

**Holy Cross**  
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

## **Attendance Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

Holy Cross is committed through its mission statement in creating a learning environment where all pupils feel valued, worthwhile and welcome and in an environment in which they feel safe and secure. This is reflected in our mission statement:

**“LOVE GOD – WORK HARD – BE KIND”**

**The below table shows the impact that good/poor attendance can have on a child’s education and the values needed for lifelong learning.**

Percentage Attendance	Number of Days Absence	Learning missed	Lessons missed over 5 years
100%	0 days missed	0 lessons	0
97%	6 days	30 lessons	150 lessons
95%	9.5 days	48 lessons	240 lessons
93%	13 days	65 lessons	325 lessons
90%	19 days	95 lessons	475 lessons

### **Aims of this Policy:**

- To establish and maintain regular attendance and excellent punctuality for all our pupils to ensure continuity of learning. Here at Holy Cross we aim for at least 97% attendance
- To promote and further develop effective working relationships with parent/carers in order to bring about improvement in attendance and punctuality
- To ensure school meets its statutory duty to monitor the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and follow the guidelines on attendance as laid out by the DfE
- To collate and analyse attendance and punctuality data and act upon those findings
- Ensure equality and fairness for all

## **2. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) ‘School attendance’
- DfE (2016) ‘Children missing education’
- DfE (2021) ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)’
- DfE (2021) ‘Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities’
- Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (Amended 2013)

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- Section 36 of the Children Act 1989
- Section 537A of the Education Act 1996
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions: statutory guidance DfE 2015
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

**This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:**

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy to intervene early and work with other agencies to address patterns of absence
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Co-operative Parental Interaction Policy

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

Attendance is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils. To help us focus on this, Holy Cross will ensure: -

- Appropriate interventions are in place to deter poor punctuality
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise disaffection from school
- Pupils with SEND, disadvantaged, looked after children and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support
- Parents are kept informed of pupil's attendance and punctuality through first day response, progress reports, individual letters and meetings as required
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded every half term with 100% and most improved being celebrated
- Attendance Officer provides weekly % attendance data to form tutors to be discussed with pupils in form time and at assemblies alongside celebrations with the Headteacher

## **Parent/Carers**

Parent and carers have a Legal Duty to ensure their children attend school regularly if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school.

### **Parent/Carers are expected to:**

- Make sure their child leaves home in time for school. Holy Cross start at 8.55am, the warning bell rings at 8.50 to go to form or assembly
- Ensure their child attends school regularly
- Contact the school each day before 8.55 to inform the school of the reason for the absence and continue to contact on a daily basis if the absence lasts longer than one day
- Take a positive interest in their child's learning and reinforce the importance of regular attendance in fulfilling potential
- Inform the school at the earliest opportunity if their child is experiencing difficulties that could affect their attendance and punctuality
- Arrange medical and other appointments, wherever possible outside of school hours
- Avoid taking children on holiday during term time
- Complete a Leave of Absence Form (LOA) when absence is due to holiday. Holidays in term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be at the Head's discretion
- Support the school's policies and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality

### **Pupils are expected to:**

- Attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence. Pupils should aim to achieve 100% attendance
- Arrive on time for morning registration (8.55 am) and all lessons, ready to learn with all the necessary equipment
- Make a determined effort to catch up on any work missed due to absence
- Discuss with a trusted member of staff any problems that may affect their attendance and punctuality
- Co-operate fully with staff whenever sanctions are given relating to attendance and punctuality
- Report to reception if arriving or leaving at any time during the school day (after 8.55 am and before 3.05 pm when school finishes)

### **The Headteacher is expected to:**

- Lead on giving attendance a high profile
- Day to day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school

- Monitor school level absence and punctuality data and report findings to the governors

