

Westhead Lathom St. James C.E. Primary School



"Christian values are implicit in all that we do"

Attendance Policy

Last Reviewed Date: Spring 2016

Next Review Date: Spring 2017

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Author/Edit or</i>	<i>Revision Notes</i>
1	Dec 2009	Alison Albion	Policy rewritten based on Lancashire Model Policy
2	Feb 2011	Alison Albion	Policy reviewed to ensure it reflects current practice.
3	May 2012	Alison Albion	Policy Reviewed
4	June 2013	Alison Albion/Alison Craven	Policy rewritten based on LCC model policy to reflect revised DFE guidelines. Changes include: parents required to write letter for absences >1 day. Registers close at 9.30 a.m., requirement for exceptional circs for term time absence and egs of invalid reasons, use of penalty notices for persistent unauthorised absences
5	January 2016	Alison Albion	Add costings for penalty notices and minor alterations

Signed..... Chair of Governors

Date.....

Mission Statement: Our School Now

Our school provides a secure, caring, stimulating and challenging indoor and outdoor environment that promotes a love of learning. Our children, parents, families, staff, governors and community work together to enable each child to become a happy, healthy, well-balanced individual in preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.



The ethos of the school is based on the Christian ideals of commitment, responsibility and respect and love for Jesus Christ, self and others. We are committed to working in partnership with all of those involved in our children's development to lead our children towards tolerance, understanding, justice, and sensitivity to the needs of others and appreciation of the world around them.

Our motto "Enjoy, Respect, Learn, Achieve"

Vision Statement: Our Vision for the Future

- To provide role models who: go the extra mile; give of themselves and their time to meet the needs of the whole child; promote spirituality and an appreciation of the wonders of the natural world; promote a love of learning; develop Christian ideals of commitment, responsibility, respect, team-work, tolerance, understanding, justice, sensitivity of self and others and love for Jesus Christ, within a secure, caring, inspiring, stimulating and challenging environment both indoors and outside.
- For children, parents, families, staff, governors and community to work together in partnership to enable each child to become a happy, healthy, well-balanced individuals with self-confidence and belief that builds character to enable them to engage thoroughly, fulfilling each individual's potential through life's experiences, opportunities and responsibilities in a rapidly changing world.

Aims

Westhead Lathom St. James Church of England Primary School aims to :-

- Provide a broad and challenging curriculum and a stimulating learning environment that extends outside the classroom;
- Develop enquiring minds and spirituality through curiosity, awe and wonder of the world;
- Teach, demonstrate and praise Christian Values;
- Value the power of prayer;
- Teach with innovative and investigative approaches to learning;
- Provide an enriching programme of extra-curricular activities and visits;
- Plan a rich, varied and up-to-date range of learning resources;
- Encourage children to achieve their highest standards in all areas of the curriculum and to seek excellence within an ethos of support, challenge and encouragement to succeed;
- Teach children to work independently, collaboratively and become highly motivated lifelong learners;
- Include opportunities for creative thinking in problem solving settings, developing divergent thinking, adaptability and flexibility in preparation for the many changes ahead in life, including the rapid progress in technology;
- Build partnerships between the school, home and community;

Westhead Lathom St. James C.E. Primary School Attendance Policy

- Strive for continuous improvement in all that we do;
- Continually self-evaluate and continue to improve upon current practice;
- Work collaboratively towards common goals;
- Place self-esteem and a positive and inclusive approach to behaviour as high priorities thus ensuring that individuals respect and value themselves, others and the environment and is motivated to do their best in school and beyond in order to become a fulfilled adult who gives to the community.

Introduction:

At St. James, the children's high level of attendance plays a part in their success. For the children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive on time unless absence is unavoidable.

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. If a child were to miss the first ten minutes every morning then they've lost nearly an hour a week, approximately 6 days of school and 50% of Phonics teaching!

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child has regular and punctual attendance. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

We are grateful for the excellent support of the parents of our pupils.

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:

1. Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
2. Promote regular attendance in our weekly newsletter;
3. Report to you termly, if there seems to be a specific problem with attendance, on how your child is performing in school and their attendance and punctuality rate linked to their attainments;

4. Celebrate good attendance by noting individual and class achievements;
5. Reward good or improving attendance through certificates.
6. Carry out transition work with pupils leaving for high school;
7. Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
8. Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
9. 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:

1. Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
2. truancy before or during the school day
3. absences which have never been properly explained
4. children who arrive at school after the register has closed
5. shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
6. day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
7. days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription or appointment card or similar.

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

Westhead Lathom St. James C.E. Primary School Attendance Policy
pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

We monitor absenteeism electronically for each child and are able to see patterns emerging in some cases. 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 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.

