

## Pupil Attendance Policy 2023 - 2025

Head of School	Sara Marsh		
School attendance lead	Louisa Robinson	Reviewed:	March 2023
Approved by:	Advisory Board of Governors	Next review date:	March 2025

## **THE LEGAL POSITION**

Millgate School support the view that regular school attendance is important, believing that only when people regularly attend school can the school be effective. Regular attendance is defined as above 96%.

Under Section 36 of the 1944 Education Act, parents / carers of all children of compulsory school age must ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education. Usually this is achieved through attendance at school. Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly. Failure to do so is an offence punishable by law.

## **UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE:**

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required. Authorised absences are morning and / or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes which are supported with medical evidence. 'Snow days', 'strike days' will be coded in a way that does not affect a child's overall attendance

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 Local Authority using sanctions and /or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- parents /carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e., condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- absences linked to shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes a child can be reluctant to attend school. Any issues with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents /carers, and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please alert the school in the first instance so we can support rather than excuse them from attending as this can give the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

## **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

We will encourage good attendance by:

- Accurately completing attendance registers at the beginning of each session within 10 minutes of the start of the session
- Following-up absence on the first day
- Undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times
- Recording attendance on pupils' reports
- Collecting data on attendance for the whole school and by year group and making this available to the Advisory Board of Governors
- Award individual pupil certificates termly for full attendance.

## **REPORTING ABSENCES**

If a child attending Millgate School is absent for any reason, a telephone call or message will inform the school office of the reason for absence and the anticipated length the pupil is likely to be away from school. For child protection and safety reasons, it is essential that school is notified before 9:15am. The school will make every effort to contact parents after 10 am on each morning of a child's absence if he / she has not arrived at school and no reason for absence has been given. If no contact is made and the school cannot get hold of an emergency contact, school staff are required to make a doorstep visit.

If the reason given is valid, the absence will be authorised. If the reason is not satisfactory then official DfE guidance will be referred to and the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Similarly, if no explanation is offered at all, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

**If a pupil is absent for five days or more without a relevant adult being able to be contacted, the school is obliged to complete a safe and well check and follow Safeguarding protocol.** Schools must also inform the Education Welfare Service if a child is absent for 10 days or more (whether consecutive or cumulative) without permission. Please see appendix 1 – school attendance protocols for information about this.

## **ILLNESS, MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

Pupils are occasionally absent through illness and for most pupils this is a short absence. If there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, either the school or the Education Welfare Service

can refer the matter to a doctor or contact the family GP. Children who are regularly absent due to medical reasons will need to communicate effectively with the school and will need to provide supporting evidence for this in order that the school can best support the child.

Leave for dental treatment and doctor's / hospital appointments will be authorised if the school is properly notified and the appointment cannot be taken out of school hours. Parents / carers are asked to use the sign out book in the school office if they take their children out for an appointment during the school day. They are also asked to provide evidence of the appointment – e.g., a letter or screen shot. A child is expected to return to school after the appointment to ensure they get their attendance mark - nipping out to the dentist at 10am and returning for 11:00 am would still see a child achieve 100%

## **LATENESS**

The school discourages late arrival at school. Every school, by law, the school has to register pupils twice in the day; at Millgate School registers are taken at 8:50 am and again at 12:05 pm. Children are recorded as late once the register has been taken and submitted. Registers will remain open for the first thirty minutes of the day. The Secretary of State has determined that 30 minutes late will constitute an unauthorised absence if no valid reason has been given.

If your child arrives at school after the start of registration time, but before the register officially closes, they will be given a late mark (L). This means the school will accept the explanation given for the late arrival as valid and reasonable e.g., a late bus, a car breakdown, a one-off family difficulty. If your child is late due to exceptional circumstances, no action will be taken.

However, if your child is frequently late (3 times or more per term) we may ask to meet with you to identify any issues that are causing your child to arrive late at school.

