



**Avonbourne Boys' & Girls' Academies**

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

# **Avonbourne Academies**

## **Attendance Policy**

**January 2021**

# Attendance Policy

## Introduction

At Avonbourne Academies, we strive, in everything that we do every day, to create an environment that empowers every individual to realise their potential. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and must be at the Academies, on time, every day the Academies are open.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your son/daughter attends every school day and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## Why regular Attendance is so important?

All absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and future life choices. A student's absence can also hinder the progress of their peers and disrupt effective and efficient classroom routines. Ensuring your son's/daughter's regular attendance at the Academies is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from the Academies without a legitimate reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## Promoting Regular Attendance

**Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of Academy staff.**

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to you at least termly on how your son/daughter is performing in school, what their attendance rate is and how this relates to their attainments.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying year group and Academy achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through the rewards system.
- Run promotional events when parents, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the academy.

## Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the academies (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other reasons the **Academies** deems to be unavoidable. Students will not be allowed to leave the Academies for medical appointments without a note or an appointment card.

Parents should make every effort to ensure appointments are made outside of academy/school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, students should attend for as much of that day as possible to ensure they are

registered in the morning and afternoon. Parents should provide a note with a copy of the appointment letter attached. Students must collect an exit slip from the Pastoral office during break/lunch time. This should be signed by the subject teacher and taken to the Attendance Officer in reception before signing out.

Regular days off ill may be challenged by letter. Lack of any medical evidence for these days off will lead to academy unauthorised absence leading to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

High levels of authorised absence can lead to the involvement of the Academies Attendance Officer (AO) and Education Social Worker (ESW) in order to ensure the correct support is in place.

Unauthorised absences are those which the Academies do not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This type of absence can lead to using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping students off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other siblings or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the academy. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the student. If the student is reluctant to attend, it is never advisable to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

The Academies can, if required, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% (equivalent to 3 weeks in a year) or more schooling across the Academies year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parents/carers' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and a parent/carer will be informed of this immediately via letter. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully by the Attendance Officer and through our regular attendance tracking meetings.

Selected PA students and their parents/carers are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: additional support through their Head of Year and our Educational Social Worker/ Attendance Officer. **All PA cases are also automatically made known to our Attendance Officer & Education Social Worker (ESW) and notified to the Local Authority.**

### **Absence Procedures**

If a student is absent it is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (by 8.00am) and on the morning of every day of absence.
- Send a letter or note, in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence; you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.
- Or, you can call into the academy and report to reception or email via [attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)

If a student is absent, we will:

- Send a text message to parents to advise their child is absent from the Academies and no reason has been received. On receiving that text message, parents are requested to contact the Academies to advise of the reason for absence.
- If a response to the absence text message has not been received, attempts to telephone the parent/carer on the day of the absence if we have not heard from you (this call will be made between 9.30am-10.30am) will be made. This is a safeguarding procedure.
- A list will also be given to the Pastoral team to follow-up and make contact. This is a safeguarding procedure.
- If no contact has been received by the second day the Attendance Officer will report absence to all contacts including email addresses.
- If a pupil is absent for 3 school days without a contact being received from parents, a "safe and well" home visit will be requested by the Attendance Officer via MyConcern and made by our Education Social Worker or member of the Pastoral team if appropriate. This is a safeguarding procedure and is an expectation from the Local Authority.
- If absence persists your son/daughter's Pastoral Lead will make contact with you. If attendance falls below 97% our attendance team will write to you to highlight this.
- Deterioration of attendance will lead to an Initial Assessment completed by the pastoral team and could result in a further letter and phone call inviting parents in for a meeting with your Pastoral Lead and son/daughter where an Initial Assessment or Parenting Contract is complete.
- If after 4 weeks there is still no improvement, we will refer the matter to Education Social Worker who will attend a review with parents/carers to explain possible legal proceedings by the Local Authority.
- No improvement and continued unauthorised absence in a selected period of time would lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice or full prosecution.

Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised, and both the school and Local Authority have been unable to contact the parents, the Academies may remove the child from the school roll.

The school will notify the local authority when such action is taken.

Please see the procedures and Attendance Strategy for further reference (Appendix 1,2).

## Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your son/daughter by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There is a check on telephone numbers and home addresses at the start of the year. Please ensure that you inform us of any change after this time.

## The Attendance Officer (AO)

Early intervention is nearly always successful in improving attendance. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the Academies may refer the student to our Attendance Officer who will try to resolve the situation by agreement.

## Education Social Worker (ESW)

The Academies also have an Education Social Worker who can support pupil attendance and provide appropriate support and guidance to all parties in order to ensure levels of attendance remain above 97%. Please telephone the Academies for more assistance or a meeting with the ESW if you feel your son/daughter's attendance requires improvement.

If ways of trying to improve the student's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Academies can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the academy. Alternatively, parents/carers or students may wish to contact our Education Social Worker or Attendance Officer themselves to ask for help or information and appropriate advice will be given. Please telephone the school for assistance.

## Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day, they can miss essential work or information on the academy activities. The late arrival of students also disrupts the learning of others, which can be embarrassing for the student and also encourage further absence. Students who are late to the academy will be expected to attend an after-school detention and complete any work missed in lesson time and if this occurs more than once in a working week students will serve an **SLT detention on Friday of that week.**

## How we manage lateness.

The Academies day starts at 8.30 am and we expect all students to be at line up at 8.30am ready for the start of the day. Students will be in tutor or assembly by 8.35am. **If a student arrives past 8.35am and up until 9.00am they will receive a 1 hour after school detention to be completed the same day. If a student arrives on or after 9.00am, unless there is a medical reason, they will be expected to report to inclusion until their Head of Year can speak to them and complete a detention after school.** Frequent lateness and serious lateness will be followed up by the pastoral/ year team and will result in further sanctions and contact with parents/carers.

## **The Academies are open from 7.45am.**

Registers are marked promptly at the start of registration time and a student will receive a late mark if they are not in class by 8.30 am.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution if the problem persists. Details of the late procedure are found below in Appendix 3.

## **Holidays in Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking your son/daughter away during the academy term time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday during the academy term time are offset by the cost to your son/daughter's education. **There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during academy time to go on holiday and at Avonbourne Academies holidays in term time will not be authorised.** If the unauthorised holiday is taken and **attendance falls below 97% a Penalty Notice will be issued through the Local Authority.** The Penalty Notice can be a fine of up to £120 per parent per child.

If there is a case for compassionate leave e.g. for a funeral the Academies may authorise leave of absence – in these circumstances' parents/carers should complete an application for absence (collected from reception or found on the website) or letter and this will be considered by the Assistant Principal.

All applications for breaks from education in these exceptional circumstances must be made in advance. In making a decision the Academies will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence in term time. It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- In the month of September.
- When a student is just starting the at the Academies. This is very important as your son/daughter needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods – GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 97% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/ parental work commitments
- Holidays abroad for visiting sick relatives, except where that person is seriously ill (medical evidence may be requested to help with the decision)
- Pilgrimages

## **Academies Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and every student has an important part to play in meeting these targets. We believe student who achieve good attendance should be recognised and rewarded to reinforce positive behaviour and to provide other students with incentives to improve their attendance.

**Our expectation at Avonbourne Academies is that all students will have 100% attendance.**

Academic research demonstrates the link between high attendance, improved progress and attainment results.

**Those People Responsible for Attendance Matters in This School Are:**

- Attendance Officer
- Education Social Worker
- The Pastoral Leads
- The student's Head of Year
- Assistant Principal with responsibility for Attendance and Admissions

**Expectations for Students**

Irregular attendance means that students will miss out on aspects of the educational experience on offer at Avonbourne Academies.

Students need to understand that if they are absent or late, they will not get access to their entitlement of learning for success. Furthermore, the development of their social skills, key learning skills and their ability to achieve academically will be severely compromised.

