



Kirkstall St Stephen's C of E (VA) Primary School

Attendance Policy

August 19th 2024

This policy includes key information from the Department for Education's 'Working together to improve school attendance' document which becomes statutory on the 19th August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Our School Vision:

We are cherished- we aim to create a caring environment where all children and staff feel welcome, supported, valued and respected.

We are challenged- we aim to provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment, where achievements are recognised and it's also safe to fail.

We are children of God- we recognise the value of each and every individual, and aim to encourage everyone's unique spiritual development and potential.

Our school values are **Perseverance, Justice, Thankfulness, Forgiveness, Trust and Respect.**

Our attendance policy flows from our School Vision.

At Kirkstall St Stephen's CE Primary, we strive to ensure that all our children flourish in their learning and development, through our engaging and challenging curriculum. Regular attendance at school is vitally important in helping pupils reach their academic potential, develop socially and emotionally as well as developing a range of life skills which will support them as they leave our school and start the next phase of their education at secondary school.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Children who frequently miss school often fall behind and they may find it challenging to make the expected progress in their learning. Regular absences may also lead to children finding it difficult in maintaining friendships and they can feel isolated from their school community. Kirkstall St Stephen's CE school staff will work together with pupils and their parents/carers to ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the opportunities and experiences offered by the school. We will ensure parents and carers have the support they need so that their child achieves the maximum possible attendance.

Attendance Champion	Phil Sheppard (Headteacher)
Email	Philip.sheppard@kirkstallss.net
Telephone	0113 3821960

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996 and 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Working Together to Improve school attendance'

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Ensure that pupils are safe (the first of our school values); having parent/carer contact when they are absent so the school know (to the best of their knowledge) where the pupil is when absent.
- Monitor trends and patterns of absence of individual, vulnerable pupils.
- Support pupils and their parents/carers in establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality, so children are ready to learn (the third of our school values).
- Balance the priority of establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality with a pragmatism that absence is a reality because everyone is unwell from time to time, family events occur and not all religious festivals take place in school holidays.
- Understand that *'It's OK not to be OK'* and to be absent due to mental health as well as physical health. We have systems in place for pupils who would need additional support to assist them in a safe and successful way. We believe this is being kind (the second of our school values).
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we offer in order to improve each pupil's academic outcomes.
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school.
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities.

Expectations:

The government expects parents to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. through sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand any child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered to improve their child's attendance.

We expect that all parents/carers will

- Be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Be honest with school in all communication regarding attendance and absence.
- Ensure their child attends school regularly unless they are too unwell or have been given permission to be absent
- Ensure that their child arrives at the school punctually at the start of the day, so they are ready to learn (our third school value).
- Ensure that they contact the school by 9:15am, **daily**, of an absence and explain the reason for their child's absence and where the child will be whilst they are absent.
- Apply to the Headteacher in advance for a period of absence where there are exceptional circumstances
- Provide school with at least 2 current contact telephone numbers and an email address
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details
- Where there are concerns about a pupil's attendance parents are expected to work with school staff to address these concerns.
- Should not take any unauthorised absence
- Are expected to support school attendance by not taking family holidays during term-time
- Will support the policy by respecting any sanctions given by the school.

The school will

- Provide a safe learning environment
- Regularly review the attendance policy
- Provide a welcoming and supportive atmosphere which enhances pupils' progress, development and wellbeing
- Promote, recognise and reward outstanding and good attendance and punctuality through a strategic whole school initiative
- Work with children to help them develop their own self-understanding about high attendance in an age-appropriate way.
- Work from the basis that information provided by parents in relation to attendance or absence is truthful and honest
- Respond to any child's or parent's concerns that may impact on the pupil's attendance or punctuality
- Maintain regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality; ensuring registers are taken for every session within the first 10 mins. Ensure missing pupils are reported for safeguarding purposes
- Provide support for children's own wellbeing so they understand when *'It's OK not be OK'* and when it may be appropriate to be absent to care for your own physical or mental wellbeing.
- Follow the Pupil Absent Procedure – refer to Appendix A
- As a safeguarding priority, contact parents when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence. The school make every effort to do this by 9.30 a.m.
- Monitor and report whole school, identified cohorts and individual pupil's attendance to the senior leaders to inform planning
- Follow up unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. NB: Although parents may offer a reason, **only the school can authorise the absence**
- In the case of long term or frequent absence due to any medical conditions, we will work together to develop a plan to maximise attendance and support progress
- Monitor the attendance of pupils using the Tier System model and take appropriate actions at the identified Tier thresholds – refer Appendix B
- Meet with the attendance representatives from the local authority and cluster to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Notify the local authority after 20 days continuous unexplained absence; following the 'Children Missing in Education' process of the local authority
- Make a copy of the attendance policy available on the school website
- Communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance through regular school newsletters
- Report a set of comprehensive attendance data to school's governors at regular points throughout the academic year
- Report attendance percentages to parents termly
- Provide additional 'catch-up' intervention and support in class to help pupils who have missed learning due to absences from school

