



# Greenside Primary School

A great school in a great community  
achieving great outcomes for children

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**Reviewed by Governors February 2016**

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

### Overview

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

### Objectives

1. To ensure that all learners attend school every day.
2. To ensure that all learners are punctual.
3. To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school and that they arrive on time.
4. To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
5. To investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed.
6. To work effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
7. To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.

### Strategies

1. All staff will complete registers accurately for each session and will draw to the Deputy Head teacher's attention any absences that are cause for concern or suspicion.
2. Staff will follow attendance and punctuality procedures when dealing with related issues.
3. Parents will be asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is absent or ill.
4. The school office will make telephone contact with a home when a child is absent if the parents have not notified the school that their child is absent.
5. Where a learner is developing a pattern of 'occasional' absences the parent will be contacted to discuss the pattern of absences.
6. The school will use Local Authority services and the school child and family support assistant to support families where absence and punctuality issues are related to social circumstances and parenting issues.
7. LA welfare and attendance officers will be used to follow up absences that are suspicious or causing concern or where the family is not engaging with the support the school is providing.
8. Where necessary the school will work closely with the LA to take action against those unlawfully keeping learners from school.

### Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

### Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent/carer. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to the family and is intended to offer support to families and resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

### Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Under the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 an authorised officer of Tameside Borough Council has the power to issue each parent/carer with a penalty notice for each of their children who fails to attend school regularly. A penalty notice is an early deterrent that is intended to prevent more extended periods of unauthorised absence developing. Penalty notices issued incur a fine of £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice within 28 days may result in prosecution. Full payment of the penalty discharges the parent/carer from liability for conviction following a prosecution.

A request to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice shall be made when:

- A pupil is absent from school as they have taken a holiday in term time, or an unauthorised leave of absence.
- When a pupil has accumulated at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a term, the parent/carer will be issued with a Penalty Notice Warning Letter. This letter will advise the parent/carer of the absences and inform that the child's attendance will be monitored closely for a period of no less than 15 days. If any further unauthorised absence is accumulated a penalty notice will be requested in line with Tameside MBC Code of Conduct.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol.

### **Absence Procedures**

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by Parent/Carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parent/Carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return (where possible). If no contact is received, this will trigger our first day calling procedures and may result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.

### **Categorising Absence**

#### **Illness**

Parent/Carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. When medical evidence has been requested, the absence will be marked as unauthorised until evidence has been provided.

#### **Medical / Dental Appointments**

Parent/Carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parent/Carers are required to show the appointment card to school to confirm the appointment for the absence to be marked as authorised within the register.

#### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration/ support package.

#### **Requests for leave of absence**

In September 2013 changes to Government regulations and guidance means that Head Teachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances).

All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parent/carer known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer, issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for child due to 'exceptional circumstances.' At Greenside Primary School, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This may only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher and it will be marked as unauthorised. Greenside Primary School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made.

Each application will be considered and will take into consideration the following factors, among others:

- Length of leave requested
- Age of pupil
- Pupil's attendance/ absence record
- SATS/ examinations/ tests
- Pupil's educational needs
- Welfare of the pupil
- If there are exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Headteacher)
- Previous leave of absence requests.

Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may make a referral to Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution. Greenside Primary School will respond to all application for leave of absence in writing.

When a leave of absence is granted by the Head Teacher, the parent/carer will need to agree a date of return with the Head Teacher. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from or made with the parent/carer school may instigate Child Missing Education Procedures and the pupil may be removed from the school roll in compliance with the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**. This means that the child may lose their school place.

A penalty notice request or a referral for full prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:-

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period of time is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.