**Avonbourne Academies expect:**

- 100% attendance, only being absent through genuine illness.
- Arrive at school at 8.30am in time for roll call at 8.35am and be punctual to every lesson.
- Register at the late room if they are late, or at reception after 9:00.
- Bring a note from home explaining the reason for absence following every session of absence.
- See individual teachers and catch up work missed during the period of absence.

**Summary**

**The Academies have a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure their sons/daughters attend and arrive on time. All academy staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.**

**'There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent manage to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including Maths and English. 73 per cent of pupils who have over 95 per cent attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C'.**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/180772/DFE-00036-2012\\_improving\\_attendance\\_at\\_school.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180772/DFE-00036-2012_improving_attendance_at_school.pdf)

**'Nationally only 20% of students with attendance below 80% achieve 5 grade 4 and above at GCSE'.**

## How We Manage Attendance at Avonbourne Academies

**Subject teachers** are responsible for:

1. Accurately completing the statutory PM registration for students within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
2. Accurately completing an Arbor register in every lesson and monitoring patterns of attendance.
3. Highlighting and discussing problems of non-attendance with their Head of Year or curriculum Subject Leader.
4. Being aware of students that they teach who are identified as persistent absentees.

**Form Tutors** are responsible for:

1. Accurately completing the statutory AM registration for students in tutor time.
2. Monitoring attendance figures daily and weekly.
3. Welcoming back students who have been absent and passing all letters of explanation regarding absence to the Attendance Officer. **An 'N' code will be amended to unauthorised at the end of the of the day if no communication is received by the AO.**
4. Identifying any 'patterns' of absence and notifying the appropriate Head of Year of their concern.
5. Make contact with home for any students who have attendance concerns but are above 93% attendance.
6. Highlighting and discussing attendance targets, procedures and issues with members of their tutor group.
7. Being aware of any students who are identified as Persistent Absentees and notifying the Head of Year/ Attendance Officer immediately of their absence.

**Heads of Year / Pastoral Leads** are responsible for:

1. Ensuring that all teachers and tutors complete their attendance responsibilities.
2. Pursuing any absences which have not been explained, by either contacting the parent/carer direct or asking the Attendance Officer to do so.
3. Checking all registers weekly and pursuing any unexplained or 'suspicious' absences passed from tutors with parents/carers.
4. Highlighting any unauthorised absences and discussing strategies with mentors.
5. Monitoring weekly attendance figures for the school and supplying reasons why the % return is lower than 97% to Assistant Principal (Attendance & Admissions) via spreadsheet.
6. Sending a letter home to any student who has attendance below 97%; if no improvement has been made after 2 weeks contact parent/carer by phone; if there is no improvement after 2 weeks then review with ESW/ Attendance officer, meet with parents/carers.
7. Monitoring and developing action plans for all students who are identified as having persistent absence to improve attendance.
8. Meeting with parents/carers referred by the Attendance Officer / Education Social Worker
9. Liaison with parents/carers, tutor, Curriculum Team Leader and teachers re: the setting of suitable work for students where medical evidence or appropriate reasons have been provided.
10. Update staff when students are expected to be absent for longer than a few days and when the students return so that reintegration can be affected smoothly.

**Attendance Officer / Education Welfare Officer** are responsible for:

1. Reporting daily attendance figures to United Learning
2. Ensuring that up to date and detailed attendance information is available for the Attendance Team meetings.
3. Sending a letter home to any student who has attendance below 97%; if no improvement has been made after 2 weeks contact parent/carer by phone; if there is no improvement after 2 weeks then refer to Head of Year who will meet with parents/carers.
4. Working with families to provide either reintegration programme or take legal action.
5. Liaising with appropriate outside agencies.
6. Completing SIMS inputting the correct code/comment for students who arrive after registration closes.
7. Checking all registers weekly and pursuing any unexplained or 'suspicious' absences passed from tutors with parents/carers.
8. When notified of student absence via telephone inputting the correct code/comment into SIMS.
9. Initiating Attendance text messages/ absence phone calls to parents of students where there is unexplained absence or lateness to school.
10. If a pupil is absent for 3 school days without a contact being received from parents, a "safe and well" home visit will be made by our Education Social Worker or pastoral lead. This is a safeguarding procedure and is an expectation from the Local Authority.
11. Providing absence reports for parents' evenings.
12. Preparing follow up letters and communication linked to the escalation ladder.
13. Liaising with Bournemouth Borough Council's Education Social Worker Service.
14. Collating all attendance figures for both internal and external use:
  - below 97%
  - % individual
  - % tutor group
  - lateness figures
  - Attendance certificates

