

Effectively Managing Attendance and Punctuality and Developing a School Attendance Policy

August 2024

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Education Welfare Service

Introduction

This document aims to provide guidance to schools on managing and developing effective systems and policies to promote and ensure attendance and punctuality. Promoting good attendance is a priority for all schools. Good attendance at school ensures that children are able to develop both academically and socially, improving their future life chances, but it also has a significant welfare role in safeguarding children and young people. Many issues related to non-attendance will highlight children with particular health or social needs.

An effective policy will form part of the school strategies for managing pupil welfare and relates to policies on behaviour, pastoral care and special educational needs. Sensitive awareness of pupils' home backgrounds and community values, good communication with parents, coupled with high expectations of pupils to achieve and an effective curriculum offer, need to be considered when developing a school policy on attendance. Thus, any policy and systems developed by the school should enable children to learn, stay healthy and safe and progress successfully from the school having built up good working habits. There is a direct link between poor attendance and poor attainment for a child or young person.

In Merton in 2019 for Key Stage 1 there was a 14% difference in reading, 20% difference in writing and 16% difference in mathematics between those passing the assessment at the expected level where their attendance was between 95-100% and where attendance was 90% (PA level) or below.

In Merton in 2019 Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths are assessed in combination (RWM) there was a 29% difference in RWM between those passing the assessment at the expected level where their attendance was between 95-100% and where attendance was 90% (PA level) or below.

Nationally the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 42. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

[The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4, Academic year 2018/19 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime (the proportion of children that had been cautioned or sentenced for any offence that had ever been persistently absent was 81% and for serious violence offence was 85%). [Education, children's social care and offending: local authority level dashboard, Academic year 2019/20 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

The pupils' perception and experience of school are important in any approach for promoting good attendance. The involvement of pupils and the attitudes of teachers are important in developing school ethos and relationships as aspects of school policy. As in other areas of school life, the expectations of teachers and how those expectations are communicated to pupils are critical for improving attendance. Poor attendance seriously affects pupil achievement. The curriculum offers continuity and progression in pupil learning and any absence from school will adversely affect the pupils' ability to participate and benefit from the learning programme. Absenteeism by some pupils is also disruptive for the progress of others. Non-attendance is linked to poor health as well as the risk of child protection issues and the potential to develop criminal behaviour.

We recognise that the pandemic has had a lasting impact on school attendance. Children have not had full school years and learning and family life have been significantly interrupted. This may be due to heightened levels of anxiety, impact on families or medical needs. Schools and services will need to work with families to address the specific concerns that may be a barrier to attendance, however returning to school and strong attendance is the basis for catch up and recovery. School attendance in Merton has improved since Covid and we are above national and London levels for attendance and better than national and London levels for persistent absence (PA) (pupil missed 10% or more of actual sessions regardless of the reason for absence) and severe absence (SA) (pupil missed 50% or more of actual sessions regardless of the reason for absence) has reduced across both phases. However, locally we have another 1.48% to improve attendance by and 6% to reduce PA by to get us back to pre-covid levels and this gap is even more at a national level. Even though Merton's attendance is higher than elsewhere there is a significant gap between children on free school meals and those who are not and for children on Education Health and Care Plans.

The focus for the government and the Children's Commissioner is that attendance is everyone's business. With a focus on early intervention, offering support and improving school attendance. The raising of the participation age in education to their 18th birthday means that our young people must engage in education or training for a further period of time.

Improvement in attendance has been achieved in schools with a high attending ethos and good administrative systems for all children as well as targeted care for individuals. This document outlines what should go into an attendance policy and system as well as providing guidance on effective case work that schools can undertake to help parents meet their obligations to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually.

From the national survey of children's views about attendance [ImpactEd Evaluation \(impactgroup.co.uk\)](https://www.impactgroup.co.uk/impact-ed-evaluation) we can see that a key factor in developing and strong attendance ethos is the sense of belonging that the child has with the school and the school ability to build strong relationship with parents. This is all in the context of high attendance expectation. Understanding children's and family's needs must be at the heart of any approach to strong attendance in a school.

Effectively managing attendance and punctuality and developing a whole school attendance policy

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Part 1

Sections 1 – 4

Law Policy and Practice

Section 1: Legislation

The legislative framework that relates to school attendance is extensive. The following is a summary of the principal legislation and statutory instruments. For further information, please refer to the appropriate document.

Education Act 1996

Parental Duty (Section 7)

The parent of every child of compulsory school age (see footnotes) shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence. The term 'parent' includes those who have parental responsibility for, or care of, a child (which includes the local authority in the case of looked-after children). Magistrates may impose a parenting order if this would help prevent further pupil absence. The order will require parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions for up to three months. It may specify other requirements, for example ensuring the child is escorted to and from school for up to twelve months.

School Attendance Orders (Sections 437–443)

A school attendance order (SAO) gives an LEA power to help it ensure that children attend school. A LEA must serve a SAO on the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to prove the child is receiving suitable education, and where the authority believes the child should attend school. The attendance order specifies the school (or pupil referral unit) that the child should attend. Failure to comply with a SAO is an offence, unless the parent can prove the child is receiving suitable education outside school.

Prosecution for irregular attendance (Section 444)

If a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the LEA LA can prosecute a parent unless the parent can prove that one of the statutory defences¹ apply. LEAs must judge whether and when to prosecute on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes prosecution will be a last resort; in other cases, it may be right to begin prosecution at a much earlier stage to prevent problems worsening. Continuity of learning is critical to educational progress, so LEAs-LAs should adopt a vigorous stance to truancy. A block of prosecutions could help prove to parents how seriously the LA regards truancy and condoned unjustified absence. LAs should make sure local magistrates are aware of truancy problems, including problems with parentally condoned unjustified absence. Parents may be prosecuted for the non attendance of their child/ren. On conviction of a Section 444 section 1 offence the parent of each child may be fined up to £1,000. In order to prove the higher offence the LA, as the prosecutor, must show that the parent had knowledge of the child's absence and that there was no justifiable reason. On conviction of a Section

444 1A offence each parent may be fined up to £2,500 and or imprisoned for up to 3 months. If they fail to attend court a warrant for their arrest may be issued.

1 In law compulsory school age is the term after the child reaches their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June in the academic school year that the child reaches 16.

The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of his absence from the school (a) with leave, (b) at any time when he was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause, or (c) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs.

The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if the parent proves (a) that the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home, and (b) that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority for any of the following (i) his transport to and from the school, (ii) boarding accommodation for him at or near the school, or (iii) enabling him to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his home. Walking distance means (a) in relation to a child who is under the age of eight, means 3.218688 kilometres (two miles), and (b) in relation to a child who has attained the age of eight, means 4.828032 kilometres (three miles), in each case measured by the nearest available route.

If it is proved that the child has no fixed abode, the parent shall be acquitted if he proves (a) that he is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place, (b) that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and (c) if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

These will apply to any parent who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is registered at a school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

The amounts stated on the Penalty Notices will be £80 for those who pay within 21 days; and £160 for those who pay within 28 days for the first offence. A second Penalty Notice fine will be £160 with no option to make early part payment. No more than two fines can be issued per parent per child in a rolling three year period. After two fines any subsequent enforcement action will be via prosecution under s4441/1A Education Act 1996.

Children Act 1989

Education Supervision Orders (Section 36)

An Education Supervision Order (ESO) makes the LA responsible for educating a child of compulsory school age. LAs may apply for an ESO instead of, or as well as, prosecuting parents for poor attendance or failure to obey a school attendance order. ESOs should ensure that such a child receives full-time education suited to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs, and that both parent and child are given sufficient support and guidance. A supervising officer is appointed to work with the child and family. ESO proceedings are 'family proceedings' as defined by the Children Act; this means the child's welfare is the

main consideration. An ESO normally lasts one year or until the young person reaches 16 years of age. ESOs may be extended for up to three years if an LA applies within three months of the expiry date and may be extended more than once.

Parental Responsibility (Section 3 (1))

Parents married to each other at the time of a child's birth have shared parental responsibility. Fathers that are unmarried at the time of birth but are named on the birth certificate do have parental responsibility.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

All schools (Schools, Academies, Free schools, private and independent schools and alternative education establishments) must notify the Local Authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

The guidance also places a statutory duty on schools to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii) (see Annex A from the statutory guidance).

The school must tell the local authority when a child comes off roll by or before the date on which they are taken off roll. This is a duty on all types of schools. The school must collect key data and agree (if applicable) if the child can come off roll and the code under which this is agreed.

When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority must include:

- (a) the full name of the pupil,
- (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides,
- (c) at Least one telephone number of the parent,
- (d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable,
- (e) the name of the pupil's social worker and youth justice worker if they have one and
- (e) the ground in regulation under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (Appendix 3).

Under the guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance and Keeping Children Safe in Education there is a statutory duty that schools will collect and share this information with the LA.

The Education (School Leaving Date) Order 1997

The school leaving date for 1998 and for successive years shall be the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they are 16 years old.

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

Regulation states that schools must be open for 380 sessions each school year.

The Education Inspection Bill 2006 (Section 103,104 and 105)

The new DfE Guidance to schools and Local Authorities that came into effect in September 2007 for pupils excluded from school states that any parent of any child found in a public place whilst excluded from school in the first five days of any exclusion may be issued with a PN or be prosecuted. Likewise, where a child does not attend an alternative education provision or PRU provision and the arrangements have been confirmed in writing to the parent the parent may be issued with a PN or prosecuted to ensure good attendance.

Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced in April 2004

Section 19 relates to the making of Parent Contracts for exclusion from school or truancy.

Section 20 refers to the opportunity to apply for a Parenting Order in relation to exclusion from school or truancy.

Section 23 deals with the authority for the issue of Penalty Notices for truancy.

This Act requires that the local authority draw up a code of conduct in respect of the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices, for consultation with Head Teachers and Police. Included, though not legally required, will be included a code of conduct in relation to both-Attendance Contracts and Parenting Orders.

Crime & Disorder Act 1998

Introduced Anti Social Behaviour Orders. As part of obtaining an ASBO Acceptable Behaviour Contracts were evolved as a source of evidence. These have now been

used for poor attendance and behaviour in school. They have also been incorporated with ABAs being sought by other agencies such as Police and Housing.

Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) & Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA)

The Courts officer works with agencies, such as police and housing in tackling behaviour both in and out of school.

Acceptable Behaviour Agreements are voluntary agreements in order to correct behaviour, which is unacceptable; they last initially for 6 months and are renewable. This is often coupled with attendance issues. The school will provide an incident log. In school they are used in an effort to prevent exclusion.

Breaches of an ABA are to be noted as the ABA may be used together with other evidence when consideration is being given to other enforcement.

The Courts Officer will take a lead role in gathering education based evidence when police are seeking an CBO.

Section 16 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

This introduced designated places and roles and responsibilities for dealing with truancy. Merton Division of the Metropolitan Police and the Education Department of London Borough of Merton have agreed to adopt a co-ordinated approach, working in partnership, as and when truancy patrols are considered appropriate. They may be undertaken by school based Police Officers.

Children & Young Persons Act 1933 and Merton's local bylaws relating to child employment

Addresses Child Employment and child health and safety. Any employer of a child of compulsory school age must ensure that they have a work permit that legally entitles them to work. An employer may be prosecuted for employing children and young people illegally.

Children and Young Persons Act 1963, S.37 The Children (Performances) Regulations 2014

Covers licensing for children employed in entertainment and the licensing of Matrons/Chaperones. Any child from birth until they cease to be of compulsory

school age who is employed in entertainment including modelling, filming, television work, sports or music must be licensed to do so. The law states the hours that children may work and when they may do this. The production company should apply for the licence for the child to perform at least 21 days in advance. Those wishing to become chaperones require an enhanced DBS check, references, passport photos, proof of identification and address and will need to complete an application form.

Merton also allows organisations that meet the criteria to apply for a Body of Persons Approval. Information on this process can be found on our website. [School attendance, welfare and support : Children in entertainment | Merton Council](#)

Section 2 Guidance

In addition to the legislative framework, a considerable amount of guidance some of which is statutory is available. For full details, please refer to the appropriate documents.

Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities August 2024

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

Expectations of the Local Authority (LA)

The LA must have a School Attendance Team – that gives guidance and support to all schools (LA/Academies/ Free/private and independent schools) free of charge.

- The core functions to be provided to all schools are communication and advice, targeting support meetings, multi-disciplinary support for families and legal intervention.
- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support to and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School Head.
- Schools and LA would need to offer and use Attendance Contracts where less formal support hasn't been successful prior to legal action to try and improve attendance.
- Anyone with absence of 50% should have targeted joined up support, including a family plan and consideration of the child's special needs and a potential safeguarding hub referral.
- To offer and facilitate Targeted Support Meetings (TSM's) to schools with attendance levels below the national average for their phase; it is expected local authorities meet at least termly with each school. Where a termly meeting is requested, this should be provided. Schools are expected to take part in the Targeting Support Meeting in accordance with their safeguarding duties, so they should not refuse to meet. For schools with attendance levels above the national average for their phase, the frequency may be reduced to one Targeting Support Meeting per school year where the school and local authority agree.