If your child still arrives late, the school may decide not to authorise the late arrival and enter an unauthorised late mark. CAWS Education Welfare Service regularly monitors lateness and may be present in school to do this.

Your child's education is important and being late will mean:

- Missing the beginning of lessons
- Not hearing important information about school and lessons.
- Not being able to complete work because your child was not given vital information
- Your child being embarrassed at having to enter a room where a lesson has already begun – this can cause anxiety
- Being late for the start of important assessments
- Your child failing to learn an important life skill – being on time – this will feed directly into their working life

## **HOLIDAYS WITHIN SCHOOL TIME**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/ carers to help their child by not taking children away in term 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 and Fixed Penalty Notices.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday or on other trips. **All applications for leave must be made in advance by completing the leave of absence form from the school office.** In accordance with the law, agreement will only be given where the Headteacher considers the reason for the request to be exceptional. The decision made will be confirmed in writing. Without this written confirmation, it cannot be taken that there is agreement to authorise all or any of the absence.

Any period of leave taken without the Headteacher's written confirmation, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Penalty Notices are fines of £60 which increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay by the 28th day will usually mean that the Local Authority proceeds to the Magistrates' Court in relation to the parent's failure to ensure regular attendance.

## **FAMILY BEREAVEMENT**

The death of a member of the close family is a traumatic event in a pupil's life. The school will always respond sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or associated events and such absences will always be authorised. These absences will still be recorded and monitored.

## **RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS**

Absence for observance of religious festivals is classed as authorised absence.

## **OFF SITE ACTIVITIES**

Approved educational visits are treated as authorised absences e.g., music / dance exams. These visits must be requested with proof from the testing organisation.

## **EXCLUDED PUPILS**

Such absences will be treated as authorised. Excluded pupils are not allowed out to play in the school day.

## **MONITORING ABSENCE**

Absence and attendance will be monitored by the Foundation Committee of Board of Advisors, the Executive Headteacher, Head of School and the school Office Manager. Whole school attendance is reviewed on a monthly basis and regular reports are submitted to the Advisory Board of Governors.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENCE:**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance is at 90 % or below. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full support and co-operation to tackle this. Millgate School monitors all pupil absence closely and where there are concerns about your child's attendance, we will be in touch with you about this. Pupils who are identified as persistently absent are monitored carefully. Persistent absence is highly likely to result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service. (Appendix 1)

## **CHILDREN FROM TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES**

Traveller children of compulsory school age are expected by law\* to attend at least two hundred sessions out of the possible 380 sessions per school academic year. The use of the Traveller code (T) for more than 180 sessions could indicate that the pupil has failed to meet this requirement. Please note that absence for travelling purposes should only be coded "T" when the parent is engaged in trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. If this is not the case, the child is required to be in school as usual.

\*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

It is important that there is consistency between schools in relation to the approach to the absence of Traveller children and this school therefore adopts this policy. The attendance of children from travelling families is treated with equity and fairness considering the cultural needs of our Traveller community; the culture of travelling families can require travel for genuine work purposes and is recognised nationally.

However, it has also been recognised that Traveller children's attendance tends to be very low and can result in significant problems with achievement, attainment, and whole school attendance performance management. Of particular importance is:

- a) The coding of the absence of Traveller pupils in schools
- b) Movement among Traveller families; children may leave and return at the parents' will and at very short notice, with no indication of the whereabouts of a child and/or his/her welfare
- c) This in turn makes it difficult for the school to exercise the duty of care to children and to provide a good education to each and every one of our pupils. It is important that the school is able to monitor, assess and review children's development and to ensure that children are progressing.

Whilst respecting the need for Traveller families to conduct their day-to-day businesses, it is important for everyone to work together to maximise the opportunity for all children to achieve and attain through improving attendance and punctuality in school. Traveller families are therefore subject to the same limitations and constraints in regulation as all other families albeit with discretion where travel is for business purposes.