### **Religious Observance**

Greenside Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance. Parent/carers are requested to give advance notice to Greenside Primary School if they intend their child to be absent. It is reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request that a penalty notice is issued or refer the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

### **Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity or dual registered when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

### **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- The death of a pupil
- A pupil has transferred between schools
- A pupil is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

At Greenside Primary School, the Deputy Head Teacher, Ms Alison Curtis, is the senior manager who leads on attendance under supervision of the Head teacher, Mrs J Reynolds and the Governing Body who retain overall responsibility for attendance. The day to day responsibility for managing/ monitoring and providing support for attendance issues lies with the Learning Mentor, Ms Joanne Butterworth. Attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and Department for Education annually through the census and to the Governing Body termly. This information is collected through the SIMS system.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure there is a whole school approach to improving attendance and reinforcing good attendance by:

- Disseminating the attendance policy to all staff, reviewing it regularly and updating staff as required
- Ensuring the school has in place strategies for collecting and analysing attendance data
- Ensuring the attendance team receives support, guidance and the appropriate resources to fulfil its day to day duties
- Promoting the importance of good attendance to parents, carers and pupils through regular whole school letters and other communications sent home
- Issuing a parent friendly copy of the attendance policy
- Seeking to promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and parents and carers during assemblies and at parent events
- Ensuring a safe and structured learning environment for all pupils
- Undertaking pupil progress meetings with class teachers
- Informative lessons that are set to pupils' needs

The Attendance Team will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
- Managing individual pupil casework files
- Carrying out first day calling and utilising the parent mail facility
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies and the Local Authority including the Education Welfare Officer as required

The Teaching and Support Staff Team will support and promote good attendance by:

- Highlighting to the Senior Leadership Team/ attendance staff any pupils causing concern
- Talking to their class about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Promoting whole school initiatives, reward schemes and celebrations
- Delivering a diverse curriculum in a child centered learning environment

The parents and carers of our pupils will be expected to support good attendance by:

- Talking to their child about school life and taking an interest in their child's educational progress
- Avoiding unnecessary absence such as holidays in term time
- Contacting school when their child is absent and providing a reason for the absence
- Ensuring their child attends on time everyday
- Engaging with intervention strategies provided by the school when we are concerned and/or their child's attendance/ punctuality becomes as a cause for concern

#### **Strategies for promoting good whole school attendance**

- Updating the whole school community about attendance matters through newsletters
- Celebrating good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Rewarding achievements through class competitions, certificates and extra-curricular activities
- Providing regular support and feedback to parents

#### **Strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality**

- First day calling procedure
- Late Gate and Blitz day initiatives
- Discussion with pupil to ascertain if there are any concerns or worries
- Standardised and escalating series of school letters- highlighting with parents attendance and punctuality concerns
- Home Visits
- Individual Action Plans/ parenting contracts
- Referral to support agencies
- Casework with identified pupils/families
- Attendance panel meetings
- Referral to School Nurse where medical issues are a concern
- Parenting contracts with agreed targets
- Referral to the School's Education Welfare Officer

- Issuing of penalty notices
- Referral to Local Authority for consideration of implementing legal proceedings

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops below 90% for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. All pupils who are actually PA, or are considered to be on track to becoming PA, will be discussed at the weekly Attendance Review and will result in appropriate interventions being instigated. Referrals may also be made to appropriate external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or full prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

