

# Attendance Policy

(June 2019)

**Park Community School**

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## Rationale

At Park Community School we expect excellent attendance from everyone and recognise that when students are fully engaged in their learning and happy in school, their attendance is likely to be strong. We strive to support all students in achieving 100% attendance and good punctuality.

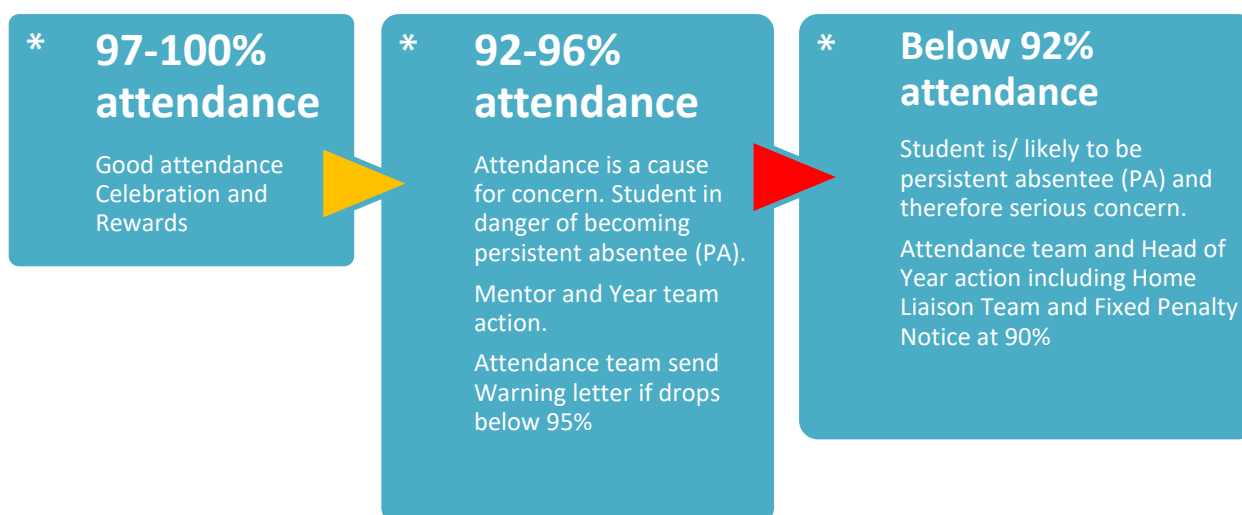
Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less well in school. Parental support is vital if students are to maintain optimum levels of attendance. Engagement with parents and the recognition of any barriers affecting attendance, are key elements of our attendance strategy.

It is essential that students attend school every day on time. The development of these routines around attendance and punctuality, not only support strong progress in school but also establish these habits for the future and the world of work.

## Why regular attendance is vital

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.
- Learning: - any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

## Defining Good attendance



## **The Law**

The Law States that all children of compulsory school age should attend school regularly to obtain the maximum benefit from their education.

### **Parents must ensure their children attend school regularly**

The 1996 Education Act Section 7, states that parents are required to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. The Act (section 576) also defines "parent" to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

### **The Role of the Parent**

Whatever efforts are made by the school staff, it is ultimately parents' responsibility to see that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If parental support is not forthcoming, strategies to encourage good attendance may fail.

It is parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as promptly as possible and to provide any further information which may be required.

For any absence other than sickness a Leave of Absence Form must be completed (see Appendix 8). Parents are expected to attend meetings with school staff when necessary in relation to their child's attendance and take an active role in improving their child's attendance. Where children have individual targets for attendance, parents are expected to work with school staff to ensure those targets are met.

In case of absence, parents should:

- Contact the school before 8.30am on the first day of absence, giving a reason and approximate anticipated length of absence.
- On the student's return to school, parents must provide written evidence of the reason for absence (further clarification may be sought by the school)
- Make every effort to ensure medical/dental appointments are made for out of school hours. If this is unavoidable, the school should be informed in advance. The school reserves the right to mark as unauthorised any time taken for medical/dental appointments when the student is not accompanied on return to school by an appointment slip.