Processes to support the Expectations

Absences

Examples of absences include (note this is not an exhaustive list):

Authorised absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil.
- Urgent hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil or medical appointments where it is not possible to get an appointment outside school hours. Evidence required to authorise.
- External exams, educational assessments and supervised educational activities.
- Family celebrations (e.g. weddings and funerals) for close family members. This is limited based on the days needed to travel and evidence is required to authorise.

Unauthorised absences. Absences that will not be authorised by the school. For example:

- Family term time holidays.
- Parent/Carer unwell.
- Shopping, day trip, birthday treat.
- Visiting family or friends during the school day.
- Oversleeping due to a late night for example late return from family event etc.
- Appointments for other family members.

See Appendix E for further guidance

Children Missing in Education (CME)

When a child's absence is unexplained, Kirkstall St Stephen's CE Primary will make every effort to contact the parents/carers from the first day of absence to establish the reason for the absence. (Refer Appendix A Absence Route) If the child's absence remains unexplained, we will continue to call parents and other emergency contacts, carry out home visits and make enquiries in an effort to establish the whereabouts of the child. If enquiries prove unsuccessful, the school will report the child as a Child Missing in Education (CME) to the local authority; this will be made within 20 days after the child's last attendance at school.

If a child moves out of the authority and is not registered in another school, regardless of whether or not we know the address the child has moved to, a CME referral to the local authority will be made.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Good punctuality is essential and flows from our value of Perseverance. Lateness to school causes disruption to the child's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school is open from 8:55am.

All children are expected to be in school by 9.00am.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. School starts at 8.55am with a register taken by the class teacher **by 9am**. Morning registers close at **9:15am**. If a pupil arrives after the start of school but before the register closes, they will be recorded as late (L on the register) and the minutes late recorded. After 9:15am, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). Lateness can be subject to prosecution by the local authority. Afternoon registration is taken during the afternoon session by the class teachers.

If a child is absent we expect parents/cares to contact the school, **each day they are absent**, by 9:15am to inform us as to why their child is absent and where the child will be. Please follow the following procedure when contacting us:

Please contact the school on telephone 0113 3821960

Alternatively email school on contactus@kirkstallss.net and a member of the attendance team will call you back.

Please let us know:

- Your child's full name
- Your child's class
- The reasons for your child's absence
- Where the child will be during the school day whilst they are absent
- The best telephone number to contact you on during the day

When a child is absent the school will follow the agreed absence procedure (refer to Appendix A). This procedure is to ensure that the school systematically checks on all absent children on every day of absence. It also checks the reason for absence is established and recorded accordingly on the register.

If parents/carers cannot be contacted, staff will use emergency contact details for the pupil. If contact with parents/carers is still unsuccessful then staff will make a visit to the family home. If staff have concerns about the safety of a child, they will contact Children's Services or the police for advice or for referral.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in a position of loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are only allowed to leave the site with an adult and with parental/carers knowledge and permission.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time; only urgent appointments should be attended during the school day, although we recognise at the current time with the NHS it is challenging to get some medical appointments outside the school day.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing: by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time. School staff may ask for proof of appointments.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is permitted to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission a **safeguarding call** will be made as a priority to the parents/carers to inform them of the absence (truancy). If parents/carers cannot be contacted staff will attempt to use emergency contact details for the pupil. If this is unsuccessful the police will be informed through or *where appropriate* Children's Social Care will be informed for particular vulnerable cases. See Appendix D (appendix 11 from the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy).

