

1. Statement of purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure each academy in the University of Brighton Academies Trust (the 'Trust') develops and implements appropriate procedures which help to maintain high levels of pupil/student attendance.
- 1.2 In line with Government expectations,
- 1.3 the Trust expects each academy to:
- Promote good attendance, and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - Ensure every pupil/student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Act early to address patterns of absence
 - Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at an academy to attend regularly
 - All pupils to be punctual to their lessons

2. School attendance

- 2.1 Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils/students can fulfil their potential is a commitment to attendance. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Missing out on lessons or arriving late leaves pupils/students vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Every pupil/student should be at their academy, on time, every day the academy is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.
- 2.3 The requirements related to school attendance are contained in:
- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 2.4 The trust's interpretation of regular attendance is the expectation of attendance whenever an academy is open.

3. Authorised and unauthorised absences

- 3.1 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. This can be for longer periods in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.2 Unauthorised absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:
- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have never been properly explained

- children who arrive at the academy too late to get a mark
- parents taking children out of the academy for term time holidays

4. Procedures

- 4.1 Each academy will inform parents, normally by publishing information on the academy website, of the procedures to follow when dealing with individual absences. This will include details of:
- who to contact should a parent need to report an absence (and the latest time the academy should be contacted);
 - the procedure to follow should a parent wish to request a leave of absence during term time (NB leave in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances);
 - how long registers will be kept open each morning and afternoon (a pupil/student arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence).

5. Supporting good attendance

- 5.1 Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the academy, the parents and the child. If a pupil/student is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.
- 5.2 Parents are expected to contact their child's academy at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the academy may refer the child to East Sussex County Council's Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS) or West Sussex County Council Pupil Entitlement Investigation (PEI) depending on their location.

6. Penalty notices

- 6.1 Local authorities and all schools / academies have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance. Penalty notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.
- 6.2 In common with all schools in its area, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council (PEI) administers the penalty notice scheme on behalf of the academies in the Trust.
- 6.3 The academies in the Trust may decide to request that a penalty notice is issued where a parent appears unwilling to take responsibility for their child's attendance. There are two circumstances in which penalty notices may be issued:
- (i) Planned, but unauthorised absence, such as holidays during term time
 - (ii) Persistent unauthorised lateness
- 6.4 The procedure for each is set out below.
- (i) *Planned, but unauthorised absence*
 - (a) A parent wishing to request a leave of absence during term-time should submit a request to the academy;

- (b) The Principal will then make the decision as to whether or not the circumstances justify authorisation, following the guidance of the Department for Education, which states this can be given in **exceptional circumstances only**;
- (c) That decision must be recorded and sent back to the parent promptly.

If the absence is unauthorised and subsequently taken, ESBAS (East Sussex), or the WSCC PEI may issue a penalty notice if the requested absence is at least 5 days (10 sessions).

(ii) *Persistent unauthorised lateness*

- (a) Each academy will indicate how long registers will be kept open each session; a pupil/student arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence;
- (b) If unauthorised lateness is a cause for concern then a 'Late Warning Letter' should be sent to the parents.
- (c) Attendance should be monitored weekly over a period of 10 weeks.

If 10 sessions of unauthorised lateness are then accrued during the 10 week period *following* the Warning Letter, ESCC or WSCC may issue a penalty notice.

6.5 In relation to pupils/students which are referred to ESBAS or PEI (see paragraph 5.2), these officers may try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use legal interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

7. Admission and attendance registers

7.1 The law requires all schools, including academies and independent schools, to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils/students are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils/students (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined.

8. Contents of the admission register

8.1 The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil/student in the academy, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

8.2 Expected first day of attendance

8.2.1 Each academy in the Trust must enter pupils/students on the attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the academy has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil/student will attend the academy. For most pupils/students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

8.2.2 If a pupil/student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the academy must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly.

8.3 Amendments to the attendance register

8.3.1 Every amendment made to the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

8.4 Preservation of the Attendance Register

8.4.1 Every entry in the attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

8.5 Safeguarding and attendance

8.5.1 School attendance and punctuality is often a key indicator in identifying where a child or young person is at risk. Schools play a vital role in ensuring that a child or young person is not at risk of harm, including radicalisation, abuse and child sexual exploitation.