### **Schools should:**

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
2. Ensure every child has access to full time education.
3. Act early to address patterns of absence.

***DfE Guidance School Attendance (2014)***

### **Promoting strong attendance**

Attendance is given a high profile in school and its links to learning and achievement are reinforced through:

- Weekly mentoring focus and rankings
- Assemblies
- Displays in corridors
- Daily absence texts sent for all absentees
- Weekly attendance texts used for targeted groups
- A dedicated attendance team, including home liaison
- Good attendance of individuals is publicly celebrated half termly
- Explicit roles and responsibilities regarding attendance linked to key thresholds can be found in appendix 6

### **Rewards**

Rewards may include:

- Termly attendance badges for 98-100% attendance
- 100% attendance and punctuality = Termly certificate awarded

### **Strategies for Maintaining and Improving Attendance**

Strategies for maintaining and Improving attendance may include:

- Verbal praise, encouragement and acknowledgement.
- Parent and student awareness as to the importance of good attendance – regular information given in: assemblies, Mentor time, rewards, Parents' evenings.
- Key member of staff responsible for providing attendance data and monitoring consistency of records across the whole school.
- Nominated member of staff ensures rewards and certificates are available.
- Concerns regarding attendance go through fortnightly referral meetings.
- Prompt follow-up on absence – 1st day contact made with home; absence calls made daily.
- SENCO to have identified strategies for helping students return from absence and, in addition, teachers offer supportive advice to returning students.
- Use of Educational Psychologist/Education Welfare Service, SENCO and Inspired Education provision in setting up suitable re-integration programmes for poor attendees.
- Educational Psychologist discussion with SENCO about curriculum access and the most effective use of support staff.
- Termly attendance clinics

### **Completing the register**

Registers are legal documents that may be used as evidence where parents are being prosecuted for attendance offences. They are retained by the school even after a student has left school.

The governing body is legally responsible for ensuring the school maintains accurate admission and attendance registers.

Registers at Park Community School are completed using the SIMS system (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the SIMS codes).

In the register students will be entered under their legal name on their birth certificate or as changed by deed poll; their known name may be shown on the register in brackets.

### **Registration**

The register is a legal document. It is the responsibility of each teacher to ensure that information is accurately entered onto the SIMS register as follows:

- AM and PM registers must be completed.
- All students should be registered in every lesson unless there is a clear reason not to do so.
- Registers must be completed using agreed symbols for SIMS. Teachers are responsible for taking the register, not students.

### **Absence from school**

When a student is absent without explanation school will endeavour to contact the parent as soon as possible. Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates/evidence will be kept on file and referred to as and when appropriate, e.g. If legal action is required.

School will closely monitor the attendance of all students. School and the Attendance Officer work closely together to identify children at risk of becoming persistent absentees (PA's) i.e. below 90% attendance and will offer support to parents as appropriate.

### **Safeguarding students who do not attend school**

- On the first day of absence, a text will be sent or a phone call made to the parent. This will be repeated for all subsequent days of absence.
- If no contact is made from home and a second day of absence immediately after the first, a call will be made to the parent
- If there is a third of absence and no contact from home, a home visit will be made.
- If school are unable to contact home on the third day, having made further enquiries, including to other family members, the school will begin 'child missing in education' procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance.
- If a child is absent for 10 consecutive days, we are required to notify the Local Authority that the child is 'at risk of being missing.'  
(see Appendix 4)

### **Communication**

- On the first day of absence, school expects parents to inform them of the absence and the reasons for it.
- If we do not receive notification we will text or phone to check the reason for the absence after 9.00 am.
- Reasons for absence are recorded on SIMS.

## **Absences**

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the am and pm register must show whether this was authorised or unauthorised.

- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence (see Appendix 2).

## **Authorised Absence**

- The Department for Education (DFE) makes clear that it is only the school that can authorise an absence, not parents.
- If a parent's note offers an unacceptable explanation for an absence, then the school will not authorise it.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

- If we feel a child has had too many authorised absences, usually 10 sessions, future absences will not be authorised unless there is clear evidence that the absences were unavoidable (see Appendix 3 for examples of circumstances that would be considered unauthorised absence.)
- ALL OTHER ABSENCES MUST BE TREATED AS UNAUTHORISED

## **Addressing Poor attendance**

- After 5 sessions of unauthorised absence, in a 50-session period, the Attendance Officer will send a warning letter.
- After 10 sessions of unauthorised absence a fixed term penalty will be issued.
- The Home Liaison Officer or school medical officer will liaise with local GP's if poor attendance seems to be linked to medical problems.
- The school will also make a referral to the Attendance Legal Panel (ALP) where there are concerns re poor attendance which does not improve after the issue of fixed term penalty and school intervention (see Appendix 5).

## **Role of Home Liaison Officer**

- Will meet with and offer support to parents whose children have attendance/ punctuality issues.
- If a student is absent for three consecutive days, then Home Liaison will make a home visit.

## **Lateness Procedures**

- Students arriving after the am register has been taken must be marked Late (L) by mentors.
- Students arriving after 10.30am will be marked as Unauthorised (U)
- A daily text goes out for all students who arrive late at school.
- Students arriving late for school complete a 10 minute recall with senior staff at the end of the day.
- Students arriving late to more than one lesson in the same day complete an early morning detention on the following day.
- Attendance Officer, Home Liaison Officer, and senior staff will discuss students with persistent poor punctuality and take appropriate action.

Students who arrive after 8.30am will need to enter school via main reception to sign

in (see Appendix 7).

### **Lateness**

Letters received regarding Absence/Lateness - On receipt of a letter the mentor must write the child's name, mentor group, date and sign it and pass to the Attendance Team, who will, if not satisfied with the explanation offered, discuss with the Home Liaison Officer and further information be sought from parents.

- Parents can be asked to provide medical evidence to support the reasons given, **or**
- The school can refer the matter to a medical practitioner working for the school/Health Service, **or**
- Parental consent may be sought to contact family GP.

### **Removing a student from Roll**

When a student leaves Park Community School they will not be removed from the school roll until one of the following is the case:

- Until they have been accepted onto the roll of another school.
- Until we have authorisation from the Local Authority (LA) to remove the child from the school roll.

### **Requests from parents for Elective Home Education**

Park Community is clear with parents that EHE is not a solution to attendance issues.

- If a school receives notification of EHE they should offer a meeting with the parent
- A letter should be written to the school by the parent stating they wish to home educate
- The school will forward a copy of the letter with the parent and child details to [eheshampshire@hants.gov.uk](mailto:eheshampshire@hants.gov.uk)
- The Local Authority will then contact the parent
- If the school is concerned regarding a request for an EHE from a parent of a child they will contact the Local Authority
- Park Community School will also direct parents to the linked website <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/educationinclusionservice/electivehomeeducation>

### **Suspected Changes of Address**

When it is suspected that a family has moved away from the area without notifying the school, reasonable enquiry to locate the child will be undertaken. After a period of 4 weeks the child will be removed from the school roll and their name will be placed on the school to school (S2S) site for missing children.



## Appendix 1 - SIMS Codes

/ \	Present at registration
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate Code/description)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
F	Agreed leave of absence
G	Leave of absence not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not work based training)
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age Students
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all Students

## **Appendix 2 - Authorised Absence**

An absence may be counted as authorised if a child is absent:

- When prevented from attending by illness.
- On a day set aside for religious observance.
- Participating in a public performance.

