



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## AIMS:

- To raise the profile of attendance by encouraging and promoting a positive attitude in order that all children can achieve a good rate of attendance, and therefore learning, throughout their time at school.
- To ensure that children are happy to come to school.

## OBJECTIVES:

- To foster a high expectation of pupils' attendance in school on a regular basis.
- To raise family awareness of the importance of a child's regular attendance at school.
- To inform parents/guardians/carers as to what is considered legitimate reasons for absence.
- To maintain an accurate attendance/registering system and a mechanism for monitoring and controlling attendance.
- To maintain a clear policy on attendance which is known to all staff, pupils and parents/guardians/carers.
- To maintain clear communication both within the school and between school and parents

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

Under Section 44 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is a registered pupil. Failure to discharge this duty may result in the LEA prosecuting the parents and each parent may be fined. Absences are considered either to be either authorised or unauthorised.

- **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a **good reason** and that the school has either given approval in advance for the pupil to be away or that the explanation given afterwards is accepted as satisfactory justification. This includes illness and any educational, musical or sports exams.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those, which the school **does not consider reasonable** and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences which have not been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register.

The Headteacher has responsibility for deciding if an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Under new government law, Headteachers are not allowed to grant authorised absence for

holidays. School staff need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence, whether written, telephoned or given in person, if they doubt the explanation. Absences should be reported to the school office before 9.30am on the first day of absence. Otherwise the school will send a text message to confirm the absence. If a message is not received by 1pm to explain the absence, it will be recorded on CPOMS (our safeguarding system). If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence, please inform the school and we can work together on resolving the underlying issue.

On a half termly basis, children's attendance that falls below 95% is looked at by the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer. If it is deemed to be of concern, the Headteacher will contact parents to inform them of the percentage and to investigate further. If it persists, the Education Welfare Officer will meet with the Headteacher and parents to try to resolve the problem.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **Absence**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- ***Illness.*** If a child has been sick they should stay at home for 48 hours to lessen the risk of infecting others.
- ***Holiday.*** Schools may not grant leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- ***Exams or medical appointments.*** These can often be arranged outside school hours, but any parent or carer wishing to take a child out of school must inform the School Office, as far in advance as possible.

The Headteacher will consider each request individually, taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the requests; whether the parent gave advance notice; the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. *Leave is likely to be refused where children have already missed a lot of work, attendance is below 90% or at crucial times of the year (e.g. during SATs).*

### **Lateness**

- Children must attend on time to be marked present on the morning register. School starts at 9.00am and we ask that children arrive where possible by 8.55am so that they are ready for the start of the day. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. Anyone arriving after the bell, but before the register has been taken will be classed as late.
- Should a pupil arrive late and miss registration, he or she will need to be "signed in" at the School Reception Office for purposes of emergency evacuation.
- The class teacher marks a registration print-out form twice daily (morning and afternoon). Each pupil is marked present or absent.
- Should a pupil be late before registration is closed (9.10am) he/she will receive a "late before registration closed" mark.
- Should a pupil be late after registration (after 9.10am) is closed he/she will be marked as "absent" but will be "signed in" by the parent/carers at The School Reception Office in order that the school has knowledge of his/her late attendance and reason in school.

Administration Staff will input the information on to the School's Computerised Administration System, which calculates pupils' attendance marks. The school is responsible for completing the Absence Report Forms that are generated by the Computer. These forms give the name of each child, the dates of the absence and reasons for non-attendance, using a code. The School's Official Register is printed, as required by law, at least once a month. This information is also shared with Governors. Letters are sent home periodically, reminding parents about authorised and unauthorised absences as listed above.

The Education Welfare Officers annually set the targets for our attendance following an audit.

**The school's attendance register is by a computerised registration system (Attendance Module – within SIMS.net.)**

### **PENALTY NOTICES**

**As a school we are committed to the following legislation:**

The 2007 Regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 21 days; or £120 if they pay within 28 days.