Expectations of schools

- All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

- Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Listen and understand the issues, offer, and facilitate support, use Attendance Contracts where less formal support hasn't been successful to try and improve attendance and take enforcement/legal action after this to try and improve attendance.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Schools should engage with the offer of a Targeted Support Meeting to support improved attendance and as part of their safeguarding duties.
- Schools are expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

Expectations of academy trust boards and governing bodies of maintained schools

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties with regards to improving attendance and targeted support meetings with the Local Authority.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure that all school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- If attendance is below expected levels in a school Governors should develop a plan with the school to address it and monitor that plan at Governors meetings.

Expected first day of attendance

Most school admissions involve the school or admission authority offering a place to the parent of the prospective pupil or, in the case of admission to sixth form, the prospective pupil. An offer of a place is not an agreement. Before a pupil can be registered at a school the parent (or prospective pupil) must have accepted the offer, either by agreeing the starting day in advance or the pupil attending the school on that day. In the normal admissions round, when parents have accepted the school place and starting day offered, the local authority can communicate that agreement to schools on behalf of the parent. E.g. when LA's co-ordinate in-year applications for school places.

Removing pupils from roll

A school cannot retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register or attendance register. The admission register and attendance register must be an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. A pupil's attendance must be recorded up until the date that the pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

Notifying the LA of children joining the school, leaving the school and where they have had 15 days of sickness or 10 days of unauthorised absence.

- On roll: Through the School Admissions system or via LGfL USO-FX if you don't access this system and within 5 days of admitting a child.
- Off roll: Via Merton's online electronic form within 24 hours of removing a child from roll.
- Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U) via Merton's online electronic form.
- Sickness returns: providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness via Merton's online electronic form.

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) Updated 14 July 2023

How well schools manage and promote attendance and punctuality will be evaluated under the Behaviour and Attitudes judgement. The Inspectors will observe how leaders and staff create a safe, calm, orderly and positive environment in the school and the impact this has on behaviour and attitudes.

Inspectors looking at attendance will look to observe and see evidence of:

- A calm and orderly environment enabling pupils to learn.
- Clear routines and expectations.
- Strong focus on attendance and punctuality so that disruption to learning is minimised.
- Clear and effective behaviour and attendance policies which include rewards and consequences. How policies are applied and if they are consistent and applied by all staff.
- Pupils' motivation and positive attitudes to learning.
- Observe pupils' punctuality in arriving to school and at lessons.

- The school maybe working with pupils with particular needs in order to improve their behaviour and/or their attendance and can explain what strategies they have tried and what they are doing to improve an individual student's behaviour/attendance taking into account the individual circumstances of the school.
- They will look at the pupils who are not present on the day of inspection and what education they are receiving, should they believe that not having student on site on the day of inspection is an attempt to have an impact on the inspection the school are likely to judge criteria 2 and 4 as inadequate.
- How the school analyses absence, PA and SA rates for all pupils' and for different groups compared to national averages for all pupils; this includes the extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low.

The DfE Children Missing Education statutory guidance for Local Authorities (September 2016)

Local Authorities under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 had to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME). There were concerns about children going missing between schools and those leaving the country, between schools and the LA. The new guidance places a statutory duty on schools to collect information during the admissions procedure and again when the child is leaving the school. It is the school's responsibility to make reasonable enquiries to ascertain this information and that investigations as to the whereabouts of children is a shared responsibility.

Merton's Children Missing from Education Policy December 21

This Guidance addresses the statutory duty placed on LAs in the DfE Children Missing Education statutory guidance for Local Authorities (September 2016). The duty is to make sure that any children not receiving, or at risk of not receiving, suitable education are identified quickly, and effective tracking systems and support arrangements are put in place. For further detail please see Merton's CME Policy. [CME good practice guidance \(merton.gov.uk\)](http://merton.gov.uk)

Children Missing Education

Merton tracks all children missing education via the off rolling notifications from schools at our monthly panel. Merton's Children Missing Education Guidance highlights the responsibilities of schools and other agencies in this process. The Authorities CME Officers are the EWS Manager and School Admissions Co-ordinator. Merton's Policy may be found on the Internet. Merton tracks its pupils with 20% or less attendance as vulnerable to CME and schools/academies should bring all pupils who meet these criteria to the attention of the CME Officers.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

This is statutory guidance from the DfE This includes safeguarding information on children missing from education, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, preventing radicalisation, safer recruitment, managing allegations of abuse against staff and what knowledge all staff should have around the safeguarding agenda.

[Keeping children safe in education 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Part-time Timetables WTTIA 2024

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their 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. ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

Merton's Part time Attendance guidance September 2022

Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils. It is illegal for schools to discriminate against pupils on the basis of their SEN and/or disability or to coerce a parent/carer in to agreeing their child will attend part time in order to avoid exclusion. A reduced timetable may be considered as part of their reintegration approach for pupils who have not attended school for a period of time due to illness, disability, mental health issues, family circumstances, etc. it is accepted that a reduced timetable may be appropriate as part of a planned reintegration for pupils who have not attended school for a period of time. The setting must be able to demonstrate that the recommendations in this guidance have been followed or as a method of assisting the child to manage their behaviour to enable them to access learning and if after other strategies have been implemented and exhausted and the recommendations in this guidance have been followed. [Education Welfare Service - Part time timetable guidance - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The Local Authority collects information on part-time education to monitor the practise as this is part of the LA's responsibility under CME.

School Census

The DfE will include the attendance rates of reception aged children but not their persistent absence figures in the School Census count. For children in year 1 – 10 three full terms attendance and persistent absence will be calculated and for those in year 11 two and a half terms (excluding from May half term to the end of July) will be included in the count and published in the national figures. PA figures will be published to include anyone with absence of 10% or more. Severe absence figures will be published for all schools showing the percentage at 50% absence or more. Data on the number of sessions lost under each reportable code is also collected and published.

Children not in School Census (CNIS)

The CNIS Census requires the LA to submit details of children who are not on the roll of a school to the DfE. This includes children who are waiting for a school place, have left their old school but have not started at another school in this country or where we are establishing their whereabouts, and we believe that they are not in receipt of education.

LA Revised Code of Conduct Penalty Notices August 2024

Merton revised its Code of Conduct to include being able to issue Penalty Notices when the national threshold is met. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Notice to Improve

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. An authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a notice to improve would have any impact on a parent's behaviour (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

Children Not Collected from School, setting or after school childcare provision

Merton's policy on children not collected from school, setting or after school provision can be found here. [Joint Policy Agreement for any child who would under normal circumstances be collected from school or from the extended school \(merton.gov.uk\)](#)

Guidance and Support

Further Guidance is available from the DfE schools' attendance website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

The Education Welfare Service can provide training to whole staff teams on registration systems, categorisation of absences, whole school attendance policies and other training around attendance matters. Schools should discuss their requirements with their EWO's.

Child Protection and designated safeguarding lead Training for school staff may be provided by a multi agency delivery group. Further information may be obtained from the LA.

Inclusion and exclusion advice can be provided by the Schools Inclusion Co-ordinator in the Virtual Behaviour Service.

Section3: What Improves Attendance

Before you can consider developing an attendance policy you need to look at what improves attendance and why some young people do not attend school.

The DfE have issued a toolkit and advice and guidance. [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/toolkits/toolkit-for-schools-communicating-with-families-to-support-attendance)

The DfE have published case studies and You Tube content of how schools have improved attendance. [dfE improving school attendance - Search Videos \(bing.com\)](https://www.bing.com/search?q=dfe+improving+school+attendance)

There is also research and good practice in the area which supports improved attendance through understanding issues, changing practice, multi agency working and supporting families and pupils.

[ImpactEd Evaluation \(impactgroup.uk\)](https://www.impactgroup.co.uk/)

[A Theory of Change to help make attendance everyone's business in Redcar & Cleveland \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/)

[CC A4 HEADER \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/)

Work between schools

- Setting up expectations and patterns in primary school.

- Support for transitions of vulnerable pupils.

- Sharing relevant information to support attendance.

- Sharing good practice and learning from each other.

School policies and procedures

- Whole school approach – clear policy with daily routines providing consistency in registration procedure and follow up to all staff. This creates an attendance culture.

- Policy clearly makes the link between performance and attendance. “Action to improve attendance and behaviour is most effective when it is linked to well designed efforts to improve attitudes to learning and attainment” OFSTED.

- Policy focuses on punctuality and attendance, getting the 95%’s to 100% as well as 80%’s to 85%’s.

- Tracking and targeting all at risk of PA pupils.

- Tracking and targeting all PA pupils below 90%.

- Tracking and targeting all Severe Absence pupils below 50%.

- Use of IT – use of administration staff to support teachers and senior managers to analyse trends in data.

- Senior managers use data to generate action.

- Is the non attendance class based, subject based, related to lunchtimes, lack of pre / post school provision, supply teachers – what training do they get.

- Attendance data is linked to performance data and used for target setting.

- First day contact made by a known and respected individual.

- Schools follow the latest guidance around on and off rolling pupils and report to the LA at times as defined by legislation or statutory guidance.

- An Attendance Contract is in place where attendance is below expected levels.

Welcoming school

A positive welcoming school environment creating high expectation for attendance and a sense of belonging.
Strong relationships with parents.
Curriculum that motivates.
Rewards system that values academic and non academic progress.
Young people given positions of responsibility.
Low levels of fixed term exclusion – less disruption.

Data

Track data on all pupils to identify trends, cohorts and plan interventions to meet need
Use daily tracking to emphasise the importance of attendance through communication with pupils and families.
A system of rewards building from good attendance data.

Support for children

Anti bullying policy.
Anti bullying action by all staff.
Anti bullying curriculum in PSHE.
Collect and analyse data on bullying and implement strategies using this information.
Behaviour support.
Identified pastoral staff.
Small group support.
A whole school approach to Mental Health including effective relationships with the school's mental health team.
Structured pre/lunchtime and post school activities targeting vulnerable children.
Creating quiet and safe places around the school.
Potentially threatening areas of the school supervised, corridors supervised at lesson change over, pupils kept on school site at lunch.
Peer support processes set up.
Specific work targeted at vulnerable groups: young carers, travellers.
Health Care Plans that identify need and support young people to attend to the best of their ability and catch up on work missed.
Systems to help non-attendees/ excludees catch up missed work – this can be via in school centres, online learning or other support resources.
Reintegration processes that welcome children back in.
Induction processes for in year admissions that help them catch up missed work
Use of Alternative education projects for KS4 long term non-attendees to re-engage.
Use of youth workers to mentor young people and help them cope emotionally and socially with school.
Use of mental health in schools' workers to support good mental health.
Use of social workers in schools to support pupils and families to overcome barriers that may prevent or impact on attendance.
1:1 support for parents.

Support for parents

Clear expectations (home school agreement) and consistent follow up to counter casual attitudes.

Parents who are new to the UK and others benefit from understanding the importance of education and what a good level of attendance.

Home school relationships set up and maintained.

Building schools' links with parents who are hostile/ defensive about school.

Complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.

Helping parents with support to manage their children: including parenting programmes and early intervention services and their own and their children's health needs (Children's Attendance Project research July 2015)

Support for language.

Effective use of Attendance Contracts.

Peer support processes set up.

Effective use of the local area Early Help framework [Effective Support for Families in Merton - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](http://mertonscp.org.uk)

Support for teachers

Clear written daily routines, especially for supply staff.

Use of administration staff to support tutors/ pastoral staff.

Non contact time for pastoral staff/ tutors.

Use of youth workers to mentor young people and help them cope emotionally with school including 1:1 support.

Training in use of IT systems, safeguarding and school systems.

Behaviour training.

Clear role as tutor, planned programme to start each day and planned PHSE curriculum. "Form tutors have a significant influence on pupil's attitudes and progress" [OFSTED].

Work between schools

Setting up expectations and patterns in primary school.

Support for transitions of vulnerable pupils.

Sharing relevant information to support attendance.

Sharing good practice between schools.

Working with Education Welfare

Clear criteria regarding which students' schools are dealing with and which require EWO help.

Education Welfare Officers used to support whole school policy not just hard cases.

Focus on attendance issues.

Truancy patrols.

Targeting work at vulnerable pupils prior to non attendance becoming entrenched

Good practice is shared across LA/ nationally.

Legal enforcement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Involvement of the senior management team

Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.

Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Establish clear lines of responsibility.

Ensure good communication within the school and with parents, students and support agencies.

Ensure the attendance policy is updated frequently and adopted as an integral part of the pastoral policy of the school.

Use every public forum to comment on attendance and punctuality (parents' meetings, new starters, assemblies, etc.)

Regularly monitor the effective use of the school's registration system.

Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, for individual pupils or cohorts looking at boys and girls, year groups, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, pupils with a social worker or who are looked-after by the local authority, pupils eligible for free school meals, and any pupils from backgrounds (including ethnicities, religions or beliefs, or sexual orientations where applicable) in the school community that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers.

Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Ensure that the policy is being applied fairly and consistently whilst considering the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Involvement of parents

Communicate frequently with parents about positive achievements and improvements and in ways that emphasise the responsibility and role of parents in partnership with the school.

Ensure parents are welcomed into the school and can gain easy access to staff.

Create a parents' room.

Create a warm and inviting entrance area.

Ensure parents understand their role in promoting good attendance by including attendance and punctuality as part of the home school agreement.

Use of Attendance Contracts to support engagement.

Targeted support for vulnerable parents.

Involvement of the pupils

Seek the views of pupils through questionnaires, discussion, and school council meetings.

Consider and implement, when appropriate, pupil suggestions for school improvements.