8.5.2 It is particularly important that early action is taken around attendance for these children and young people who are particularly vulnerable, such as those on a Child Protection Plan, Looked After Children, children who are known to be at risk of sexual exploitation and those where there are any safeguarding concerns. This action would be taken on a daily basis, but schools must also have systems that look for concerning patterns of attendance over a period of time.

8.5.3 Appendix 2 gives suggestions on how schools could monitor patterns of attendance.

8.5.4 Appendix 3 gives suggestions on daily absence procedures to ensure the immediate safety of children and young people, including when to contact other agencies, such as social care and the police.

8.6 Children at risk of missing education

8.6.1 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2016, to require all schools and academies to inform their local authority when they are about to delete a pupil's/student's name from the admission register under any of the 15 grounds stated in the regulations. The 15 grounds for deleting a pupil from the admission register are provided in Annex A of the DfE's Children Missing Education guidance¹; in summary, the local authority should be informed when a pupil/student is being deleted from the admission register for the following reasons:

- when an alternative school has been named on a pupil's school attendance order
- when a pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school (unless it has been agreed that the pupil should be registered at more than one school)
- when a pupil who is registered at more than one school ceases to attend the academy
- when a pupil has been taken out of the academy by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- when a pupil has ceased to attend the academy and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- in instances where a pupil has been granted a leave of absence, but fails to attend the academy within 10 days of the expiry of the leave of absence except for reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause.
- when a pupil has a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that they are unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend he academy;

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

- when a pupil has been absent for a period of at least 20 days, where the absence has not been authorised and assuming that the reason for non-attendance is not sickness or other unavoidable cause
- when a pupil is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the academy does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the academy at the end of that period
- when a pupil has died
- when a pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the academy next meets, and the pupil's parents/carers have indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the academy
- when a pupil has been permanently excluded
- when a pupil has been admitted to the nursery and has not transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the academy

8.6.2 The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the academy becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

8.6.3 Where a pupil/student leaves an academy (before completing the academy's final year), the academy should record details of the pupil/student's residence, the name of the person with whom they will reside, the date from which they will reside there and the name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information).

8.6.4 The academy should inform their local authority of the pupil/student's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.

9. Children Missing Education

9.1 If an academy in the Trust suspects a student/pupil is 'missing' and there are existing child protection concerns or the child is on the child protection register, the academy **must** make a referral to the relevant social care team immediately, as well as inform the Children Missing Education Officer [East Sussex CME reporting](#) [West Sussex CME reporting](#)

9.2 Where an academy is sure that a student/pupil has left but has been unable to establish the educational provision that the student/pupil is attending, or where a student/pupil has been missing for 20 school days or more the academy should complete the online CME form. If at any point during the above 20 days the student's/pupil's whereabouts is established then the clock resets and the 20 day cycle must start again.

9.3 Before making a referral the academy must try to locate the student/pupil. The CME officer will require the academy to demonstrate what actions they have taken leading up to the referral.

9.4 Once the CME Officer has confirmed that they have taken on the case then the academy can take them off-roll and follow the relevant local authority off-rolling procedures.

9.5 Off-rolling of students/pupils

9.5.1 The obvious trigger for off-rolling a student/pupil is that they have left the academy at which they were registered. However, an academy should only do this when they have confirmation of the date on which the student/pupil was placed on-roll at the new school and has been provided with details of attendance or absence. The guidance recognises four reasons why an academy in the Trust would take a student/pupil off-roll:

- **Student/pupil transferring to another school in or outside of Local Authority area**
The academy must obtain the details of the destination school (from parent/carer or other agency) and contact that school for confirmation of the start date and the fact that the student/pupil is attending. Once confirmation is received that the student/pupil is on-roll at their new school, and attending, the academy can take them off-roll and inform the local authority via published procedures.
- **Student/pupil emigrating to another country**
The academy should seek confirmation of this in writing (or email) from the parent / carer asking for a forwarding address and the date the student/pupil will be leaving the UK. Once confirmation is received then the academy can take them off-roll and inform the local authority via published procedures.
- **Student/pupil leaving to be home educated**
The parent / carer must confirm their intention to home educate in writing. Copies of the letter must be forwarded to the relevant local authority department. Then the academy can take them off-roll and inform the relevant local authority via published procedures.
- **Student/pupil deceased**
The academy should take the student/pupil off-roll and inform the relevant local authority via published procedures at the earliest opportunity.

