



# East Harptree and Ubley Primary Schools

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## 1 Policy Statement

It is the aim of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP) that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. The Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils

LSP strives to consistently deliver excellent educational experiences for pupils, improving their life chances and serving the communities of which we are a member.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason.

The LSP is committed to providing a high quality and inclusive education for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial.

The expected attendance level for schools across the Trust is 100%. However, we recognise that children do occasionally get ill, therefore the Trust is concerned about any attendance below 96%.

All staff, parents/carers and the Local Authority share a legal responsibility in ensuring full attendance at school for our pupils.

## 2 Reference to other relevant policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with existing trust-wide and school policies including (but not limited to) the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

## 3 Legislation or non-statutory guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Department for Education (DfE) guidance and legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)
- [The Equality Act 2010 and schools \(DfE May 2014\)](#)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(DfE December 2015\)](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school \(DfE January 2013\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE\)](#)
- [Working Together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE Published May 2022, applies from September 2022)
- [School attendance \(DfE May 2022\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures \(DfE January 2015\)](#)
- [School Census Guidance \(DfE\)](#)
- [School Suspension and permanent exclusions \(DfE September 2022\)](#)
- [Home to School Travel & Transport Guidance \(DfE July 2014\)](#)

## 4 Roles & Responsibilities relating to attendance

### 4.1 Parents

Parents have a duty to educate their children “suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs which they may have” either by regular attendance at school or otherwise under Section 7 of The Education Act 1996. Parents whose children are registered at school are then responsible for ensuring that they attend punctually, regularly and stay at school.

### 4.2 Schools

Schools have a number of legal responsibilities relating to attendance:-

- to call the attendance register twice per day - at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session;
- to ensure that attendance registers are kept, in accordance with legal requirements and the policy of the school;
- to inform the Local Authority about pupils who do not attend school regularly or who have been continuously absent for two weeks or more (unless the absence is covered by a medical certificate);
- and to include data on authorised and unauthorised absence in the school profile, in accordance with Department for Education and Skills (DfE) requirements.

### 4.3 Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

LGBs will receive termly reports on attendance from headteachers so that they can monitor the effectiveness of the school’s systems and hold leaders to account. They will give particular attention to the attendance of vulnerable groups such as disadvantaged pupils and SEND pupils.

### 4.4 The Multi-School Trust

The operational management of attendance issues is delegated to individual schools and headteachers. The Lighthouse Schools Partnership appoints the Educational Welfare Service which supports schools and this is funded through the Core Services Charge. The Chief Executive and Trustees will monitor attendance data termly as part of their high-level oversight of school and trust performance.

### 4.5 Local Authorities

Local Authorities are required to ensure parents carry out their responsibilities, with regard to their children’s education. In North Somerset, the Local Authority fulfils this requirement through the Education Welfare Service (EWS), whose primary responsibility is to enforce the regular and punctual school attendance of all pupils. In Bath and North East Somerset, the Local Authority fulfils this requirement through the Children Missing Education Service and will consider legal action where other strategies to improve attendance have failed.

## 5 Equalities Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for this policy in accordance with the Trust’s equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## 6 Data Protection Implications

The personal information the school uses to help manage attendance and absence is governed by the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Much of this information will be sensitive, to both pupils and their parents/carers, and staff must take care to apply appropriate safeguards to ensure personal information is processed fairly and lawfully, is the minimum amount necessary to achieve our aims, is accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date, is not held for longer than is necessary and remains safe and secure.

Staff must record personal information accurately, being clear whether something is an opinion, reported by someone else, or fact. It is also important to remember that pupils and

parents/carers can ask to see copies of the personal information the school holds about them.

## 7 Aims

The school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by promoting good attendance; ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled; and acting early to address patterns of absence.

This policy sets out the school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents<sup>1</sup>/carers must follow to report their child absent from the school.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents/carers to send their children to every session that is available to them.

If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent/carer should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, the school will contact the parent/carer to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

The school will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory<sup>2</sup> school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Pupils should attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough to. Children who attend regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. The school wants all pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion, unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

The school will do all it can to encourage pupils to attend. The school will make the best provision it can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to physical or mental health needs or disability. The school recognises for disabled pupils, 'reasonable adjustments' may be needed to the school environment or to policies to support good attendance. Please see DfE guidance documents '[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015](#)' and '[Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013](#)' - or ask the school for printed copies.

One of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, the school strives to provide a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents/carers.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality the school aims to:-

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community;

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<sup>1</sup> Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

<sup>2</sup> A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

- Raise pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers, pupils and staff; and
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the wider family.

## 8 Effects of non-attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason.

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days of absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

	Sessions missed	Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Lost hours of learning
Excellent	0 - 4	100% - 99%	0 - 2	0 - 10
Good	8 - 15	98% - 96%	4 - 7.5	20 - 37.5
Requires Improvement	19 - 34	95% - 91%	9.5 - 17	47.5 - 85
Persistent Absentee	38 - 54	90% - 86%	19 - 27	95 - 135
Critical	57 - 76	85% - 80%	28.5 - 38	142.5 - 190

## 9 Safeguarding & Attendance

The school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of its standard procedures. However, it is recognised that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE), Local Procedures and the School's Safeguarding Policy, staff will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of the school's safeguarding duty and standard procedures, staff will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when they cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

If a pupil is not attending as required, where the school deems it appropriate, staff may make home visits to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers as part of the school's safeguarding and attendance processes. If staff are unable to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the school with relevant information.

## 10 Contents of the Attendance Register

The law states that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:-

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## 11 Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in the school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. However, it is also recognised that pupils are sometimes late due to reasons such as caring for parents/carers or siblings, or transport difficulties.

If a pupil starts arriving late to the school on a regular basis, the school will work with the pupil and family to find out why the pupil is late and whether any support is needed for the pupil or family, in order to support the pupil to attend on time.

The office attendance administrator (Mrs Tranter at Ubley and Mrs Alexander at East Harptree and/or the Headteacher will meet with parents/carers of pupils who are frequently late, to further investigate reasons for lateness and discuss solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

### 11.1 Morning registration

Our pupils must arrive by 8:45 at Ubley and 9:00 at East Harptree at the latest on each school day.