Traveller families will be requested to complete a Traveller Request Form before a child's period of absence from school commences where travel is for business purposes and/or the child will be accessing education in another location. See Appendix 5 for a copy of the form.

Requests for absence of any other nature should be made using the schools leave of absence request process. Please note the following:

Absence linked to travel for the reasons listed below will not constitute travel for work purposes. The school must conform with regulations to provide equality for all pupils and set the foundations for a fair Attendance Policy for the whole school population:

1. Bereavement
2. Weddings
3. Visiting Relatives
4. Absence the family feel is religious observance where this is in excess of 1 day exclusively set apart by the religious body
5. Pre-wedding preparations and weddings
6. Birthdays

Where a family does not inform the school or seek permission for absence before departure, the absence will not be authorised.

### **Traveller Pupil Tracking Form – Guidance**

The purpose of the form is to record the proposed leave of pupils from the travelling communities, recording details of their local residence and their current contact numbers. The purpose of the form is also to record information about intended travel dates and the expected date of return. If the family is staying on a Local Authority site in another area of the country, the details can be recorded and confirmed.

If the pupil is dual registered with a school outside of the local authority, this information should be confirmed, and the dual registration procedures undertaken accordingly. The purpose of this process is to support good practice, to encourage traveller families to share their proposed arrangements prior to leaving and to ensure that effective contact is maintained. The Traveller Pupil Tracking Form should assist in reducing cases of children deemed to be missing in these circumstances and therefore strengthen the safeguarding procedures in place, as well as ensuring that children's school attendance is maximised.

Together, we anticipate a continued improvement in attendance at school by working jointly with parent(s)/carer(s), specialist support from the Traveller Education Service and the Education Welfare Service to achieve better educational outcomes for our Traveller Children and Young People.

### **SCHOOL TARGETS, PROJECTS, AND INITIATIVES**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The attendance target for the school for 2024/25 is 90%.

Throughout the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our *newsletter* and we ask for your full support.

## **THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM**

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e., pupil attending other establishment)	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances



#	school closed to pupils	Not counted attendances	in	possible
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If you would like a copy of your child's attendance record at any point, please ask **at the school office**.

### **Security of registers**

By law, registers must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. The registers will be safely stored on an encrypted MIS system.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

- DfE School attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities September 2022.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

# Appendix 1

## ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

**Attendance etiquette**

Encourage parents and carers to make contact with the school if:

There is a problem not being able to get to school, poorly or appointments have been made that cannot be made outside of school hours.