Developing Good Self Understanding about Attendance

When explaining the attendance policy and rewards to children we will help children to understand that everyone gets ill at times in their lives and that in these times it is acceptable to be absent. As part of this we'll explain the concept of 'it's OK not to be OK' and discuss both physical and mental health and wellbeing.

This is why, as a school, we aim for a 96% challenge rather than 100% attendance which may be hard to achieve. We will always ensure appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where needed.

Leave of Absence

The school term times, holiday dates and training days are published a year in advance and are available on the school website. School training may be subject to change, however, the school will ensure they communicate any changes to parents/carers through text, newsletter, website etc

Schools are not allowed to authorise requests for pupils to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence and those which are covered by this are listed above. Parents/carers should make any request well in advance and in writing (a form is available from the school or from the school website).

All requests are considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request. Other factors will be taken into account, such as:

- the time of year the pupil will be absent
- the attendance record of the pupil
- the number of previous requests for leave of absence
- the pupil's ability to catch up

Parents will be notified of the school's decision verbally.

Where a parental request has been refused, and parents continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Kirkstall St Stephen's CE will attempt to support all pupils to achieve maximum possible attendance and will inform parents/ carers when attendance starts to fall. Where attendance is falling (including punctuality) to a level causing concern, parents will be invited into school to discuss ways to improve. Where attendance continues to fall then a further meeting may be held with governors (Appendix B).

We will always work with families to support them where there are challenges with attendance following the Tier Model (Appendix B). As a last resort, a **Penalty Notice** may be issued to parent/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or other agencies including the local authority Education Welfare Service. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Penalty Notices

Parents and pupils are supported by the school and by the Local Authority to overcome issues that prevent regular school attendance through a wide range of intervention strategies. Where this intervention fails a Penalty Notice can be issued for unauthorised absence and if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. This policy is in line with the Leeds City Council Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices and falls under Sections 444a and 444b of the Education Act 1996. The Education (Penalty Notices: England) Regulations 2007 set the framework for the operation of the Penalty Notice Scheme.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued are:

- Irregular school attendance.
- 10 unauthorised sessions (AM and or PM sessions) over a 10 week rolling period. This could span different terms and academic years.
- Overt truancy.
- Parentally condoned absences which are not authorised by school.
- Unauthorised holidays in term time.
- Persistent late arrival at school.
- Being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion.

Payment of Penalty Notices

- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £160 when paid within 28 days.
- If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.
- The amount payable is per parent, per child.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to refer the case for prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failing to ensure regular school attendance or withdraw the penalty notice.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools, such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Please note that all penalty notice fines go directly to Leeds authority and are not kept by school.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Kirkstall St Stephen's CE as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.

The pupil's records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority for follow up through the Children Missing in Education procedure.

Rewards for Good and Excellent Attendance

Weekly Rewards

Classes can win the weekly attendance and punctuality awards, given out in Friday assembly.

Termly Rewards

Individual children can win an attendance badge of 100% attendance or no unauthorised absences each term.

'Give it 100%'

In March and November each year, children are awarded weekly stickers and extra playtime for 100% attendance or no unauthorised absence and awarded a certificate if they have managed this for the entire month.

Useful Links

- [Department for Education/Gov.uk – Legal sanctions to enforce school attendance](#)
- [Department for Education/Gov.uk – School Attendance and Absence](#)
- [BBC Learning Parents information – School attendance and your legal responsibilities](#)

Appendix A Attendance Policy - Actions for Pupil Absent from School

We must always remember that children present in school are safe children. If a child is absent this *can be* a safeguarding concern. We have a duty of care and we are required to know where children are when absent from school and the reason for absence. Parents are required to inform the school of any absence, the reason for absence and must contact the school every day of absence.

When a pupil is absent from school and we have *not* received any contact from parents/carer with a reason for absence the following route will be followed.