Pupils arriving after 8:45 at Ubley or after 9:00 am at East Harptree will be marked as late (L) - which still counts as present. See DfE Attendance Codes - [Appendix A](#).

If a pupil arrives after the close of registration (9:00 at Ubley and 9:15 at East Harptree, they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U) for the morning session. (See 'Unauthorised Absence' section for more information on unauthorised absences.) If a pupil arrives late after the registers close due to a valid reason, such as an unavoidable medical appointment, their absence will be marked with the appropriate authorised absence code.

### 11.2 Afternoon registration

The afternoon register is taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

If a pupil has been out of school during the morning and/or lunchtime session and arrives at school after 1:00pm but before 1:15pm they will be marked (L) - which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after 1:15pm they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U) for the afternoon session. If a pupil arrives late after the afternoon registers close due to a valid reason, such as an unavoidable medical appointment, their absence will be marked with the appropriate authorised absence code.

### 11.3 Effects of Late Arrival

When a pupil arrives late to the school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions; this can seriously disadvantage pupils. The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year
5 mins	3 Days
10 mins	6 Days
15 mins	9 Days

## 12 Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school.

## 12.1 Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows the [DfE School Attendance - Main Guidance](#), which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent/carer to obtain a letter from a GP, or seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require suitable evidence in order to authorise any future absence where illness has been given as the reason. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/carer/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first and any subsequent days of absence may not be authorised.

## 12.2 Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent/carer or another authorised adult (unless otherwise agreed between the school and the parent/carer) and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer confirmation.

## 12.3 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents/carers should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable, the pupil should only be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a pupil to miss a whole day for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. The school recognises that pupils with a health condition may have a higher number of medical appointments than other pupils and it is therefore possible that at least some of these appointments may be during the school day.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent/carer or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it is an emergency appointment. Parents/carers should also provide the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter.

## 12.4 Religious Observance

The school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that religious festivals sometimes fall outside of school holidays or weekends.

In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent/carer belongs - this will be marked with the R code. In line with the [DfE school attendance guidance](#), if necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent/carer's religious body, about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.



Parents/carers should notify the school in advance that their child will be absent for religious observance, so that the school knows whether to expect the pupil into school or not.

If a parent/carer would like their child to be absent for an additional day, around a religious observance, they should contact the school. The school will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If additional absence is authorised, this would be marked with the C code.

The school will ensure a pupil is not penalised for absence due to days of Religious Observance, for example if using attendance rewards.

## 12.5 Traveller Absence

The Education Act 1996 includes specific reference to the school attendance of children “of no fixed abode”. This law applies when a child is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent/carer “who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require [the parent/carer] to travel from place to place”. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child’s age and number of sessions absent.

The [DfE school attendance guidance](#) explains that a number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller - Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

The school will discuss requests for absence individually with parents/carers as necessary. Parents/carers should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible.

To help ensure continuity of education for children from the above groups, wherever possible the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case, the child will be dual registered at the school they are attending and at this school, which is their ‘main school’.

The T code, which is an authorised absence, should be used for pupils when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending another educational provision.

Children from these groups whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

## 13 Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE School Suspensions & Exclusions](#).

Any exclusion must be agreed by the Headteacher.

The school will notify the parents/carers of the exclusion. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil’s carer, social worker and the Local Authority’s Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children’s Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform the pupil’s allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent/carer or another authorised adult and signed out in the ‘signing out’ book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer confirmation.

## 14 Absence Reporting & Response

### 14.1 First Day of Absence Reporting

Parents/carers are expected to notify the school of the reason for their child’s absence on each day of absence.

Full reason for pupil absence should be given. Reporting a pupil as 'not well' or 'ill' does not constitute a full reason.

If a pupil is absent due to illness which lasts more than one day, the parent/carer should contact the school each day to provide an update, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

If a pupil is absent due to illness or any other reason, parents/carers should notify the school of the absence as early as possible. This should be before 9:00 am on the day of absence and include the specific reason ('unwell' is not sufficient).

Parents/carers can notify the school by phone, using the school telephone number of 01761221492 (East Harptree) 01761 462654 Ubley. (If parents/carers are able to leave a voice message - make it clear they must include the pupil's full name, date of birth and year group.) Parents/carers can also notify the school by email or by a personal visit to the School Office (via an adult.)

The school may contact parents/carers to discuss a pupil's absence in more detail.

#### 14.2 First Day of Absence Response

If no contact has been made with the school by 9.15am on the first day of absence, the school will follow up the absence by phoning the parents/carers. If the parents/carers cannot be contacted by phone, the school will phone the pupil's emergency contacts, in priority order. Priority will be given where there is additional support in place, or where pupils are considered more vulnerable. e.g., Children in Care; Child in Need or Child Protection Plans; children who have previously been reported missing; and children where there are, or have been, concerns regarding attendance.

If the school is unable to establish why the pupil is absent and/or is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, staff may request a Welfare Check from the police.

#### 14.3 Pre-agreed absence

Parents/carers are not required to contact the school on the day of an absence if the parent/carer has already formally notified the school prior to the day of absence and the absence has been agreed in advance. For example, a planned hospital appointment or an exceptional term time leave of absence which has already been agreed by the Headteacher in writing.

#### 14.4 Emergency Contacts

Parents/carers will be asked to supply details of at least two other adults who can be contacted in an emergency. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to keep these contact details up to date by communicating with the school office. The school will also remind parents/carers about this through newsletter reminders and letters.

#### 14.5 Following up Unexplained Absences

The school will follow up any absences where the parent/carer has not made contact to explain the reason. Following up on unexplained absences can take up a considerable amount of school resources, therefore, the school expects parents/carers to report all absences. If a parent/carer does not contact the school on the morning of each absence, the absence may not be authorised, unless the school is satisfied there is a good reason why the pupil is unable to attend and why the parent/carer was not able to contact the school by the required time on the day of absence.

When the school establishes the reason for the absence, it will be marked as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason. If the school is unable to establish the reason for absence, having followed the school's attendance procedures, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, using the O code.

