is most appropriate) we expect that (insert pupil's name) will attend school/arrive on time for at least (insert percentage/number here that is achievable and realistic) of the time.

REVIEW DATE: _____

The School (insert name) and parent(s) (insert name) will meet again on the above date to discuss how things are progressing and whether or not to make any changes to the contract.

NB: A meeting can be requested, at any time, by any of the people concerned to discuss the agreement. An earlier review *should* be arranged if further difficulties or problems arise, or if it becomes clear that the target set above will not be met in the given timeframe. Consideration should then be given to the drawing up of a new agreement or the implementation of additional strategies e.g. CAF process, referral to PAST, legal process etc.

FURTHER REVIEW DATES:

This contract will run from **(date)** until **(date)** and the attendance will be monitored for a period of six months after this date.

- We will next meet on **(date)** at **(time)** at **(location)**.
-
-
-
-

CONTRACT AGREEMENT

We agree to work together to meet the agreements set out in this parenting contract to help (insert pupil's name) attend school regularly and punctually and to behave well for the period of this contract (date) to (date).

Signed:

	Signature	Date
Parent(s)		
School		

If there is no improvement in (insert pupil's name)'s attendance/punctuality, then school may have to consider a referral to external agencies (such as the Pupil Attendance Support Team) and this will involve the sharing of information which may have been discussed in this meeting/contract.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES:

School Office		01524 414384
Teacher/Headteacher		01524 414384
Other Services		
(e.g. School Nurse)		
(e.g. Social Workers)		
(e.g. Children's Centre)		
Parenting Advice	www.parentscentre.gov.uk	
	www.parentlineplus.org.uk	0808 800 222

PUPIL'S AGREEMENT

NB: This appendix is only to be used where the pupil is of an appropriate age to comply with any expectations set out in this contract

(c) The pupil, (insert name), has agreed to:

- Let a teacher/member of school staff know if there are any problems that might affect attendance/behaviour;
-
-
-

I agree to work with school and my parent(s) to meet the agreements set out in this parenting contract to help me attend school regularly and punctually and to behave well for the period of this contract (date) to (date).

Signed:

	Signature	Date
Pupil		



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HOME LEARNING ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale:

At Morecambe Road School we recognise that both the educational and medical needs of our children have changed significantly in recent times and that there is now a need for us to look creatively at delivering education to some of our children whose underlying medical conditions mean that they:

- are unable to attend school full time;
- have prolonged periods of absence due to ill health;
- are cared for at home by extended family and carers;
- spend time at a hospice;
- spend extended periods of time in hospital.

We recognise that although some of our pupils may not be well enough to attend school, they may be well enough to enjoy and benefit from educational activities at home/hospital/respite. For this reason, we have developed this policy to highlight ways in which we can support the learning opportunities and experiences of these children.

Each of our children and their families are unique. This policy is not intended to meet the needs of all of our children as it stands but rather highlight the ways in which we can provide support and education beyond school if it is appropriate for a child and if the parents want this.

Creating learning opportunities for children who are unable to attend school full time.

For some of our children, their underlying medical conditions mean that they can not attend school full time as they find the early morning routine, journey to and from school, school routine and the busy environment too exhausting and detrimental to their health. However, whilst at home on a rest day, they are well enough and may benefit from brief educational activities.

Procedure:

- Senior management to be informed of children who can not attend school full time.
- Discuss with parents/carers whether they feel that their child would benefit from educational activities at home on the days when they are not in school.
- Discuss appropriate activities with parents/carers and who will deliver these activities e.g. parents, siblings, grandparents, support carers. If it is appropriate, include the whole family in the delivery of activities.



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- Demonstrate how to deliver these activities and discuss the learning opportunities and the responses to look for from the child. Discuss ways of recording the child's progress and achievements.
- As far as is possible, ensure that the person who will be sharing the activity with the child is involved in the demonstration of the activity by education staff.
- Review activities regularly with the family and discuss progress and future activities and resources.
- Senior management to make a decision at this stage re: how registers should be marked (see below)

Creating learning opportunities for children who are unable to attend school for prolonged periods of time due to ill health.

Procedure

- Senior management to be informed.
- Discussion with parents-this could be an informal discussion between class staff and the parents or may be as part of a TAC or annual review. Parents need to be asked what educational provision, if any, they would like for their child whilst they are unable to attend school. Examples include:
 - School to resource appropriate activities for family/support carers to deliver at home/hospice. School to demonstrate delivery of these activities and highlight learning opportunities and responses to look for. The class team need to ensure that contact with home is maintained through either phone calls or home visits and that there are opportunities to review activities with the family.
 - A familiar member of the class team to deliver an activity at home/hospice on a regular basis. This would need to be at a time both convenient for the family and class.
 - School to co-ordinate and deliver appropriate training for hospice/hospital play workers to support them in planning and delivering learning opportunities and experiences within their setting. If parents feel it is appropriate, class staff can visit the child in hospital/hospice.
- Senior management to make a decision at this stage re: how registers should be marked (see below)



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Procedure for marking registers:

In accordance with Regulation 6 (4) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010), schools are able to approve off-site educational activities so long as certain conditions are met. These conditions are expanded on in more detail in the Keeping Pupil Registers Guidance which assists school in applying the 2006 regulations. The relevant section of this guidance document can be found in the appendix to this document.

