



Attendance Policy

"The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad" Psalm 126:3

Great Barton C of E Primary Academy

Attendance Policy



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This policy covers:

1. Introduction
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. The Schools Day to Day Processes and Expectation for Managing Attendance (including lateness):
4. Fixed Penalty Notices:

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes for Absence

Appendix 2 – How Schools Will Work With Families

Appendix 3 – Letter templates

Appendix 4 – Application for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

SECTION 1 - Introduction:

1.1 Great Barton CE Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

Recent research shows excellent attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Pupils with the highest attainment at the end of year 6 and year 11 have higher rates of attendance throughout their respective key stages compared to those with the lowest attainment.

This demonstrates that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on excellent attendance.

This policy has been drawn up after consultation with the wider school community and is based on the Department for Education guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' published in May 2022.

1.2 The Law on school attendance:

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

SECTION 2 - Roles and Responsibilities:

2.1 School Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff (teaching and support) at Great Barton CE Primary Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Great Barton Primary Academy Responsibilities

All staff at Great Barton Primary Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting 100% attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our children are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for promoting 100% attendance by:

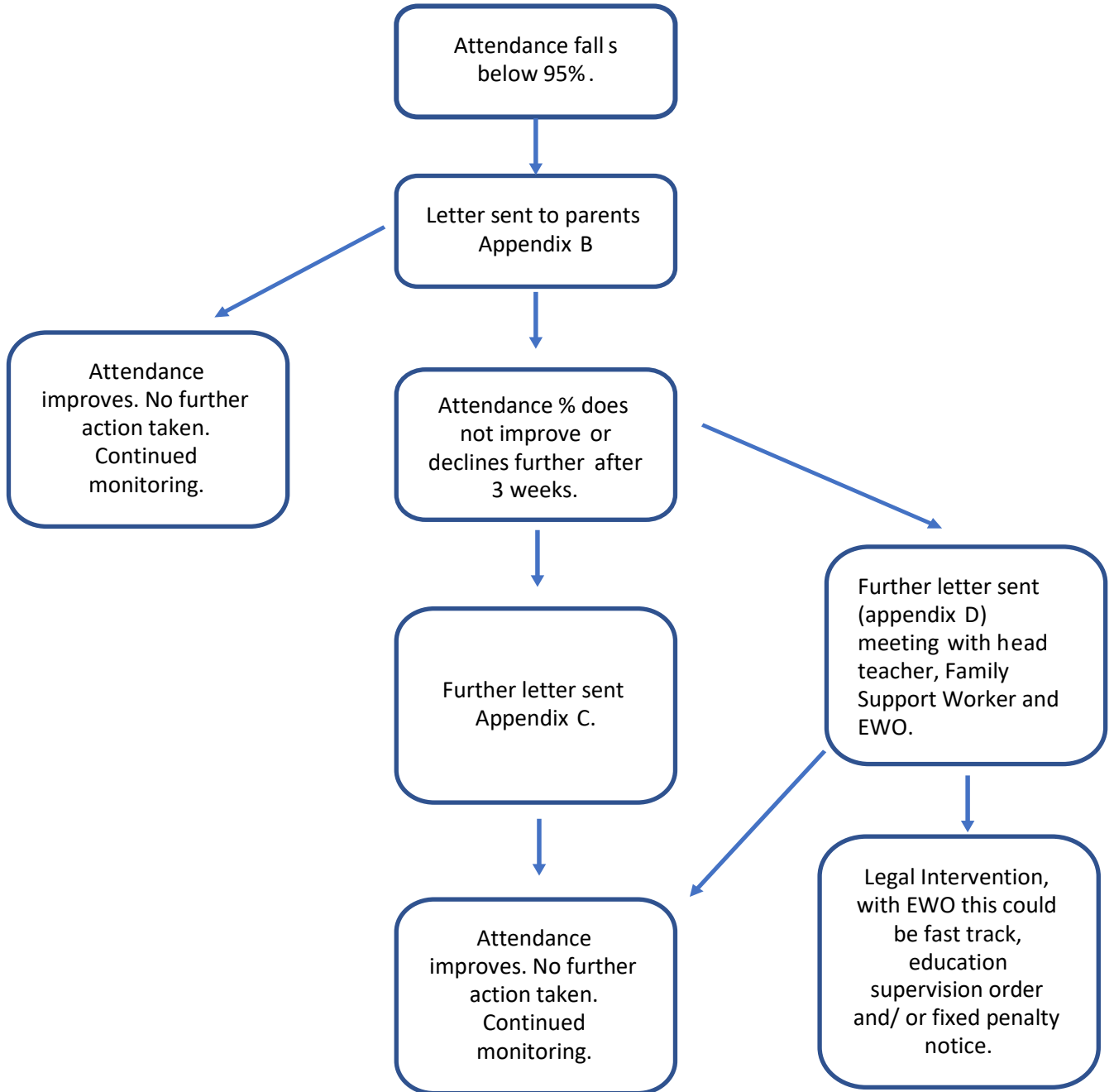
- Ensuring that all registers are taken accurately and within the first 10 minutes of a session.
- Contacting the parents/carers by telephone or email each day a child is absent from school without being notified in advance and recording the contact.
- Exploring possible interventions where we have concerns around a child's attendance and, where appropriate, consulting with the parents/carers.
- Consulting regularly with the Education Welfare Service if a child's attendance continues to give cause for concern and, where applicable, referring cases for a Fixed Penalty Notice, Prevention Meeting, Education Supervision Order or Fast Track proceedings.
- Analysing attendance figures, monitoring by registration group as well as gender, ethnicity, Pupil Premium status and Special Educational Needs status. The school will also carefully monitor those children who fall into the Persistent Absence category (where attendance falls below 90%).
- Making sure parents are aware of their child's attendance through termly attendance information on reports, (Appendix A.)