If a pupil is not attending and the school is unable to establish the reason why and/or confirm the pupil's whereabouts, the school will take appropriate action which will depend on the circumstances of each case. This could include, but is not limited to: contacting the pupil's emergency contacts, or other contacts of the family who the school reasonably expect may

be able to advise of the pupil's whereabouts; contacting other professionals; contacting siblings' schools; home visits to the family address; making enquiries with neighbours; requesting a Welfare Check from the EWO or police; and making referrals to Children's Social Care.

## 15 Rewarding Good & Improved Attendance

The school recognises that rewarding good and improved attendance should be carefully considered in order to ensure it does not make pupils who have poor attendance, feel marginalised, worried or guilty about their low attendance rate; its impact on the pupil's own learning or the learning or rewards for the class as a whole.

The school will regularly review any reward systems to ensure they are not negatively impacting on individual pupils or groups of pupils.

## 16 Communicating with parents/carers where attendance is a concern

When the school has concerns about the attendance of a pupil, staff will do their best to make the parents/carers aware of the concerns about their child's attendance in the most accessible way possible, communications will be provided in accessible formats and can be offered in different languages if requested.

The LSP schools follow an 8-week review cycle to decide on next steps when it comes to school absences ([see Appendix B](#)). Where there are increased concerns, the school may choose to move up a stage sooner within the 8-week review period.

## 17 Pupils who are reluctant to attend

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend. The school encourages parents/carers and pupils to be open and honest about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent/carer to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. The school needs to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend, in order to be able to support pupils and parents/carers in the best way.

The school's aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers to remove barriers to good school attendance. Staff strive to establish good working relationships with the families of our pupils through good communication and regular meetings to address on-going attendance concerns. If necessary, staff signpost our families to specialist support services who can work with the family and school in a multi-agency approach.

## 18 Child on Child Abuse

All pupils have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them physically, verbally, and emotionally both in person and online. There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

The school recognises that a pupil may be reluctant to attend if they are experiencing any kind of child-on-child abuse. The school constantly strives to promote a positive and inclusive culture where all pupils feel valued, have a strong sense of 'belonging' and are fully supported if things go wrong.

The school takes all reports of child-on-child abuse extremely seriously. All incidents will be investigated, appropriate measures will be taken for all pupils involved, including working with and making referrals to external agencies where appropriate.

The school recognises that child on child abuse is a rarely-witnessed event, and that the most likely source of information will be through hearsay (either direct from the victim, or indirectly through witnesses or parents).

If a parent/carer thinks their child is experiencing child on child abuse, or is concerned their child may be involved in child-on-child abuse in any way, they are encouraged to report this to the school as quickly as possible, so that appropriate measures can be taken.

Please see the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more information on how child on child abuse is addressed.

## 19 Children in Care

Foster Carers do not have parental responsibility for the children in their care, although they are responsible for ensuring their regular school attendance.

If a Child in Care is not attending the school, or there are concerns about their attendance, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority's Virtual School and the child's social worker, as well as communicating with the pupil and foster carer.

## 20 Disability Related Absence

The school will ensure 'reasonable adjustments' are made for disabled pupils (defined as those with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'). This may include changes to the physical environment, curriculum or the way information is provided, as well as providing auxiliary aids and equipment, or tailored services.

The school recognises that some disabled pupils may need additional support to attend regularly and that, for some pupils, they may have more absence due to their disability, for example due to attending medical appointments. The school will ensure disabled pupils are not penalised for absence related to their disability and will support the pupil and family to access support from external agencies where appropriate.

## 21 Young Carers

The school recognises that pupils who are Young Carers may have caring responsibilities that impact on their punctuality and/or attendance. Where this is the case, the school will work with the pupil and family to encourage them to access appropriate support, including direct support from Young Carers and any other support the pupil and family may need; the school will also provide support in school where appropriate.

## 22 Parents who live separately

Where appropriate, the school will involve all parents/carers in order to ensure each are aware of their child's attendance pattern and are able to support the child's attendance to improve.

## 23 Complex Family Circumstances

The school will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances the school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents/carers fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or fail to implement the suggested changes. When referring for legal sanctions, the school will show that the parent/carer has been warned they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If the school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, staff will share information with other agencies as deemed necessary and in line with GDPR policy.

## 24 Formal non-attendance process

Where there are continued concerns about a pupil's attendance which are not resolved informally, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the school to discuss the matter more formally. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced. The school may also invite other involved professionals, where relevant.

## 25 Term Time Absence - leave requests & sanctions for unauthorised absence

The law does not grant parents/carers the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time for holidays or other absence such as trips and visits.

The school will not authorise any leave of absence in term-time unless satisfied the reason for absence is exceptional. The school will consider each application individually.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking-into-account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

The Government have provided guidance on what is deemed to be exceptional:

- Forces' Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Parents' employment restrictions - evidence will be requested from employers to prove that none of the school holidays can be used.
- Significant family events or circumstances - these will need to be considered individually.

The Government have also noted areas which would not be considered exceptional, for example:

- Relatives visiting
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad.
- Family day trips.
- Visiting friends/family that have different half terms or holidays.
- Because a child has good attendance.
- Employment restrictions during the summer holiday.
- Visiting relatives

Parents/carers are asked not to make plans to take their child out of school without making a request to the school first.

Parents/carers wishing to request leave for their child should complete a Term Time Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and, wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence.

Parents may be required to provide the school with additional evidence in order to support a leave of absence request.

The school will consider the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Term time absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

The absence should be for the shortest time possible - if an absence is agreed, the Headteacher will decide how many days of absence will be authorised. If the pupil is absent for more days than were authorised by the school, the remaining days absent will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Any holidays and other absence such as trips and visits which have not been agreed by the school will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents/carers should be aware unauthorised absence may result in a Penalty Notice or Prosecution. See 'Unauthorised Absence' section for more information.

If the school has any concerns about possible safeguarding risks, staff will follow the necessary protocols. (See the school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

## 26 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, or where no reason has been provided.

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. See 'Penalty Notices and Prosecutions' section for more information.