**Assistant Principal (Attendance & Admissions)** is responsible for:

1. Overseeing all aspects of the attendance monitoring system through weekly returns and regular reports from Heads of Year and attendance team.
2. Working with the Pastoral Leads, Heads of Year, and Attendance Officer & Education Social Worker to agree strategies in the most difficult cases of student absence.
3. Liaising with the Attendance Officer.
4. Compiling 'whole-school' attendance data as required by the Principal/Governors/United Learning.
5. Reporting regularly to the Vice Principal and/or Principal concerning all aspects of attendance.
6. Completing any United Learning, Local Authority or national forms regarding attendance/ absence statistics as the need arises.
7. Considering all requests for holiday in term time in conjunction with the Vice Principal and/or Principal.

### **Monitoring – Summary**

1. On a **daily** basis tutors will take the register, chase notes and update absence list and inform the pastoral leads of any concerns. Persistent lateness should be noted. **Weekly** complete absence returns. **No 'N' code can stay on the register for more than 1 week.**

2. **In every lesson** teachers will register all students using SIMS within 5 minutes of the start of the lesson.
3. 'First Day of Absence Check' students may be contacted at home by office via text message/ phone call
4. Every **2 weeks** the Heads of Year will look at percentage figures for each tutor group and recognise the tutor group with the highest attendance.
5. Every **2 weeks** each Head of Year meets with the Education Social Worker and Attendance Officer to address all students with attendance below 97% and review and confirm actions. Phone calls, letters and parental meetings will then be actioned by the attendance team raising the concern.