All our PA pupils and their parents are 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 and reported nationally, annually through the Inspection Dashboard, available on-line.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

1. 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
2. Further consecutive days of absence require details in writing upon return to school

If your child is absent we will:

1. Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
2. Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist;

- **The persistent absence threshold is 15% absence** This is worked out each half term by number of sessions missed. Pupils who hit these triggers each half term are classed as On Track to PA (OTPA).

Half Term 1 - 10 sessions

Half Term 2 - 22 sessions

Half Term 3 - 30 sessions

Half Term 4 - 38 sessions - **Pupils who hit this trigger are statistically classed as PA as this is when data is returned**

Half Term 5 - 46 sessions

3. 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.

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:

1. Meetings in school between parents, pupils, teachers and the Headteacher;
2. Home School Agreement Contract;
3. Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority School Attendance Team) through Team around the Family (TAF) meetings;
4. Attendance panels

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 **8.55 am** and we expect your child to be on the school premises at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.10am** 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.

We will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice (£120 per parent per child) if they take their child/children out of school for leave during term time without prior arrangement with the school. The decision to authorise will be made by the Headteacher.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance (10 days), 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.

It is important that you understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by school at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

Examples of Unacceptable reasons for absence in term time are:

- cheaper holidays
- Additional holiday time

N.B. if the reason given is 'unable to take leave in school holidays' then this must be verified by the employer on the request/evidence form.

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

1. When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period. Your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
2. Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. SATs
3. When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.

Westhead Lathom St. James C.E. Primary School Attendance Policy

4. Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 92% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.

5. 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. Repeated unauthorised absence 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)

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:

1. Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
2. Contact school on 1st day of absence and give written details after further consecutive days absence
3. Avoid any leave in term time and apply in advance using form
4. Attendance at meetings in school
5. Participation in Parenting Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies

Pupils:

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

Headteacher / School Attendance Lead:

1. Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
2. Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
3. Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
4. Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance

Westhead Lathom St. James C.E. Primary School Attendance Policy

5. 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
6. 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: Admin Officer

1. First day response: Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided
2. Input and update the attendance registers
3. Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
4. Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents
5. Work with children and parents in conjunction with the headteacher 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:

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

Governors

1. Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly
2. Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy
3. Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures
4. 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 **95.4%** 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.

Westhead Lathom St. James C.E. Primary School Attendance Policy

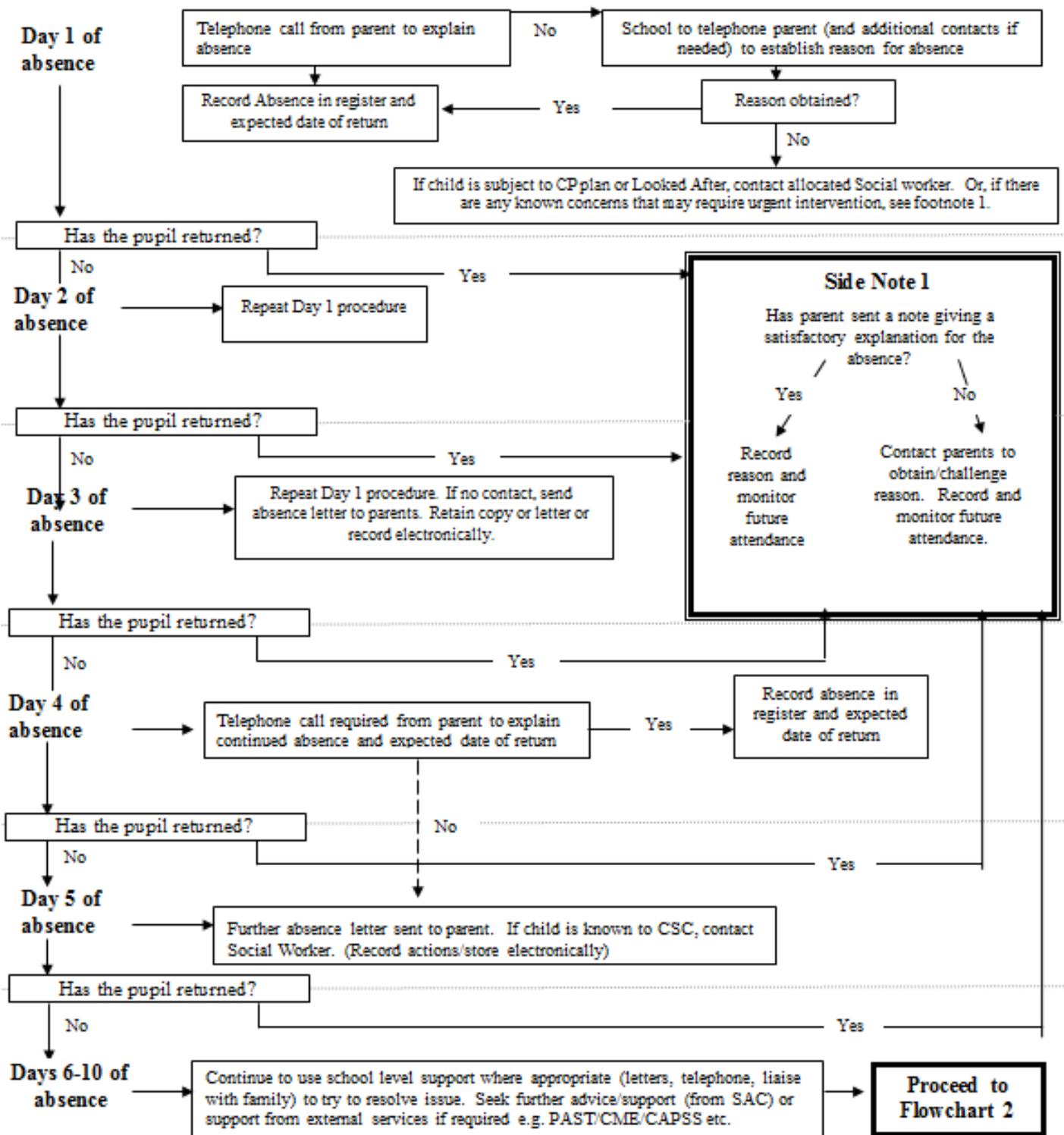
Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in newsletter and we ask for your full support.