Unauthorised absence includes (but is not limited to) absences due to:-

- Reasons which have never been properly explained to the school
- Arriving at the school after the register has closed. (Although late arrival for a reason such as a medical appointment will usually be an authorised absence - see 'Medical / Dental Appointments' section for more information.)
- Shopping
- Having a hair-cut
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for something to be fixed, or a parcel to be delivered
- Parent/carer's or sibling's illness (unless very exceptional circumstances apply and have been agreed in writing by the school)
- Day trips
- Holidays in term time (unless exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance, by the school - see 'Leave of Absence' section).
- Appointments - schools will only authorise absence for the part of the day the appointment covers and travel time

Where the school has cause for concern about the actual reason for a pupil's absence, staff may seek additional information or evidence from parents/carers regarding the absence, and/or make a home visit in order to verify the reason. If the reason cannot be verified and the school has cause to believe the reason given for absence may not be genuine, parents/carers may be asked to provide satisfactory proof of the reason before the school authorises the absence. If satisfactory proof is not provided, the school may record the absence as unauthorised.

Schools will not provide work for pupils who are absent from school as, if children are well enough to complete school work, we expect them to be in school.

### 26.1 Penalty Notices & Prosecutions

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 at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child. If an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with unauthorised absence. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings have unauthorised absence, and there are two parents/carers with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action, unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. This will include unauthorised absence due to term time holiday or other trips/visits, and other types of unauthorised absence. When referring for legal sanctions, the school will show that the parent/carer has been warned they are at risk of a Penalty Notice

or other legal sanction. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Where a parent/carer has previously received a fixed penalty notice for a term time holiday and they continue to put in further requests for term time absence, LSP schools can make a request to the Local Authority for a prosecution is considered instead of repeating with a further fixed penalty notice.

See table below and DfE statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information, and the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, including thresholds, which is available from North Somerset Council/ Bath and North East Somerset Council.

## 26.2 Legal Sanctions for Unauthorised Absence

Sanction	Potential Outcome	When Used
Penalty Notice	The penalty is £60 (per parent/carer, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay may result in prosecution.) Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.	For low level offences, as a tool to support improved attendance. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's unauthorised absence. If a pupil has an extended period or repeated periods of unauthorised absence, a prosecution may be considered instead of a Penalty Notice.
Prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996	If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £1000 and ordered to pay court costs. The court may also impose a Parenting Order.	It is for the Local Authority to determine whether a section 444(1) or section 444(1A) prosecution is most appropriate. First prosecutions are usually under s444(1).
Prosecution under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996	If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £2500 and ordered to pay court costs. Other court outcomes include community sentences, such as Curfew Orders, Unpaid Work (Community Payback) or a prison sentence of up to three months. The court may also impose a Parenting Order.	If a parent/carer is prosecuted more than once, or in extreme cases of non-attendance, the Local Authority may decide to prosecute under s444(1A).
Education Supervision Order (ESO) under section 36 of the Children Act 1989	The order is placed on the child and a supervisor from the Local Authority is appointed by the court, to give directions to the child and its parents, with a view to securing that the child is properly educated. Parents can be prosecuted if they persistently fail to comply with a direction.	The Local Authority must consider applying for an ESO before prosecuting under s444 Education Act 1996. A local authority may apply for an ESO instead of, or as well as, proceeding with a prosecution.

## 27 Mental Health & Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead and / or SENDCO and/or Mental Health Lead for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned.

## 28 Part-time timetables & phased return to full-time education

In line with the expectations of the Department for Education, all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.



If, for any reason, the school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, staff will work with the pupil, parents/carers and other agencies where appropriate, to come to an arrangement that is deemed to be in the best interests of the child wherever possible.

Any part-time timetable should be in place for the shortest amount of time possible, it must not be treated as a long-term solution. It should be reviewed at least every two weeks, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time education at the school or, where appropriate, at alternative provision.

A decision to place a pupil on a part-time timetable should be approved by the Headteacher and must be agreed by the parents/carers. The SENDCO and DSL, as well as any other relevant members of staff, should also be aware of such arrangements and involved with decision making where appropriate. Discussions and agreements should be clearly documented in writing and relevant information should be recorded in SIMS and CPOMS. The school will be mindful of any additional safeguarding risks to the pupil when they are not timetabled to attend school and will therefore consider carefully whether a part-time timetable is an appropriate measure.

If the pupil's part-time timetable means the pupil is expected to arrive at the school after the register closes in the morning and/or be absent for the school's afternoon registration period, any such am and/or pm registrations must be recorded with the C code 'Leave of absence authorised by the school'.

## 29 Approved Educational Activity (AEA)

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case. (See [DfE School Attendance - Main Guidance](#) for more information.)

### 29.1 Approved Sporting Activity

If a pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity off the school site, which is of an educational nature, approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the Headteacher, such activity should be marked using the P code 'Approved Sporting Activity'.

## 29.2 Alternative Education Provision

Attendance staff in the school will be notified of Alternative Provision (AP) arrangements and updated about any changes in arrangements, so they can ensure the school's registers are marked accordingly. Attendance staff and other relevant colleagues will communicate closely with the AP setting.

The school will follow up with pupils and parents/carers on any attendance concerns, in conjunction with the AP.

If a pupil is only being offered part-time AP, the school will ensure the pupil is offered additional educational provision, which together with the AP equates to a full timetable, unless there are exceptional reasons why not. Pupils will only be offered part-time educational provision for the shortest time possible and this will be regularly reviewed with the pupil and parents/carers with the aim of the pupil accessing full-time education as quickly as possible.

## 29.3 Alternative Education Provision: Dual Registration and use of the D code

If a pupil from the school is attending another state-funded DfE registered school, Pupil Referral Unit<sup>3</sup> or Alternative Provision School, for part or all of their education, the pupil will be dual registered at this school (Dual - Main) and the other setting (Dual - Subsidiary).

If a pupil is attending an AP which is not a state-funded DfE registered school, Pupil Referral Unit, or Alternative Provision School, the pupil cannot be dual-registered; examples are Impact Mentoring and Education 1st. See 'Off-site educational activity (B code)' section, for more information.