There have also been additional changes to legislation and the updated guidance can be found under 'Advice on school attendance' at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>

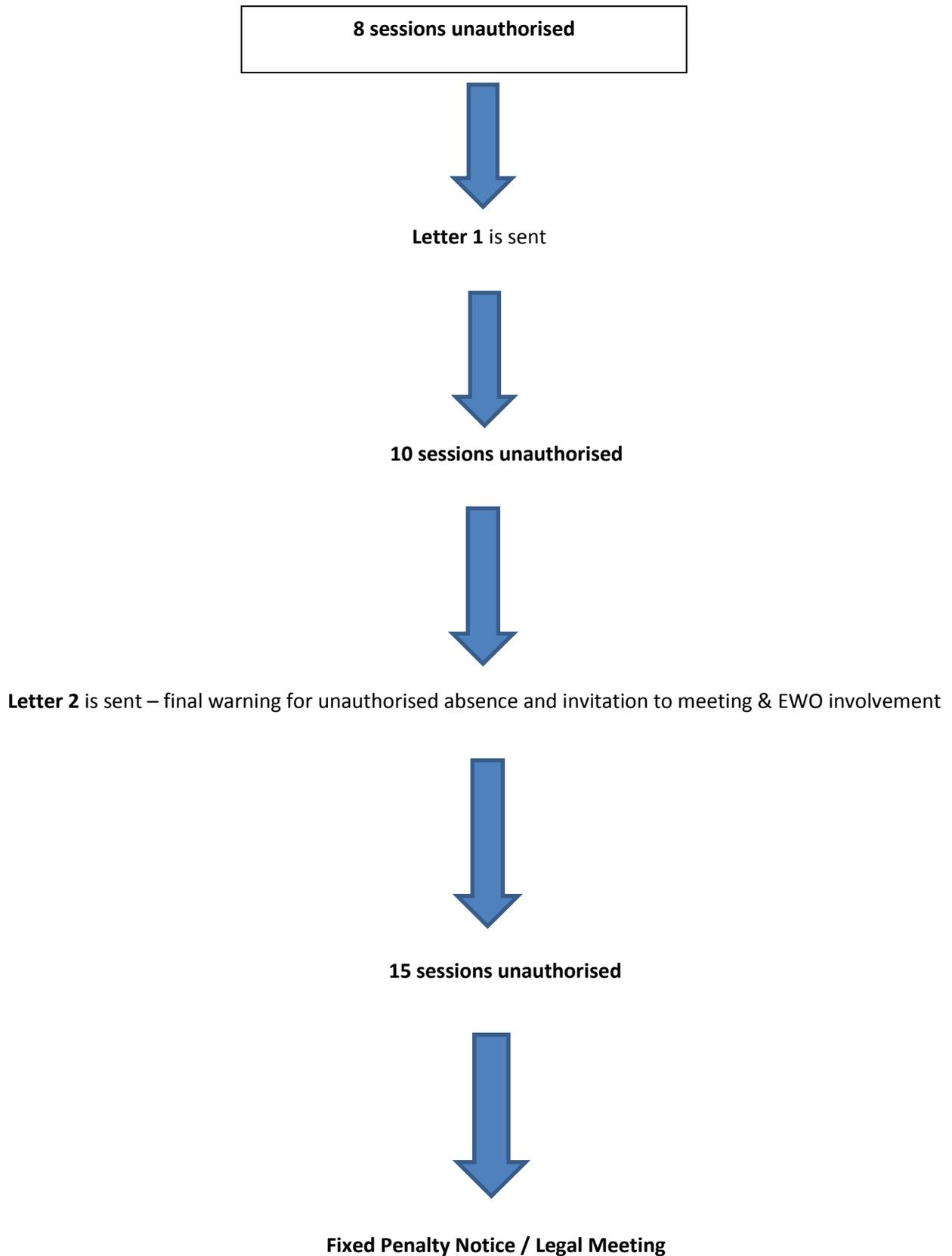
This guidance relates to changes regarding:

Pupil registers and attendance codes;

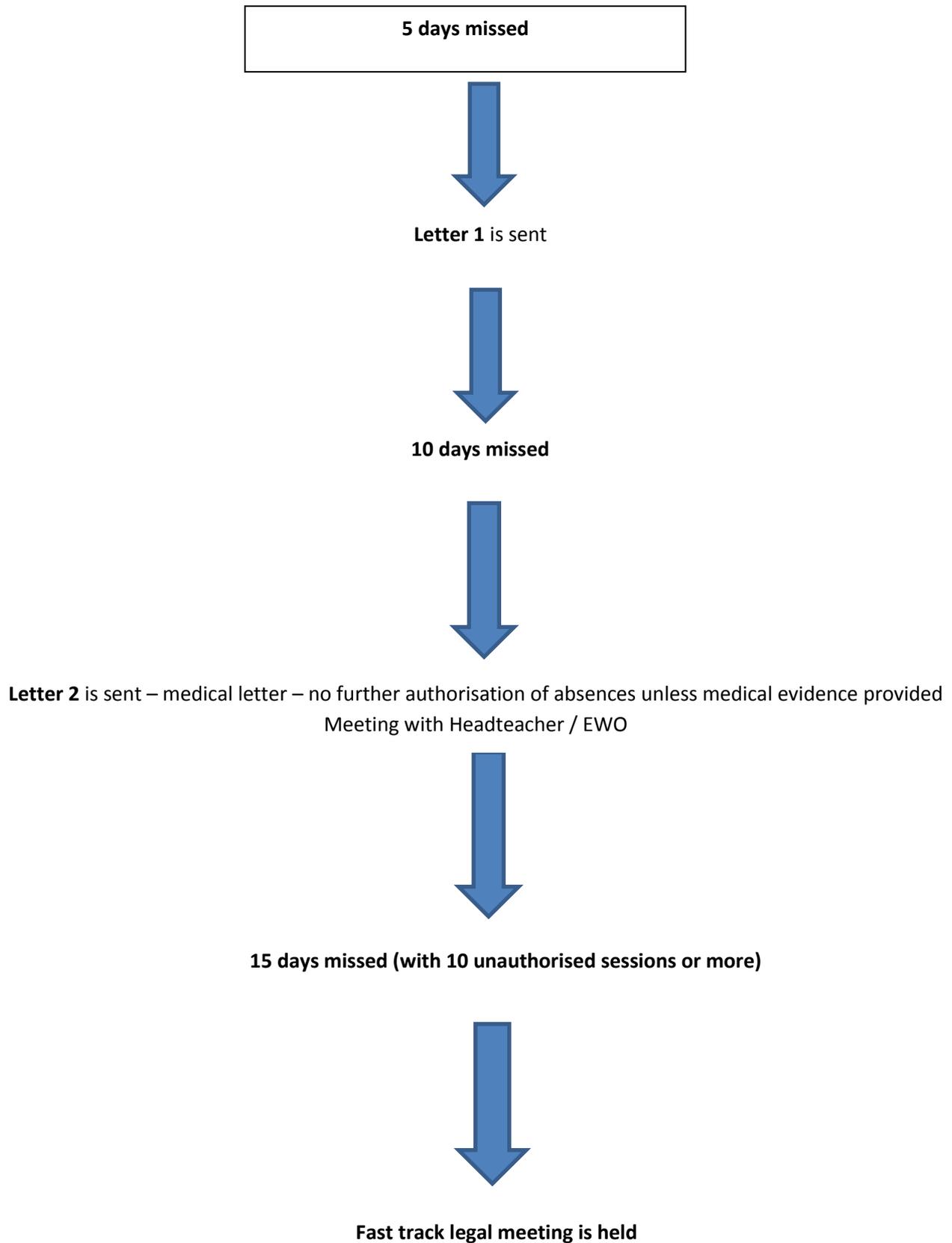
School day and year;

Statutory guidance on education related parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices.