Furthermore, the school may “reasonably exercise discretion to grant leave” for:

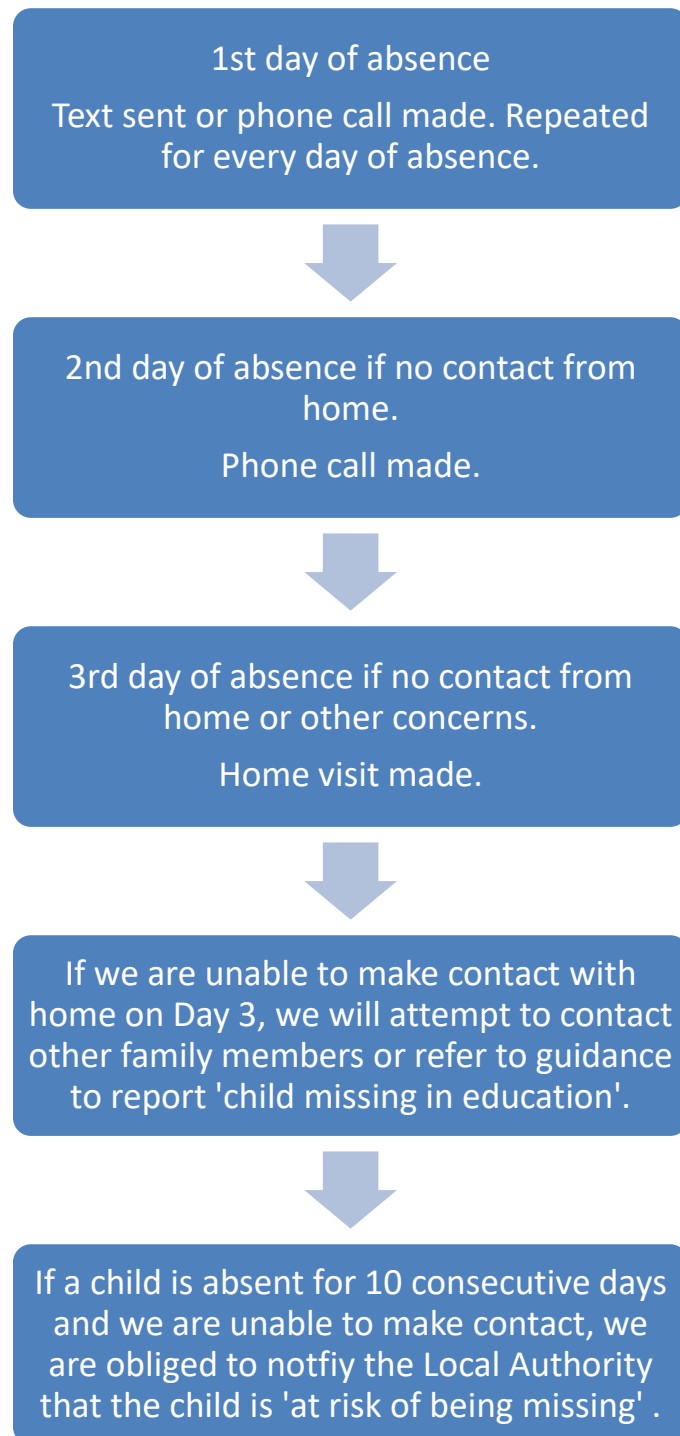
- Absence following the death of a close family member of the child's family.

### **Appendix 3 - Unauthorised absence**

Circumstances that may lead to parentally condoned absences but would not be authorised include:

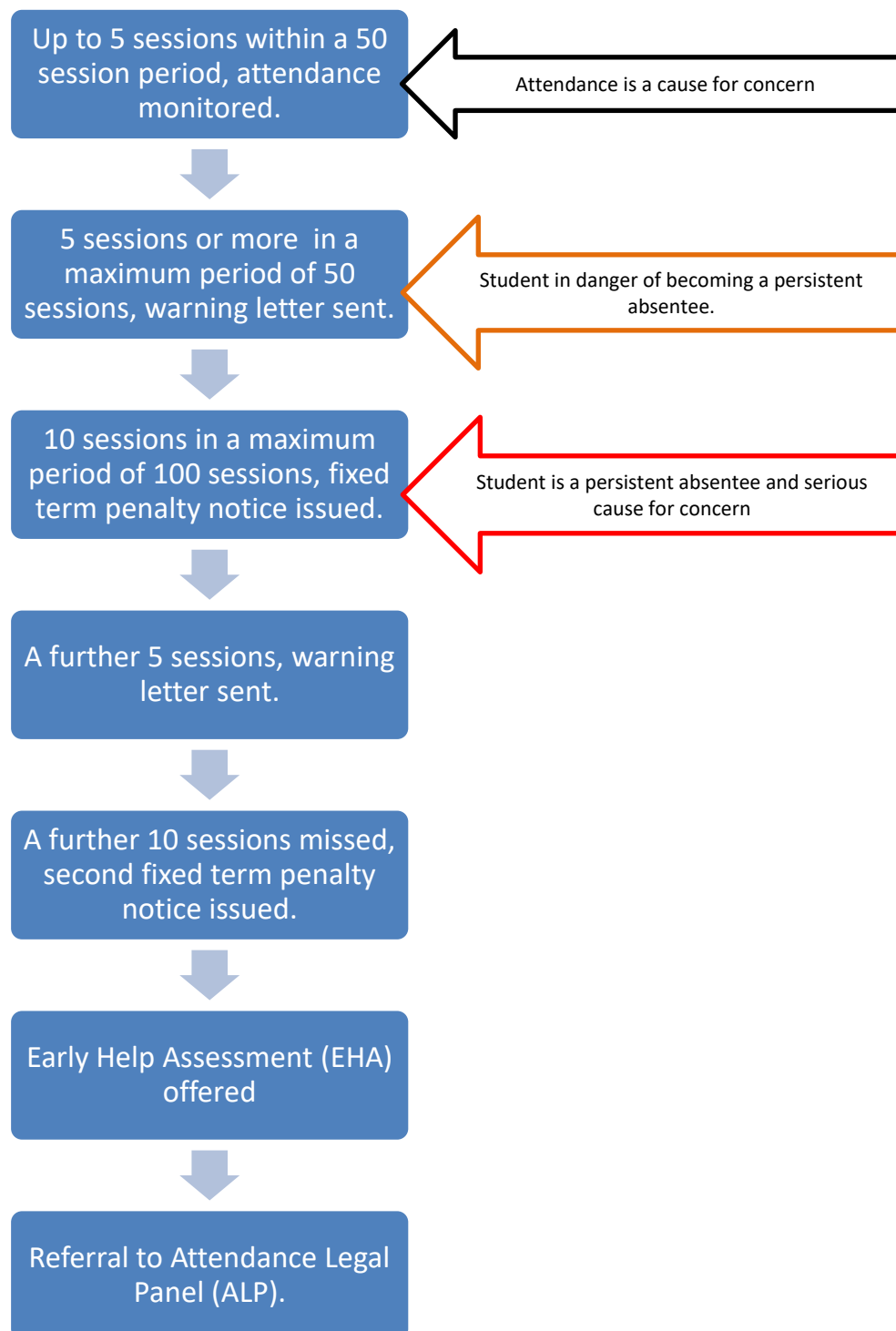
- The child's father/mother/carer being ill
- A student being used to support members of the family
- Family work patterns
- A parent's desire for company
- Family holiday
- Indulging a child who wants to stay at home
- A child's birthday
- Apathy on the part of the parent
- Buying clothes
- A parent's inability to control the child
- Child used as an interpreter
- Uneasy relationships with an institution representing authority

#### Appendix 4 - Procedures for Safeguarding as follow up to non-attendance



## Appendix 5 - Procedures for Unauthorised absences

Any absences which are not covered by the definition of authorised absence or after 10 previous sessions of authorised absence, will be regarded as unauthorised.