When a pupil from the school is dual registered with another setting, the school will ensure the pupil and parents/carers are clear about the pupil's timetable; i.e., when the pupil is expected to attend the school or the other setting, and what the arrangements are for register marking, including the use of the D code. The school will also be clear which setting will be following up any absences. Where pupils are dual-registered, the AP should provide the school with attendance updates weekly, unless otherwise agreed with the alternative setting. However, if attendance and/or safeguarding concerns are identified at any point, the AP is expected to raise these with the school immediately and a course of action will be agreed in writing between the school and the AP.

A dual registered pupil must not be removed from either setting's roll without the agreement of the other setting.

## 29.4 Alternative Education Provision: Off-site educational activity (B code)

If a pupil is attending an AP setting which is not another school, Pupil Referral Unit or Alternative Provision School, for part or all of their education, the school will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). The school will mark any sessions attended at the school with the relevant present code, and any absences with the relevant absent code. Such APs should provide attendance updates daily, unless otherwise agreed, so the school can mark the register accordingly.

Some AP settings are registered as Independent Schools and, as such, are able to offer full-time provision where required. However, some AP settings are not registered schools and are therefore only legally allowed to offer part-time education to pupils.

Unless otherwise agreed with the AP, the AP is expected to notify the school by 9:15 am on the morning of any individual pupil absences, to ensure the school is made aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and takes follow up action as necessary.

If attendance and/or safeguarding concerns are identified at any point, the AP is expected to raise these with the school immediately and a course of action will be agreed in writing between the school and the AP.

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<sup>3</sup> This includes Bristol Hospital Education Service, Voyage Learning Campus and Pathways Learning Centre.

### 30 Managed Moves

Any pupil on a Managed Move (MM) must be dual registered at their main school (the 'sending school') and their subsidiary school (the 'receiving school').

If a pupil from this school is attending another school on a MM, the pupil will be dual registered at the other school. This school will mark the pupil with the registration code D during the time they are expected to attend the other school. The school the pupil is attending for the MM trial (the receiving school) will mark the pupil present or absent, according to their attendance pattern. The receiving school will be expected to follow up any pupil absences in the same way they would for their other pupils, in conjunction with this school where appropriate. They will also communicate the pupil's attendance with this school on a regular basis, in line with the MM review process.

If a pupil from another school is attending this school on a MM, the pupil will be dual registered at this school. This school will mark the pupil present or absent, according to their attendance pattern, whilst the sending school will mark them with the registration code D. This school will follow up any absences in the same way as for all other school pupils, in conjunction with the other school where appropriate. This school will also communicate the pupil's attendance to the sending school on a regular basis, in line with the MM review process.

At the end of the agreed MM period (or sooner in some circumstances) a decision will be made as to whether the MM will be made permanent or not. At this stage the pupil will either: (a) go permanently on the roll of the receiving (subsidiary) school - single registration (in which case the pupil will come off roll at the 'main' school); or (b) be expected to return to the main school (in which case the pupil will come off roll at the 'subsidiary' school).

A Dual Registered pupil must not be removed from either school's roll without the agreement of the other school.

### 31 Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE guidance)

In accordance with the [DfE School Attendance - Main Guidance](#), the school will record pupils as code Y 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):-

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause.
- The transport provided by the school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's '[Home to school travel and transport](#)' guidance document or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending the school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school's roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, those sessions can be as 'present at approved educational activity').

### 32 Children Missing Education (CME) and removing pupils from roll

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow Local Authority Child Missing Education process and make a CME referral as appropriate.

- [North Somerset - Child Missing Education Policy](#)
- [BANES - Children Missing Education Service](#) & Policy '[Children Missing Education](#)'

### **33 Reporting to Parents/Carers**

The school will include each pupil's attendance information as part of their reporting cycle. If parents/carers wish to see a copy of their child's attendance summary at any other time during the year, they can ask for a printed copy at the school office.

### **34 Recording Information on Attendance & Reasons for Absence**

All absences are recorded in the school's attendance register in the Management Information System, SIMS. Information about the reason for the absence, how it was reported and by whom, and any additional information pertinent to the absence may also be recorded.

### **35 Policy Monitoring Arrangements**

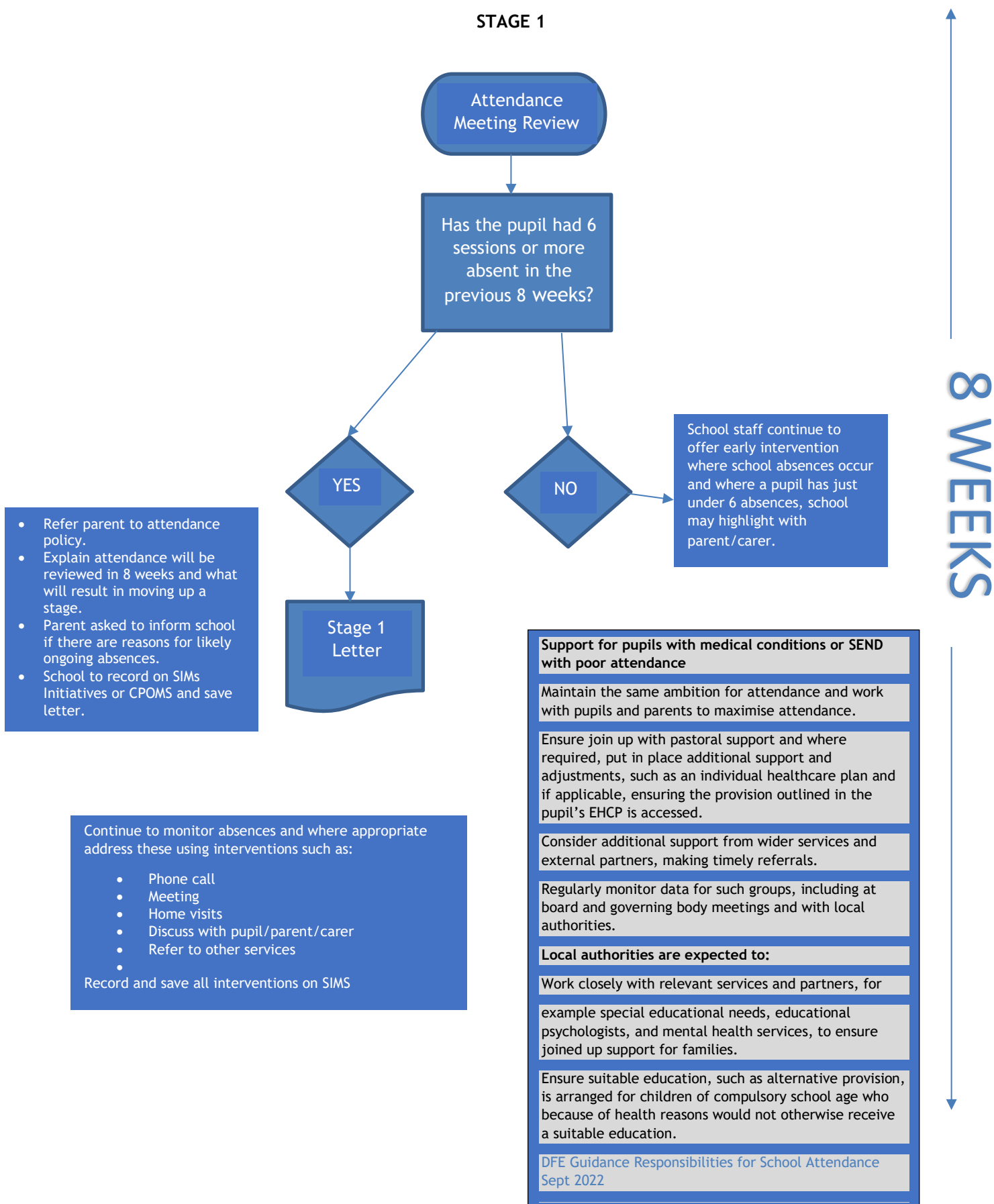
This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher and Governors, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance.