Give pupils responsibilities and encourage them to take an active part in the life of the school.

Invite feedback from pupils with varying levels of attendance.

Develop social areas and facilities for pupils.

Provide a range of planned games, leisure and play facilities during breaks.

Involvement of the school staff

Provide frequent feedback to pupils on their progress, referring to attendance when appropriate.

Ensure the curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of the pupils.

Enable pupils to make some choices when applicable to encourage a reduction in absenteeism.

Ensure school staff are aware of, and plan for, cultural and religious events and occasions when particular pupils are likely to be absent.

Staff frequently welcome pupils into the school at the beginning of the day and there is a formal conclusion or summing up of the pupils' experience at the end of the day.

Bullying is identified and tackled by school staff, sometimes using confidential and anonymous means for pupils to identify problems. (Some schools have used a worry box for anonymous complaints and a video camera to record incidents that are then discussed by teachers and pupils, and sometimes resolved by pupils themselves).

There is a good level of adult supervision and presence around the school at all times, with positive interaction, which has a powerful influence on pupils, especially as they enter and leave the school.

School staff lead by example, are punctual and have good attendance.

Visit homes, in conjunction with the EWO, when that will improve communication and help to improve pupils' achievement and attendance.

The role of the EWO and Targeted Support Meeting Lead to support the school

Schools will receive one termly targeted support meeting where attendance is below national levels and an annual meeting where it is above national levels of attendance. The EWS staff will work strategically to improve attendance. Schools will be responsible for all work pre legal that historically EWOs have undertaken.

EWOs should work closely with schools and families to resolve attendance issues, arranging home visits where necessary. The key to success is an effective working relationship between schools and the EWS including:

- Shared policies and operational practices between the EWS and the schools.
- Clearly defined roles of school staff and EWOs.
- How much time the EWO will devote to the school.
- Expectation of the quality of EWO service.
- Arrangements for referral, regular review, monitoring and evaluation.
- Procedures for resolving enquiries.

To achieve this, each school maintained by the LA should have a named EWO responsible for the attendance of all the pupils in the school. If a child lives in a neighbouring LA, follow-up action will require co-operative working with the relevant EWS. Any necessary legal action is the responsibility of the LA where the child lives.

To provide an effective service, an EWO will need to demonstrate the following:

- The ability to communicate and engage with children and young people, their families, schools, educational services and establishments and other statutory and voluntary agencies, and to promote education by regular and worthwhile attendance at school or otherwise.
- To develop the values, knowledge and skills that enable members of the service to respond effectively to absence from school in an organised and considered way.
- The ability to promote regular school attendance and help parents in meeting their responsibilities to secure the education of children and young people.
- The ability to assess and review children and young people and family circumstances, plan appropriate responses and intervention within the statutory framework, and evaluate outcomes.
- The ability to contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Education Welfare Service within an LA.
- To take personal responsibility in managing, evaluating and further developing professional competences through effective use of supervision, appraisal, and management of workload.
- To have the knowledge and skills that will promote the protection of children and young people from abuse and exploitation.

Procedures for registration

Ensure that all staff are trained in how to take a school register.

Ensure all staff are aware of their role within the registration process.

Ensure registers are returned to the central collection point as soon as possible after each registration period if using manual registers or ensure IT is working where electronic registration takes place.

Collection and use of attendance data (WONDE)

The DfE are collecting daily attendance, absence and on and off roll data from all state schools. This does not apply to independent and private schools.

The LA require all state funded schools and academies to provide daily attendance, absence and on and off roll data to the LA. This will allow the LA to:

- Collect and analyse attendance data regularly.
- Identify attendance patterns and the needs and characteristics of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Publish attendance figures and focus on pupil achievements.
- Encourage competition between year groups and class groups.
- Provide detailed information to parents as part of the pupil's annual report and at other appropriate times.
- Inform the attendance managers of developing patterns and trends.
- Submit external returns on time.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Ensure all staff are aware of the current guidance on the categorisation of absence taking into consideration national guidance and local arrangements.

Inform parents that the school decides if an absence is authorised and not the parent.

Inform parents that unauthorised leave of absence in term time are not acceptable.

Ensure that parents understand that unauthorised absence is not acceptable.

Following up non-attendance

Make contact with a pupil's parent on the first day of absence.

Ensure that you have current telephone numbers and contact details for each pupil's parents.

Develop a structured series of contact letters to challenge any lack of parental response.

Ensure that all staff are aware of their own responsibilities for following up absent pupils and for referring them to senior colleague.

Discuss with your EWO pupils who are developing patterns of non attendance or poor punctuality.

Induction of new pupils and staff

The school has developed procedures for welcoming and inducting new parents and pupils, as well as using constructively any information on the needs and backgrounds of the pupil.

Explain start and finish times to parents and expectations about regular attendance and how they should advise the school if a child is absent from school.

Introduce new members of staff to their responsibilities for attendance management.

Brief new staff on the school's philosophy on attendance.
Ensure that staff receive training in attendance management.

Re-entry strategies for absentees

Pupils who are late or have been absent are positively welcomed into the class on their return.

Ensure absent pupils will have work adapted to help them to catch up and to minimise problems on return to school.

Offer extended day, extra tutorial and homework provisions so that pupils can catch up and have more individual or small group attention from teachers.

Look at positive activities and small groups to create a sense of belonging.

Rewards and sanctions

Have a structured approach to rewards and sanctions.

Recognise and praise good attendance and punctuality.

Recognise and praise improving attendees (Children's Attendance Project)

Frequently use merits, stickers, certificates, golden time or similar systems to reward good attendance and punctuality.

Clear criteria for the use of Penalty Notices in your policy

Moving From Satisfactory – Good Attendance

The school attendance leader is a senior manager supported by the management team of the school who models expected practice to improve attendance.

The school's attendance targets are met and in line with national/authority levels and plans for improvement/sustainability are in place.

The percentage of pupils with persistent absence is falling and in line with national/authority data.

Attendance is a priority for school improvement.

A whole school approach to attendance is used with clear roles and responsibilities for all.

Pupils are engaged in shaping, delivering and reviewing school policies and activities.

Feedback from pupils on specific issues leads to systemic change in the work of the school on improving attendance.

There is dedicated time and resources allocated for attendance.

Reliable (electronic) systems are in place to gather and analyse data.

School data is analysed to inform reasons for absence, profile persistent absence, identify vulnerable groups and links to standards.

Improved attendance is linked with improved attainment and class teachers know the attendance and academic performance of the students.

The school ensures staff, pupils and parents/carers understand the registration times and adhere to them.

Data is reliable and routinely submitted to LA/DfE when required

Registration practice is efficient and effective.

Good attendance and punctuality is modelled by all adults in the school community.

Punctuality of pupils at the start of school sessions and when attending lessons is good.

There is an escalation of interventions which are used fairly and systematically and the impact of these interventions is widely known.

There is first day contact for pupils.

Coping/problem solving skills are being explicitly taught to support attendance and punctuality

The school employs additional personnel to support attendance (as needed) e.g. Home School Liaison Officers/Parent Support Advisers to offer support and challenge to parents/carers to reduce absence.

Appropriate in and out of school support is available for vulnerable pupils and their parents/carers.

Pupils get clear messages from the school that good punctuality and high levels of attendance are requirements to future employability.

The school works with the local authority to support legal interventions to promote the pupils' right to regular education.

Moving From Good – Outstanding Attendance

The Head provides strong and determined leadership to promote attendance and this is reflected in all areas of the school.

Overall absence targets are met and are better than national/authority levels and plans for improvement/sustainability are in place and regularly reviewed.

The percentage of pupils with persistent absence is falling and better than the national/authority data.

Attendance is consistently high across all groups of pupils.

Attendance of vulnerable groups is good with no evidence of disproportionate absence by specific groups.

Pupils' attendance to lessons is excellent and closely monitored by the school.

Improved teaching, attainment and attendance are all linked together and the school has data to show how this has been achieved and class teachers know this data about their students.

The school offers an appropriate balance of support and challenge to parents/carers.

Effective pupil tracking is in place to identify any pupil whose attendance or punctuality begins to slip and action is taken immediately to address this

The school's escalation of intervention alerts staff to pupils who have attendance difficulties due to health related issues.

The school makes sure it knows the whereabouts of all pupils every day and all pupils are spoken to on return.

Action plans are in place for pupils who have persistent absence, which includes relevant agencies to support improvements in attendance.

Emotional support programmes are at the established/enhancing stage as a whole school approach and are integrated into all aspects of learning and teaching

Small group work is used to support vulnerable pupils and the school can demonstrate the impact this has and know what interventions have been successful and why.

Where bullying impacts on attendance actions have been taken to address this and the outcomes are measurable.

The school has a well developed participation strategy which involves all pupils.

School attendance panels for medical absence/other absence are in place and result in improving attendance.

There is a "team around the child" or "team around the family" approach to support for vulnerable pupils and access to external support services is swift and the impact of this can be demonstrated.

Links with faith leaders are used to minimise absence where appropriate.

Pupils can demonstrate an understanding of the links between attendance, punctuality and future employability.

Through assemblies, PSHE and other activities, the need for excellent punctuality and attendance is reinforced by input from employers.

The school has established a system with local businesses to prevent non-attendees using their premises.

The school contributes to the LA's Safeguarding and SEND Inspections, Children and Young People's Plan, reviews of the Code of Conduct and other plans.

The school is implementing the use of PNs for unauthorised leave of absence and, as a result of the policy or other work with parents unauthorised leave has reduced.

Section 4: Developing a whole School Attendance Policy

An attendance policy communicates values and expectations to the school community and outlines strategies for promoting attendance. It is part of a framework of policy documents. The development of an attendance policy and strategies to improve attendance will also be managed and implemented within the framework of the School's Development Plan.

When drawing up an attendance policy schools may wish to consider the following:

- How you communicate your belief that education is important
- Stating why the school thinks attendance is important
- Using language that is accessible to all
- Positively phrasing statements
- How the policy integrates with all other school policies
- Where the additional financial and staffing resources will be procured from
- The DfE and Ofsted's expectations.

MODEL FOR ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This may include:

- Your overall mission statement or school's motto including your aims and values and how attendance contributes to this
- How you communicate your belief that education is important including the educational, social and emotional learning and development aspects of good attendance
- The level of attendance that you expect as a school
- The link between attendance, punctuality and attainment
- The link between examination success and future carer choices making it age appropriate
- The start and finish times of school sessions and set out in your policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent.
- When parents will be provided with dates of school terms and INSET dates
- Where to find information on the school's attendance policy online or as a paper copy

EXPECTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

This may include:

- An explanation of the partnership between the home, school and community
- Illustrating how you view good attendance as an integral part of the school's ethos and culture and everyone's responsibility.
- How you will build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Ensuring that parents, pupils and all school staff understand the procedures and expectations around attendance and punctuality
- How you will communicate these expectations to pupils, students and staff. Including policies, newsletters, letters and online information.

RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

This may include:

- The LAs responsibility to offer educational provision for those of compulsory school age
- The parents' right to express a preference for a school
- The legal position (Education Act 1996) and that parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend
- The legal position regarding taking a register School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The statutory Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance
- The schools responsibility to consider safeguarding risks and refer to the Children and Families Hub where concerns exist. Where a child has poor attendance, it is the school's responsibility to co-operate to ensure they are safeguarded
- Who in the school has responsibility for managing attendance overall and how this is delegated
- What the parent and students can expect from the school
- What the school expects from its students
- What the school expects from its parents
- What the school expects form tutors/heads of learning/pastoral staff to do
- What the Attendance Officer or the person with responsibility for attendance will do
- What the Education Welfare Officer will do
- What is an absence
- How parents contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason for absence and by what time in the day contact should be made and then how frequently there after
- When schools will contact parents of the first day of absence if they have not heard from them
- What are acceptable reasons for absence (school can/will authorise) and what are unacceptable reasons for absence (school cannot/will not authorise)
- Taking a leave of absence in term time
- Dental, optical and doctor's appointments in school time and proof required for appointments
- What is persistent absence and what is severe absence
- When the school may ask for medical evidence to be provided.
- Information required when children join and leave the school
- When the school will remove a child from the roll and that schools must notify the LA.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

This may include:

- What is an attendance and what is an absence
- What are acceptable reasons for absence (school can/will authorise) and what are unacceptable reasons for absence (school cannot/will not authorise).
- Taking a leave of absence in term time for exceptional reasons and how parents request this
- Dental, optical and doctor's appointments in school time
- What is persistent absence
- When the school may ask for medical evidence to be provided
- When the school will remove a child from the school roll and what information parents are required to provide and in what timescales.

PROCEDURES - WHO DOES WHAT AND WHEN

This may include:

- The start and finish times of the school day including any breaks
- The stages, processes and staffing involved in registration
- A system for lateness including the time the register closes including what happens if their child is late after registration has closed
- The importance of having up to date contact details including address, phone numbers and e-mails for parents and emergency contacts
- Whom the parents should contact on the first day of their child's absence and at what time
- When the school will contact the parent if the child fails to arrive at school
- What parents should do if they don't have access to a phone or are unable to write an explanation for the absence
- Signing in and signing out systems for lateness and leaving or returning from an appointment
- How and when problems with attendance are communicated to parents, including letters, meetings in school, TAC/TAF meetings etc
- How the school reintegrates students returning to school after absence
- How the school uses Medical Plans (as outlined in the schools Medical Policy) to support the attendance of children who have poor attendance for medical reasons
- Procedures that are relevant to your individual school.

