WHOLE-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

COATES LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence also disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good 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, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Carry out transition work with pupils moving between nursery and reception, and before leaving for high school;
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together

on raising attendance levels across the school.

- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.

- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence is authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or similar.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

From September 2015 a pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly.
PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.
All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an action plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. Due to the serious nature of persistent absence, school will always consider requesting support from the local authority attendance team in order to address the matter. School will also consider requesting that the local authority issue penalty notices, or use other sanctions, as a means of improving attendance.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to reception

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you,
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance lead and/or head teacher if absences persist,
- Consider using parenting contracts or panel meetings in order to identify barriers to regular attendance and agree targets for improvement,
- Refer the matter to the local authority school attendance team, where appropriate,
- Consider requesting that the local authority issue penalty notices in accordance with LCC's Code of Conduct, or use other legal sanctions, as appropriate, in order to improve attendance

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

In-School Strategies to Improve Attendance/Punctuality (see appendix):

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. School may

consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils, pastoral staff and the head teacher,
- Home visits,
- Use of parenting contracts,
- Use of the common assessment framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the local authority school attendance team),
- Use of attendance panels,
- Use of penalty notices
- Referrals for legal action

The Local Authority School Attendance Service:

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST). PAST will also support school in trying to resolve the situation by agreement and will work to support school and parents in achieving improved levels of attendance.

Use of Legal Measures:

Coates Lane Primary School defines irregular attendance in line with the thresholds set out for the use of penalty notices within the Local Authorities Code of Conduct. If other ways of trying to improve the attendance of an individual pupil fail, and we consider attendance to be irregular, where absences are unauthorised the case may be referred to the School Attendance Legal Team (SALT), who can use sanctions such as penalty notices or prosecutions in the magistrates' court.
Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the local authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.55**am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. The afternoon session starts at **1.15pm** and again, prompt attendance is expected.

Registers are marked by **9.05am/1.20pm** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.25am/1.30pm** the registers will be closed. In accordance with regulation, if your child 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 penalty notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the head teacher and/or a member of the pastoral support team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave in Term Time:

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.
Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.
There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form, available from the school office.

It is important that parents understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional. Therefore, parents are advised to provide school with any relevant information regarding their request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional. Information provided after a decision has been made may not be considered.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:

  When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

  Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods.

- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.

- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already a cause for concern, or could become concerning, as a result of taking leave.

- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

In certain circumstances, where leave has been agreed, parents risk losing their

child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date and readmission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific criteria which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll in these circumstances are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.

Religious Absence:

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, (i.e. the day set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member) and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.
Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

Alternative provision and use of directions:

There are a range of reasons why pupils might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their main school. The main reasons are listed below:

- Pupils who have been excluded, either for a fixed period of more than 5 days or permanently,
- When a pupil is unable to access provision at their main school for medical reasons
- When a pupil is required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour; either on a temporary basis or with a view to making a permanent move to the alternative provision (managed move)

When a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for the purposes of improving behaviour, the governors of the main school must issue a written 'direction' informing all parents of the alternative provision which their child is required to attend. Where a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for all other reasons, the issuing of a written direction is considered best practice.

Pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons:

The introduction of new statutory guidance on 1st September 2014 places much more emphasis on the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils; whether their condition is short or long term. The school will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be as a result of specific practices or resources used within school or by sourcing more appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this should always be done via the use of a direction (please see the relevant section of this policy).

Roles and responsibilities for attendance matters in this school:

Parents:

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Contact school on 1st day of absence
- Avoid any leave in term time, but apply in advance using form if the reason for leave is unavoidable/exceptional
- Attendance at meetings in school
- Participation in parenting contracts and common assessment framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies

Pupils:

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtime
- Attend school/registration punctually
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

Headteacher / (**School Attendance Lead): David Toddington**

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school confirms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision
- Where there is ambiguity regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process

Designated Staff: Mrs Francis

- First day response: Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and log this information accordingly by text message or telephone call
- Input and update the attendance registers
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, following Absence Flowcharts 1, 2 and 3 (see appendix), and using parenting contracts where appropriate

All School Staff:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To see pupils' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff

- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures

Governors

- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to consider and make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the head teacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent.