## Appendix A - Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

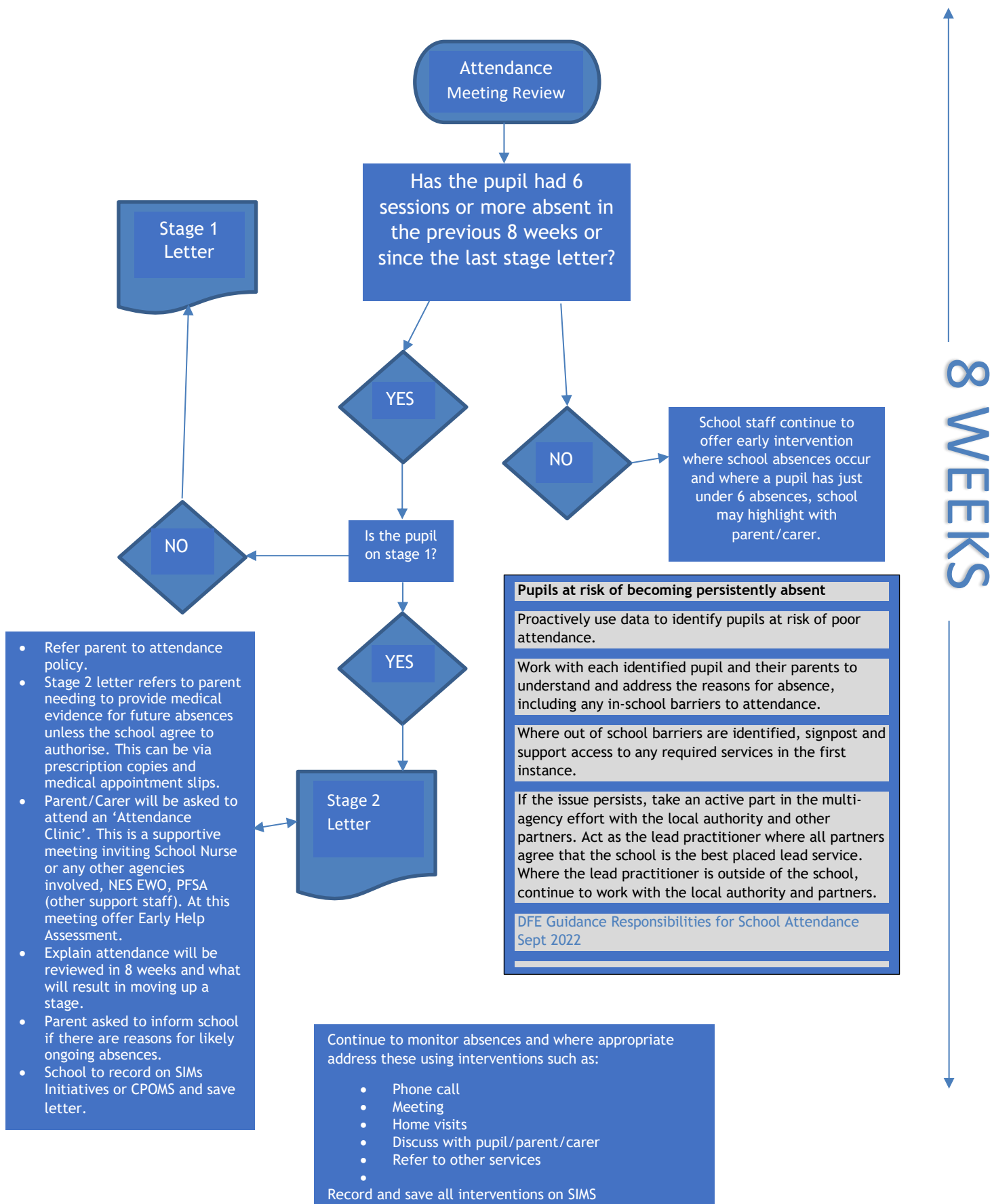
CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e., pupil attending another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school; or a pupil is detained in custody for less than four months.	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Appendix B - Attendance Flowcharts