STRATEGIES USED BY THE SCHOOL IN THE AREA OF ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

This may include:

- How will this policy integrate with other policies that impact upon attendance e.g., safeguarding, behaviour etc?
- Rules, rewards, incentives, and sanctions
- First day contact schemes
- The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most
- The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance
- Attendance support groups
- Individual target setting
- Meeting with students and parents
- Referrals to other support networks/agencies
- Referral to EWS
- Parent and community initiatives
- Reintegration programmes
- Sanctions in school
- Clear escalation of the consequences of unauthorised absence
- When Attendance Contracts may be used
- The point at which Fixed Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g., for an unauthorised leave of absence in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, REFLECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

This may include:

- How the school will monitor the effectiveness of the policy
- When monitoring and evaluation will take place and who will carry this out
- Which students, staff, parents, governors and the wider community will be involved
- Any additional funds needed to carry this out
- How any evaluations are to be fed back into the various stages of the policy.

All school attendance policies must contain information on issuing Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence in Term Time and comply with the requirements of the Legislation and Code of Conduct. The Policy must be reviewed by the LA to ensure compliance. If you update or amend your attendance policy and wish the LA to issue Fixed Penalty Notices on your behalf for unauthorised leave of absence in term time the policy must be legally compliant and the new policy should be forwarded to education.welfare@merton to ensure it is compliant.

It is clear that the complex nature of attendance issues requires the involvement of parents, pupils, teachers and support staff, as well as external agencies, in the process of developing an effective school policy. The policy should give clear guidance on practice and be easily communicated to parents, pupils and staff and recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and that it is a continuous process that requires regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.

Conclusion

Research has shown that schools' success in improving attendance depends on continual attention to detail, consistent applications of agreed procedures and most of all the provision of a stimulating and appropriate curriculum for the needs of all pupils. Attempts to maintain pupils' regular attendance are an important equal opportunity issue for schools and the LA in ensuring justice and equal rights and access for all pupils. Approaches to promoting good attendance are one of the ways in which schools act to deliver these objectives.

Part 2

Section 5 – 7

Registration and Absence Management

Section 5: Recommended Registration Procedures for Manual Registers and When Computerised Registration is Unavailable

The register is a legal document that must be maintained in a good condition, kept accurately and marked in ink. The register may be required in a court of law as evidence where the LA is prosecuting a parent / carer for non-attendance.

- Legally registers should be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the last date of entry. Schools may wish to keep records for longer than this especially where students are attending for 6 years at primary and 5 years at secondary school.
- Schools may set their own time limits for the period that they keep their register open for but the amount of time should be limited.
- The class teacher or another member of staff, who is informed of the registration procedure, may complete the register. Staff should never allow a student to mark the register.
- Registers must be taken twice daily. A register must be taken at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.
- Pupils should be marked as either present, absent, at an approved educational activity or absent due to unavoidable cause.
- Blank spaces should not be left in the register.
- Black ink should be used to mark students as present.
- Red ink should be used to circle absences (unless using microfiche to store old register).
- Tippex, pencil and other coloured inks should not be used. Apart from red circles to indicate an absence.
- Where a pupil arrives late before the close of registration (within 30 minutes) they should be marked as Late (L) for the session.
- Where a pupil arrives after registration having attended a doctor's, dental, optical or other medical appointment the code (L) may be used.
- Where a student arrives after the close of register without a valid reason an unauthorised late absent mark should be applied (U).
- The school should retain and record reasons for absence for a minimum of one academic year.

Recommended Registration Procedures for Computerised Registration Systems

The register is a legal document that must be maintained in a good condition, kept accurately. The register may be required in a court of law as evidence where the LA is prosecuting a parent / carer for non-attendance.

- Where schools keep a computerised registration system, they should ensure that they have kept the original entry and a record of change.
- Legally registers should be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the last date of entry. Schools may wish to keep records for longer than this especially where students are attending for 6 years at primary and 5 years at secondary school.
- Schools can keep their register open for a maximum of 30 minutes at the start of the school day. Schools are free to set shorter periods if they wish.
- The class teacher or another member of staff, who is informed of the registration procedure, may complete the register. Staff should never allow a student to mark a register.
- Registers must be taken twice daily. A register must be taken at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon. Schools are free to choose at what point in the afternoon they register students.
- Pupils should be marked as either present, absent, at an approved educational activity or absent due to unavoidable circumstances.
- Blank spaces should not be left in the register.
- Attendance data should be entered into the computer daily in all schools.
- Teachers should record and store explanations for absence and retain this for one academic year.
- Schools should use the computerised registration system to generate letters about absence.
- Where a pupil arrives late before the close of registration (within 30 minutes) they should be marked as Late (L) for the session.
- Where a pupil arrives after registration having attended a doctor's, dental, optical or other medical appointment the code (L) may be used.
- Where a student arrives after the close of register without a valid reason an unauthorised late absent mark should be applied (U).

Statutory Duties to Inspect Register

The LA has a statutory responsibility to inspect manual or computerised registration systems. Schools legally must make registers available to HMI and the LA when required.

Section 6 : ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS 19th August 2024 onwards

All schools are required to use the national absence and attendance codes whether using manual or computerised registration systems. Schools must not adopt their own codes or change the meanings of the existing codes. This advice should be read in conjunction Working Together to Improve Attendance.

Registration code	Description	Physical meaning	Statistical meaning
/	Attending school	Present am	Attending school
\	Attending school	Present pm	Attending school
L	Attending school	absent when the register was taken but arrives before the register is closed.	Attending school
B	Attending an education activity not on the school site.	Attending any other approved educational activity	Attending an approved educational activity
D	Attending an education activity not on the school site.	Dual registered at another school	Not counted as a possible session
K	Attending an education activity not on the school site.	Attending an education provision arranged by the LA. Schools must record the nature of the provision, be notified of absences and record these with the relevant code	Attending an approved educational activity
P	Attending an education activity not on the school site.	Participating in a sporting activity	Attending an approved educational activity
V	Attending an education activity not on the school site.	Attending an education visit or trip	Attending an approved educational activity
W	Attending an education activity not on the school site.	Attending work experience	Attending an approved educational activity
C	Absent with authorisation	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Authorised absence
C1	Absent with authorisation	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Absent with authorisation	Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Absent with authorisation	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised absence
I	Absent with authorisation	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).	Authorised absence
J1	Absent with authorisation	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
M	Absent with authorisation	Attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
R	Absent with authorisation	Religious observance	Authorised absence

S	Absent with authorisation	Studying for a public examination	Authorised absence
T	Absent with authorisation	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
G	Absent without authorisation	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
N		Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent without authorisation	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
U	Absent without authorisation	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Q	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance.
X	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (under or over compulsory school age)	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend or not required to attend	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. Schools must record the nature of the provision, be notified of absences and record these with the relevant code.	Not a possible attendance
Z	Administrative codes	Prospective pupil not on the admission register	Not collected for statistical purposes
#	Administrative codes	Planned whole school closure	Not collected for statistical purposes
H	Code has been deleted	No longer in use. Exceptional leave granted by the school will be recorded with the C code.	Do not use. No longer a legal code

Section 7: School Based Intervention and Referrals to EWS (LA Schools and Academies purchasing a service)

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. The Government's approach to attendance is a support first model. The expectation is that schools will work their way from support up to sanction if required:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Before a referral is made to the Education Welfare Service, we would expect the school to have attempted to address any attendance or punctuality issues. School based interventions should include the following:

Ensuring an accurate register is taken every morning and every afternoon.
A policy for dealing with late arrivals and how this has been implemented.

Asking parent / carers to contact the school on the first day of absence and ensuring that a policy is developed to facilitate this.

Making contact with parents by telephone, letter or in person on the first day of a student's absence.

Discussions with the student about your concerns and in school strategies to support and promote attendance.

Meeting with parents / carers or others involved in the child's care to discuss attendance and punctuality issues and other factors that may be affecting attendance and to work towards developing and implementing a plan to support attendance.

An Attendance Contract if appropriate or attendance targets in any other plans.

Discussions with the EWO for general advice and suggestions on other strategies that they may be tried.

If the above strategies have failed to improve the student's attendance and the school consider it appropriate to make a referral to the EWS the school should complete the referral form as thoroughly as possible.

Referral should be clearly signed and dated by the school and state who the contact person is within the school.

The senior manager with responsibility for attendance should have a clear overview of the number of referrals being made by the school and may need to prioritise cases with the EWO to ensure that a workable caseload may be maintained.

The first page of the referral should include all the students, parents /carers and siblings' details if known and an indication if they belong to a vulnerable group.

The second page requires details of all school-based interventions, the presenting problems, attendance issues, contact with parents/ carers, Attendance Contract, pupil's relationships, attainment and other issues that are pertinent to the case.

A certificate of attendance should be attached as should any copies of letters.

Referrals that don't comply with the requirements of the service will be returned thus delaying any intervention.

School Based Intervention and Referrals to EWS from Academies that use an independent EWO or their own staff

The school is responsible for all attendance monitoring and intervention. Where a school chooses to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice or take other enforcement action the school must:

Ensuring an accurate register is taken every morning and every afternoon.

A policy for dealing with late arrivals and how this has been implemented.

Asking parent/carers to contact the school on the first day of absence and ensuring that a policy is developed to facilitate this.

Contacting parents by telephone, letter or in person on the first day of a student's absence.

Discussions with the student about your concerns and in school strategies to support and promote attendance.

Meeting with parents / carers or others involved in the child's care to discuss attendance and punctuality issues and other factors that may be affecting attendance and to work towards developing and implementing a plan to support attendance.

Referral should be clearly signed and dated by the school and state who the contact person is within the school.

The senior manager with responsibility for attendance should have a clear overview of the number of referrals being made by the school.

The first page of the referral should include all the students, parents /carers and siblings' details if known and an indication if they belong to vulnerable group.

The second page requires details of all school based interventions, the presenting problems, attendance issues, contact with parents/ carers, pupil's relationships, attainment and other issues that are pertinent to the case.

A certificate of attendance should be attached as should any copies of letters, Attendance Contracts or other relevant information.

Referrals that don't comply with the requirements of the service will be returned.

Part 3

Sections 8 – 12 Education Welfare Service (EWS)

Section 8: London Borough of Merton, Education Welfare Service

Referral From School

OPEN TO CLIENT

Referrals will only be accepted if they are fully completed

To: Education Welfare Service, London Borough of Merton, Merton Civic Centre,
 London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX.
 LGFL USO-FX: The London Borough of Merton Children Missing Education group.

From (School)		Staff Contact's Name	
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Subject Child			
Last name		First name	
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)		Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Address			
NC Year		Ethnicity	
Child in Care of LA		EHCP/SEN support	
Child in Need or Child Protection Plan		Suspensions from school	
Other vulnerabilities			

1. Parent or Other Significant Adult		2. Parent or Other Significant Adult	
Title		Title	
Last name		Last name	
First name		First name	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Address		Address	
Telephone Number		Telephone Number	
E-mail		E-mail	
Ethnicity		Ethnicity	
Interpreter Required		Interpreter Required	
Language Spoken		Language Spoken	
Relationship to Child		Relationship to Child	
Parental Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Parental Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Care of the Child	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Care of the Child	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sibling or Other Child		Sibling or Other Child	
Last name		Last name	
First name		First name	
Date of Birth		Date of Birth	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Address		Address	
School (if known)		School (if known)	

EWS referral criteria

*Attendance below 85% with the majority of absences being unauthorised;
 Or 10 days unauthorised absence consecutively or over a 10 week period;
 Or Sudden unexplained drop in attendance where no explanation for the absences has been received.*

The school must follow up on concerns regarding non-attendance initially and offer informal and formal support to the pupil and parent prior to making a referral to the EWS.

Child's name:

Date of Birth

Informal and formal support already offered by the school both to pupil and parent/carer	
Please include information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and support offered to the pupil • Contact and support offered to the parent/carer • Has school contacted parents? Include dates any logs. • Letters sent • Telephone calls • E-mails • Have parents been invited to a meeting in school to discuss absences? • Are there any other agencies involved? • If yes, state which agencies are supporting the family • Is there an Attendance Contract in place or a higher plan? If yes what is in place and when did it start and /or finish. • All support must be listed and if this was successful/not successful/not engaged with. 	

Reasons for Referral to EWS	
Please include information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting challenges • Attendance concerns 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil’s relationship with peer group • Impact on attainment • Additional relevant information • Expectations from referral to Merton EWS 	
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Please attach or embed a copy of the registration certificate.

Please note that all sections of the referral must be completed fully and a registration certificate embedded or attached or the referral will be rejected and returned for you to be completed.

EWOs visit alone so please advise if you aware of any health and safety issues relating to this referral?

I confirm that the information recorded above is a true and accurate record of this School’s work with the pupil named, who is a registered pupil at _____ School.

Print Name

Designation

Signed

Date

Please send this form and the registration certificate via LGFL USO-FX to the London Borough of Merton Children Missing Education group.