### **Truancy Checks**

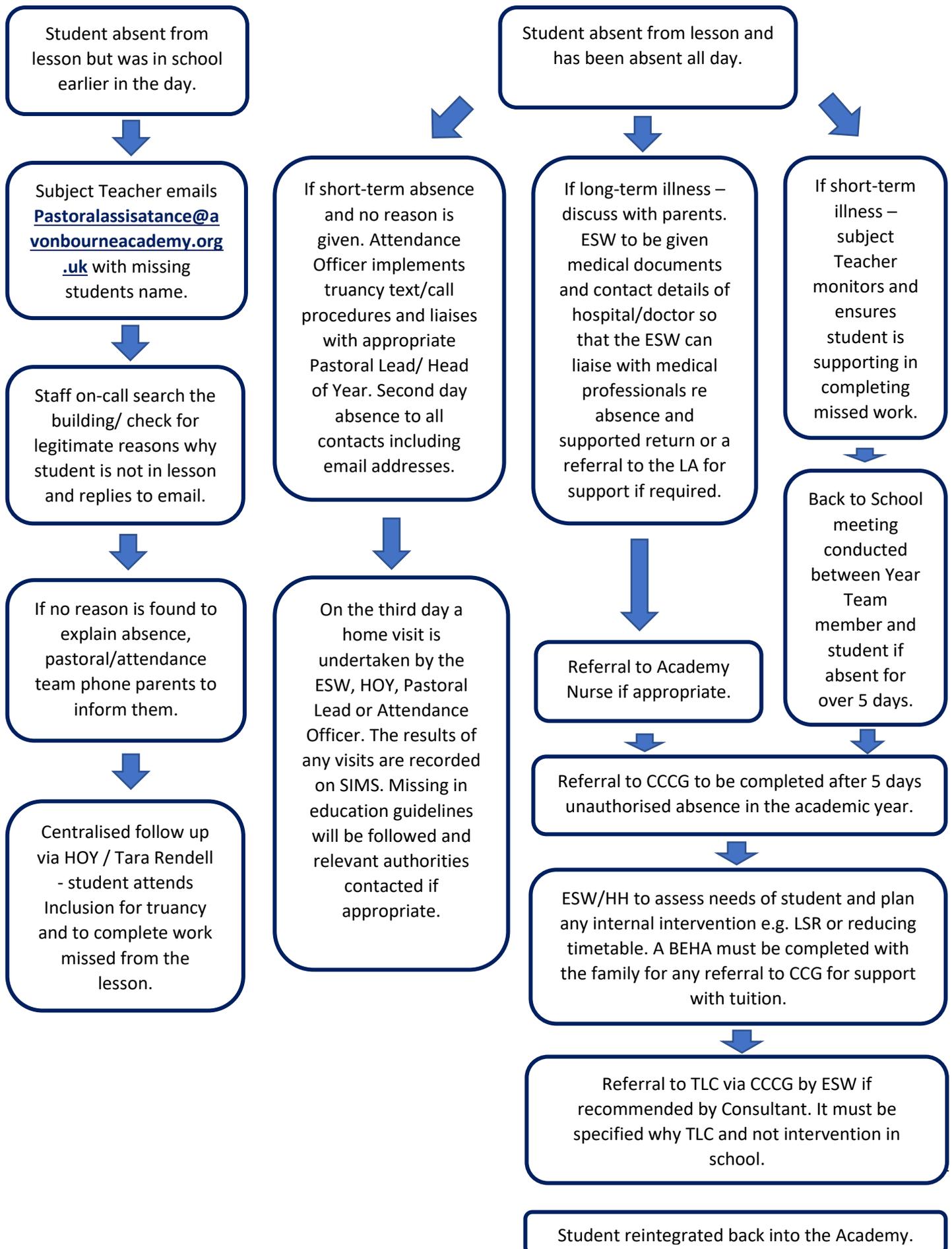
Can take place throughout the day through SIMS. The Attendance Officer contacts parents and carers from 9.30am.

### **Attendance Planning Meeting**

In cases of very poor attendance where the academy is about to initiate legal proceedings, parents/carers will be invited to an attendance meeting with their son/daughter's Year team or Education Social Worker/ Attendance Officer to clarify reasons for absence, parental responsibilities and the legal process. Further support that the academy is able to offer will also be outlined.