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.

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

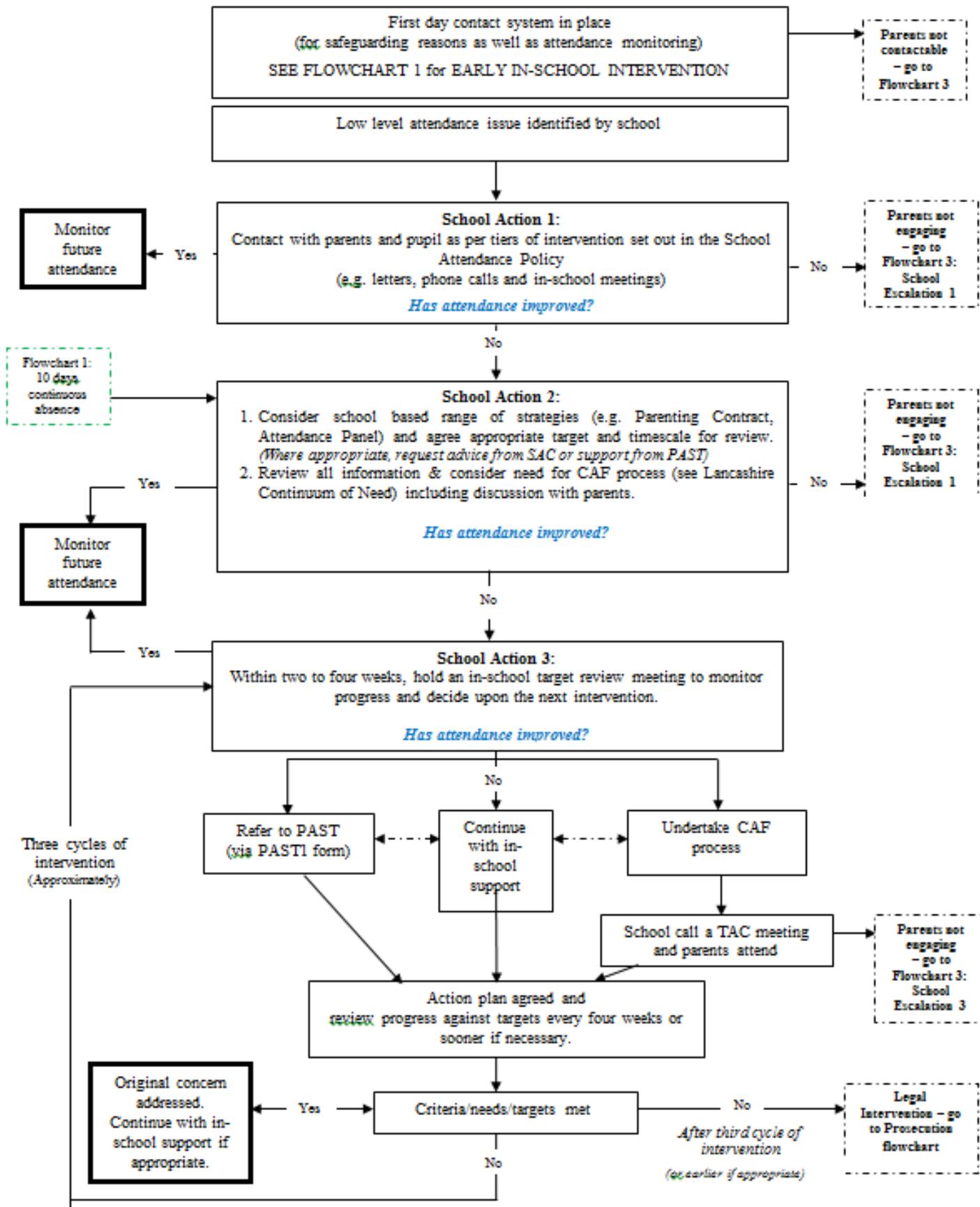


If at any point there are concerns about the safety or welfare of the pupil, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.