In closely monitoring the attendance of the school's children on a cumulative and week to-week basis, the school undertakes a clear step-by-step approach when a decline in a child's attendance is identified.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. However, in very exceptional circumstances, the school may see there is a need for a temporary part-time timetable to support this individual, this must not be treated as a long-term solution, so they will be bound by time limits. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school has agreed to a child being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

The school must also have regard for the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The school is required to put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Attendance Intervention Flow Chart



Governors' responsibilities:

The governing body of Great Barton CE Primary Academy will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies;
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, to help school leaders focus improvement efforts on those who need it most;

- consider the school's attendance data in comparison to other schools and expect it to be in the top 40% of similar schools as shown on the Ofsted Data Dashboard;
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The governing body will also make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are on roll at the school.

2.2 Parents' / carers' responsibilities:

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:

“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered child at the school, fails to attend regularly at school, his parent is guilty of an offence”. (NB: Where the Education Act refers to “his”, it also means “her”.)

Our expectations from you as a parent are that:

- Your child attends school regularly and punctually.
- You notify the school of any absence via email or phone call before 8.55am.
- If your child is absent for more than 3 consecutive days you provide medical evidence.
- You do not take your child out for holidays during term time. If you would like to request holiday then a Leave of Absence Form must be completed. Appendix E.
- You provide school with an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be kept updated by the parent/carer wherever possible and they should be checked during the annual data collection.
- You work in partnership with the school to support their children's attendance and positively engage with support offered;
- You contact the class teacher or headteacher without delay if you are concerned about any aspects of your children’s school lives or of difficulties that might prevent them from attending regularly and on time.

2.3 Pupil Responsibilities:

All pupils will be made aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that might prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time and ready to learn.

2.4 Role of the Education Welfare Officer:

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5 sessions as a maximum over a 6-week period.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 8 sessions within a 12-week period.

- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To investigate cases that have been referred for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention.

SECTION 3 - The Schools Day to Day Processes and Expectation for Managing Attendance (including lateness):

3.1 The school day:

- Gates open for school at 8.40am. Children can be dropped off at the gate from this time:
- School starts at 8.45am
- The register closes at 8.55am
- The afternoon register is taken at 1.15pm after lunch for children in reception, year 1 and year 2 and at 1.30pm for those in years 3-6
- The end of the school day is at 3.15pm

3.2 Registration:

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once at the start of the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (Appendix 1)

The morning register closes at 8.55am and the afternoon register closes at 1.15pm and 1.30pm (see above). Children who arrive at school after these times will be marked as absent.

3.3 Lateness and Punctuality:

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes.

If there are persistent incidents of lateness the school will work with the parents to address and overcome these issues. However, if the issue is not resolved quickly it could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) being issued.

3.4 Absence Reporting:

It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason they will not be attending school. Parents should report unexpected absences to the school office by phoning 01284 787353 by 8.55am.

Great Barton CE Primary Academy has a process in place to contact parents on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided. In addition, Great Barton CE Primary Academy will identify any absences that are not explained and contact parents to understand why and when the pupil will return.