Day	Action
1	<p>DOJO message sent between 10-10.30am. re absence to ALL absentees with an unknown reason.</p> <p>Priority home visits identified by a designated member of staff and completed by the BCL attendance team the same day in order of priority (Child Protection, Child in Need, Children Looked After, Pupil Premium, Persistent Absentees, SEND)</p> <p>Marks in the Register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in Scholarpack. ● Where no reason is yet established the mark will remain as an N code. <p>If there are NO immediate safeguarding concerns, and no reason established for absence, or if a home visit is conducted and no one is home the second contact on Scholarpack will be used to try and establish where the pupil is.</p> <p>If there are immediate safeguarding concerns about the child or family Children's Social Care will be contacted.</p> <p>Log home visits and concerns on CPOMS.</p>
2	<p>If the pupil is absent for a second day and no contact has been received, further phone calls will be made and DOJO/Text 2 is sent between 10-10.30 a.m. This text highlights the school's concerns re safeguarding and their duty of care. Home visit is completed by BCL.</p> <p>If there are safeguarding concerns Children's Social Care will be contacted again or the police may be asked to complete a welfare visit.</p> <p>Marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in Scholarpack. ● Where no reason is yet established the mark will remain as an N <p>If no reason has been established by 11:30am, despite further phone calls, DOJO/Text 3 is sent This text informs the parent/carers that the police or Children's Social Care may be contacted.</p>

	Log home visits and concerns on CPOMS.
3	<p>If the pupil is absent for a third consecutive day and no contact has been received to give reason for the absence, further phone calls will be made and DOJO/Text 4 is sent.</p> <p>BCL home visit is completed.</p> <p>Contact is made with Children’s Social Care for advice and guidance.</p> <p>Marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in Scholarpack. ● Where no reason is yet established the mark will be changed to an O – an unauthorised absence <p>Log home visits and concerns on CPOMS.</p>

If the parent provides a reason we do not believe is truthful or a pattern of condoned absence emerges then the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the parents/carers and request that a medical evidence letter is signed. This agrees that all future absences will require medical evidence or will be logged as unauthorised by the school.

Appendix B - Attendance Tier Model

Tier	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5	Tier 6
% Attendance	97% or Above	96%	95%	94%	90-93%	< 90%
Rating	Impressive	Good. Just below 97% Challenge	Nearly There	Needs to Improve (At risk of becoming a Persistent Absentee)	Danger Zone Potential persistent absentee if <90%	Danger Zone At risk of becoming severely absent
Parent / Carer Contact	Reward notification	Informal Discussion (if required)	Letter 1	Letter 2	Letter 3	Letter 4
Frequency of monitoring and intervention	Half Termly Tracker	Half Termly Tracker	Half Termly Tracker	Regular Individual Monitoring	Regular Individual Monitoring	Regular Individual Monitoring
Contact	Class Teacher	Class Teacher	Attendance Team	Attendance Team	Attendance Team & DSL or SLT	Attendance Team & DSL or SLT
Potential Action Interventions	Termly Rewards. Recognition of excellent attendance	Rewards and incentives. Motivation and encouragement from staff to maintain or improve attendance to meet 97% Challenge	Informal discussion with pupil. Parent contacted to discuss concerns. 20 days monitoring of attendance to see improvement.	Action Plan created with parents.	Action Plan e.g requiring medical evidence of absence. School panel meeting if no improvement.	School panel meeting if no improvement. Potential 'Fast Track' monitoring of attendance Potential penalty notice or case created for prosecution in the courts