Expectations regarding regular attendance:

As a school, we aim to have all of our pupils in school every day. Whilst we recognise that pupils may have unavoidable absences at times due to illness and other unavoidable cause, we aim to reduce unauthorised absence and to work with parents and pupils to minimise absence where possible.
Our minimum expected level of attendance is 96%. We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the area.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. As stated previously, Coates Lane Primary School defines irregular attendance in line with the thresholds set out for the use of penalty notices within the Local Authorities Code of Conduct.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in newsletters and we ask for your full support.

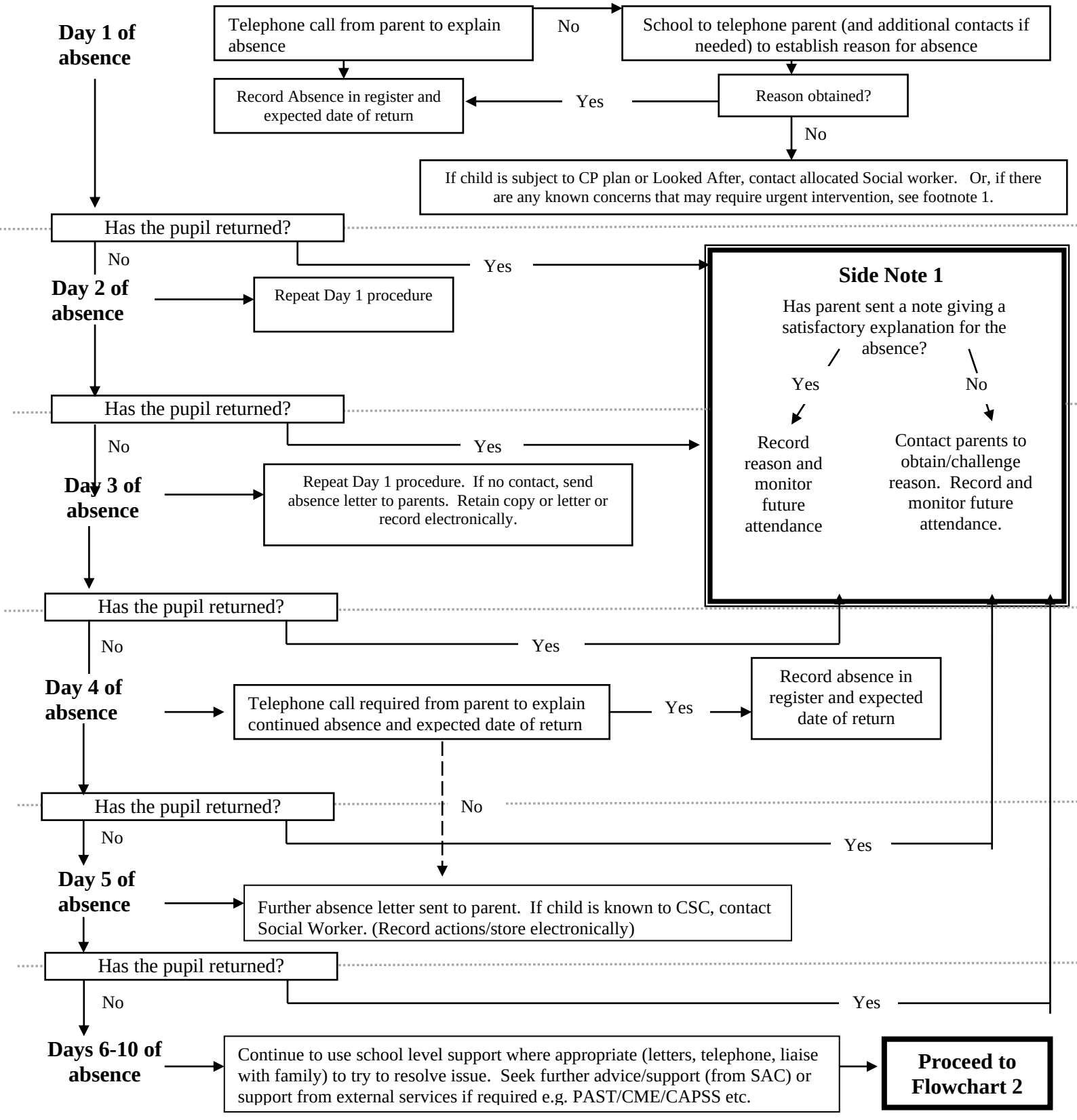
Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Date of Policy: September 2026