10. Contents of attendance register

- 10.1 Each academy must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil/student is:
- Present;
 - Attending an approved educational activity;
 - Absent; or,
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 10.2 The academy should follow up any absences to:
- Ascertain the reason;
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
 - Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

11. Absence and attendance codes

- 11.1 The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

12. Policy status and review

Written by:	Governance Officer
Owner:	Director of Policy and Governance
Status:	V1 = Approved V2 = Approved V3 = Approved
Approval date:	V1 = HAT: 5/16 V1 = UoBAT: 20/7/16 V2 = 9/11/16 (HAT RC), 14/11/16 (UoBAT RC) V2a = Merger editorial changes September 2017 V3 = BoT 14/12/17
Review Date:	By 2021/22

Appendix 1 – Attendance and absence codes

Attendance codes

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course only need to be placed on the registers of their 'main' school rather than on all of the schools they attend. They should be treated as guest pupils at the other consortia schools. The consortia schools however, must ensure they have suitable systems in place for monitoring and reporting the attendance and absence of the pupils involved, which must be shared with the 'main' school.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

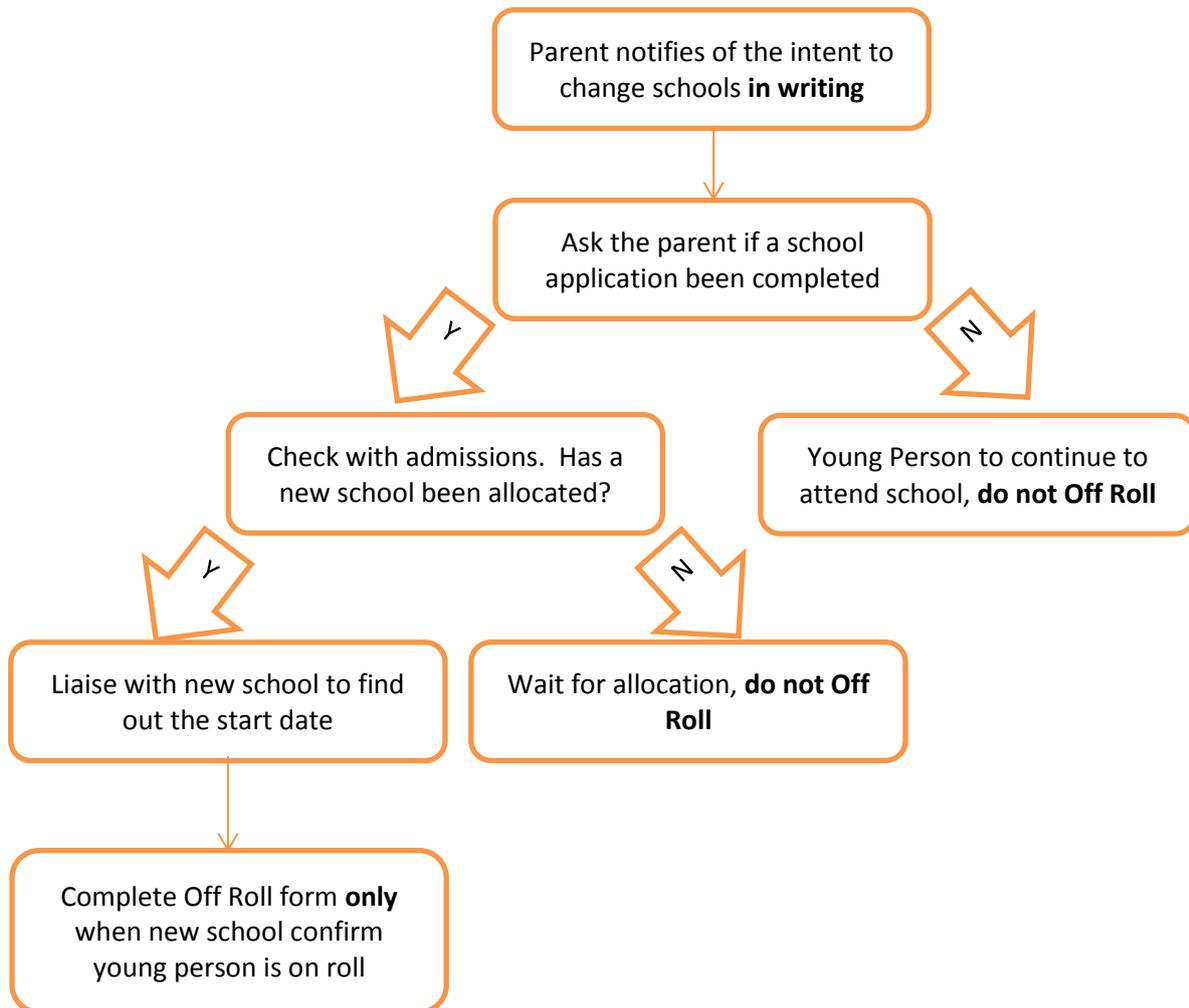
This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Different Term Dates for Different Pupils