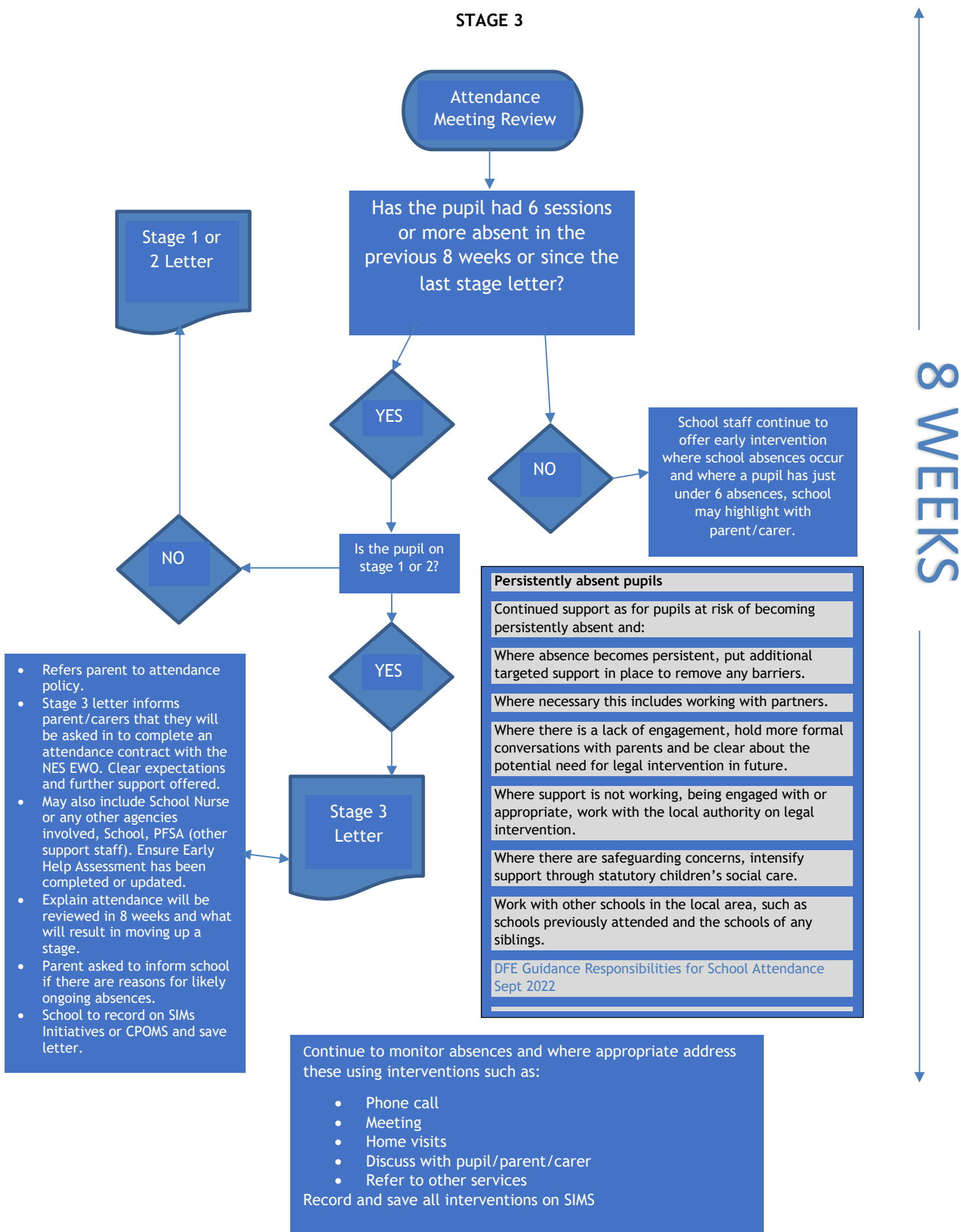
### STAGE 1



### STAGE 2



### STAGE 3



8 WEEKS

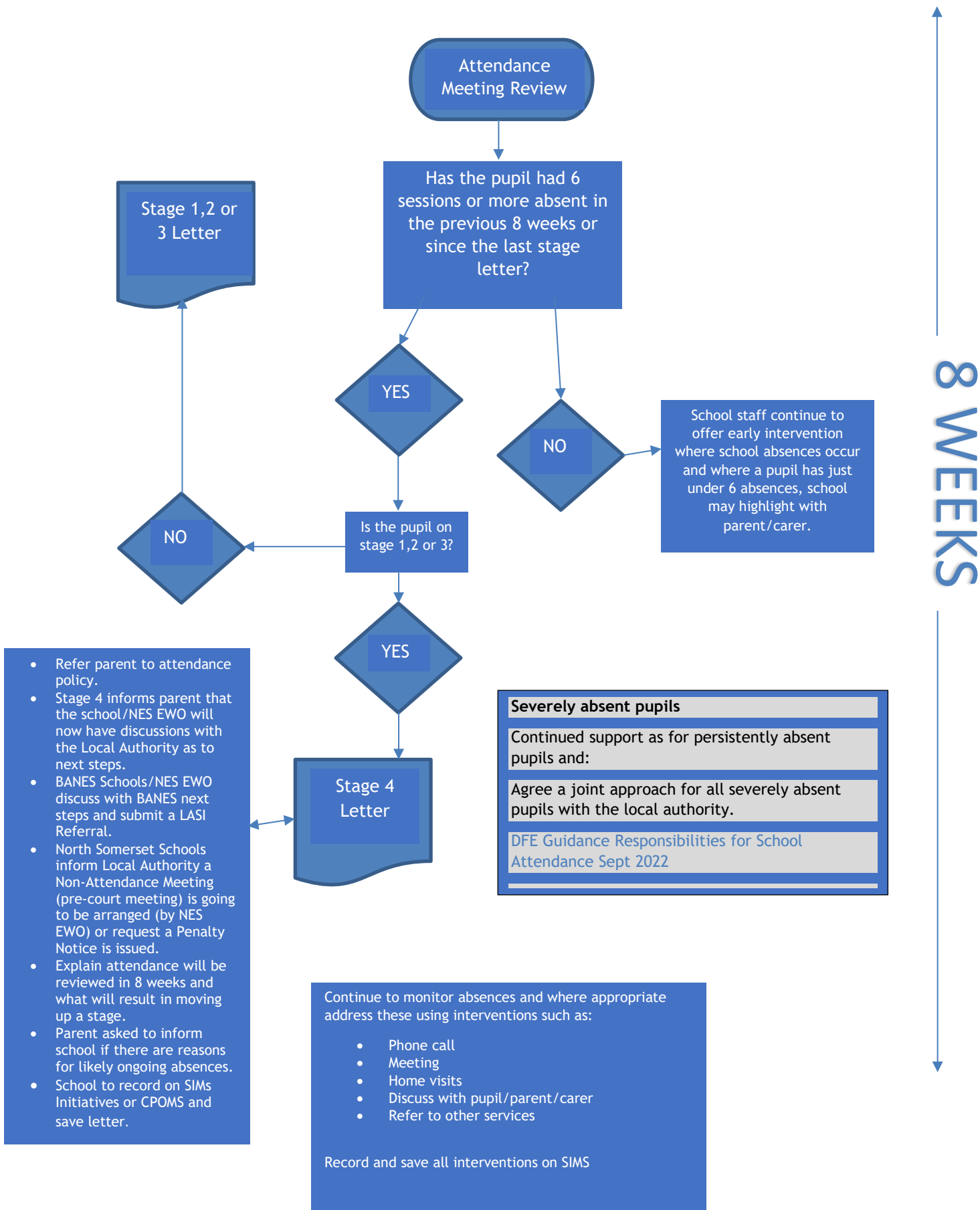
- Refers parent to attendance policy.
- Stage 3 letter informs parent/carers that they will be asked in to complete an attendance contract with the NES EWO. Clear expectations and further support offered.
- May also include School Nurse or any other agencies involved, School, PFSA (other support staff). Ensure Early Help Assessment has been completed or updated.
- Explain attendance will be reviewed in 8 weeks and what will result in moving up a stage.
- Parent asked to inform school if there are reasons for likely ongoing absences.
- School to record on SIMS Initiatives or CPOMS and save letter.