Latest Review Date: September 2027

FLOWCHART 1: PRIMARY SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES – DAYS 1-10

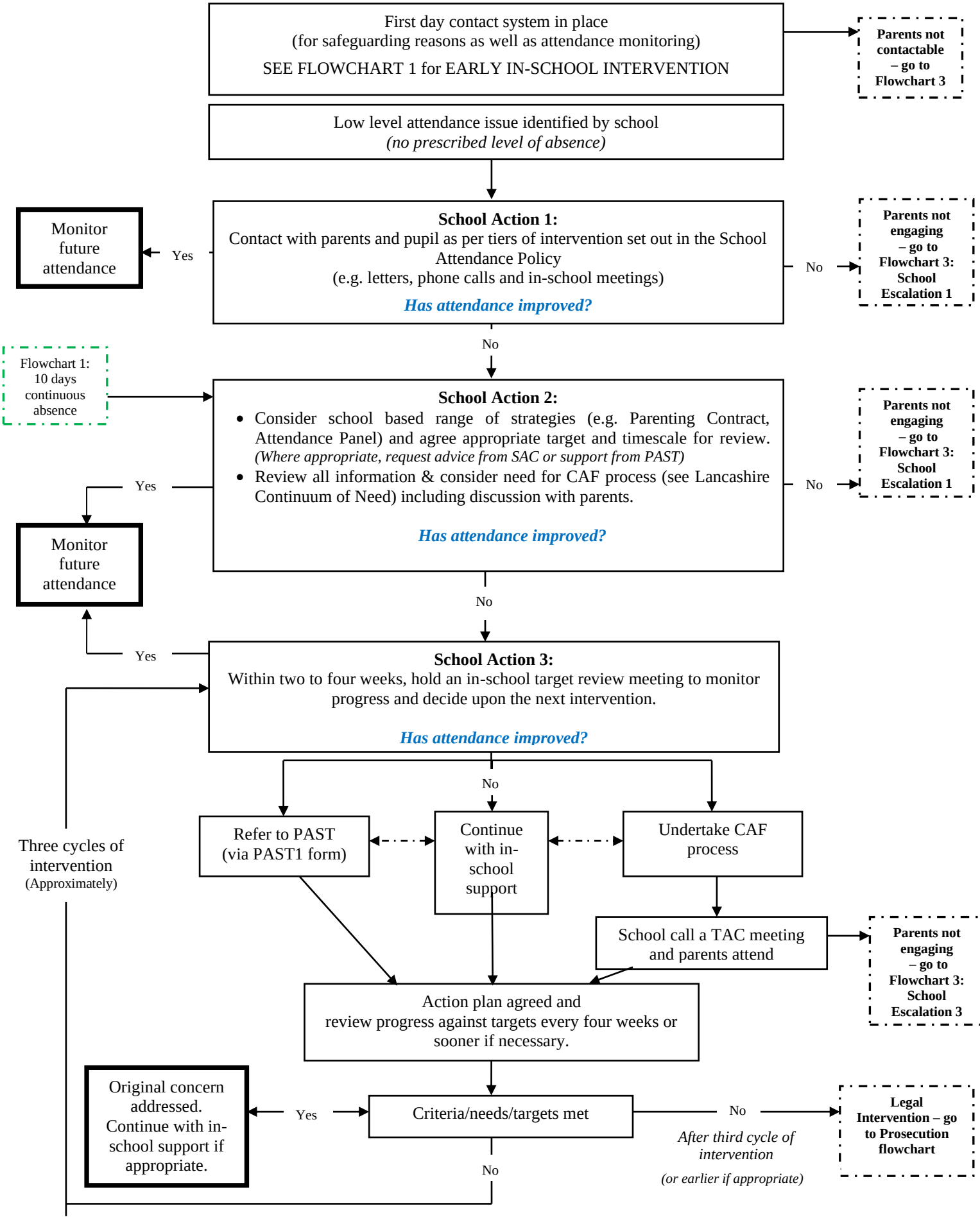


If at any point there are concerns about the safety or welfare of the pupil, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.