## **Appendix 6 - "Fixed Penalty Notice"**



### **Penalty Notices**

(To address poor attendance and punctuality at school)  
The Education Act 1996, section 444A

### **Advice to parents and carers from the Children's Services Department**

- **Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996**

Section 444A of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority (LA) and other designated bodies (including headteachers) to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance and/or punctuality. The person authorised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for Park Community School is Christopher Anders, Headteacher.

- **Why use them?**

Reducing absence and improving punctuality in schools is a key priority both nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines as well as the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities.

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly and punctually and the absence is recorded by the school as unauthorised. Absence is recorded as unauthorised unless it is taken with the permission of the school or is for some unavoidable reason. Punctuality is recorded as unauthorised absence when the pupil arrives after the register has been closed.

Depending upon the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution by the LA under the Education Act 1996, section 444. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution.

- **What is a Penalty Notice?**

A Penalty Notice is a fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. It does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables the parent/carer to discharge the potential liability for prosecution and subsequent conviction.

- **What is the cost of a Penalty Notice?**

Payment of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days of receipt.

- **How is a Penalty Notice issued?**

By post to your home by Recorded Delivery.

- **When are they issued?**

Hampshire County Council and Hampshire schools consider that regular attendance and punctuality is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be issued where a pupil has had 10 or more half-day sessions i.e. the equivalent to 5 school days of unauthorised absence, in any 10 school week period and

- where issuing a Penalty Notice will be an effective measure in helping the pupil return to school and/or ensure their future regular attendance/punctuality
- where the parent/carer is capable of ensuring the pupil's regular attendance/punctuality
- where the parent/carer has failed to cooperate in making use of advice/support offered.

NB. A Penalty Notice may also be issued where a parent/carer takes a child on holiday during term-time.

- **Is a warning given?**

In most situations the parent/carer will be given a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This written warning will advise the parent/carer about the extent of the child's absence and warn them that if the child's attendance and punctuality does not show a significant improvement and if this improvement is not maintained thereafter, a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

NB. The school may, however, have already warned parents of its policy in respect of term-time holidays. In such cases, if a holiday is taken without the school's permission beforehand, a Penalty Notice may be issued without a further warning.

- **Is there an appeal process?**

There is no statutory right of appeal. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

- **How do I pay?**

Details of payment arrangements will be included in the Penalty Notice. Payment in part or by instalments of a Penalty Notice is not acceptable.

- **What happens if I do not pay?**

You will have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If you fail to do so, the Local Authority is required, by law, to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of poor school attendance and/or punctuality.

If convicted of this offence under the Education Act 1996, there are a number of possible sentences including a fine of up to £1000 (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1)) or a fine of up to £2500 and/or a period of up to 3 months' imprisonment (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1A)).