**The Senior Leader responsible for attendance and punctuality will:**

- Have a strategic overview of attendance and punctuality across the whole school and be responsible for leading on attendance and punctuality improvement strategies
- Oversee all rewards and sanctions relating to attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure the attendance and punctuality is a high priority within the school community.
- Ensure that registration procedures are carried out efficiently and in accordance with Pupil Registration Regulations (Appendix 9C)
- Foster positive relationships with all staff, pupils and their parents/carers.
- Ensure specific attention is given to pupils from vulnerable groups so that they receive appropriate support.
- Ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for the collection and regular analysis to attendance and punctuality data
- Provide Termly updates on attendance and punctuality for staff and governors
- Contact details for Mr Morris are [attendance@holycross.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@holycross.lancs.sch.uk)

**The Attendance Improvement Officer will:**

- Together with the Senior Leadership Team have a strategic overview of attendance and punctuality across the whole school, including rewards and sanctions relating to attendance and punctuality
- Oversee daily administration for absence and first day contact, including use of Synergy to alert parents of pupil absence
- Ensure that morning and afternoon registers have been completed accurately each day
- Impress upon pupils and parent/carers the importance and value of regular attendance and excellent punctuality and arrange meetings where this becomes a concern
- Hold regular meetings with Heads of Year and Pastoral Support staff to discuss attendance and punctuality matters
- Assist Pastoral staff and Heads of Year to undertake home visits where there is an unexplained absence/ or safeguarding concerns
- Contact details for Mrs Shearer are [attendance@holycross.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@holycross.lancs.sch.uk)

**The Head of Year will:**

- Oversee the attendance and punctuality of all pupils in their year group
- Oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately
- Impress upon pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular attendance

and excellent punctuality

- Instil in pupils a sense of personal responsibility for attending school every day and on time
- Foster positive working relationships with pupils in their year group and their parent/carers
- Work in close co-operation with external agencies to secure improvement in attendance and punctuality
- Liaise regularly with Attendance improvement officer and Senior Leadership Team link to secure improvements in attendance and punctuality

**Form Tutors will:**

- Ensure the register for morning registration is taken accurately and in accordance with Pupil Regulations
- Impress upon pupils and their parent/carers the importance and value of regular school attendance and excellent punctuality
- Monitor attendance within their form group and intervene with individual pupils whose attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern
- Liaise with Senior Leadership Team, Head of Year, Pastoral Team and the Attendance Improvement Officer regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Share attendance percentages with children every half term during form time

**Subject Teachers will:**

- Ensure that the register is taken accurately at the beginning of each lesson and notify relevant staff of any suspicious absences
- Support pupils upon their return to school following a long-term absence
- Apply appropriate sanctions to any pupils arriving late without a legitimate reason

**Administrative staff will:**

- Support the Attendance Officer in ensuring all morning and afternoon registers have been completed accurately
- Take calls from parent/carers about absence on a day to day basis and record it on Synergy
- Transfer calls to the Attendance Officer for pupils who have poor attendance to discuss in more detailed reasons for absence
- Assist the Attendance Officer in ensuring pupils follow correct procedures when arriving after 8.55am and leaving before 3.05pm
- Report attendance and punctuality concerns/issues to the relevant Head of Year/Attendance Officer

Attendance and punctuality is a high priority in school and is discussed regularly with Senior Leadership Team. All staff have a responsibility to promote the importance and

value of regular attendance.

Holy Cross employs a number of strategies to support pupils and their parent/carers in striving to achieve 100% attendance.

#### **4. Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school is classified by school as either authorised or unauthorised

##### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave. Please note medical appointments taken prior to attending school count as an absence for the purposes of the regulations
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

##### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

##### **Religious absence**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals. Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

##### **Leave during term time**

By law schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence.