Referrals will only be accepted if they are fully completed

Section 9: ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Elective Home Education (EHE) is a fundamental right that parents can choose to educate their children other than in school. However, schools should not persuade parents to withdraw their child from the school roll to avoid exclusions or because of a

poor attendance/behaviour record. Schools should ensure that they refer any parent who may be contemplating educating other than at school to the Education Welfare Service so that they can be provided with detailed information and offered support and advice from the Local Authority about the requirements before they make any commitment to this route and should not remove the pupil from roll until the parent/carer has received information and confirmed in writing that they are accepting responsibility for their child's education.

Where parents withdraw their child from the school to educate themselves the school should notify the EHE Advisor on 020-4605-4021 or by Education.welfare@merton.gov.uk in the first instance.

When the LA become aware that a child is being so educated, they will arrange to gain evidence of the education provision being appropriate to the child's age, aptitude and ability as is our legal responsibility. We deem this to be a proactive responsibility.

The quality and appropriateness of the education being provided will be determined by a visit by a School Advisor who will submit a report. Where parents decline a visit then the authority would ask for a report to be submitted by the parent detailing the education being undertaken. The initial visit should be undertaken within a maximum of 6-8 weeks after the LA has been notified. Providing the provision is adequate a subsequent visit will be made 6 months later and if still satisfactory annually thereafter.

If during the visit the education being provided is deemed to be unsatisfactory another visit will take place three months later. Providing the provision is judged to be satisfactory a subsequent visit will be made 6 months later and if still satisfactory annually thereafter. Should the second check of education be found to be unsatisfactory the parents would be advised to apply for a place for their child in a school. The EWS and School Admissions department will give help and advice on admissions. Failure to voluntarily place the child in a school would result in a School Attendance Order being applied for through the courts and served on the parent/carer naming a school that they should register the child at.

Before a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), who is on the roll at a Special school can be removed in order to educate other than at school, the LA must be consulted and their approval must be given. This would be after the first satisfactory evaluation of education as agreed by SEN Panel to ensure that the child's needs are being met as required under the EHC Plan.

Section 10: Statutory Action

Statutory framework governing school attendance enforcement and basic guidelines on the use of enforcement strategies adopted by the service are communicated to schools. This method of intervention is most appropriate where parents are unwilling as opposed to unable to ensure their child's attendance at school.

ATTENDANCE LEVELS FOR STATUTORY CONSIDERATION

All pupils of statutory school age are expected to attain attendance levels of at least 96% attendance and many will achieve a higher percentage.

Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% or have attendance below 90% for two or more years, where the majority of the absences in the current academic year are unauthorised, or where they have had 10 days unauthorised absence in a 10 week period or a sudden unexplained drop in attendance where no explanation has been received and the school have not been able to contact the parent may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

An Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will attempt to engage with the family to resolve attendance related issues. Statutory action will be considered in cases where there is evidence to suggest that the parent is failing to comply with agreed action plans or will not engage.

Merton revised its Code of Conduct from August 2024 to include being able to issue Penalty Notices when the national threshold is met. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Where the threshold is met the school/academy must consider whether to pursue enforcement action (on each occasion) and we recommend that this is recorded on the pupil's file.

Support must be offered as appropriate, for example an Attendance Contract/referrals to outside and internal agencies and recorded on the pupil's file. If after support has been offered and given time to be effective attendance is still giving cause for concern then the EWO/Academy can issue a Notice to Improve (NTI).

Notice to improve (NTI)

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. An authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a notice to improve would have any impact on a parent's behaviour (e.g. because the parent has already

received one for a similar offence). The NTI should list all support offered, engaged with/or not and any further support being offered. It should show criteria by which it will be clear that the attendance has improved, what we are calling 'success criteria'. The success criteria should be developed on a case specific basis and should be deemed reasonable. The monitoring period will be between 3 and 6 weeks.

If the criteria for success are not met, a copy of the NTI, Attendance Contract and any other relevant documentation together with a Certificate of Attendance, signed by the head teacher should be handed to the EWO to be attached to the case papers.

Using the Penalty Notice process in relation to Unauthorised Leave of Absence of 5 days or 10 sessions running concurrently or separately within a rolling 10 week period

Stage One:

- The Governing Body incorporates information in the School's Attendance Policy regarding issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised holiday. A copy of the agreed policy is forwarded to the Senior EWO.

Stage Two:

- A request is made, by a parent/guardian for Leave of Absence. This should be via the school's Leave of Absence form, in advance.
- Where the parent requests/informs the school verbally, in advance, the school should keep a record of the conversation in writing.
- If the school refuses to authorise the absence, requested in writing or verbally, a letter should be sent explaining the reasons for the refusal and what action may be taken in relation to the absence.

Stage Three:

- The family take the Leave of Absence.
- The school formally refers the pupil/s to the EWO and writes to the parent/guardian regarding formal referral to the Education Welfare Service.

During Stage two and three:

- All letters to parents must be to each parent individually and per parent, per child.
- All letters must be signed by the Headteacher/Principal and be exact copies of the letters sent to the parent.
- All letters must be sent by 1st class post. In addition to posting you can also send by e-mail if you wish to do so.

Stage Four

- The school forwards copies of all appropriate paperwork to the Education Welfare Officer for processing.

For schools authorised to operate the Unauthorised Leave of Absence Penalty Notice process, pro forma and specimen letters that must be used will have been forwarded.

Section 23 of The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the power to issue PNs for truancy where a pupil who is suspended or permanently excluded from school is seen in a public place in the first 5 days during school time. The school must have notified the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. Schools must provide written evidence to the Local Authority that the pupil was seen in a public place during a period of exclusion and ask for a Penalty Notice to be issued. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance. These penalty notices are charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Penalty Notices (PNs) and legal action

The three routes for requesting a Penalty Notice are detailed above. Based on the evidence from the school the Local Authority will then make a decision if the criteria have been met to issue a Penalty Notice (PN). If a decision is made not to issue a PN the school will be notified of this decision. If the decision is made to proceed with a PN the relevant paperwork will be prepared.

Where a Penalty Notice (PN) is issued

The PN will be sent out by first class post to each parent/person with PR/day to day care and control under separate cover where appropriate. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. Parent(s) can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made.

The Courts Officer will gather the appropriate statements and create the SJP paperwork. These together with the requisite documentation will in most cases be served by 1st class post, otherwise by hand to the Defendant and via secure electronic means to the SJP section of the His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service. Under SJP, the Defendant is asked to contact the Court within 21 days of receipt of the paperwork. If no communication is received/a guilty plea made, then the Magistrate will make a judgement based on the paperwork provided by both parties. If the matter proceeds to a hearing in first instance the Courts Officer will undertake the prosecution. However, in the event of a 'Not Guilty' plea the case will be passed to the legal department who will then lead the case.

Parenting Orders

A Parenting Order is a Court Order that may be made by the Court separately to give support and guidance to the parents to improve a child's behaviour or support them to address the child's non attendance at school in addition to a fine or other penalty at sentencing.

Where a Parenting Order is made with regard to education, the Education Welfare Officer allocated to the school or the Lead Practitioner will usually be named as the Responsible Officer.

The Responsible Officer should meet with/ liaise with the parent/s subject to the Parenting Order on a regular basis, arrange /organise and/or refer the parent/s to an appropriate Parenting Course as laid down in the Parenting Order. They should also offer advice and guidance as appropriate with regard to improving attendance at school of the subject child/ren.

The Responsible Officer should follow appropriate procedures should the parent/s breach the terms of the Parenting Order.

Education Supervision Order (ESO) Section 36 Children's Act 1989. This is a strategy for dealing with poor attendance where the parents have engaged with the Education Welfare Service and they are willing but unable to effectively ensure their child's attendance at school.

A Planning Meeting inviting School Staff, Social Services, Police, other agencies, Parents/Guardians, Pupil, EWO and SEWO (Statutory) will be held. At this meeting an action plan should be drawn up and a review date set.

If the meeting decides it is appropriate to proceed to an ESO, the EWO/Courts Officer will complete a statement together with Forms C1 & C17. These will be passed to Legal Services for allocation.

A Directions hearing will be held at the Magistrates Court before a Clerk of the Court. Once directions have been agreed the case will go before the Magistrates. If the Order is granted the EWO will be the named officer who will work with the family. ESOs last for one year.

School Attendance Order (SAO).

Section 437 Education Act 1966. Where a child of compulsory school age is not on roll at a school or being educated other than at school, a SAO must be applied for.

The Courts Officer will write in the first instance requesting that the parent/s satisfy the London Borough of Merton that their child is receiving efficient full time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. If no response is received within the appropriate timescale, then the parent/s will be sent a Notice of Intention to Issue a School Attendance Order signed by the Director of Children, Schools and Families. This makes the formal request as above however also includes options that parents may adopt and will usually indicate schools within Merton with current vacancies. If after 15 days the LEA continues to believe that the child is not receiving education, then a School Attendance Order is issued by the Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families, naming a school where the child should be enrolled.

If the parent/s do not comply with the School Attendance Order, then consideration will be given to issuing a summons (per parent/person with parental responsibility) under section 443 of the Education Act 1996.

Before naming a school the Chair of the Governing Body must be consulted. If they object, they have 15 days to appeal to the Secretary of State.

Failure to comply with an order is an offence punishable by a fine.

Section 11: Working With Vulnerable Groups

For the most up to date information on services to support children and families, please access the Local Offer website www.merton.gov.uk/localoffer

Children in Care:

Children in Care are identified as a vulnerable group.

Virtual Heads are required to have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children that their authority looks after and for any child with a social worker.

Virtual School Headteachers should ensure that there are effective systems in place to maintain an up-to-date roll of its children in care and with a social worker who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress.

Care placement decisions must consider the educational needs of the child or young person and wherever possible a change of school, as a result of care placement move, should be avoided.

The Merton Virtual School Headteacher is a member of the Residential Placement Panel, the CiC Monitoring Group and the Permanency Panel, all of which focus on different aspects of care placement changes and their implications. This enables the VSHT to influence decisions that could adversely affect attendance at school or college of children and young people in care.

The Virtual School Headteacher reports regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of children in care on a termly basis to the Virtual School Steering Group (Governing Body) and annually to the Corporate Parenting Group.

Children in Care have been given the highest priority within school admissions arrangements therefore should not be subject to delay in accessing a school place in year. Allocation of a school place is required within 20 days. Additional Personal Education Plan meetings are held as children and young people in care transition to a new school or placement.

The Virtual School has commissioned Welfare Call to track and report attendance on a daily basis. Virtual School Advisory Teachers monitor each child's attendance and take swift and appropriate action to prevent further attendance issues, through discussion with Designated Teachers, social workers, carers and other professionals involved in the network around the child.

Advisory Teachers provide RAG rated updates about each child to the VSHT on a weekly basis, which include commentary and actions relating to attendance as well as academic progress and wider issues. Only children with 100% attendance for the previous week can be rated as 'Green'.

Where there are particular issues relating to poor attendance, children in care are referred to the Children Missing Education Panel. This can be for reasons of contextual safeguarding, non-compliance in education or other significant issues.

Good and excellent attendance is celebrated through rewards, as is high level of engagement in learning.

Children with a Social Worker

Virtual schools have an extended role to support social workers around improving the attendance of children who have a social worker. The Virtual school tracks the attendance of these pupils using welfare call where they are educated in Merton Schools. They support and advise social workers on how to improve attendance. They do not do direct support for children on a CIN/CP plan, unlike their role with Children in Care.

Children and Families Hub (formerly MASH)

The Children and Families Hub has the dual role of screening all referrals of school age children to ensure that they are not CME and processing “concerns” raised about Children Missing Education. If a child is referred to the Children and Families Hub and is not at school the child should be referred to CME panel for safeguarding oversight. The Education Navigator in the Children and Families Hub will BRAG rate all referrals against the agreed education criteria, which includes if the child is PA and /or has declining attendance to contribute to an overall safeguarding view of risk to the child or young person. See Appendix 7 for the criteria used to BRAG.

Child and Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Children’s attendance may be affected by their mental health. Referrals for CAMHS should be made through the Single Point of Access (SPA). Email is ssg-tr.spamertoncamhs@nhs.net For emergency case discussion and advice telephone 0800 292 2505 in office hours.

Mental Health Support (Getting Help or Getting More Help)

All schools have a mental health worker to support young people’s mental health.

Consultations are offered for school staff to discuss cases where they believe that Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) may explain a pupil’s avoidance, disengagement and non-attendance, driven by strong emotions associated with attending school.

Information on support services can be found using the link below.

<https://www.mertonscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NEW-MERTON-FLYER-1.pdf>

Children subject to a Child Protection Plan:

The EWS will review the attendance of each child that resides in Merton and attend a Merton School with the school and recommend appropriate action. Where the EWS is involved, they will attend Child Protection Conferences and contribute to the core group and care plan where necessary.

Children and Young People with Medical Needs:

Schools have a vital part to play in ensuring that pupils who are absent from school because of physical or mental health needs are reviewed regularly and sensitively and have the educational support they need to maintain their education. School should put in place a Health Care Plan to support the child in their education. Where a pupil is absent, or is likely to be absent, for over fifteen school days schools should discuss the absence with their EWO and if the referral criteria are met a referral to Melbury College should be considered. The Education of Children and Young People with Medical Needs provides further guidance. Email is mmes@merton.sch.uk

Early Help Co-ordinators

All primary schools have a named Early Help Co-ordinator who can support with parenting, running groups, Team Around the Family Plans (TAFs), thresholds and supporting improved school attendance.

