

# **CASTLE HILL INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Next Review September 2018

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# CASTLE HILL INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all their pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent Academy attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending the Academy regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole Academy community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and Academy governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good Academy attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and statutory Regulations. The Academy will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

### 2. Academy's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent Academy attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our are eager to learn, feel valued members of the Academy community and look forward to coming to Academy every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader  
A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the Academy's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the Academy. This person, known as the Attendance Leader,

will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good Academy attendance) and that a report is prepared for the Trust half termly. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### 2.3 Registration

i) The Academy is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers / form tutors are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

## REGISTER CODES

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory Academy age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	Academy closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- ii) The register will be called promptly at **9am** and **1pm**

am session		pm session	
Register opens	Register closes	Register opens	Register closes

- iii) Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted **present** but will be managed following the Academy's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para. 4.5 on page 7).

#### 2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the Academy in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the Academy as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the Academy at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Academy's Principal
- ii) Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools recognise the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. They recognise that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If

absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Academy.**

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the Academy **within 5 days**, the absence will remain unauthorised.

iv) Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the Academy in advance, for example –

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see the Academy's policy on term-time holidays);

(b) where the Academy is satisfied that the child is medically unfit to attend. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the Academy can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. The Academy can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention.

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of Academy hours wherever possible, and to return their child to Academy immediately afterwards – or send him/her to Academy beforehand);

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parent belongs;

- (f) the pupil / student lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
  - (g) the pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended Academy as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
  - (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
  - the Academy is not satisfied with the explanation;
  - the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
  - the pupil is shopping during Academy hours;
  - the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
  - the pupil is absent from Academy on a family holiday without prior permission;
  - the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the Academy will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

## 2.6 Class registers

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of pupils / students, subject teachers will take a register at the

beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the Academy office and measures taken to locate the pupil / student.

#### **2.7 Staff training**

The Academy Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### **3. Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the Trust. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the Academy target. The data will inform the Academy's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, tutor group, at subject level and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance. The Academy will also monitor those students who fall in the Persistent Absence category (currently 10%).

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

3.4 The Academy will keep up to date data on the use of early intervention processes and the use of Penalty Notices.

### **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are aware of the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in Academy.

4.2 Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools have procedures for dealing with unexplained absences.

#### **4.3 First-day calling**

Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools have in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This

helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the Academy will send a letter to them by first class post.

#### 4.4 Academy Strategies to Tackle Absence

The Attendance Leader is responsible for the Academy management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools intervene in non-attendance at an early stage.

#### 4.5 Procedures for Dealing with Absence

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis. When a child's attendance drops below 95% a letter (Appendix 1) will be sent home to inform the parent and offer support where necessary. If the attendance does not improve and goes below 92% a further letter (Appendix 2) will be sent to parents inviting them to a meeting and advising them that any further absence will become unauthorised unless supported by evidence. (see attached flowchart). Parents/Carers will also be informed about accumulated unauthorised absence by letter (appendix 3) in order to avoid further unauthorised absence and the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

#### 4.6 Referral to the Local Authority

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil / student is failing to attend Academy at all), the above procedure will be followed and if there is no improvement a legal intervention will ensue. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require Academies to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 10 Academy days or more. Academies must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absence.

#### 4.7 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at the Academy, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3.(iii) on page 4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the Academy is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil / student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be managed in the same way as other student with an emerging pattern of

absence. (See para. 4.4). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the academy's Attendance Officer.

4.8 Pupils who arrive late for Academy but before the register closes must enter through the main door and an adult will need to sign with reason for late arrival. The Academy will monitor lates on a weekly basis and a letter will be sent offering support if necessary. If lateness continues the Academy will invite parents to a meeting to discuss further.

4.9 For health and safety reasons it is important that the Academy knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the Main Office to sign in. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.10 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to Academy later in the day to sign out/in at the Main Office.

#### 4.11 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from the Academy having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil / student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools take this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the Academy will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

## 5. **Term-time holidays**

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off from the Academy for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each

other during or after a crisis;

- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in Academy holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests ie: SATS & GCSE examinations.

## **6. Extended leave of absence**

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at Academy (although parents could be encouraged to use the Academy holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some Academy-set work during this period.

## **7. Penalty Notices for pupil absence**

- Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will follow the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct when making a Penalty Notice referral.

Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools' criteria for making a Penalty Notice referral are as follows:

- (a) Has been identified for the first time as having **6** sessions or more (a session being a morning or afternoon) unauthorised absence in the current academic year.
- (b) In the company of a parent, who has been stopped under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (during a truancy sweep) and the parent has failed to give a satisfactory explanation for the child's absence which the school has confirmed as unauthorised.
- (c) Parents who meet the criteria will be issued with a Penalty Notice at the present time (March 2015) and as prescribed by the Department of Education this is £60 per child per parent with parental responsibility payable to the Local Authority, eg. A family with two children and two parents could be charged £240.
- (d) Parents will not receive more than one Penalty Notice in an academic year. Any subsequent unauthorised absences in the current academic year will be dealt with as non-attendance and the school's procedures as in para 2.4 will be followed.

## **8. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by the Academy.

Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools expect parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the Academy regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the Academy to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from Academy.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify the Academy on the first day of absence.
- ensure their children arrive at Academy on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the Academy, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;

- contact the Academy without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's Academy lives. Castle Hill Infant and Junior Schools will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## **9. Pupils' responsibilities**

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular Academy attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending Academy regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or form tutor.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from Academy they should give their class teacher or form tutor a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils / students also have a responsibility for following Academy procedures if they arrive late.

## **10. Trust responsibilities**

Section 175 (2)

The Trust shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the Academy are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the Academy.

## **10. Conclusion**

Regular Academy attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- good Academy attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend the Academy regularly
- Regular attendance at the Academy supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the Academy curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- Academies have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children

- membership of a Academy community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others
- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

### **Reviewing the policy**

The Academy will review this policy each year

Date Adopted	September 2017
Review Date	September 2018
Signed	G Andrews
Date	04.09.17

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### 1. **When does my child need to be in Academy?**

Your child should be at Academy in good time for registration. The register will be called promptly at .....am and .....pm

am session		pm session	
Register opens	Register closes	Register opens	Register closes

### 2. **What happens if my child is late?**

Should your child arrive late they need to go the Main Office and sign in giving the reason for their lateness.

### 3. **Does the Academy need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the Academy on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to Academy. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

### 4. **What reasons will the Academy accept for absences?**

- Illness
  
- Emergency dental/medical appointment  
(Please make routine appointments after Academy or during the Holidays)
  
- Day of religious observance
  
- Family bereavement
  
- Attending an interview for a job, college, university etc

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss Academy well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

**5. What is unacceptable?**

The Academy will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

**6. Will the Academy contact me if my child is absent?**

The Academy operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular Academy attendance. A home visit may also be considered if no contact has been made.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

**7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The Academy recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact your child's form tutor as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The Academy would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SAT's (year 6). You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Principal then approves the visit, the Academy may set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

**8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend Academy?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home an Academy diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

**9. My child is trying to avoid coming to Academy. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher/form Tutor, or Head of Year, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding Academy for a number of reasons – difficulties with Academy work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend Academy and work together to tackle the problem.

## **ATTENDING ACADEMY REGULARLY**

### **A GUIDE FOR PUPILS/STUDENTS**

#### **ATTENDING REGULARLY AND ON TIME**

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at ..... Academy. It will help you:

- keep up with your Academy work and get the best results you can;

Remember, your attendance at Academy is shown in your Record of Achievement.

#### **ABSENCES**

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after Academy or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

Looking after brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from Academy.

#### **NEED HELP?**

Problems with your Academy work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at Academy? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing Academy is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your form tutor, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

## APPENDIX 1

## APPENDIX 2

Dear \*\*\*\*\*

During our weekly attendance check, it has been brought to my attention that \*\*\*\*\* attendance has still not improved and is at \*\*\*\*\*. As you know good attendance is very important and we are very committed to this.

If there is no improvement in your child's attendance you will be asked to come to school for a meeting to discuss your child's attendance. Please be aware on receipt of this letter, no further absences will be authorised without evidence and therefore you may be at risk of legal interventions.

As an academy we are able to offer many areas of support to parents. We feel that a meeting would allow us to explore any issues around attendance and possible support we that can be put in place to help you to improve this.

It is widely acknowledged that good attendance supports children's emotional and social health and development according to Ofsted children whose attendance is lower than 90% are less likely to achieve good results in their SATS and later on GCSEs.

We look forward to working closely with you on this matter and seeing the improvement in your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 3

Dear \*\*\*\*\*

**Attendance – \*\*\*\* child's name \*\*\*\***

I am writing with regards to ..... attendance, please see attached their attendance certificate.

There appears to be..... unauthorised sessions.

You will be aware that the Academy's policy is to now issue a penalty notice once a pupil's absence reaches 6 unauthorised sessions (3 days).