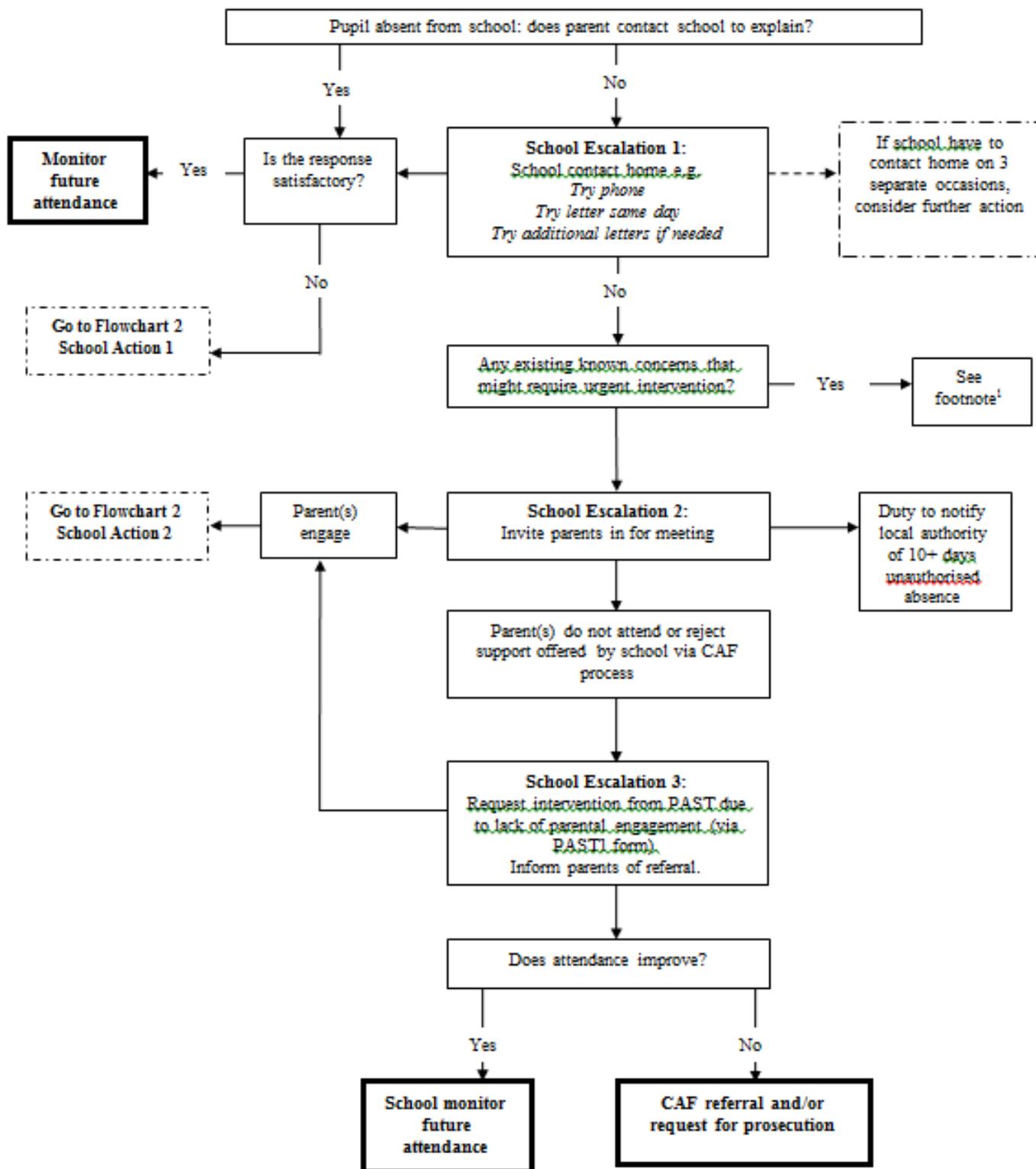
¹ In some instances, more urgent notification to the local authority may be appropriate if contact with parents/carex is problematic e.g.

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

FLOWCHART 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES



**FLOWCHART 3: PRIMARY 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/carer is problematic e.g.

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