Early Help for families with children and young people aged 0 – 19

Early Help can provide practical and emotional support for children, young people and families with a range of needs such as parenting support through group parenting programmes or one to one work in the family home, support through a voluntary or community organisation or support in an early years setting or school or through a health practitioner. Information, advice and guidance about early help services available to families in Merton can also be sought through the Family Service Directories <https://directories.merton.gov.uk> or by contacting our Early Help Outreach service on the following email fsd@merton.gov.uk. Information can also be found on our Merton Safeguarding Children's Partnership pages about our Effective Support for Families model. [Effective Support for Families in Merton - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](https://www.mertonscp.org.uk/effective-support-for-families-in-merton)

Early Years

Good Practice in the Early Years

Children can access publicly funded education from the ages of 2 up until they start mainstream school or reach statutory school age. Attendance in early years provision is not compulsory and settings should have policies and procedures in place to ensure that children's attendance is good and where there are absences that cause concern these are accounted for.

Local authority support will be via the Provider Bulletin, including information and resources on how settings can support parents and their children who are learning at home, for example, Hungry Little Minds [Hungry Little Minds – Simple fun, activities for kids aged 0 – 5 \(campaign.gov.uk\)](#) and Words for Life [Words for Life | National Literacy Trust | Words for Life](#) . For settings with vulnerable child/ren in their care, they will continue to receive a contact call to check in on the welfare of those children, if they are not in attendance.

Early years providers will continue to follow public health advice. Providers are supported with information and guidance via the Provider Bulletin to keep them up to date with the most relevant information.

“There is a vast range of evidence that confirms that children who access high quality Early Years settings succeed beyond their peers, especially for those children from vulnerable backgrounds. There is also evidence that erratic attendance can be a key indicator that other factors are impacting on the family. It may mean that additional support services would be of benefit. For all children who are being funded for Early Education, there is an expectation that attendance across a funding period is no less than 95%.

To claim for a child on the Headcount they must be in attendance for the total number of hours agreed on the Parent Early Education Agreement Form unless there is a valid reason. During an Audit you may incur losses if you cannot demonstrate a viable reason for why a child you have submitted on a Headcount was absent.

Providers should promote good attendance and Ofsted's Welfare Requirements state that you must record children's attendance on a daily basis. Attendance by children must be recorded on a daily register with start and end times. If the child is absent, the register should record the reason.

If a child has not attended for two or more days without their parent informing the provider, the provider must contact the parent or legal guardian and check the reason for the non-attendance. If the child has a named lead professional, the provider must contact the lead professional informing them of the absence and any reasons that the parent has given you.

If the child's attendance under either of the above scenarios does not improve, you are required to send a formal letter to the parent explaining that if they do not regularly attend, their place will be withdrawn. Please ensure that you maintain any

correspondence that you have with parents; this may well be required as part of any Audits by the Local Authority.

If a child's attendance is a cause of concern, then please follow your child protection procedures."

Family Information Service Hubs (FISH)

Parents and carers of children and young people aged 0- 19 (25 for children with SEND) can come along to speak with an Early Help Support Coordinator to gain information, advice and guidance around child development, living with teenagers, work and training, money, housing and benefits, finding childcare, education and accessing local support services.

Sessions must be booked in advance and can be done by visiting the following links; Church Road Children's Centre (Monday afternoons)

<https://fishchurchroad.eventbrite.co.uk>

Acacia Children's Centre (Wednesday mornings) <https://fishacacia.eventbrite.co.uk>

Family Hubs

To join up and enhance services delivered through Family Hubs transformation in local authority areas, ensuring all parents and carers can access the support they need when they need it. To contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families across England by ensuring that support provided is communicated and accessible to all parents and carers, including those who are hardest to reach and/or in most need.

Missing from Care and Home

Catch22 provides a service to all young people up to the age of 18 who have run away from home or care and are reported missing to the police. The aim of the service is to offer and to undertake a Return Home Interview (RHI). The RHI enables the development of a risk assessment for the young person and informs the interventions offered, including: a referral to the Children and Families Hub for protection and safeguarding, mediation with parents/carers, advocacy, one to one and small group sessions, anger management, safety planning, working on safe relationships, support to access additional services such as CAMHS, Sexual Health, Substance Misuse Services and Education.

The practitioners are extremely skilled in engaging this highly vulnerable group of young people and work towards stabilising their situation and preventing further episodes of going missing. The work involves providing both practical and emotional support to young people and their parents/carers where there has been a relationship breakdown at home.

The service works at all levels of intervention needed, short term or long term, depending on the need and vulnerability of the young person.

The project facilitates group work for those young people at risk of who are or being sexually exploited.

For further information please call Catch22 0203 701 8641

Safeguarding

Wider safeguarding issues such as Female Genital Mutilation, People Trafficking, Forced Marriage and Radicalisation may all be identified by a child's pattern of attendance or truancy. If there are concerns a Children and Families Hub referral should be made in all cases. If there are concerns that the child is at risk of radicalisation and may be travelling to a war zone either alone or as part of a family group a Children and Families Hub / Prevent referral must be made. The Police and The Children and Families Hub will then consider what action is appropriate. They can be contacted on 020-4605-4226 or 4227 for a consultation or to request a service use the link to obtain the form. [Children and Families Hub Request for Service Form - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](http://mertonscp.org.uk)

School Inclusion Co-ordinator

The School Inclusion Co-ordinator provides advice and guidance to schools and parents in respect of children who have been excluded from school (either for a fixed term or permanently) or who are at risk of exclusion from school. Schools are required to comply with the law when excluding a pupil from school and parents have rights to make representations in respect of any exclusion.

The School Inclusion Co-ordinator can be contacted on 07946132726.

Social Workers in School (SWIS)

All secondary schools have access to a SWIS worker who can support around safeguarding issues, TAF's, threshold levels and supporting children in education and their parents.

Teenage Pregnancy

All continuing pregnancies in those 16 years and under should be referred to the Children and Families Hub. Young parents are entitled to continue their education and cannot be excluded from the school role because of pregnancy. They are entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave if they so wish. Merton borough allows young fathers to take two weeks paternity leave. Schools are encouraged to have a named lead for the young person who will oversee the young person's education plan and risk assessment. Care to Learn funding is available to enable young parents to remain in educational courses. Learner Support Helpline:0800 121 8989, www.gov.uk/care-to-learn.

Travellers

Merton schools have a number of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils on roll with traveller culture and heritage. Their families may live on the local authority caravan site, in housing, or may be highly mobile and live temporarily in the local area. Traveller children may be dual registered at a 'base school' and at another school that they attend temporarily whilst they are travelling. In Merton, schools act as both 'base schools' for Traveller pupils permanently resident in the LA and offer temporary dual registered places for highly mobile Traveller pupils. Base schools may also provide distance learning packs of work, including on-line activities, for students to complete while they are travelling, and arrange for this to be returned and updated by post. The EWS can offer advice on the law in this matter and further information may be obtained from The Sutton and Merton Traveller Education Service who offer support and advice to schools, families and students.

Virtual Behaviour Service (VBS)

The Virtual Behaviour Service provides practical support, assessment, advice and training for schools to support children and young people who present with challenging and distressed behaviours. The team consists of specialist teachers and behaviour support workers. Schools can contact the team for advice and have a buy back system in place for ongoing support, assessments and training.

For advice and to discuss requests for support please contact VBS Deputy Manager Rachel Cooper, Rachel.Cooper@merton.gov.uk, USO-FX: rhopgood2.315
mob: 07946 890234

For advice to schools and parents on exclusions please contact Liz Kelly
Liz.kelly@merton.gov.uk 07946 132726

The manager of the VBS is Denise Dyer. Denise.dyer@merton.gov.uk 07535650326

Young Carers Support Merton

Carers First run a Young Carers Service to support Young Carers up to 18 years old who are affected by the long-term illness, physical disability, learning disability, mental health or substance misuse issue of a close family member. Schools, social care professionals and families can refer to the service, which offers support, information, advice and guidance, advocacy and time away from caring via social activities for young people. They take a whole family approach and work closely with several local partner organisations. Please call them on 0300 303 1555 hello@carersfirst.org.uk for further information about the service. Young carers may need a carers assessment by Social Care. This will require a Children and Families Hub referral.

Youth Justice

The Youth Justice Team works with young people on court orders. One of the priority areas of work is to ensure engagement with education, training or employment and overcome barriers that may prevent attendance. The team have specialist education workers that carry out this function. The team is also supported by part-time partnership secondments from Speech and Language Therapy, CAMHS, School nursing and Catch22.

Wimbledon Guild of Social Welfare

Wimbledon Guild support families through bereavement counselling, funding for school uniform and educational school trips as well as “white goods” and other items. Referrals maybe made direct from schools to the Guild.

Section 12 Training For School Staff Around Attendance

and Welfare Matters

The Education Inclusion Team offer training to School Governors each academic year. The course outline and date of this may be found in the Governor Training Manual.

The Education Welfare Service offers an Attendance Forum that operates as a support network and offers training for attendance administrators or attendance managers. This network runs during the academic year and a place may be booked through the EWS.

The Education Welfare Service can provide training to whole staff teams on registration systems, categorisation of absences, whole school attendance policies and other training around attendance matters. Schools should discuss their requirements with their EWO.

Behaviour, Attendance and Safeguarding audits can be conducted at the request of the school or on the recommendation of the LA.

Name of School
Specimen Leave of Absence Form

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

Request for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances during Term Time

It is not advisable to take your child/ren on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024

- **Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher.** (This is **not an automatic right** of parents/guardians)
- You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.
- **Please do not book your leave of absence until authority is given.**
- Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request and any supporting evidence provided.
- If the absence is approved by the Head Teacher you will be advised as to how many days the Head teacher has approved for your child's absence.
- If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days the absence will be unauthorised.
- Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service and the possibility of statutory action and a fine/prosecution

In order for your application for absence to be considered, please complete below:

Name(s) of Child(ren).....

Form/Year-----

Home address:

.....
.....

Dates of absence: From..... To:.....

Reason for request (**additional evidence may be required**)/Who is travelling?

.....
.....

Signed: Parent/Guardian

Email address:..... Mobile phone number:.....

Date form submitted:.....

The above request for leave of absence in term time for
has/has not been authorised. If authorised, your child/ren should return to school
on:.....

Signed..... Headteacher/Principal.....

School Data Checklist:

For School Office Use Only

Pupil's name	
Previous leave of absence requested/taken (last 2 years)	
Nature of exceptional circumstances and evidence provided	
No of days granted (if any)	

School Name

Record of verbal Leave of Absence request

Date:

Person taking the call:

.....

Family name: _____

Child/ren's names: _____

Name of parent who requested Leave of Absence: _____

Who is travelling? _____

Dates of Leave of Absence requested: _____

Date on which the pupil is expected to return to school: _____

Reason for Leave of Absence request:

Evidence requested from parent to support exceptional circumstances:

Was the Parent advised that Leave of Absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances? Yes/No

Was the parent advised that a letter would be sent advising whether the Leave of Absence was/was not agreed? Yes/No

Was the Parent advised that if the Leave of Absence is not agreed by the School the case will be referred to the EWO and it is likely that a Penalty Notice will be issued carrying with it a fine of £160? Yes/No

Leave of Absence: Authorised/Unauthorised

Letter sent to parent/s advising them of School's decision. Yes/No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Attendance Contract requirements, good practice and template

An Attendance Contract is a formal written agreement with the School/Academy, Parent(s), Pupil(s), and School/Academies Education Welfare Officer (EWO) or appropriate Lead Professional.

An Attendance Contract is not a punitive tool and is designed to provide a support framework.

Parents can't be compelled to enter into a contract and they cannot be agreed in the absence of the parent/s

A letter should be sent to the parents/carers to invite them to a meeting to discuss the concerns regarding attendance and/or punctuality with a time and date of the appointment and details of who to contact if this is not convenient.

- The appointment should be arranged in advanced.
- The letter(s) should be sent by post to the home addressed to each individual parent.
- Both Parents should be invited to attend unless this would place one or other at risk or be counterproductive.
- The letter should be translated into a language that the parent understands.
- The letter should include that they should bring the child with them if they are not in school that day or if they are in school advise the parent that they will be brought to the meeting if they are able to understand and contribute.
- Offer the parent the opportunity to discuss matters in private that may be sensitive.
- If an interpreter is needed then this should be booked in advance. Family members should not be used.
- The Representative of the School/Academy must be able to make commitments on behalf of the establishment, at the meeting.

Attendance Contracts should be in place for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months.

The aim is to offer support by listening to the reasons for absence and difficulties that prevent regular school attendance during a meeting with the parents, child, School/Academy staff and EWO/Attendance Lead in the school where appropriate.

It should set out an action plan to address the poor school attendance of the pupil with realistic achievable targets to be made within a reasonable time.

Be written in clear and accessible language that everyone understands.

Any issues raised by the parent/carer or pupil on the school's side are addressed with specific solutions.

It should avoid general statements of good intentions on either side.

Everyone attending should be asked to score the level of concern as per the scale shown on the Attendance Contract.

A review date should be set at the initial meeting

The Attendance Contract should be printed and signed at the end of the Meeting (time should be allowed for this to happen). Everyone at the meeting should be given a copy of the Attendance Contract and a copy placed on the pupil's file.