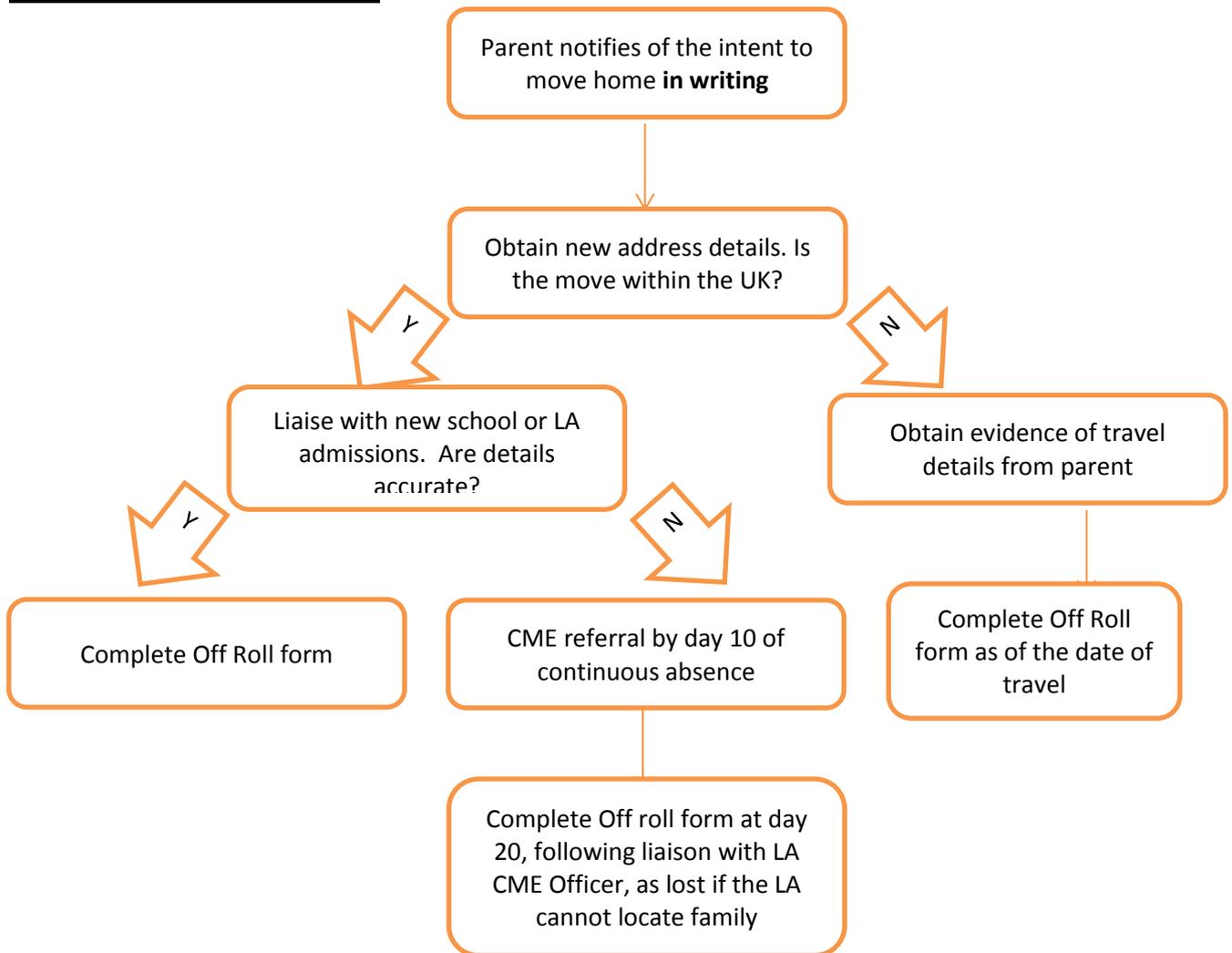
Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for 'staggered starts' or 'induction days'. Code # can be used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