The penalty notice is currently fixed at £60 per adult, per child.

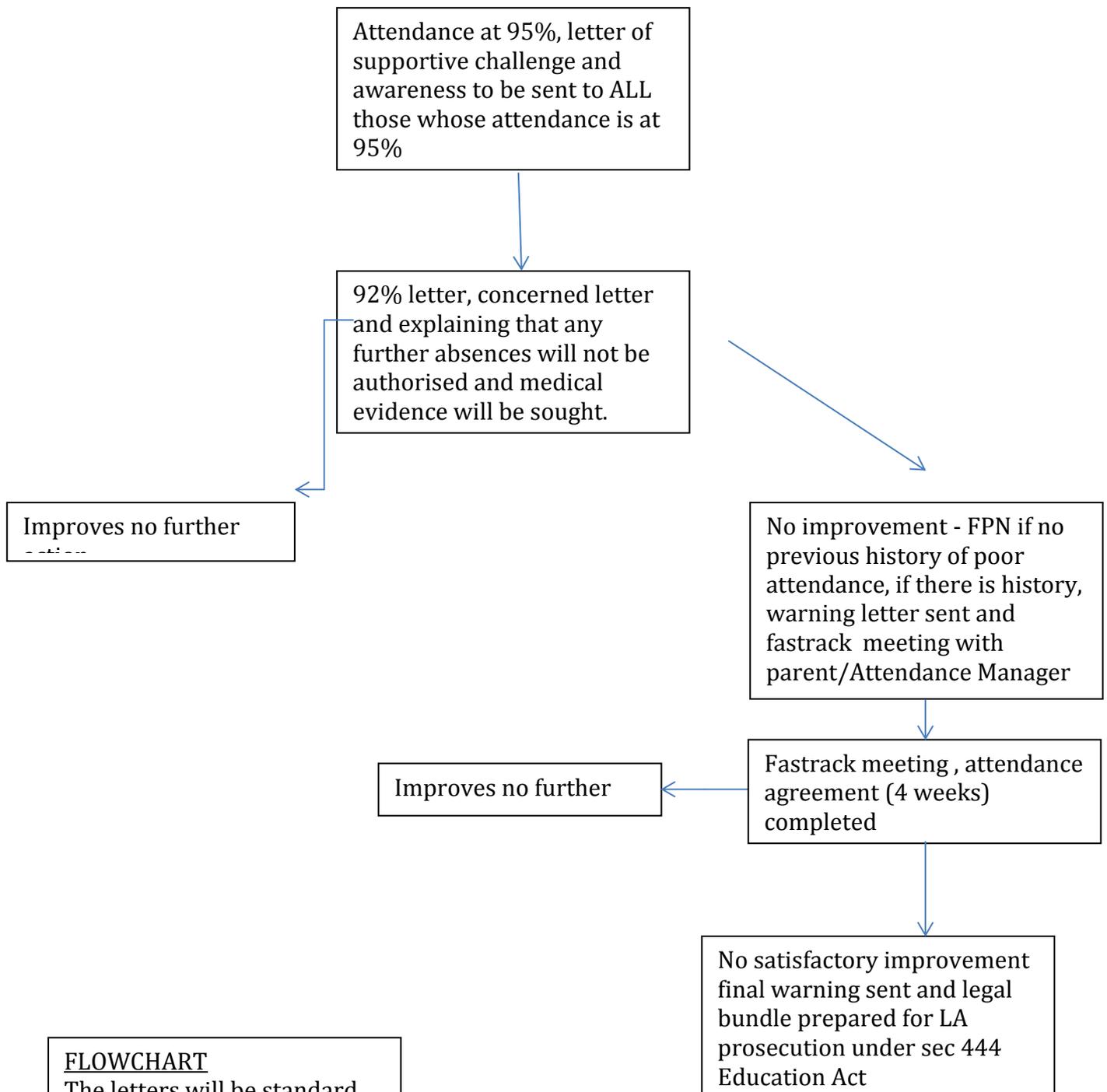
We are writing to remind you of the importance of ringing the Academy every day when \*\*\*\*\* is absent. Without this contact the school will be unable to consider authorising any absences.

We have this Policy in place for your child's safety, to make sure that we know that your child is with you if they are absent from school.

Please can we ask therefore that you contact us every day on ..... when \*\*\*\*\* is not attending school so that authorisation can be considered.

Thank you.

## FLOWCHART



### FLOWCHART

The letters will be standard and just require names etc.