**Lympstone C of E Primary School**  
**Process for escalation of non-attendance**  
**Unauthorised absences**



**Lympstone C of E Primary School**  
**Process for escalation of non-attendance**  
**Medical / illness absences**



## Letter 1

Dear

Please see below the standard attendance letter from County that we are obliged to send once attendance falls below 95% or your child has missed days or sessions as per our attendance policy.

### **% Attendance**

I am writing to remind you about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Days off school add up, missing lessons makes it hard to catch up and some students have to work harder when they come back.

It may be useful for you to know what attendance figures mean for your child:

98% -100% = Excellent

96 – 98% = Good

94 – 96% = Average

92 – 94% = Below Average / Low

90 – 92% = Very low

85 – 90% = Exceptionally Low

Under 85% = Persistent Absentee

If your child's attendance falls below 90% it triggers cause for concern, if it falls to 85% it triggers interventions by the Education Welfare Officer.

Please help your child to maintain good attendance by booking doctor, dentist, and optician appointments either in the afternoon after school, the school holidays or weekends. Any requests for absence should be put in writing.

Our minimum attendance for all students is 95%. If your child is absent from school for whatever reason **please call** the school.

I have enclosed a copy of your child's attendance record for your information. Though there may be a perfectly valid reason for the absences, we have a duty to keep parents aware of their child's attendance. Unauthorised absences are coded as O or N. If you have any queries concerning the report or there are any circumstances of which I need to be aware please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please be reminded that we can administer non-prescription medication such as Calpol. This may help your child to attend school when they have a minor issue or are a little 'under the weather'.

Some of you have already been to see me to explain absence levels, for which I am very grateful, however I am still obliged to send you this reminder.

I will not now be able to authorise any further holiday requests for your child due to low attendance levels.

Yours Sincerely

Emily Mellor

## **Letter 2**

Date

### **Attendance Concern**

#### **Pupil Names and % attendance**

Due to a further drop in attendance following letter 1, your child has unfortunately hit trigger point 2 in attendance. There may well be a valid reason for this but it is our duty to now investigate and where possible support you to ensure better attendance for your child. This is in line with our attendance policy. It may be that there are long standing medical or anxiety issues that we may be able to offer support with. I do need to remind you that under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996, it is an offence not to ensure that children attend school regularly and on time.

If there is any reason preventing full attendance, please contact me at once, it may be possible that we can offer support to improve attendance. For any future absences due to illness or medical appointments we will require evidence from the GP/hospital. Please ask the GP to stamp an appointment card for you to say that you have had an appointment. All GP surgeries will do this for you at no cost. Absences without this will be recorded as unauthorised.

I enclose a copy of your child's attendance record for your information. Unexplained absences are coded as O and/or N.

If their attendance continues to fall, we will be inviting you to a meeting with both myself and the Education Welfare Officer to find ways to support your child's attendance improving.

Thank you to those of you who have already explained individual situations to me. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance closely, please let us know if there is any way in which we can offer immediate support.

Many thanks

Emily Mellor

### **Letter 3 - Meeting letter**

Dear XXX

I refer to my previous letters of XX and XX regarding your child's poor attendance. I would now like to invite you to a meeting to discuss any issues that may be impacting upon full attendance. Both you and your child will have the opportunity to say what is causing difficulties in school attendance and if there is any support you need to improve attendance. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact me as soon as possible, so that we can arrange a convenient alternative.

If you do not attend this meeting and do not contact me to rearrange you will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration of legal proceedings.

**Lateness (after registers close)**

Dear XXX

RE: XXXX

I am writing to inform you that your child XXX is persistently late for school since XXX; to date they have been late after registration closes on XX occasions and has missed X hours and XX minutes of education.

When pupils are late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher, everyone's education is compromised.

**Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance a school and failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.**

Meanwhile, if anything can be done to support XX getting to school on time please do not hesitate to contact me.