- **What if my child has further unauthorised absence from school?**

If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences, you

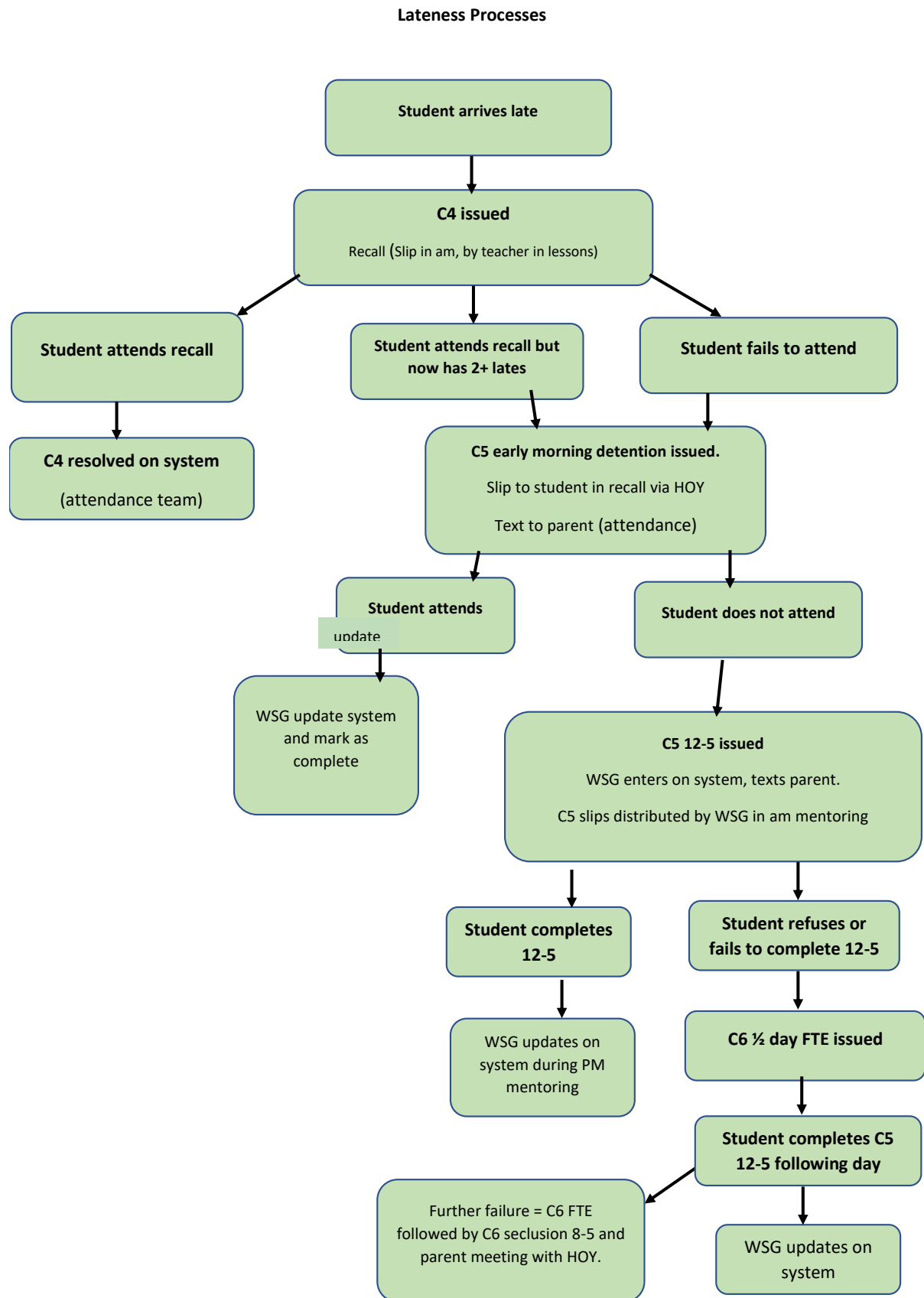
may be prosecuted for the further unauthorised absences but not for the absences during the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

- **Can I get help if my child is not attending school?**

Yes. Both the school and Hampshire County Council Children's Services Department are available to provide advice and support.



## Appendix 7 - Lateness processes



## Appendix 8 – Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Before submitting your request, please book an appointment with Ms S Bannard (Assistant Headteacher). Call 023 92 489800 ext 251. Please bring this form with you to your appointment.

### Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. Please note there is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday and if you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we may refer the matter for consideration of legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

#### Section A – to the headteacher

I wish to apply for

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (inclusive dates)

#### Section B

Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and why the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks annual holiday your child already has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event, for example a funeral, please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please continue on the other side of the page.

#### Section C

I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PTO



**Hampshire**  
County Council

[www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

**Section D – for school use only**

**Delete as appropriate**

Request approved for \_\_ number of days from the dates and times \_\_\_\_\_

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

A personal discussion with you is requested ☐ Please contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Current attendance rate: \_\_\_\_\_



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