Appendix 2 – Removal from Admissions Register (off-rolling) guidance

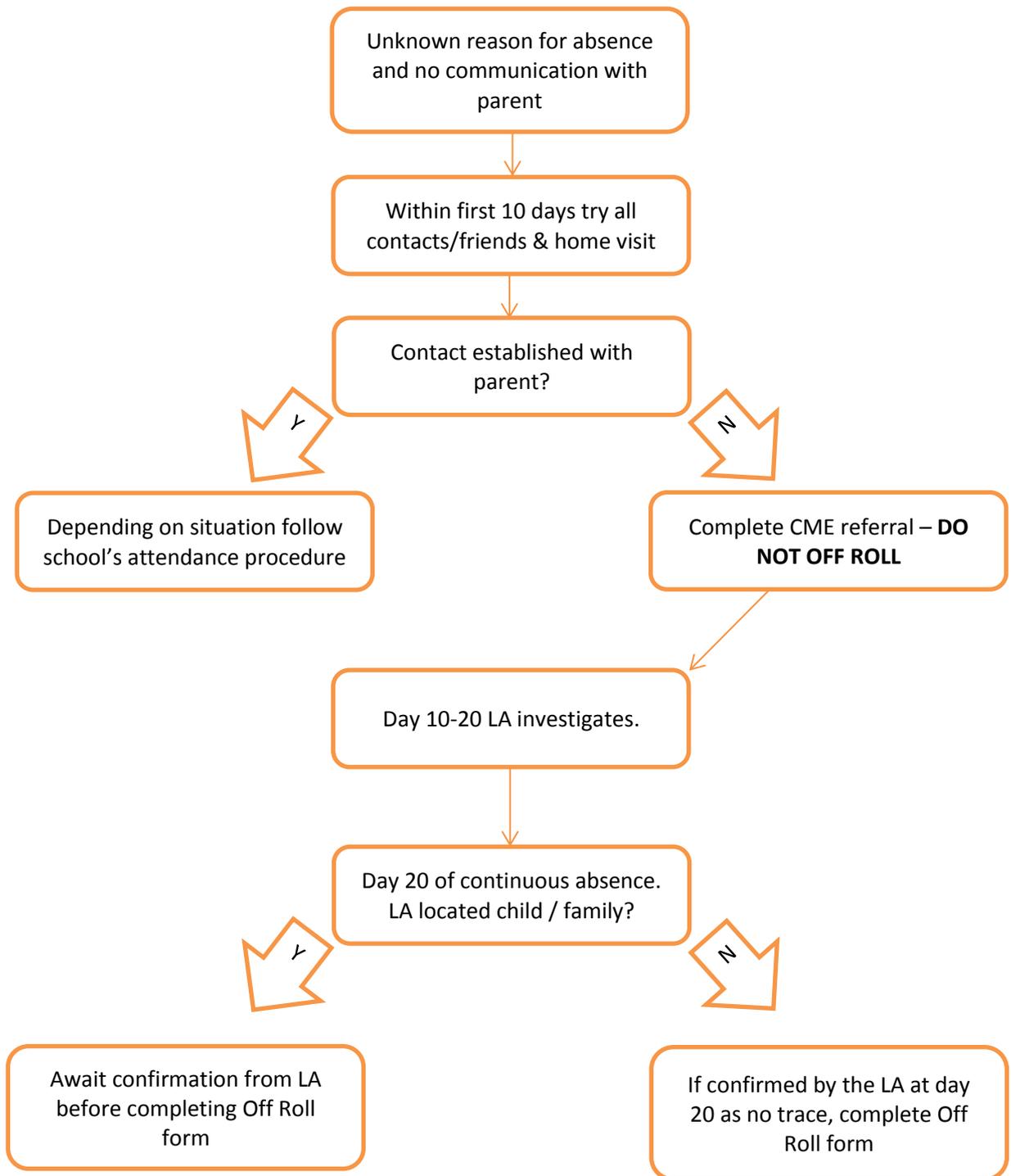