Where an absence has been recorded as unexplained in the register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as possible, but no later than 5 working days after the missed session.

If unauthorised absence occurs persistently and limited improvements are made, despite intervention and support this could lead to a FPN and referrals to other agencies. (Section 4)

3.5 Process for Requesting Leave of Absence:

As stated in section 1, Great Barton CE Primary Academy promotes excellent school attendance for all, therefore only in ***exceptional circumstances*** will a leave of absence be granted.

To request a leave of absence please fully complete the 'Leave of Absence' form available from the school office and attach a letter of explanation/evidence before returning.

Upon receiving a completed leave of absence form, the headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Parents will receive a response in writing to indicate if the leave has been granted. Where leave is granted it is up to the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

As headteachers can only grant leaves of absence in ***exceptional circumstances*** it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school will not authorise a leave of absence during periods of national tests e.g. KS2 SATS.

If parents decide to not bring their child to school following a leave of absence being rejected, this absence will be marked as unauthorised and could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice. (Section 4)

3.6 Medical Appointments:

All medical appointments should be made outside of school hours. This includes dentists, opticians and doctor appointments. On the rare occasion where this is not possible, for example a child needs to attend a specialist centre at a given time, parents must complete a 'leave of absence' request and provide a copy of the appointment letter.

When a pupil has a medical appointment, the child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. They should be brought back to school as soon as possible.

3.7 Strategic lead for attendance:

Great Barton CE Primary Academy takes attendance in school very seriously. The strategic lead (attendance Lead) for attendance is:

Mrs. Claire Ratley - Headteacher

The attendance lead will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. In addition, they will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the staff, pupils, parents and Governors.

Other staff who have a specific role in supporting families to identify and overcome any attendance issues at an early stage are:

Name: Mrs. Claire Leeks

Role: Office Administrator

3.7 Attendance Data:

Through accurate data collection and robust data analysis the school will be in a strong place to identify concerns and drive forward effective improvements in attendance.

Great Barton CE Primary Academy will monitor the attendance data collected to:

- Identify emerging patterns of absence at the earliest stage;
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels;
- Use attendance data to inform staff and governors about any challenges and improvements to attendance;
- Where attendance falls below 90% (25 days in a school year) attendance will be identified as 'high risk' and parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss reasons for absence. A plan will be put in place to support the family and resolve the attendance issues;
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners. Referrals to the necessary agencies will be made as quickly as possible;
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority;
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps;
- Promote and incentivise good attendance.

SECTION 4 - Fixed Penalty Notices:

4.1 To promote good attendance at school, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) will be used in line with Suffolk County Council's Code of Conduct. The Working Together to Improve School Attendance document outlines that FPNs are used by schools where parents have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school that they are registered in.

The Education Attendance Service aim to support schools/ Academies and parents/carers to improve pupil attendance but Suffolk County Council will issue a Penalty Notice once a referral from a school has been received when:

- Unauthorised absence has occurred from school and limited improvements have been made despite intervention and support. This can include being persistently late;
- One off instances of irregular attendance where a leave has been taken during term time without the permission of the school. This includes family holidays during term time and includes when these have been requested but not authorised by the school. If an unauthorised absence occurs for more than 4 consecutive days, a fixed penalty notice referral will be completed and a fine issued;
- Where parents are stopped during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school;
- Where a parent allows their child to be present in a public space during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion;

The law says that if children of compulsory school age are absent from school without good reason they are committing an offence and their parents or carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrate's Court.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine has already been issued to parents and a child has further unauthorised absences within the academic year (for example, a second term time holiday), the school will refer matters to the Local Authority, with a recommendation from the school for prosecution.

4.2 Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice:

A fixed penalty notice will be issued to each parent or carer for each child.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid between day 21 and 28. The payment must be paid directly to the Local Authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice.

If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 days, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

There is no right to appeal against a fixed penalty notice.