Off Track



At Risk



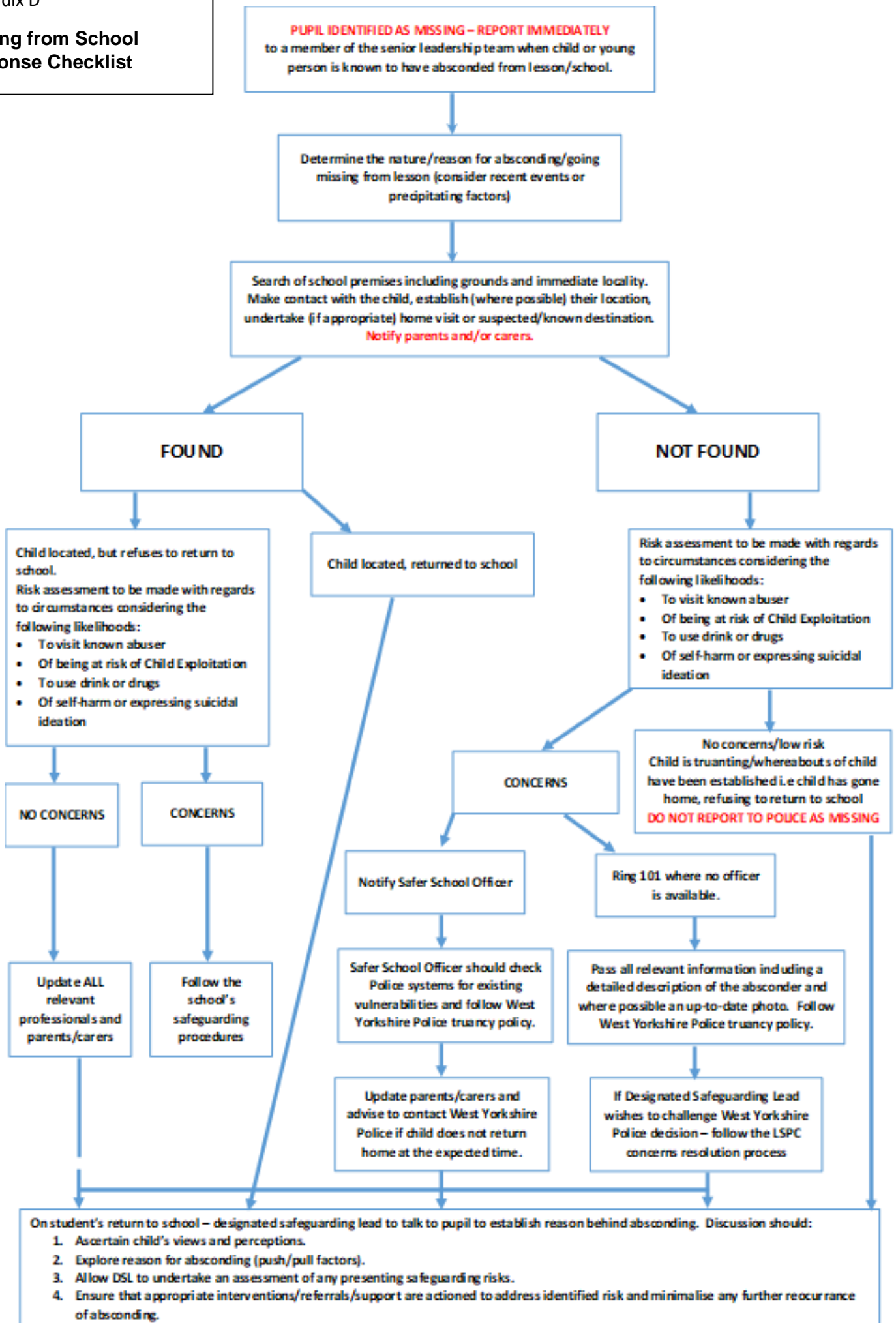
On Track

Persistent Absentee!

Aim for the three shades of green

80% Danger Zone	90% Danger Zone	94% Needs to Improve	95% Nearly There	96% Good	97% Impressive	100% Perfection
2 months off in a year	18 school days missed	11 school days missed	9 school days missed	7 school days missed	5 school days missed	

Missing from School Response Checklist



Date of Meeting:	
Present:	

Name of Pupil:	Class/Year:
Name of Parent(s):	Contact Details of Parent (s)
Current Address	DOB:
	Age: y m
	Current Attendance:

Tick	Reasons for Absence
	Illness
	Friends/Peers
	Teachers
	Lessons
	Getting to School
	Family
	Other

Strategies to improve attendance (See over)	
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Target Attendance for Period Ending:	
Target Attendance for Period Ending:	
Target Attendance for Period Ending:	
Review Dates:	

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

Strategy		Comments on Strategy	Dates (from/to)
Pupil/Parents			
1	Change morning routine		
2	Change bedtime routine		
3	Do not book holiday in term time		
4	Provide rewards/privileges for good attendance		
5	Young person to visit GP		
6	Make more time to talk to young person		
7	Provide assistance with getting to school		
8	Bring into school and ensure meets member of staff		
9	Phone school if absent – safeguarding concern		
10	Other		
School			
11	Attendance reward card		
12	Mentor/Link person		
13	Buddy		
14	Place of safety		
15	Special responsibility		
16	Discussion with class teacher		
17	Modification of timetable		
18	Modification of social time		
19	Targeted first day response		
20	Medical support		
21	External services input		
22	Other		
Pupil			
26	Make sure you are ready for school		
27	Complete own attendance chart		
28	Discuss any problems as soon as possible with member of school staff		
29	Keep diary – bullying, difficulty with lessons etc.		
30	Other		

Signature Parent _____

School _____