- An application form must be completed for each request and submitted at least 14 days before the leave of absence

### **Persistent Absent pupils**

- Pupils whose cumulative attendance is 90% or below at any point during the academic year will fall into persistent absenteeism. Absence at this level has the potential to significantly hinder the progress made by a pupil. Pupils are at risk of becoming Persistently absent (PA) if they have the following number of days absence:
  - 3 days by the end of the first half term (September to October)
  - 6 days by the end of the second half term (September to December)
  - 9 days by the end of the third half term (September to February)
  - 12 days by the end of the fourth half term (September to April)
  - 15 days by the end of the fifth half term (September to May)
  - 19 days by the end of the sixth half term (September to July)

### **Absence Process**

A Text Message/Email will be sent to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts and if necessary, make a home visit. Please note such home visits may be unannounced.

### **Punctuality**

If a pupil arrives late to school they could miss out on important information for the day. They disrupt registration/lessons and this can be embarrassing for the pupil. Pupils who arrive late will be given a break detention every time they are late. If they fail to attend the detention or are persistently late they will be placed in an afterschool detention. Letters will be sent to parents every half term to inform them of the number of late arrivals their child has had and ask for their support to improve the situation. If this does not improve, parent/carers will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss reasons and identify any support required.

### **Children missing from lessons**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the attendance officer immediately

- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- Any available staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the attendance officer
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms
  - The library
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- CCTV will be checked to see if the whereabouts of the pupil can be established
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- If appropriate, the missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing. The incident will also be updated on CPOMS.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

## **5. Attendance Procedures**

Parent/carers are asked to contact school at an early stage, and to work with Holy Cross Catholic High School in resolving any attendance problems together, however, if concerns persist school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required to support parents in improving their child's attendance and or punctuality:

- Telephone calls and/or letters
- Invitations to meetings to discuss concerns with HOY/ Attendance Officer or Pastoral Team
- Use of Wellbeing Parenting Contracts to support pupils with mental health concerns. See Appendix 9D
- Use of Early Help Assessment Process and/or referrals to other agencies and services if appropriate

- Use of Parenting Contracts to identify barriers to regular attendance, ways to overcome these. and agree support required and set targets for improvements. See appendix 9E
- For unauthorised absences, request legal Interventions by the Local County Council (LCC), such as Penalty Notices, Prosecutions or other attendance related Court Orders. See Appendix 9A

### **Pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending school**

Government Guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical condition emphasises the role on ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is long or short term.

At Holy Cross for pupils who may have mental health concerns or anxiety we follow the Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidance. (EBSA).

### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

If a pupil has stopped attending school or their location is unknown, schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the pupil jointly with the LCC. School will contact the emergency numbers and complete a home visit. If the visit is unsuccessful a referral will be made to the LCC Children Missing Education Team

## **6. Attendance Interventions**

The following will be undertaken:-

### **1-3 days absence**

- If there has been no contact from parent to inform of the reason for absence and there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family Via telephone/emergency contacts. Home visits will be undertaken

### **3+days**

- For all pupils where there has been no telephone call or response to emails asking for reason for absence the Attendance Officer will conduct home visits
- A Police welfare check may be requested if there has been no contact/sighting of a child after all other avenues have been exhausted
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and school are not aware of a good reason the parent/carers will be invited to meet an appropriate member of staff in school.
-

## **7. Persistent Absence Procedures**

Persistent absence See Appendix 9e

The following will be completed when a pupil has attendance of 90% or below. The following will include telephone calls and home visits undertaken at any stage during the process.

- All pupils who are classed as persistent absence pupils which is 90% and below will be sent a warning letter asking parent/carers to support in improving attendance
- If attendance does not improve during a specific period parent/carers will be invited into a Parenting Contract meeting where barriers to learning will be discussed and an attendance target will be set. This will be monitored for 4 weeks
- After the 4-week period a review meeting will be held and a further attendance target will be set for the following four weeks
- After the 3<sup>rd</sup> Parenting Contract meeting and sustained improved attendance the file will be closed
- If there has been no improvement a referral may be made to the LCC asking for either a Penalty Notice / or prosecution to be undertaken

Children who cannot attend school due to mental health/ anxiety concerns see well-being flow chart

Here at Holy Cross we follow the DfE supporting pupils at school with medical conditions statutory guidance

