



Attendance Policy

Benchill Primary School

Written by: Abigail Holt & Karen Icely

Date of Policy approval: Summer 2019

Date for Policy review: Summer 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Rose Radley', is written over a horizontal line.

Signed:

(Chair of Governors)

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Benchill Primary School believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximize the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Benchill Primary School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [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](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

Registration begins at 8:55am and are sent to the Attendance Officer at 9:05am so enquiries can be made for any pupil that is absent.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

You can contact school in the following ways:

- Telephoning 0161 998 3075 where a message can be left
- Sending a text or calling the school mobile on: 07912203521
- Use the Studybugs app (see appendix 5)

E-mail, attendance@benchill.manchester.sch.uk

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Or the amount of occasional days is consider to be excessive.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The appointment letter should be brought into school before the appointment and a copy will be taken.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives between 9:05 and 9:25 will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (9:25) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).

Parents of children who continually arrive late to school may be asked to come and meet with Attendance Officer to discuss any issues and to offer support.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

A meeting will be arranged for any child who has accrued 2 days unauthorised absence over the half term.

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will report their child's attendance to them half termly via a certificate. You will also receive two progress reports each academic year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. However no more than one day for any individual occasion and no more than three days in total in any academic year.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Examples of unauthorised absence:

Pupil's or family member's birthday

Going shopping

Haircuts

Arriving after 9:25am without a valid reason. Uniform being wet, oversleeping or pack lunch not being ready are not reasons for your child being late.

School will implement a range of strategies and procedures to support improved attendance, these will include:

Discussion with parents and pupils

Attendance panels with Attendance Officer (1st meeting), Deputy Headteacher (2nd meeting), Governor Panel (3rd meeting).

Attendance % bands and distributed leadership model (see appendix 2)

General absence procedure (see appendix 3)

Illness procedure (see appendix 4)

Home visits

Pre penalty notice letter

Parenting contract

Referrals to outside agencies

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Weekly

1 pupil with 100% attendance from each class will receive a certificate.

The three best classes in the school (upper and lower) will be rewarded with stickers. Any class achieving 100% attendance that week will receive a reward afternoon.

Half Termly

Class with the highest attendance over the half term will receive a cinema afternoon or choose to wear their own clothes

Annually

Children with 100% attendance will attend a party day/trip organised by school.

The class with the highest attendance (based on week by week scores) will be rewarded with a school trip.

Any parents who have concerns regarding their child's attendance can contact the Attendance Team who will offer support and guidance.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If no date of return is given then parents are expected to call school every day until their child returns.

If a pupil's absence goes above three days we will expect proof that medical advice has been sought.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving outside agencies who are able to offer additional support.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

School uses the daily register to monitor any children that are causing concern so the relevant support can be put into place to improve attendance.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis. Any absences are then passed to the attendance officer to make further enquiries.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Pastoral Lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