Persistently absent pupils
Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:
Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers.
Where necessary this includes working with partners.
Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
<a href="#">DFE Guidance Responsibilities for School Attendance Sept 2022</a>

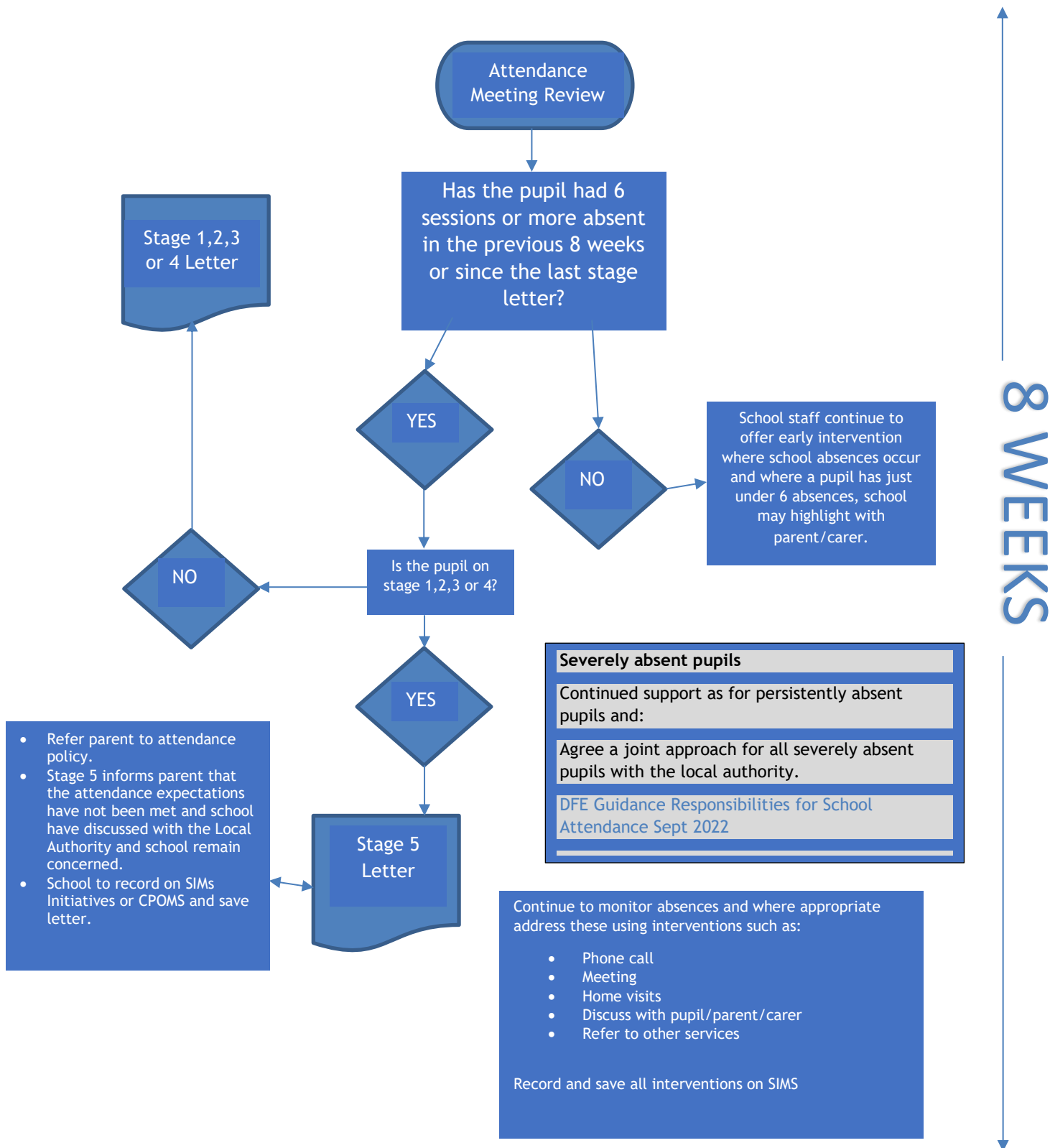
- Continue to monitor absences and where appropriate address these using interventions such as:
- Phone call
  - Meeting
  - Home visits
  - Discuss with pupil/parent/carer
  - Refer to other services
- Record and save all interventions on SIMS



STAGE 4



STAGE 5



8 WEEKS