Within the Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance it states: -

“Schools should set and maintain high expectations for the attendance, engagement and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school. It is important to recognise that, in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten their anxiety about attending in future”

Here at Holy Cross we follow the Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidance Developed by Lancashire Educational Psychology Service EBSA Working Group - [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk)

**Updated: Summer 2023**

**Review date: Summer 2024**

## Appendix 9a

### Daily intervention process

Attendance Level	Action	By Whom
All Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Attend school Regularly and on time. Registration takes place at 8.55</li><li>Fortnightly form attendance figures shared with form classes</li><li>Pupils will receive individual percentage attendance on a half termly basis. These will be coloured Red, Amber Green and the necessary intervention will be put in place</li></ul>	Attendance Officer/ Form  Tutors
95% and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pupils go into a drawer every half term. The rewards are 1X£10 voucher, 2 X £5 vouchers</li></ul>	Attendance Officer/Form Tutors
95% - 90.1 Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Letter sent to parent/carers advising of attendance concerns</li><li>Letter sent home to congratulate pupils if they have moved from Red to Amber</li></ul>	Attendance Officer
90% and below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Persistent absence warning letter sent to parent/carers</li><li>Attendance monitored for 2-4 weeks. If further absences parents/carers invited into meeting with HOY/Attendance Officer</li><li>At the meeting barriers to learning discussed and any concerns school/parent/carers may have with regards to attendance. A Parenting Contract is agreed and signed by parent/carers.</li><li>Attendance target set for the following 4 weeks.</li><li>Telephone calls/home visits undertaken by Attendance Officer when pupil is absent</li></ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review meeting held after 4 weeks and another attendance target is set</li> <li>• Once 3 Parenting Contract meetings have been held and attendance has improved case close</li> <li>• If no improvement or no engagement from Parent/ Carer Penalty Notice/ Prosecution may be requested from LCC</li> </ul>	
Penalty Notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a pupil has 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absences during a term or 7 days (14 sessions) over 2 consecutive terms a Penalty Notice may Be requested from the LCC</li> <li>• Penalty Notices will be submitted to the LCC where a parent requests/takes a holiday for 5 days (10 sessions) or more during term time unless the Head Teacher has authorised the absence due to exceptional circumstances</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer

## **Appendix 9b: School attendance and the law**

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this policy but is not exhaustive.

### **Parents and carers**

Government expectations

The Department for Education's School attendance guidance states that the government expects:

☐ Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

**Section 7 of the Education Act 1996** covers the duty of parents to secure the education of children in their care who are of compulsory school age and states: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs, he may have,  
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Offence if a child does not attend regularly

**Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**, if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, their parent is guilty of an offence.

The offence is absolute as the only defences available to the parent are those statutory defences listed within that section of the Act, i.e.:

☐ the child was absent with leave granted by the school;

☐ the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause;

☐ absence was on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parent belongs;

☐ that the school is not within statutory walking distance and that the local education authority has made no suitable transport arrangements or enabled the pupil to become registered at an alternative nearer school.

### **Compulsory school age**

Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 establishes that a child becomes of compulsory school age on the start date of the term following her/his fifth birthday, or that day if her/his fifth birthday falls on the day term starts.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 16 or if he/she reaches 16 after

the last Friday in June but before the start of the new school year.

### **Legal definition of "parent" in relation to attendance**

The law requires that all “parents” are held responsible for their child’s attendance. This definition can include any person who has care of the child. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states:

### **Meaning of “parent”.**

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) who has care of him.