CHANGE OF LOCAL SCHOOL



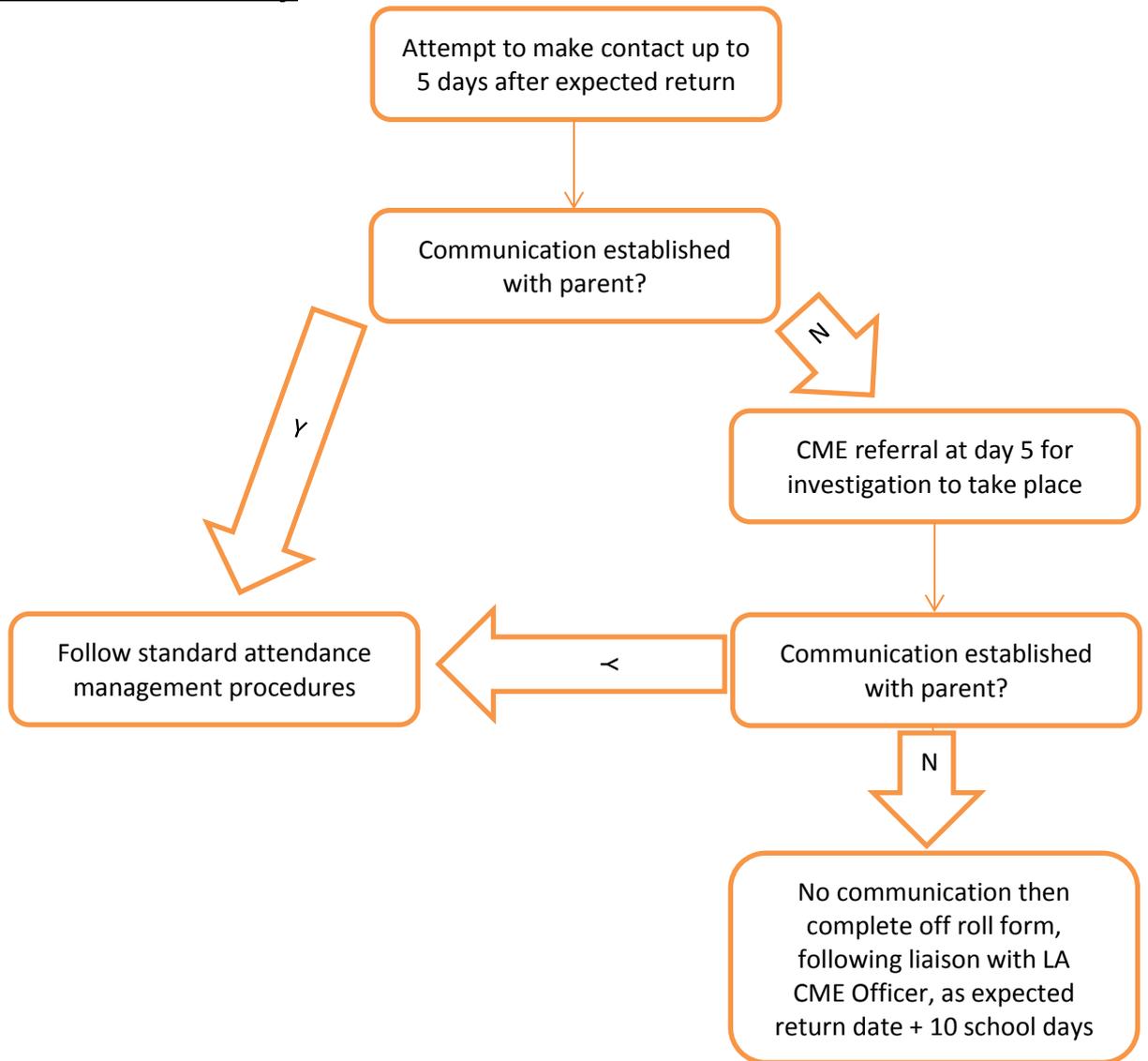
MOVED OUT OF AREA