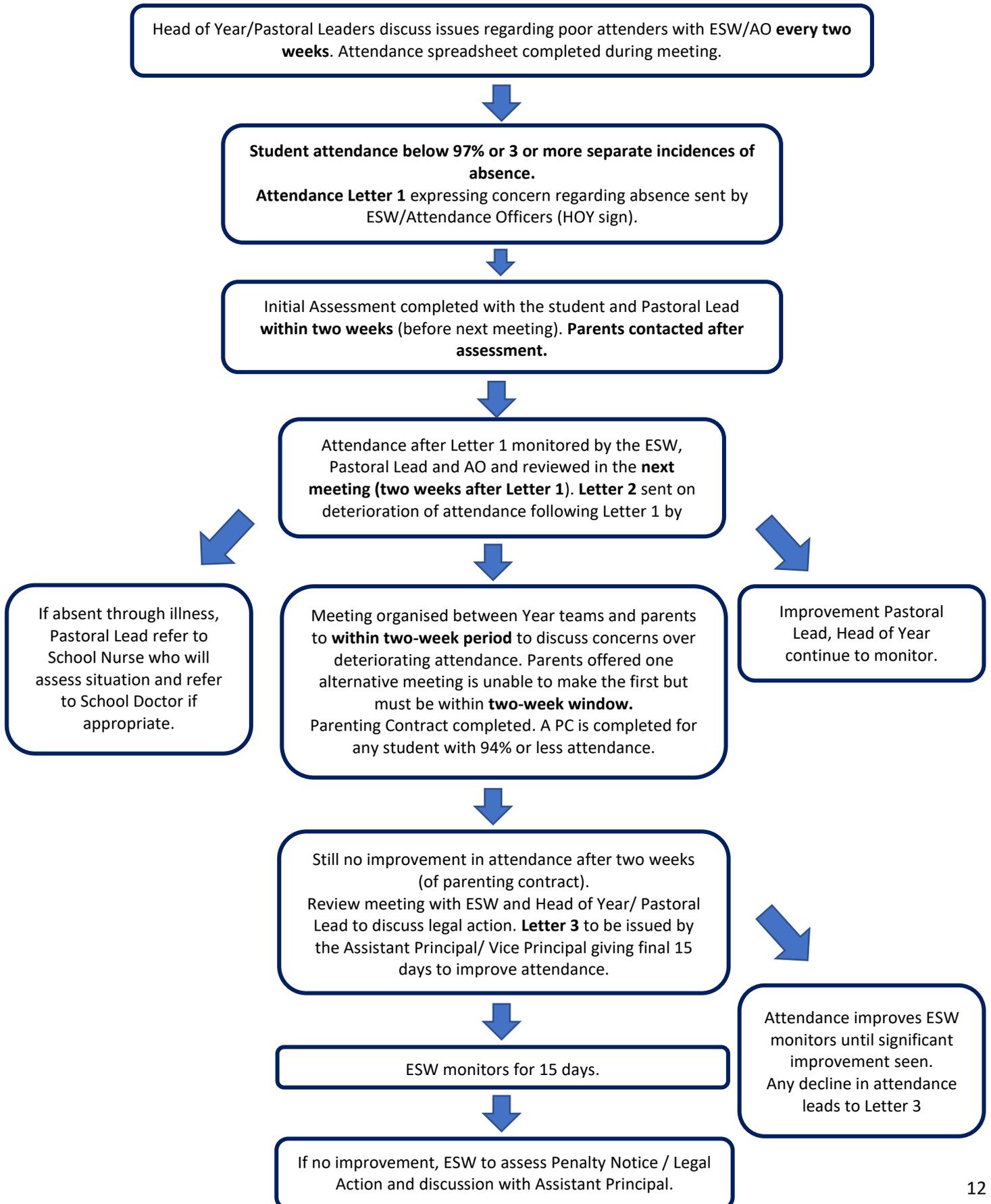
# Appendix 1

## Procedure for absent students



## Appendix 2

### Attendance procedure



## Appendix 3

### Attendance Strategy Ladder for Avonbourne Academies

100% - Excellent attendance

97% - Good attendance

Below 97% attendance or 3 separate incidences of absence – Letter 1 sent home from Head of Year (sent by ESW/Attendance Officer).

Initial Assessment completed within two weeks of Letter 1 being sent

Below 94% attendance, Letter 2 sent from Head of Year (sent by ESW/Attendance Officer) on deterioration of attendance from Letter 1. Pastoral Lead organises a parent meeting to discuss attendance concerns. Extenuating circumstances are investigated to determine suitability of next steps. Parenting Contract completed by HOY/Pastoral Lead (copy to ESW). Alternative meeting time offered within the two-week window if required.