Thus, the definition of “parent” means all-natural parents, whether they are married or not, and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

## **Appendix 9c**

### **Attendance and absence registration codes**

The school will use the national attendance codes taken from the DfE guidance on school attendance: -

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided. If no reason is received the code will be changed to O as Above.
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip



- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = School site or part of it is closed due to unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

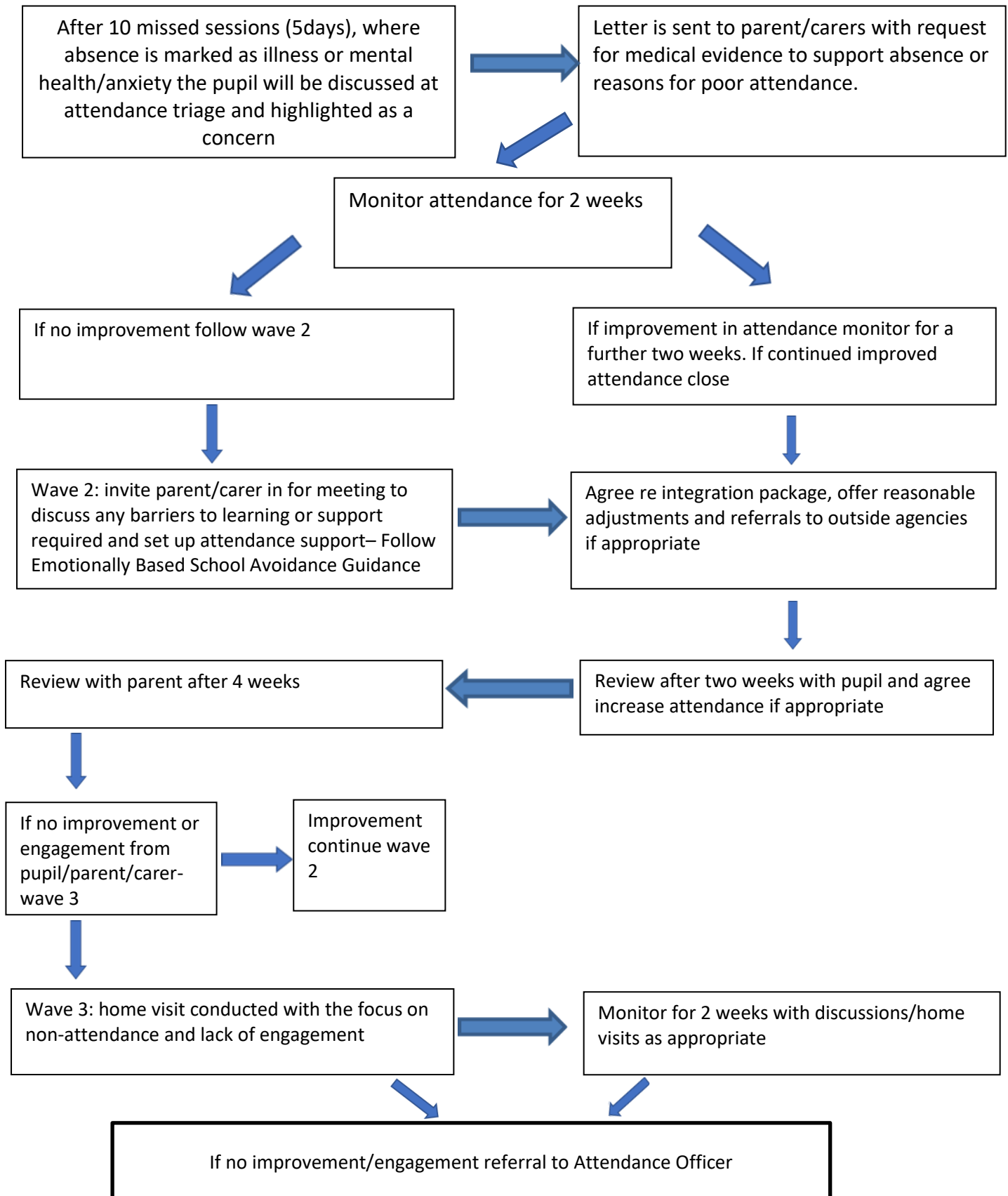
When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## Appendix 9d

### Well-being Attendance Procedure Flow Chart



## Appendix 9e

### **Persistent Absence Procedure Flow Chart**