Further information and advice is available on Attendance Contracts in Working Together to Improve School Attendance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) . Please also see Appendix 1

Attendance contracts can be used as an outcome of a TAF meeting
<https://www.mertonscp.org.uk/working-with-children/effective-support-for-families-in-merton/> including templates for meetings and family plans.

Useful links:

Early Help/Children's Social Care - candfhub@merton.gov.uk

Below are some suggestions of tasks/actions that you may wish to include. You may also wish to include tasks or actions that are specific to the pupil or family.

The Parent/Carer agrees to:

Suggested Action
Make sure pupil attends school every day.
Contact the school by phone to check attendance.
Look for the pupil and when possible, return them to school should they have chosen to walk out of school.
Attend any future meetings that may be called by school staff or Education Welfare Officer/Lead Professional.
Notify the school on the day of absence, giving a reason and indicating a return date/time.
Contact the school as soon as you become aware of any concerns, issues or problems that you or the pupil have.
Contact the EWO if the pupil feels that the school are not dealing with any issue, or if the pupil feels uncomfortable about discussing an issue with the school.
Find out where the pupil goes when he/she is not in school and inform the EWO so that action can be taken if this arises.
Notify the school of any occasions when you are aware that the pupil will be late into school giving reasons.

Keep the school updated with full contact details, including, where possible, a telephone number.
Ensure the pupil is seen by a GP/a GP is consulted when ill and provide medical evidence of any absence due to illness (i.e., appointment cards, prescriptions, letters etc.)
Address the concerns that the child has about leaving home or why they stay at home.
Reward child with extra positive activities at home / weekend with improved attendance.

The school agrees to:

Suggested Action
Address concerns related to why the child doesn't want to be in school - this could be extra support with learning/ friendship groups/ bullying.
Respond as soon as practicably possible to any issues raised by the Pupil, Parent/carer or Lead Professional. If contacted by the Parent/Carer by phone or e mail response to be within 2 working days.
Meet child every morning in an agreed room to help them start the day well.
Arrange to meet with the pupil regularly or when the pupil requires.
Allow the child to access after school activity to build confidence or success / build new peer group.
Provide support, help or advice to the pupil, parent/carer or school staff on request.
Meet with the parent/carer, pupil or school staff in the first instance should there be any further issues or problems identified particularly relating to attendance or punctuality.
Refer child to extra support provided by in school services i.e. Mental Health in school support.
To make referrals to appropriate agencies – state which ones.
Work with Social Care or Early Help/appropriate agency as appropriate attending meetings regarding the pupil or family.
Review attendance after weeks with Line Manager and agree further action as necessary.

The Lead Professional / Education Welfare Officer agrees to:

Suggested Action
Respond as soon as practicably possible to any issues raised by the pupil, parent/career or school staff.
Provide support, help or advice to the pupil, parent/carer or school staff on request.
Provide the parent/carer(s) with details of a place on a Parenting Program.

Meet with the parent/carer, pupil or school staff in the first instance should there be any further issues or problems identified particularly relating to attendance or punctuality.
Arrange to meet with the pupil regularly or when the pupil requires.
Review attendance after weeks with Line Manager and agree further action as necessary.
Consider the use of the Common Assessment Framework.
Contact other professionals supporting the pupil to clarify roles.

The Pupil agrees to:

Suggested Action
Attend school as agreed and on time.
Be responsible for obtaining a registration mark even if they are late for school.
Attend any future meetings as felt necessary by parent, school staff, lead professional or Education Welfare Officer.
Be responsible for getting out of bed each morning to get to school on time and be aware that if he/she is late he/she will have to face the consequences.
Make sure they follow the conditions of any attendance report.
Tell their parent/carer of any concerns especially if they are likely to affect attendance.
Contact the EWO or the identified teacher and let them know of any problems they have generally or relating to his/her schoolwork.

If the Parent/s who sign this Attendance Contract do not follow through with what has been agreed and attendance fails to improve to the agreed level set for the child or an appropriate level (over 90% for more than 6 weeks) consideration will be needed as what further actions will now support an improvement in attendance.

For example: They may issue a Notice to Improve to each parent and/or discuss with the Local Authority whether an Education Supervision Order (ESO) is indicated in this case. The decision to apply for an ESO rests entirely with the Local Authority.

Schools name

Schools logo

Attendance Contract

Student's Name		DOB / Year group		Student's school	
Parent/carer 1 full name		Parent/Carer 2 full name		Address	
Contact number		Contact number			
				Date	
Child's ethnicity		Any SEND		Time (start/end)	
Attendance during last 12 weeks		Sessions of unauthorised absence		Number of late marks	
What are we worried about?		What's working well?		What needs to happen? What will it look like to not be worried anymore?	
0					
..... 10					
On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means (pupils name) is attending school regularly on every day the school is open and only absent in exceptional circumstances and when authorised and 0 means that (pupil's name)'s attendance is not improving, where do we rate the situation?					

Targets for pupil, parent, school and agencies	Date to be achieved by	Review of targets	Date to be achieved by

Date of review:

This is a voluntary agreement where all parties agree to work together to follow the agreed plan to support the pupil attend school regularly and punctually.

I agree to work together with school and the local authority to follow the agreed plan

Signed: Date: Student's score

 [child]

Signed: Date: Parent's score

 [parent]

Signed: Date: Parent's score

 [parent]

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.

Signed: Date: School score

 Academy/School

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.

Signed: Date: EWO's score
.....
Lead professional/ EWO

Signed: Date: Professionals score
.....

Other professional List job title/role

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

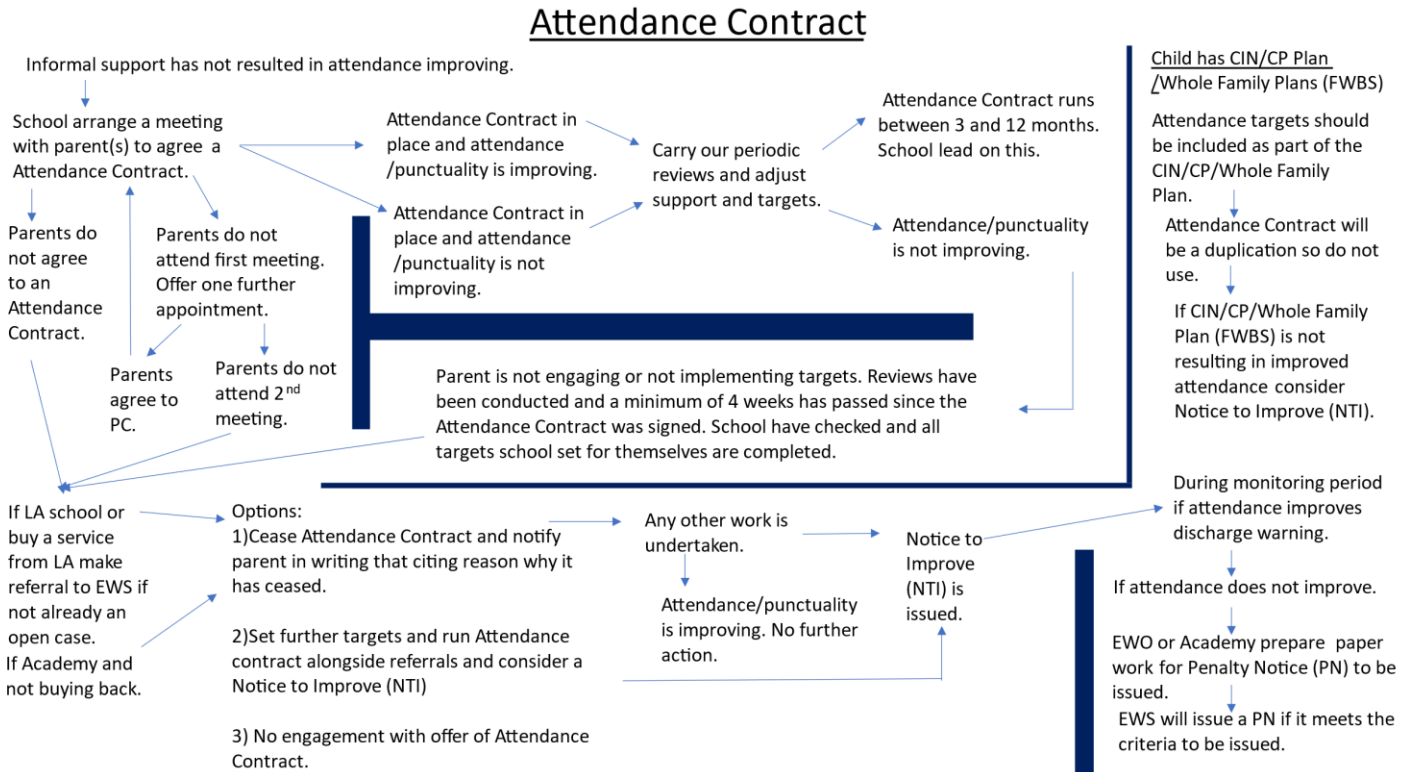
FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Attendance Contract process map



Off Roll Procedure

Annex A: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register

Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, **Schools should not remove students from roll unless they meet the criteria under these regulations and where appropriate or required by law discussions have been held with the LA.**

Deletion of names from the school's admission register

217. A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted. A pupil's name must not be removed for any other reason and doing so could constitute off-rolling.

218. In accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6), a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register (a Deletion Return). This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the school's most senior class (for example, pupils who leave primary school at the end of Year 6 or secondary school at the end of year 11), unless the local authority has requested such information. *Merton CME/EWS only require you to tell us about those without a confirmed school place in year 7 or if they will be EHE. For year 11 students please tell My Futures about off rolling after the pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age.*

219. Where a school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, as set out in regulation 13(4), the school must provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:

- full name;
- address;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency;
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there;
- if applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school;

- the reason set out in regulation 9(1) or (3) under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register.
- Plus the additional information that the Merton Headteacher's/Principals have agreed to provide of an e-mail address, gender, year group, CP, CIN, LAC, EHCP and information required for CNIS Census of ethnicity, name of Youth Justice Worker and/or Social Worker where appropriate.

220. A school cannot retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register or attendance register. The admission register and attendance register must be an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. A pupil's attendance must be recorded up until the date that the pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

Code deleted: The code that allowed you to remove a child who was medically unfit for mainstream school as certified by the Chief Medical Officer has been removed.

Deleting the name of a pupil non compulsory school age from the admission register

The only reasons where the name of a pupil not of compulsory school age shall be deleted are:

9(3)(a) The pupil is not a boarder and will not attend the school again

9(3)(b) The pupil is a boarder and has ceased to be a pupil at the school

9(3)(c) The pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days and

the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause and has made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances.

9(3)(d) Where a pupil has died Remove immediately on notification.

9(3)(e) The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school and the outcome of an appeal is known.

Deleting the name of a pupil of compulsory school age from the admission register

221. *The only reasons why a pupil's name shall be deleted are:*

9(1)(a) The pupil has been registered at another school and you have checked that they have started.

9(1)(b) The pupil has not continued at the school following completion of nursery education.

9(1)(c) The pupil is also registered at one or more other schools and the other schools have agreed the deletion. Where dual registration has ceased.

9(1)(d) The pupil has a school attendance order which has been changed to name another school which you have confirmed with the LA.

9(1)(e) The pupil had a school attendance order which has been revoked which you have confirmed with the LA.

9(1)(f) The parent of a pupil has notified the school in writing that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise than at a school. Elective Home Education or EOTAS -SEND.

9(1)(g) The pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school.

Where a pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school, the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again.

9(1)(h) The pupil has not returned following a leave of absence and the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances and you do not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause and more than 10 school days have passed.

9(1)(i) The pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days and you do not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances.

9(1)(j) The pupil is detained under a sentence of detention and you have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will not return to the school once they are released. Schools will discuss this with the pupil's youth offending team worker.

9(1)(k) The pupil has died. Remove immediately on notification.

9(1)(l) The pupil will be over compulsory school age and will not continue into the sixth form.

9(1)(m) The pupil is a boarder at a school maintained by a local authority or academy and their boarding fees have not been paid by the end of term.

9(1)(n) The pupil has ceased to be a pupil at an independent school or non-maintained special school.

9(1)(o) The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school and the outcome of an appeal is known.

CHILDREN WITH EHC Plans: For children with EHCP's you can only remove from roll if you are not the named school on the EHCP, the LA where the child lives agreed to the removal or where the parent has indicated that they are undertaking EHE if mainstream/ARP provision is named. If you are a Special School and parent is EHE you cannot remove a child from roll without the agreement of the LA which will not be given until the EHE is deemed suitable and appropriate to meet the needs of the pupil.

Appendix 4

Common Transfer File

Transfer of information using Common Transfer File

1. The Common Transfer File (CTF) is the mechanism whereby schools transfer “common transfer information” as specified in the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No.1437 (hereafter referred to as Pupil Information Regulations) to a subsequent school when a pupil leaves together with associated Explanatory Memorandum 2005 S.I. No. 1437 and subsequent amendments The Education (Pupil Information) (England) (Amendment) 2008 S.I. No. 1747 and associated Explanatory Memorandum 2008 S.I. No. 1747.

In particular, regulation 10(3) provides that: “The head teacher at the pupil's old school shall send the information (the common transfer information and educational records) within fifteen school days of the pupil's ceasing to be registered at the school”.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-to-school-guides-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

School to school (S2S) data transfer system: guides publication page.