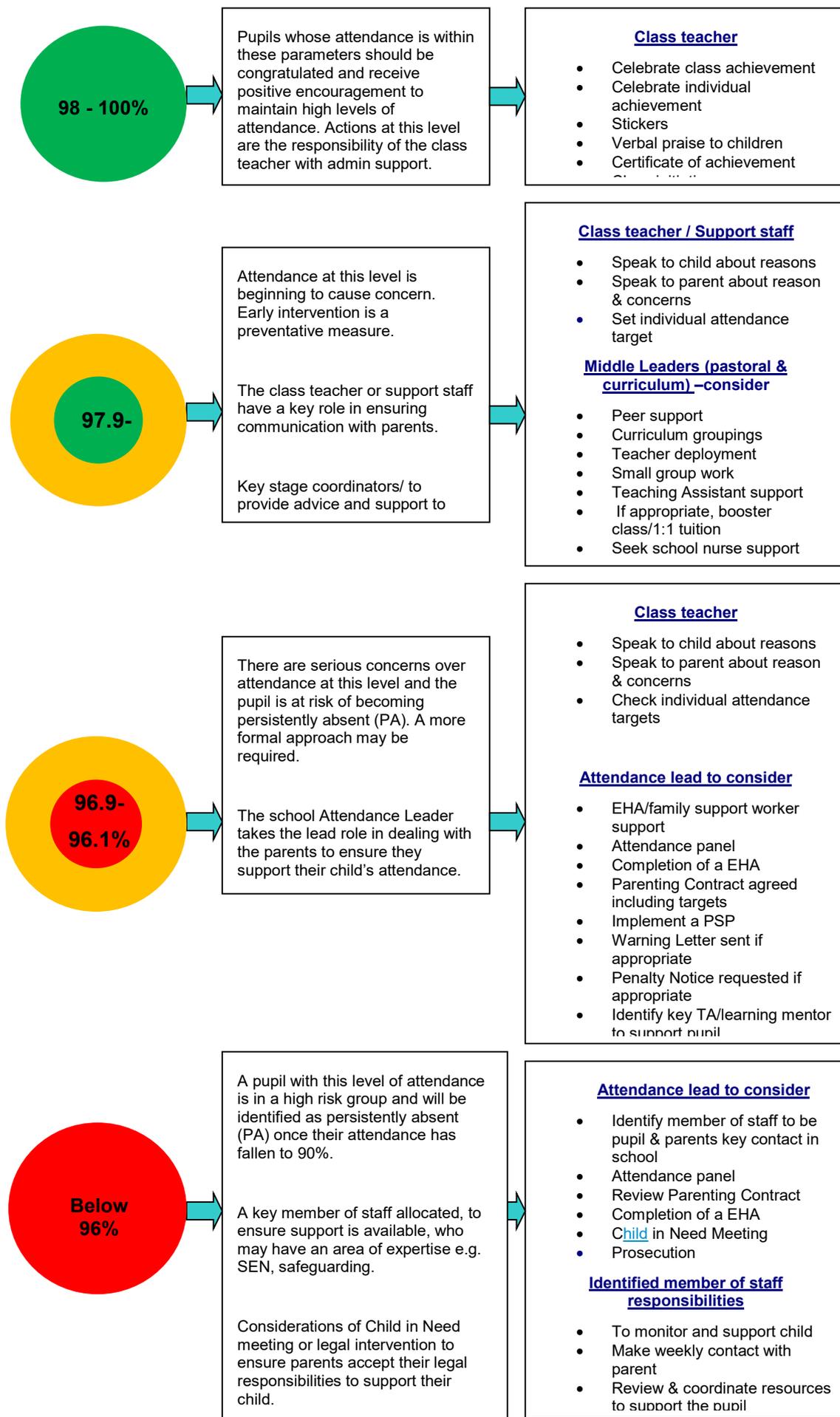
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