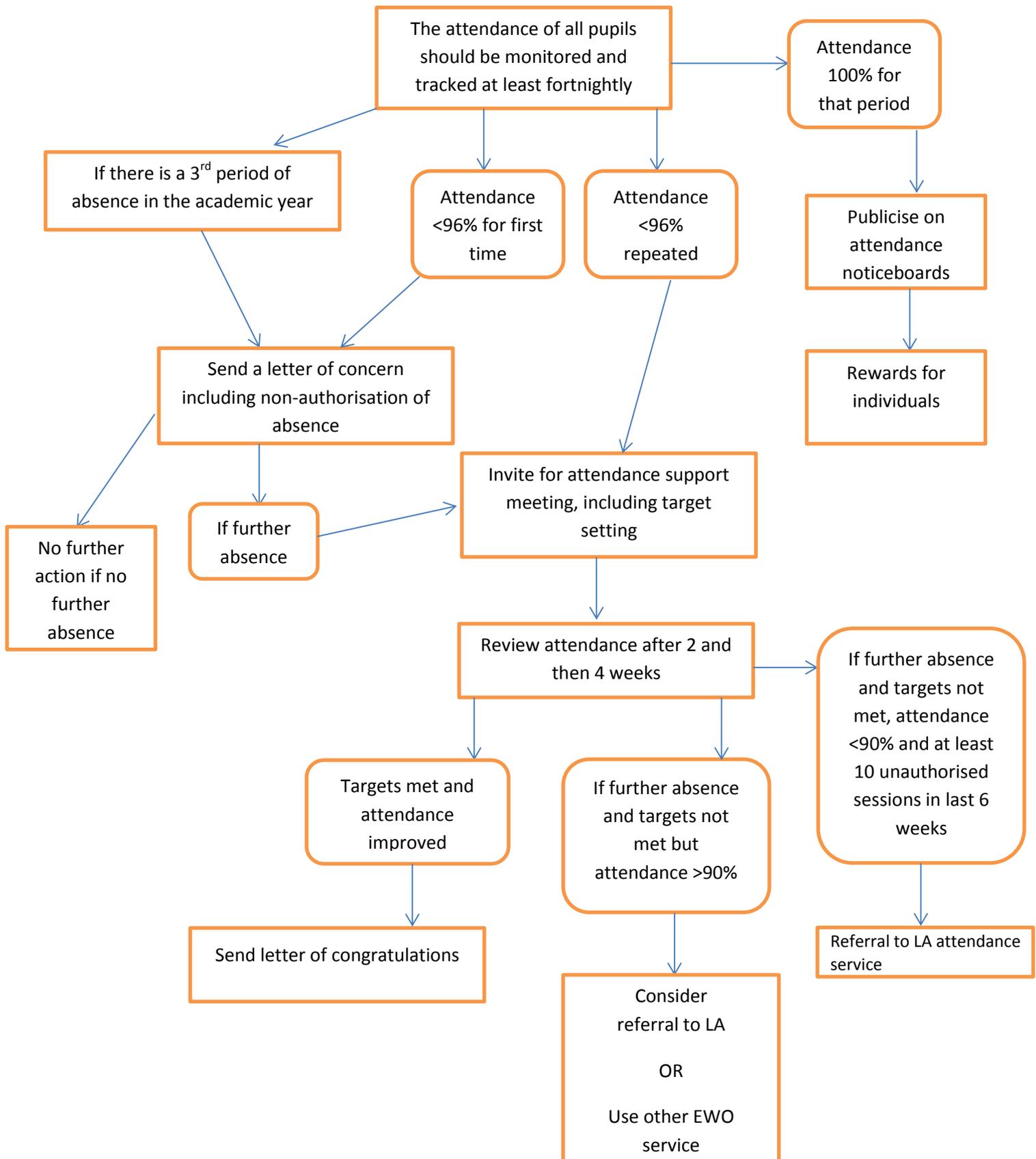
Lost Children/absent no parental communication