- a) For those pupils where the destination is unknown, the child has gone ‘missing’ or is ‘lost’, moving abroad or into the independent sector, the school has a statutory obligation to transfer information in the form of a Common Transfer File (CTF). The submission of these files must also be completed within the 15 days, allowing Merton to take appropriate child protection action if the pupil's disappearance from school leaves them vulnerable or at risk.
- b) The DfE has developed a secure internet site Secure Access with a portal (s2s) for the electronic transfer of information Common Transfer Files (CTFs) from school to school when a child moves school, <https://sa.education.gov.uk> Merton produces comprehensive guidance of the Common Transfer and s2s systems, updated regularly, which is made available to all schools. Training is scheduled for all schools at peak transfer times in the school calendar year and telephone support is available throughout the year for school administrative staff.
- c) There are occasions when it is not considered appropriate to pass on details of a pupil's history to a new school. Each case would need to be judged on its *merits in consultation with relevant parties*. *Circumstances when it is not considered appropriate to pass on details via a CTF might include: a family escaping a violent partner; or the family is in a witness protection programme.*

Lost Pupil Database (LPD)

The LPD is not a separate database, it is a searchable area of the S2S website containing CTFs of pupils where the destination (or next) school of the pupil is not known to the school the pupil is leaving:

Where a school knows that a pupil is leaving but cannot identify the school to which the pupil is transferring, the school creates a CTF with just that pupil in it and identifies the destination school as unknown.

The CTF file is then posted to the S2S website.

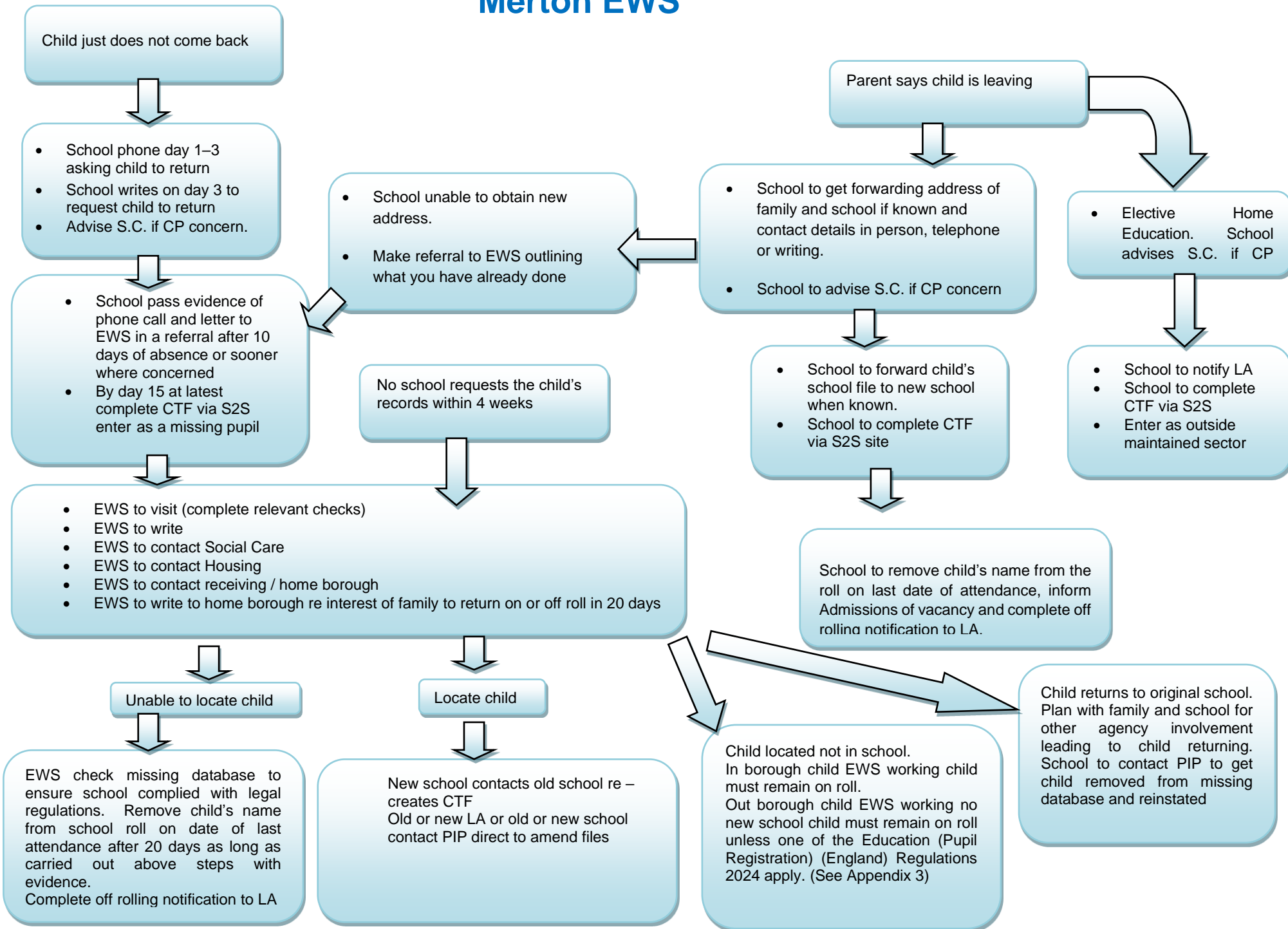
The school which has enrolled a new pupil but cannot identify the previous school, requests the maintaining LA to conduct a search to see if they can locate a CTF for the pupil.

The LA searches the S2S website using the available pupil related data provided by the school and, if a match is found, downloads the CTF and forwards it to the school (some editing may be required to ensure that the file can be imported by the new school).

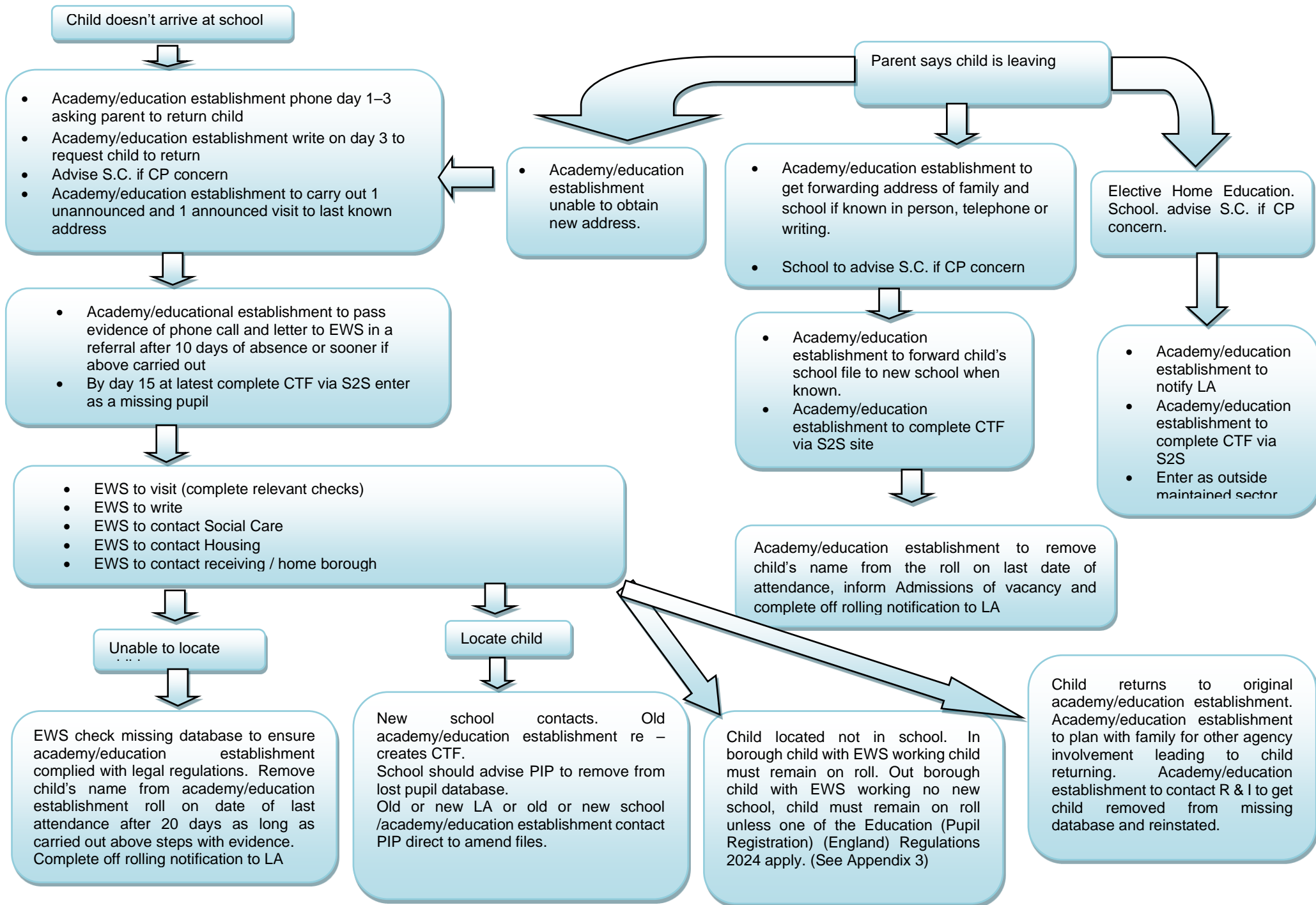
A similar process is used when a pupil is leaving a school and is known to be transferring to a non-maintained school or to a school outside England and Wales.

Monthly uploads and download reports, of pupils without a destination, are produced and circulated to the Educational Welfare Service. For known missing pupils for whom the CTF procedure has not been completed, schools will be contacted and statutory regulations reinforced.

EWS Missing Child Procedure LA Schools and Academies purchasing Merton EWS



EWS Missing Child Procedure for Academies, Free Schools and other educational establishments that don't buy a service from Merton EWS September 2024



**Any transfer at any time between educational establishments
aged 3 (Nursery) - 16 years (end of year 11)**



School complete CTF via s2s.

1. If you have the name of the new school, look up the DfE number and send CTF to this establishment.
2. Use xxxxxxxx if pupil is missing or you don't have the name of a school they are attending and send this CTF.
3. Use mmmmmmm if outside maintained sector, elective home education, moved abroad or in a school in Scotland and Northern Ireland and send this CTF.

INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE PLAN

ADRESSING PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

SCHOOL				
PUPIL'S NAME				
PUPIL CLASS/ YEAR GROUP				
ATTENDANCE %	Overall %	PA %	UA%	AA%
TIME PERIOD	From		To	
NUMBER OF LATES (L) IN THIS TIME PERIOD				

What is the attendance concern?

Attendance Action Plan Who will do what and by when

Review date
Signed
Date

Dual Registration

Dual registration can be used to aid reintegration from Melbury College, enable a child in a special school to access mainstream, aid a managed move, or support the transfer process where there may be concerns that a change of schools may not resolve the issues.

Any arrangement made directly between schools should be discussed in the first instance with School Admissions to ensure that year groups are not over subscribed as admitting a child above the Planned Admission Number (PAN) when there is a waiting list is only permitted through a Fair Access Protocol and will also weaken the case for future appeals.

The child is the responsibility of the originating school; however, the child and family need to know that the dual registration is for a fixed time and gives clear targets to work towards. The arrangements for the dual registration agreement must be discussed with the parent prior to the period starting so they are fully aware of what is expected. Dual registration must be agreed between both schools. Where it is a managed move, the parent must also agree to the move taking place.

The child remains on the roll of the originating school until, through this agreement the child can come off roll. If the targets set through the agreement are met, the move should become permanent. If targets are partially met, schools may wish to agree an extension to the dual registration period, and this decision lies with the importing school. School Admissions must be kept informed of the final arrangements to ensure on roll numbers are kept up to date.

Dual registration should be for a period of no less than six weeks. Review meetings should be set for during and at the end of the agreement and schools, parents and other relevant parties (e.g., behaviour support, Inclusion Officer, Social Worker, Education Welfare Officer) should be invited where the case is open to the service.

Targets must be measurable so that all parties can be clear as to how they will be met and should be realistic based on the history and needs of the child. They must include an attendance target, and it is recommended targets around behaviour/exclusions are included. Other targets should be relevant to the individual child's history and issues at the previous school and may include things such as punctuality, classroom effort, homework completed on time etc.

Schools should: -

- Share information about the child
- Communicate to parents/ carers and child about the dual registration
- Record the dual registration in the register and on the pupil's file
- Attendance must be recorded at the originating school as dual registered and the receiving school marks the attendance register.

Name of Child _____

Length of dual registration from _____ to _____

Review date _____

Targets and comments including an attendance target

Date of Agreement _____

Originating school _____

Signature _____
(Senior manager agreeing dual registration)

Dual Registration school _____

Signature _____
(Senior manager agreeing dual registration)

I, _____ the parent/carer of the above child agree to this Dual registration and understand that if my child does not meet the targets set that they will have to return to their original school and that if they are absent, I must produce medical evidence to substantiate the absence

Signature _____
(Parent/carer)

Date taken off roll from originating school and fully on roll of the receiving school/current school (if applicable)

_____ or

Date dual registration ceased and child returned to the original school

Date letter sent to parent confirming that the child has been accepted on to roll permanently or dual registration has ceased and the child must return to the original school