Contact should be made with the school if you wish to discuss a fixed penalty notice you have received.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes for Absence

Authorised Absence Codes

Code	What the code stands for	Additional information
Code I	Illness	Not medical or dental appointment
Code C	Authorised Leave (not holiday)	Agreed in advance through the leave of absence process
Code H	Authorised Holiday	Agreed in advance through the leave of absence process
Code L	Late	Before register closes
Code E	Exclusion	
Code M	Medical Appointment	
Code R	Religious Observance	
Code T	Traveller absence	

Unauthorised Absence Codes

Code	What the code stands for	Additional information
Code U	Unauthorised Late	After register closes
Code G	Unauthorised Holiday	Denied in advance through the leave of absence process (or when not informed)
Code N	No reason given at the time of absence	No more than 5 working days and then converted to Code O
Code O	no reason established	

Attending Approved Educational Activities

Code	What the code stands for	Additional information
Code D	Dual Registered at Another School	
Code B	Offsite educational activity	Y6 taster days at secondary school (as part of transition) School to contact to check pupils have arrived. If not, then usual absence processes follow

Code J	Interview with prospective employers	To enable Y5/6 pupils to visit a secondary school To enable other pupils to visit schools for a tour to support transfer to new school Page 63
Code P	Supervised Sporting Activity	For pupils taking part in national sports activities Page 63
Code V	Educational visit or trip	School organised trips and visits (including residential)

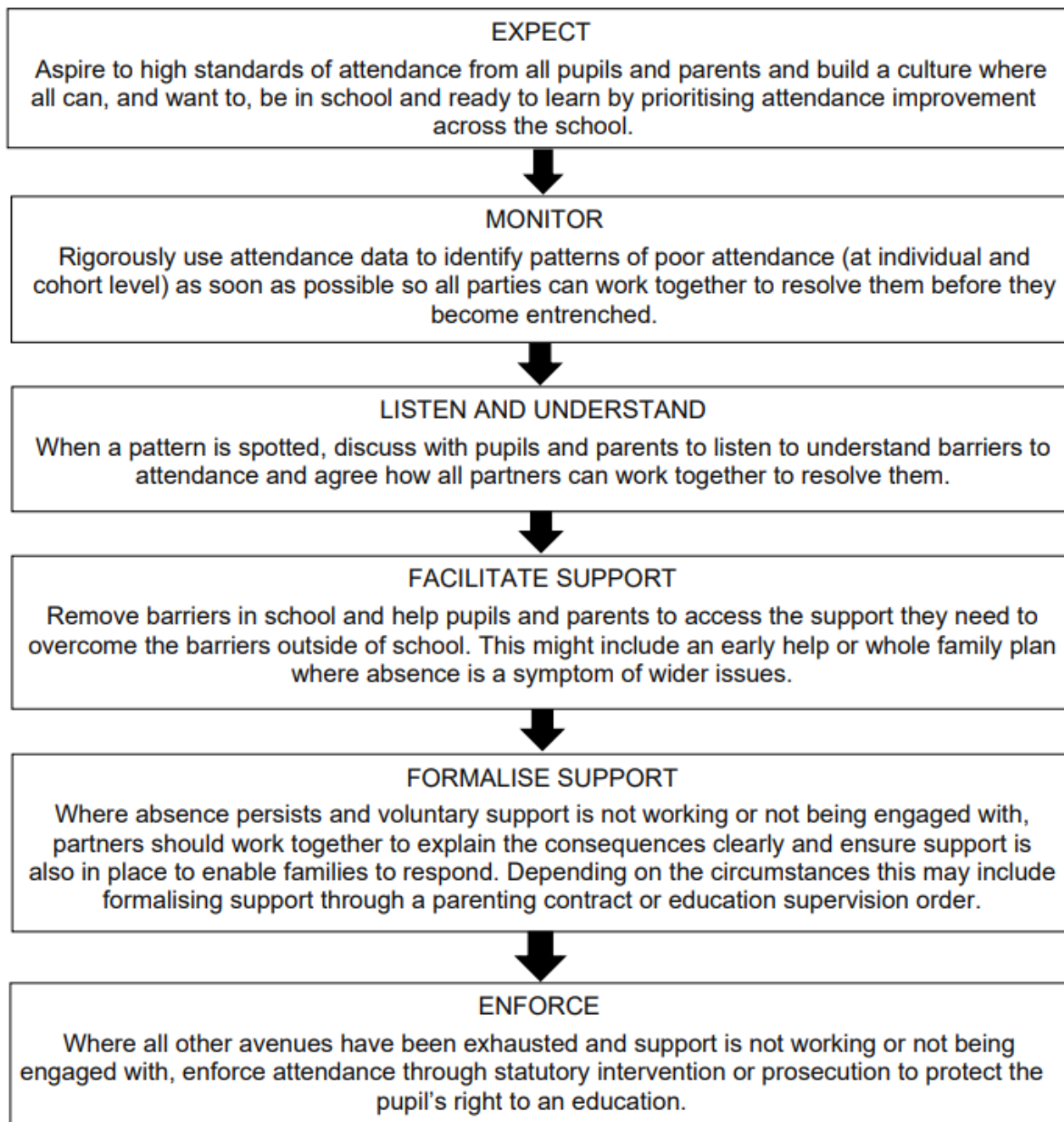
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Code Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed e.g. snow day Transport provided is not available Widespread disruption to travel Pupil in custody
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Administering Codes