In the case of pupils who are identified as being unable to attend school full time, we may choose to approve 'off site education' for all (or some of) the 'missed' sessions and, in this instance, the 'B' (educated off site) code would be used. The 'B' code would count statistically as present in the register and would therefore demonstrate that, although not present at school, the pupil was still accessing educational provision appropriate to his/her needs. This would then enable a more accurate picture of a pupil's *educational interaction* to be gathered. (*??is this appropriate phrasing??*)

In order to approve the use of 'B', the Headteacher (or senior manager) must ensure that all points listed in the appendix are met. Clearly, this step is one which must be considered on a child by child basis as the particular needs of the pupils on our roll means that each plan would need to be individually tailored.

Regular contact with parents, hospital / hospice staff, medical professionals etc should be maintained and arrangements / decisions re: registration coding should be reviewed routinely, and more frequently if circumstances change.

Pupils of non-statutory school age:

Where pupils are of non-statutory school age, schools are able to enter 'X' for the sessions where pupils are not required to attend (Part-time timetabling / staggered start to school year etc).

Where pupils are *expected* to attend but are subsequently absent, best practice would be to mark these absences within the register with the appropriate code ('I' illness, 'M' Medical appointment etc) as this enables more accurate tracking and monitoring of absence reasons.

In some cases however, where a pupils' medical condition is such that he/she is *unable to attend* school, and it is the opinion of medical professionals involved in his/her care that he/she is not expected to be well enough to attend school for a considerable period of time, then it would be appropriate for school revise the pupil Action Plan to redefine expected attendance patterns. This would then allow them to then mark the register as 'X' until such time that circumstances change or the pupil reaches statutory school age,




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If during this time, the pupil is well enough to come into school sporadically, then this should be encouraged and the sessions attended should be marked appropriately (/ or \).

As the pupil's health improves, the use of 'X' should be discontinued and appropriate timetabling should be put in place.

'C' (authorised absence) should then be used to denote any sessions where the pupil is not required to attend due to Part Time arrangements, or 'B' where education is considered to be taking place off site.

Approved by the Full governing Body of Morecambe Road School on 15.7.20

Signed:  Chair of Governors
(Mr A Bland)

Signed:  Headteacher
(Mr. P. Edmondson)



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Appendix:

Extract from:
**Keeping Pupil Registers :Guidance on applying the Education Pupil
Registration Regulations (DCSF guidance June 2008)**

Page 15: Approving off-site, supervised educational activities

78. Only schools can **approve** educational activities and authorise the use of the "present at approved educational activity". Clearly, this approval is implicit where the school has been involved in making the arrangements. Schools can approve activities arranged by others, including parents, if they believe the activity satisfies the regulatory requirements.

In considering any request to approve an activity, the school should consider

- a. the nature of the activity;
- b. the benefits to the pupil;
- c. the effect on the child's general education;
- d. the amount of time requested; and
- e. the timing of the activity.

Approving the activity does not imply agreement to pay for it.

79. The pupil must be **supervised** whilst undertaking the activity by someone authorised to do so by the school. When considering whether to authorise someone as a supervisor, schools must consider whether the person has the necessary skills, training, experience and knowledge to make the activity a successful, worthwhile and safe experience for the pupil. If they are concerned that the person is not suitable as a supervisor, they can decline to approve the activity.

**APPLICATION FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL:
HOLIDAY / EXTENDED LEAVE – Appendix A**

Name of Pupil(s):

Date of Meeting:

Attendees:

Factors for Consideration

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Regular attendance is vital for educational progress. The Local Authority expects that all parents/carers ensure their children attend school whenever possible. Absence during school time hinders academic progress. The following factors should be taken into account when considering an application for leave:

Factor	Comments
Will he/she miss any national tests or examinations?	
Is his/her attendance already below 95% or a previously agreed target?	Current Attendance: _____ %
Is the proposed absence during the month of September?	
Has he/she already had leave during term time this year? If so, please give dates and number of school days leave.	
Did he/she have leave of absence during term time in the previous school year(s)?	
Does he/she have any absences which have been recorded as unauthorised this year?	
Will the absence be detrimental to his/her education?	

If the request for leave is being made on behalf of a third party (e.g. parent with whom the pupil does not normally reside, grandparent(s) or other family member), please give contact details of the adult(s) who will be responsible for the pupil during the period of leave:

Other Comments

Headteacher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please attach a copy of this form to the original request form and return to the parent / carer after consideration.