### **Monitoring and review**

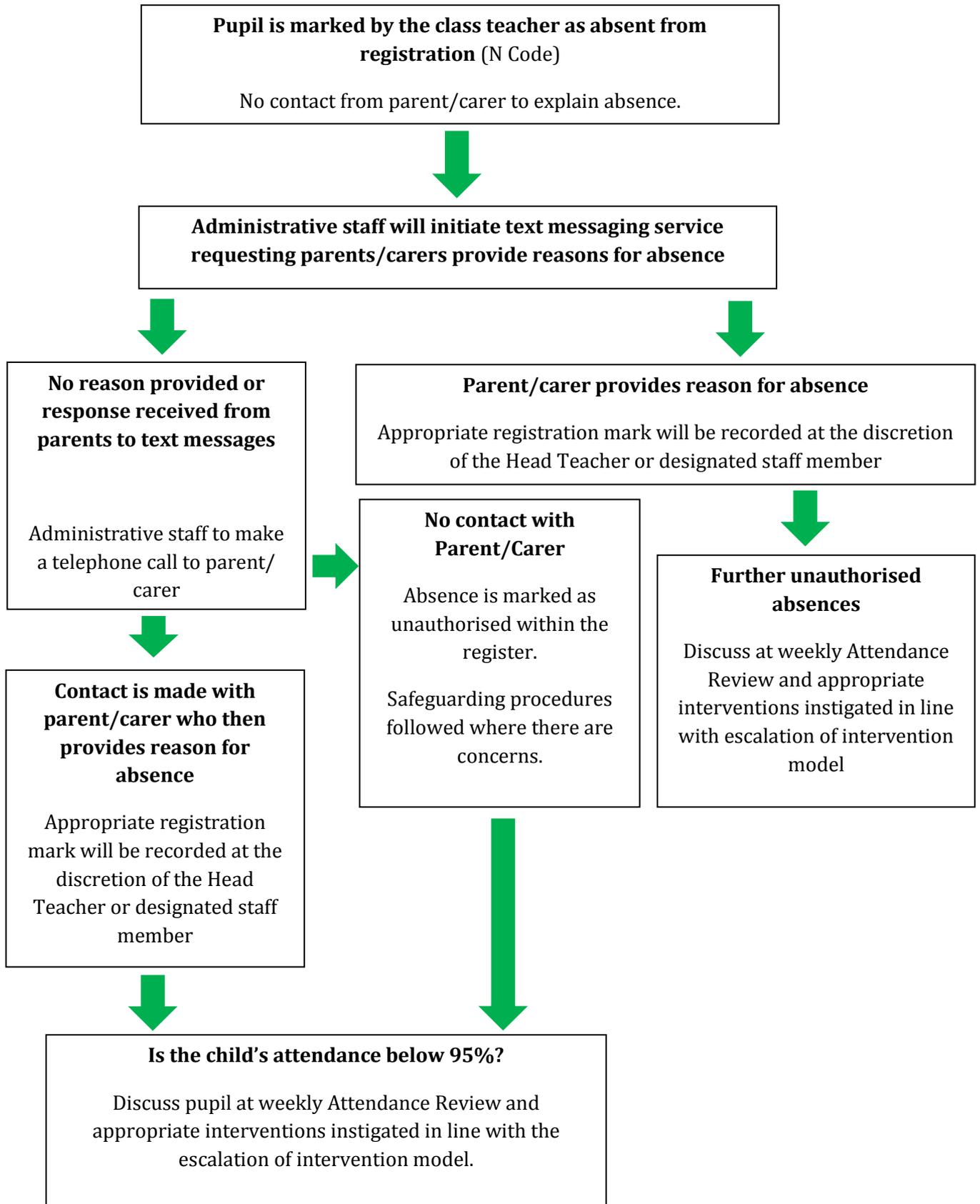
It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and the attendance leader will produce a half termly report for governors, outlining the attendance data and the key issues arising from this, alongside actions to be taken. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

### **OUTCOMES**

This school will do all it can to ensure that learners come happily, willingly and punctually to school to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education.

At Greenside Primary School we will continually strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, transgender, ethnicity, culture and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability.