Attendance Distributed Leadership Model

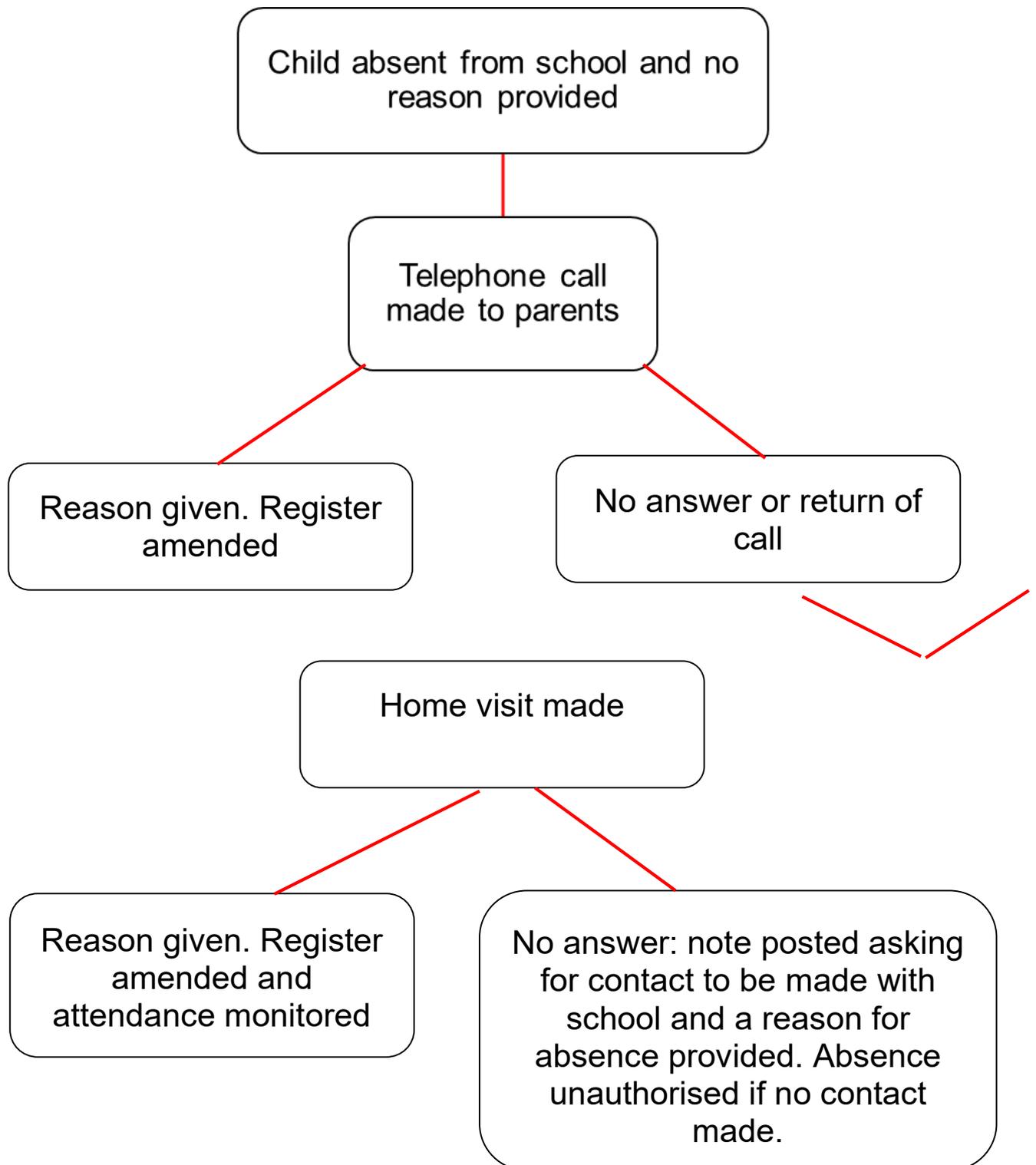


School is a welcoming environment for learning to take place. Children are happy and feel safe. There are clear links between regular attendance and educational outcomes for pupils. Their health and emotional well-being needs are met. Attendance is a responsibility shared by all school staff. Parents