Code X	Non-compulsory school age not required to be in school	Agreed part time school placement for 4-year olds.
Code Z	Prospective pupil not an admission register	To enable schools to set up pupils before they arrive in September
Code #	Planned whole or partial school closure	Half terms Bank holidays PD Days

Appendix 2 – How Schools Will Work With Families



(Working together to improve school attendance, May 22)

Appendix 3 – Letter templates

Date

Dear Parents

Re: **Your child's attendance**

We are sending you this colour coded letter based on your child's attendance.

Pupil name:

Class:

Percentage Attendance: **100%**

Green	Attendance 95% and above
Amber	Attendance between 94.9% and 90%
Red	Attendance 89.9% or below

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression if their attendance were to continue at their present level throughout the year.

Above 97%: less than 6 days of absence a year Excellent attendance. This impacts most positively on outcomes for learners, as they are accessing work consistently
95%: 10 days of absence a year This is the equivalent of 2 weeks of school.
90%: 19 days of absence a year Pupils in this group are missing a month of school per year.
85%: 29 days of absence a year Pupils in this group are missing 6 weeks of school per year.
80%: 38 days of absence a year Pupils in this group are missing a half term of school within the academic year

Please let us know if your child is going to be absent, so that it can be recorded accurately on our register. The school's number is 01284 787353.

If you have any queries about this letter or wish to discuss any concerns you have about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Claire Ratley

Date

Dear <Parents Name>

Re: <Child's Name>, <year group>

At Great Barton Primary Academy, we encourage all children to aim for 100% attendance.

We are therefore concerned about <child's Name> attendance which has dropped below 95% and is currently <attendance %>.

Please be aware that if your child's attendance continues to decline, we will require medical evidence to authorise future absences. Please refer the attendance intervention flow chart in the attendance policy which will outline the next steps if <child's name> does not improve.

We appreciate that there are many circumstances that can affect a child's attendance at school. If we can support your child in making sure their attendance improves then please do speak to with your child's class teacher, or myself, in the first instance either by telephone or email, to discuss how we can help.

Many Thanks

Claire Ratley

Great Barton Primary Academy

Date

Dear <Parents Name>

Re: <Child's Name>, <year group>

At Great Barton Primary Academy, we encourage all children to aim for 100% attendance.

We are therefore concerned about <child's Name> attendance which has (dropped below 92% has not improved since our previous letter) and is <attendance %>. This means that <child's name> has missed <days> of school. This follows our initial concerns, raised in a letter on xxxx.

We are concerned about the impact this is having on <child's name> progress, as we know that as attendance declines so does your child's chances of achieving the best possible outcomes whilst also affecting their emotional wellbeing.

We are keen to work together to support you and your child in making sure that their attendance improves. Please attend a meeting on xxxx with me.

In the meantime, we will continue to monitor <child's name> attendance and until this rises above 95%, we will continue to require medical evidence to authorise any further absence.

Many Thanks

Claire Ratley

Date

Dear <Parents Name>

Re: <Child's Name>, <year group>

At Great Barton Primary Academy, we encourage all children to aim for 100% attendance.

We are therefore extremely concerned about <child's Name> attendance) whose attendance is <attendance %>. This means that <child's name> has missed <days> of school and xx sessions have been authorised. This follows our concerns, raised in a letter on xxxx and a further letter dated xxx.

We are concerned about the impact this is having on <child's name> progress, as we know that as attendance declines so does your child's chances of achieving the best possible outcomes whilst also affecting their emotional wellbeing.

We are therefore inviting you to a Prevention meeting with Mrs Ratley, our head teacher and our education welfare officer on xxxx. We are keen to work with you to support your child in making sure that their attendance improves.

However, should you decline to attend, please be aware that a legal intervention will ensue in liaison with the education welfare officer and this could be a Fast Track, an Education Supervision Order and/ or a fixed penalty notice.

Many Thanks

Claire Ratley