## Appendix 1: Unexplained Absence Procedures



## Appendix 2: Escalation of Intervention

<p><b>100%- 98%</b> <b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><u>CONGRATULATING/ PRAISING/ REWARDING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils whose attendance is at 98% and above will be congratulated, receive positive encouragement and be rewarding at a whole school level to maintain this good attendance</li> </ul>	<p><u>Whole School</u> All staff should verbally praise these pupils and highlighted with parents by class teachers</p> <p>Weekly</p> <p>Half-Termly</p> <p>Termly</p>
<p><b>97%-95%</b> <b>AMBER</b></p>	<p><u>ATTENDANCE CONCERN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early intervention will be instigated as a preventative measure.</li> <li>It is essential that class teachers/ support staff liaise with parent</li> <li>Attendance staff will advise and support to ensure the child's needs in school are met.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Class Teacher</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quick discussion with parent to ascertain whether there are any problems at home or with their child, i.e. health concerns.</li> <li>Discussion with the child about why they were absent</li> </ul> <p><u>Attendance Officer/ Attendance Lead</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Letter 1 sent. (AL1)(Inc. request for medical evidence)</li> <li>Referral to School Nurse (if appropriate)</li> <li>Regular contact by attendance officer</li> </ul>
<p><b>94%-92%</b> <b>AMBER- RED</b></p>	<p><u>SERIOUS ATTENDANCE CONCERNS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are serious concerns over attendance at this level and the pupil is at risk of becoming a Persistent Absentee.</li> <li>Formal Interventions will be instigated</li> <li>The AO/ AL take the lead in supporting parents to improve attendance.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Class Teacher</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speak to child/ parent about concerns</li> </ul> <p><u>Attendance Officer/ Lead</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Concern Letter 2 (AL2)</li> <li>Home visit made by AO if no improvement.</li> <li>AL to individual attendance data with AO to track improvements or declines.</li> <li>AL3 Sent if no improvement seen</li> </ul>
<p><b>90% &gt; RED</b></p>	<p><u>AT RISK</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A pupil with this level of attendance is a high risk group and will be identified as persistently absent when their attendance is below 90%.</li> <li>A CAF, Social Services referral or legal interventions may be instigated (penalty notices/ prosecutions)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Attendance Lead/ Attendance Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent invited to meeting with the attendance officer. (AL 3) - possible Parenting Contract offered - CAF/ Social Services (if appropriate)</li> <li>If the parent/ carers choose not to attend- home visit.</li> <li>Panel meeting with AL if no improvement (AL3)</li> <li>Penalty notice/ prosecution warning sent (PNL 4)</li> <li>Referral to Education Welfare Service.</li> </ul>

### BELOW 90% and No Improvement

A referral may be made to the Local Authority to consider the instigation of legal proceedings including penalty notice fine or the consideration of a prosecution under S.444 (1)/ (1a) of the Education Act 1996. A referral, if appropriate, may be made to Social Services or other statutory family support service.

### Appendix 3: Punctuality Procedures

**Registration is at 8:50 a.m. and close of register is 9:20a.m.**

Pupils arriving after close of register will be marked as having unauthorised absence by the office staff - U.

Pupil has been late on three occasions - letter will be sent to parents/carers by attendance team



**Following the issue of 3 late letters:** If further late marks are recorded parents/carers should be invited to a panel meeting where a support plan will be created. Parent/carers warned about risk of being issued with a penalty notice fine for lates that are recorded after the close of register.



**Following the panel meeting if the pupil records further unauthorised absence (U code - late after the close of register) a penalty notice warning letter to be issued.**

Any further unauthorised late marks (U code - late after the close of register) should result in school requesting the Local Authority issue penalty notice. The Penalty notice warning letter must be signed by Headteacher.



**Following the panel meeting school may decide to instigate other strategies of support for addressing lateness.**

**For example:**

- Additional support from school offered to pupil and/or parent.
- Parenting contracts
- MCAF
- Referral/information given about support services
- Referral to School Nurse etc.

**Any pupil arriving after 9:00am must report to the office with their parent/carer. The school administrator will mark pupils with L if pupil arrives after 9.10am and will ask parent/carer to complete the late book and for a reason for their lateness.**

**They will close the register electronically at 9.30am. Any pupil who arrives after this time should also be entered into the late book at the main office, for safeguarding purposes, when parent/carer will be asked to complete and sign the reason for lateness.**

**Office staff will record the register with a 'U' mark and record the time on Minutes Late report**

**If a pupil arrives in the classroom after this time without a member staff, the teacher/ support staff should to contact main office.**

**For safeguarding and first day calling purposes, the whereabouts of each pupil will need to be established.**

**Ensure the parent friendly attendance and punctuality policy is distributed to parent/carer reminding them of their responsibilities and consequences of late after close of register.**