No return from holiday

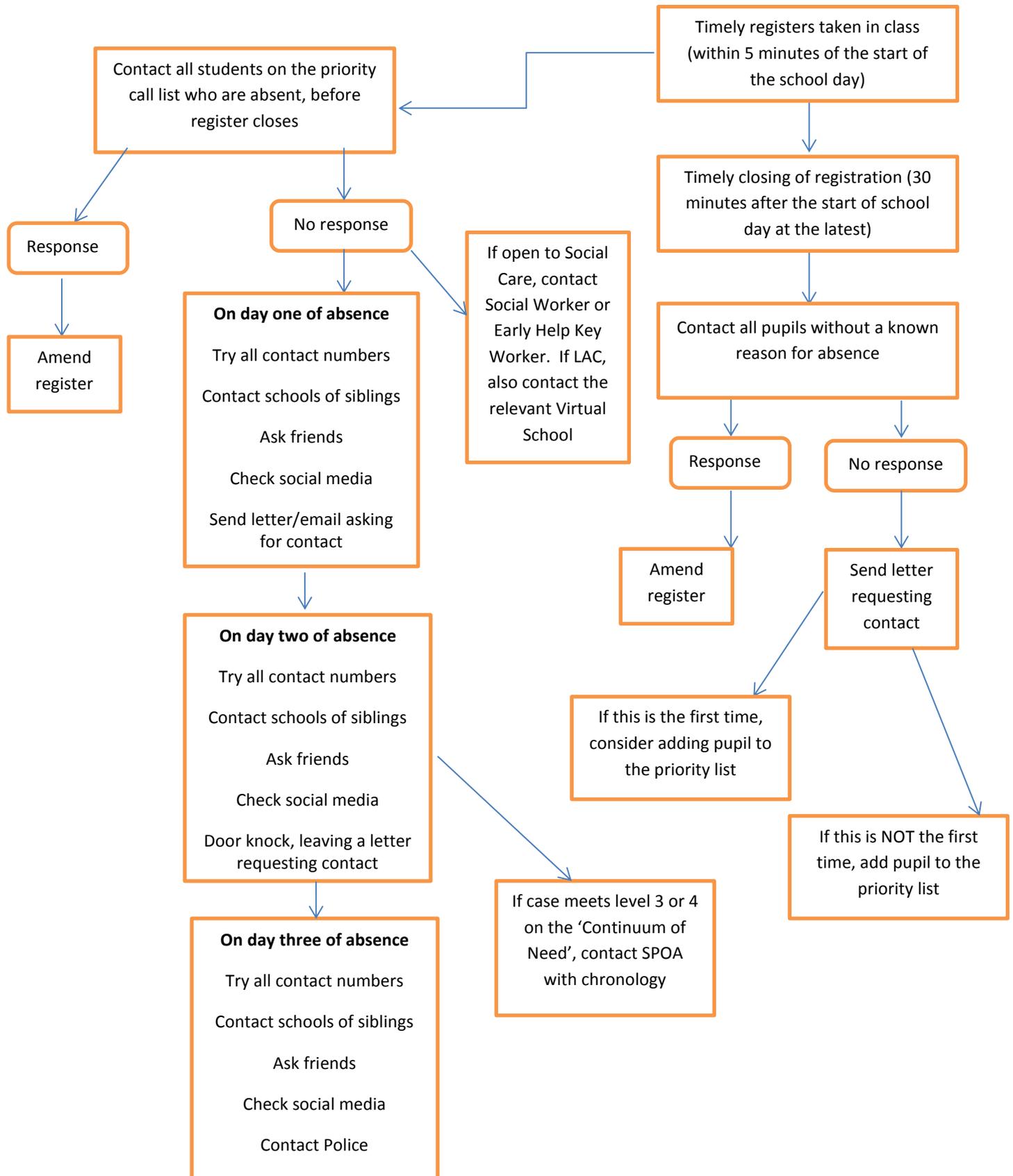


Appendix 3 – Guidance on how to monitor and track pupil attendance



Appendix 4 – Daily absence guidance.

Schools should have a 'priority call list' of students who are on a CP plan, LAC and those where there are safeguarding concerns.
All pupils on list should have a safeguarding file.



References

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, 2016