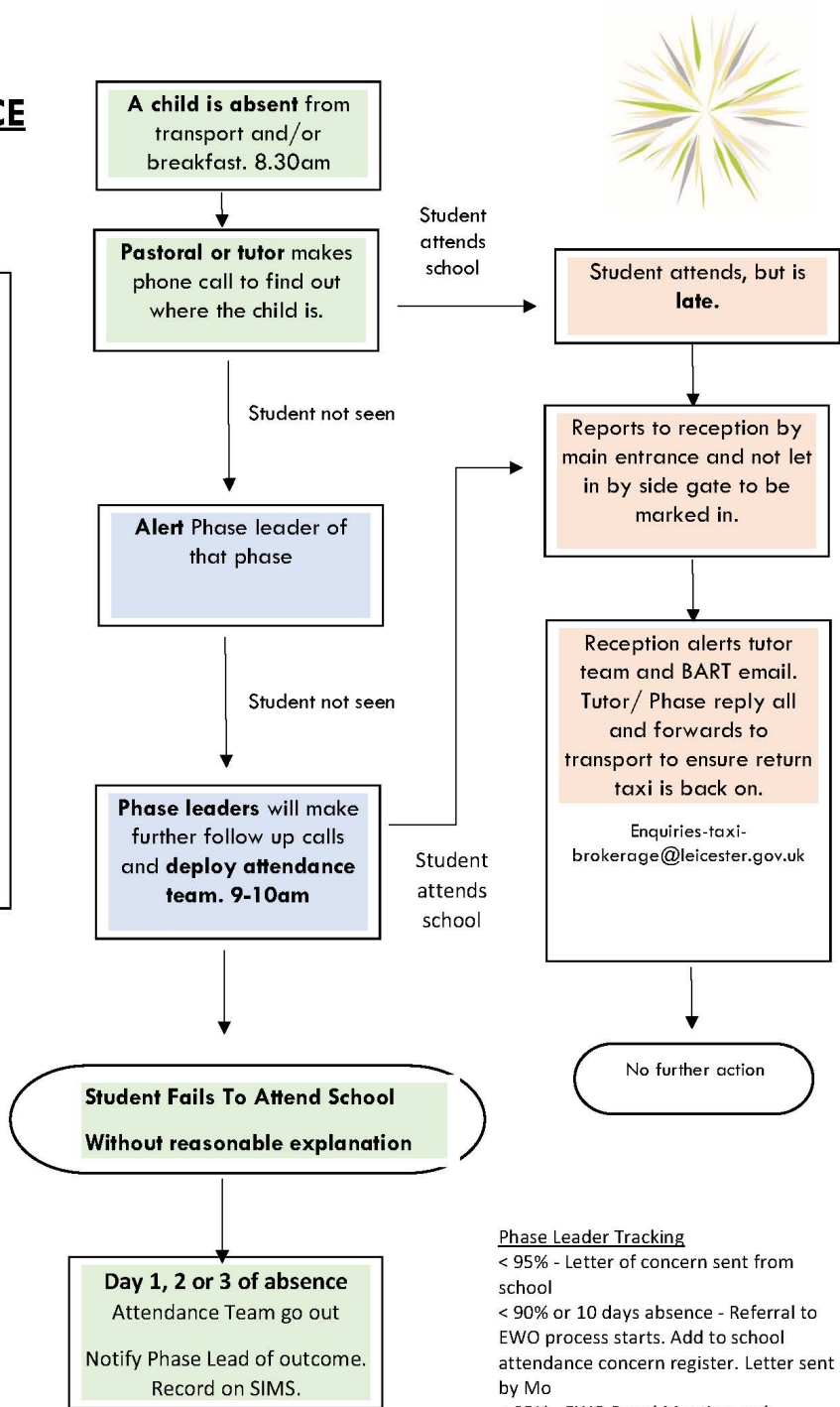
Ensure you are signing out any child vi the main office for visits and trips.