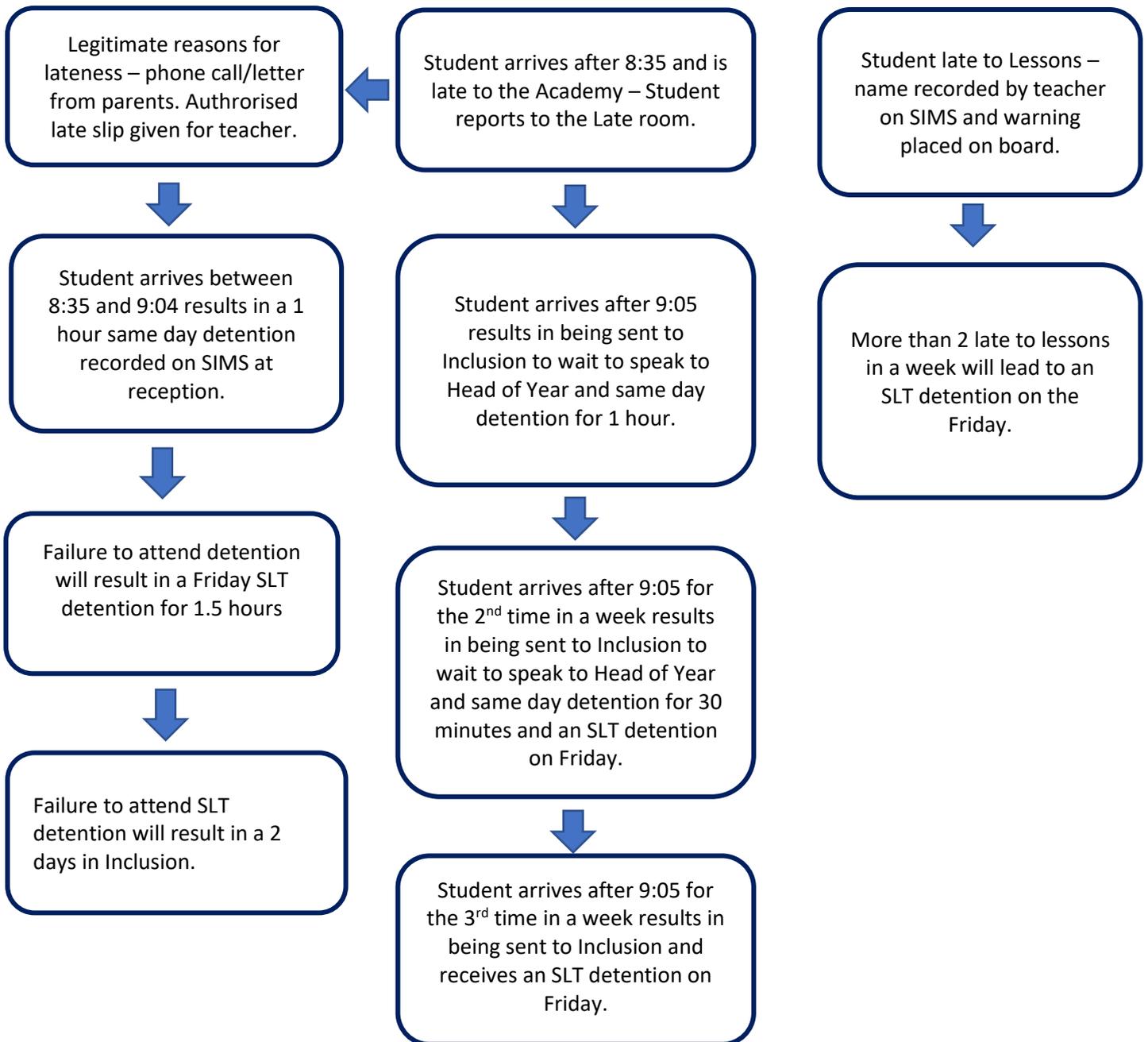
If no improvement, the ESW sends Letter 3 notifying parents of possible Penalty Notice if attendance does not improve.

After 15 days of monitoring and no improvement Letter 4 is sent by the ESW. ESW to assess if Penalty Notice required or full prosecution.

90% (PA Threshold) – allocated staff) holds weekly PA mentoring meetings with students to get a better understanding of any attendance issues. Feedback provided to ESW, form completed and submitted to Attendance Officer.

## Appendix 4

### Attendance Strategy Ladder for Avonbourne Academy



#### Repeated Lateness to the Academies and lessons:

- Parents contacted by Head of Year/Pastoral Leader requesting a meeting and completion of parenting contract.
- Student put on report and attendance and lateness monitored closely.

Date of last review	January 2021	Review period	1 Year
Date of next review	January 2022	Author	O Maund
Type of policy	Statutory	Approval	
Assistant Principal			