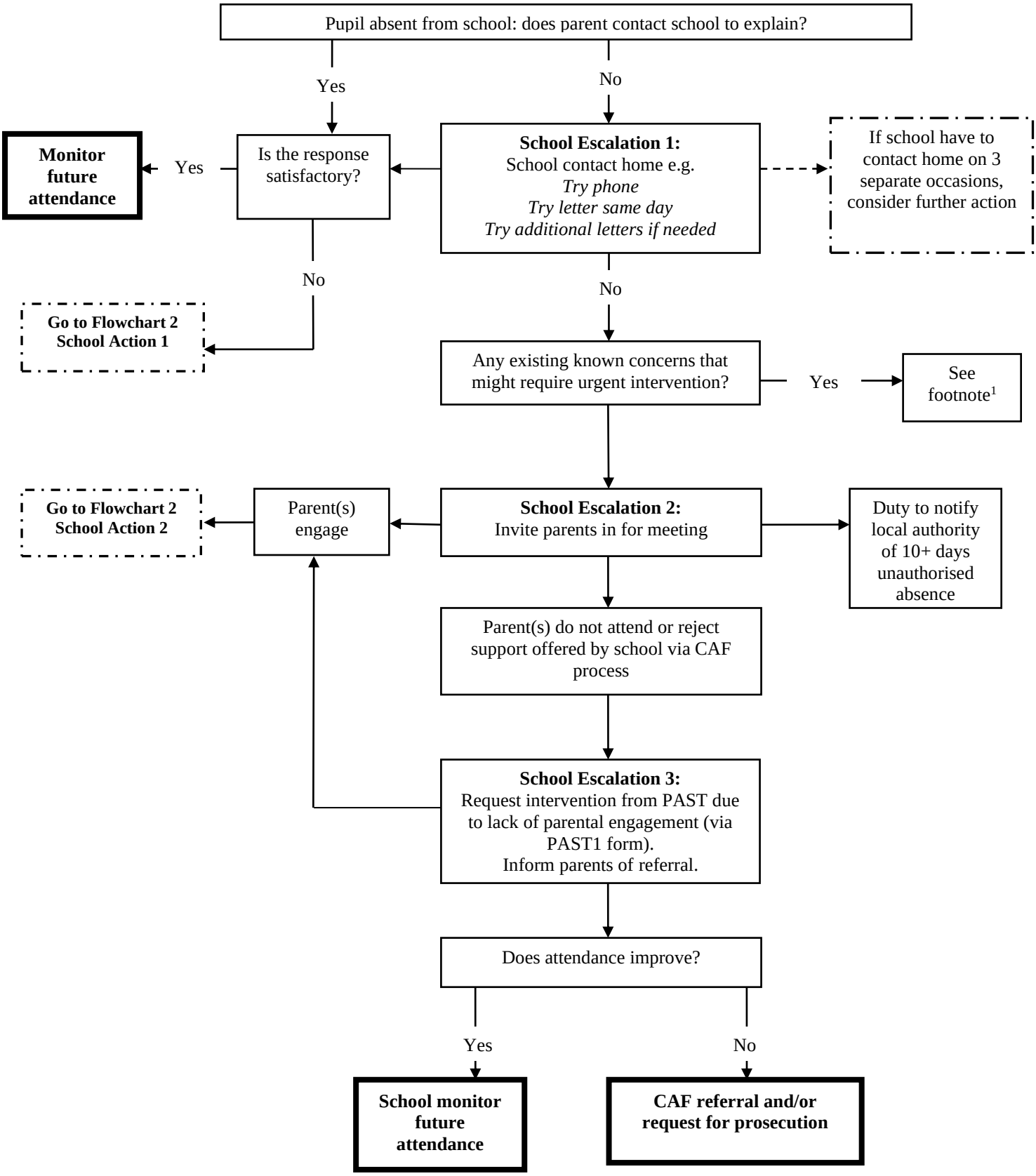
[1]In some instances, more urgent notification to the local authority may be appropriate if contact with parents/carers is problematic e.g.

- Children Looked After – schools should notify the CLA Service Manager
- Children subject to a Child Protection plan – schools should notify the named social worker
- Children in situations of known domestic violence – schools should consider whether safeguarding/child protection procedures should be followed.
- Advice can be sought from the School Attendance Consultant at any time if this is required.

FLOWCHART 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES



FLOWCHART 3: PRIMARY SCHOOL PATHWAYS FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES HARD TO ENGAGE PARENTS



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