\*Reasonable explanation

Illness

Bereavement

Major incident at home

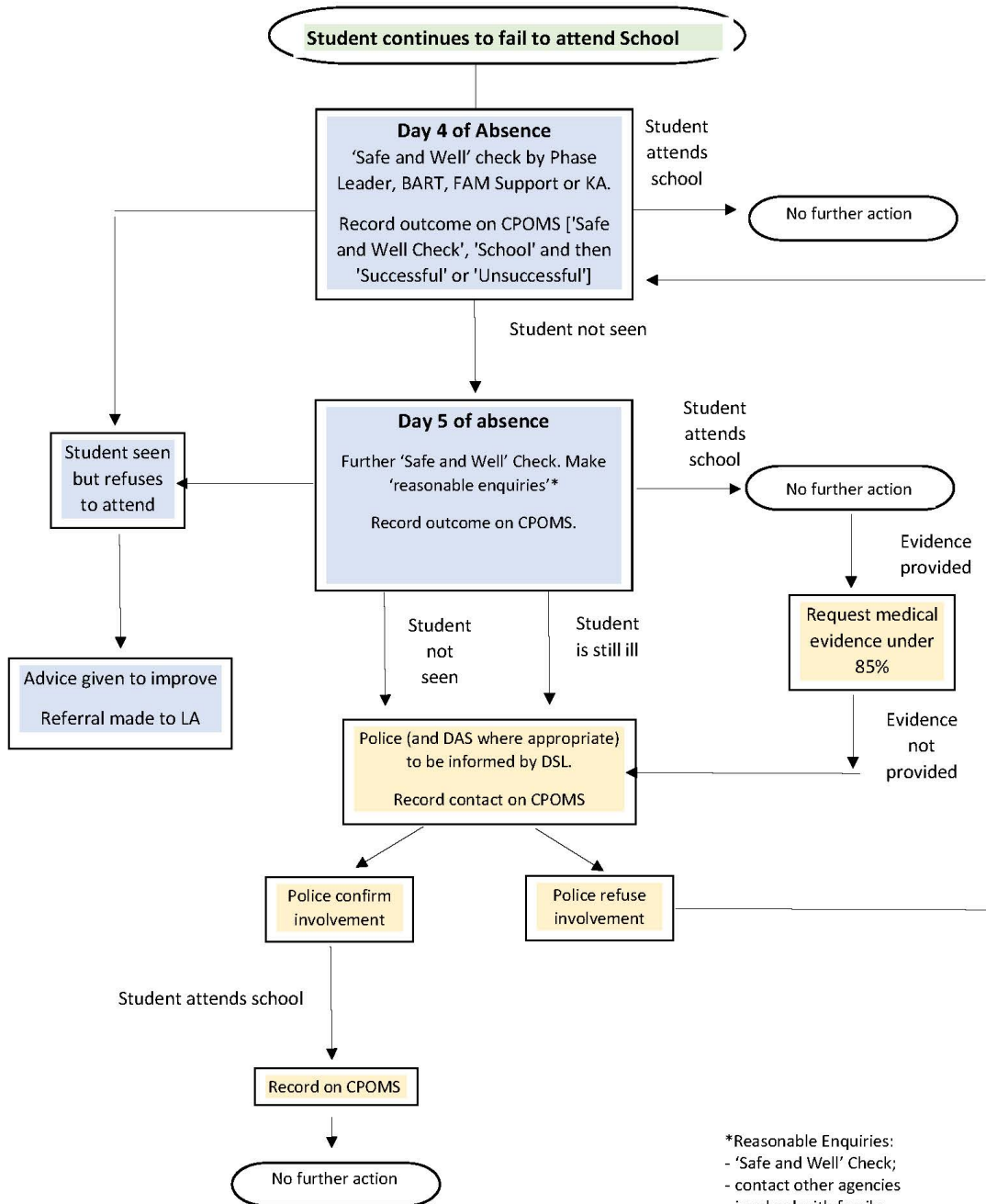


Phase Leader Tracking

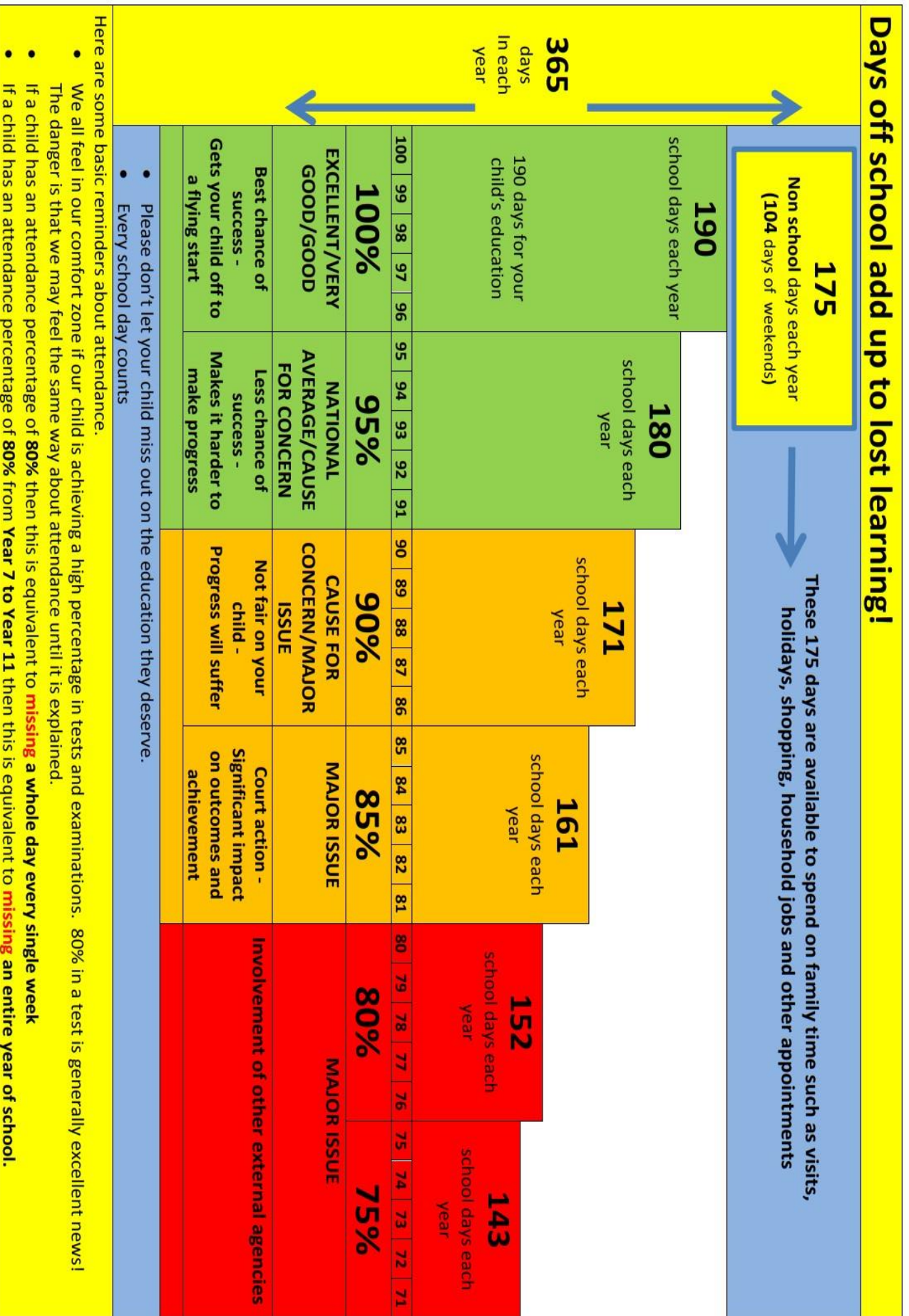
< 95% - Letter of concern sent from school

< 90% or 10 days absence - Referral to EWO process starts. Add to school attendance concern register. Letter sent by Mo

< 85% - EWO Panel Meeting and potential court proceedings issued



\*Reasonable Enquiries:  
 - 'Safe and Well' Check;  
 - contact other agencies involved with family  
 - call numbers recorded on SIMS





## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS

**The law states that a parent/carer is responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time. Failure to do so renders the parent/carer guilty of an offence.**

- ✂ Compulsory school age is from 5 years to 16 years of age.
- ✂ Ideally a child's overall attendance should be above 96%.
- ✂ Parents/carers are expected to inform the school on the first day of their child's absence to give the reason why their child is not in school. Failure to do this means the school will code the absences as **UNAUTHORISED**. Prolonged non-contact from the parent could lead to a "Safe and Well Check" being initiated on the grounds of safeguarding, (this can involve the Police).
- ✂ A child's absence from school is either recorded as authorised or unauthorised by the school. Parents/carers **CANNOT** authorise their child's absence.
- ✂ School can request supporting evidence from parents/carers, this allows them to record a child's absence as authorised.
- ✂ School will discuss with and may refer cases where appropriate, to their Education Welfare Officer, should a child's attendance become a concern or fall below 95%.
- ✂ The Department for Education (DfE) considers a child, whose attendance falls below 90%, as a "**persistent absent**" child. Schools are expected to address attendance at this level and **not** continue to authorise any further absences unless evidence is provided.
- ✂ The regulations regarding holidays in term time changed on the 1st September 2013. These regulations prevent Head Teachers from authorising holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances. **PARENTS ARE STRONGLY ADVISED NOT TO BOOK HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME WITHOUT FIRST SPEAKING TO THE SCHOOL OR EWO.**
- ✂ Children are expected to attend school for 190 days per academic year; the other 175 days are spent at home with you 😊
- ✂ Legal action can be taken against parents/carers by the Local Authority if their child's absence has been recorded as unauthorised. This can either be a:

### **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE (A FINE)**

£60 per parent, per child if paid within three weeks, doubling to £120 per parent, per child if paid in the fourth week. Payment is required in full. Failure to pay will result in the Local Authority submitting the matter for prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

### **PROSECUTION**

In the Magistrates Court. The Court can impose a fine of up to £2500 and or 3 months' imprisonment – parents may also be expected to pay court costs and a victims surcharge. The parent/carer usually receives a criminal record. Parents/carers may also be required to attend a parenting course.

**Paula René**

SENIOR EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

**Children's Attendance  
Welfare Services Ltd**

**E** paula@childrensattendance.co.uk

**T** 0116 277 6721

**W** childrensattendance.co.uk

## Appendix 4



## YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Dear Parent/Carer,

**My name is Paula René. I am a qualified Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from Children's Attendance Welfare Services, (CAWS). I have been commissioned by the school to address their attendance and welfare concerns.**

I check the school's registers regularly, specifically concentrating on any child whose attendance falls below 95%, where a substantiated reason or evidence has not been provided. If this be the case I may write to you regarding it.

My letter will:

- Highlight your child's attendance with an invitation for you to contact me.
- Inform you that your child's attendance will be monitored closely until improvement is deemed satisfactory.
- If necessary, include an appointment for you to meet with me to address the issues which you feel may be preventing your child from attending school regularly; this is with a view to offering support and solutions to bring about change.

A child, whose attendance falls below 90%, is deemed to be a "Persistent Absence" pupil as set out by the Department for Education (DfE). Should your child fall into this category, you **WILL** be required to provide the school with evidence to support any further absences, this is to enable the school to authorise the absence.

### **THE EDUCATION ACT 1996, SECTION 444 STATES:**

**"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".**

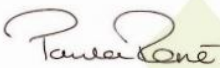
In view of the above, I seek your support in ensuring your child attends school regularly and on time, as failure to do so means you place yourself at risk of legal action in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice and or Prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your child's attendance, or the contents of this letter, I invite you to contact me, either by:

**EMAIL:** paula@childrensattendance.co.uk

**PHONE:** 0116 277 6721

Yours sincerely



**Paula René**  
SENIOR EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

**Children's Attendance  
Welfare Services Ltd**

**E** paula@childrensattendance.co.uk  
**T** 0116 277 6721  
**W** childrensattendance.co.uk

## Appendix 5

### Traveller Pupil Tracking Form

In the interest of pupil welfare the school and parent/s will complete the following information together **before pupil(s) travel**:

<b>Child's Name:</b>	Child's dob:
Base 1: Leicester address with post code:	

<b>Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/ Carer(s) Name(s):</b>
Base 2: Address with post code (other residence):
Reason for travel:
Landline telephone number:
Mobile telephone number:
Email address:

#### TRAVEL DATES

Travel Date	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Expected Return date	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6

#### School details where child is dual registered:

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Education Packs provided Y / N

#### Please note:

Traveller children whose whereabouts are unknown can be deleted from the school roll in the same way as other (non-traveller) pupils after thorough investigations have been undertaken and the pupil has not been located. In all cases, the school complies with the LA and Maintained Schools Protocol on the Management of Children Missing From Education.