Whole School

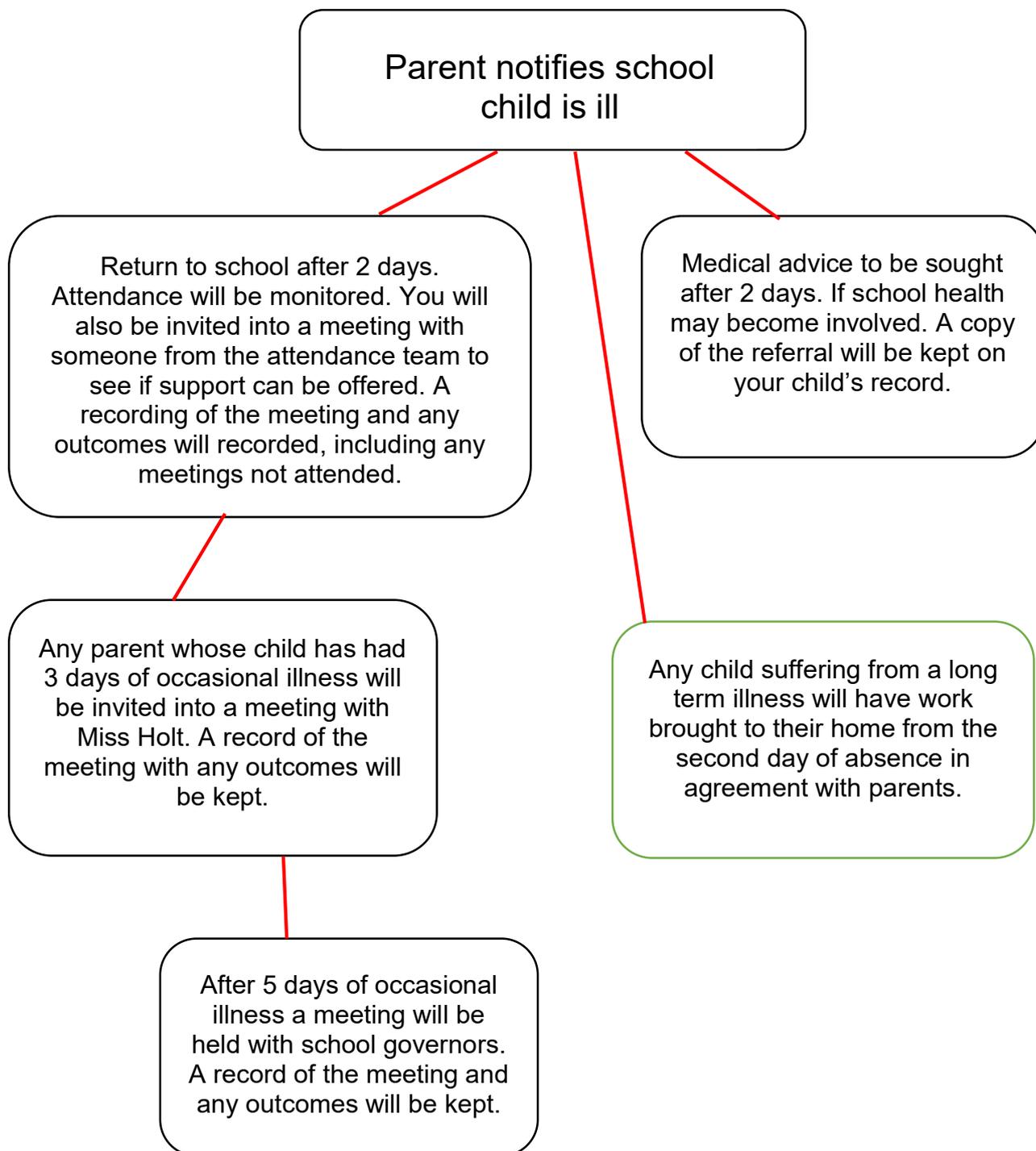
Appendix 3

Absence Procedure



Appendix 4

Illness Procedure



We are a rights respecting school. All our policies and procedures are written and reviewed to ensure that children's rights, as detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are respected and promoted. Article 29: Education should help children use and develop their talent and abilities. It should also help children learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Growing responsible global citizens

Benchill Primary School
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Wythenshawe
Manchester
M77 8FJ
Tel: 0161 998 3075 Fax: 0161 945 0008
Website: www.benchill.manchester.sch.uk



07 May 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

We're pleased to announce that Benchill is introducing a new, more efficient and secure system for reporting your child's absence due to illness, called Studybugs.

If you haven't already, please get the free Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell us whenever your child is ill and unable to attend school.

Get the app or register now: (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>)

Top 3 reasons to use Studybugs

1. It is integrated with our systems so we know right away if your child is unaccounted for.
2. It is quick and easy to register and use and it automatically reminds you to keep us posted.
3. You'll be helping the NHS and other public health organisations improve children's health. (<https://studybugs.com/about/schools>)

Thank you,

Benchill Primary School



Headteacher: Mrs H Eken
Heads of School: Mrs F Davies & Miss A Holt
Chair of Governors: Mr Ian Madley



WHAT SCHOOL WILL DO

- School will monitor the attendance of all children regularly.
- School will telephone or text if no reason for absence has been given, records of this will be kept. A home visit will be carried out if there is still no response from the above.
- School will work with Parents/Carers to ensure their children have good attendance. A Parent Support Advisor will monitor attendance and offer help to all.
- An EHA or parenting contract can be put in place to support you with your child's attendance.
- The children will be grouped according to their level of attendance as follows.

Gold Band: children who have 98 – 100% attendance
Green Band: children who have 96.1% -97.9% attendance
Amber Band: children who have 95.1% - 96% attendance
Red Band: children with 95% and below attendance.

Gold Band: Excellent attendance will be celebrated with prizes, class of the week, airport party, certificates and half term reward.

Green Band/Amber Band: Our Parent Support Advisor will work with parents/carers, children and staff to identify reasons for why attendance is lower and the affects this will be having on your child's progress. Meetings will be arranged and home visits will be carried out when necessary.

Red Band: If your child is regularly in this band it is considered that he/she is persistently absent from school. An EHA (new CAF) or Parenting Contract May be set up and/or a penalty notice may be issued – a fine of £60 if paid within 14 days/ £120 if paid within 28 days per child per parent

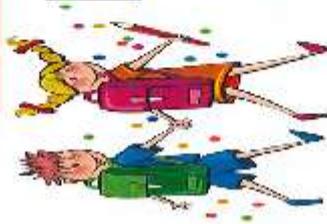
CAUTION

Failure to pay may result in prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

One of the most important things you can do for your child's future is to make sure they go to school.



Be in line for quarter to nine



Good school attendance = better job prospects

KNOW THE LAW

If your child is between 5 and 16 years old and is a registered pupil at a school it is your legal responsibility to make sure they attend school regularly