

# Studio West

## Attendance Policy

Revised: September 2018

Chair of Governors: Simon Hanson

Link Governor:

Signed:

Date of next Review: September 2020

At Studio West we believe that good attendance at school is crucial to students learning effectively.

We believe that there is likelihood that students with poor attendance leave school with fewer qualifications and poorer life chances. The school believes that a high level of attendance is important for the attainment, life chances and future employment of young people.

Studio West is a happy school. Students learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child's welfare.

The school places great emphasis on attendance in its communication with parents.

Our target attendance figure at Studio West is 96.5% as studies have shown that when a student attends less than this figure it will have a negative impact on their final GCSE grades. Furthermore, we feel that regular attendance at school prepares young people for the expectations from a future workplace.

### **Communication**

The importance of attendance is highlighted in the school prospectus and the School Attendance Policy is published on the School website. A letter is sent out to all parents/carers advising them of the attendance policy and giving instructions regarding notification of absences.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school about any issues which may affect attendance; parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset students which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.

Parents are asked to arrange their family holidays only within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. An attendance officer will talk to those parents who persistently take their holidays in term time and remind parents of the disruption to their child's education. Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised by the school, unless they are under exceptional circumstances, and therefore negatively affect a child's attendance percentage.

Students may be admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups – a meeting will take place with the Principal where the importance of regular attendance will be highlighted along with other school routines.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent or is going to be absent, if known. This can be done by telephoning the school reception. All information is used to inform teachers when filling in their registers. When a child has poor attendance e.g. a significant number of absences or a significant number of broken weeks the school will require medical evidence of illness before it authorises. If no notification is received about a child's absence the attendance officer will contact the parent/guardian. The school will only authorise illness absences if it considers them to be genuine health issues. If such issues were to persist the school would expect a note from the student's GP to explain the absence.

### **Concerns**

The school will start to show concern for a student if their attendance dips below 95% in a year.

Appendix 1 details the procedures for dealing with absences from School.

If attendance does not improve parents are invited to an attendance meeting with the Attendance Officer to outline attendance targets and explain the legal monitoring process.

Attendance and Punctuality is monitored by the Attendance Officer and punctuality is also monitored during regular health check meetings within the attendance team. This meeting acts as an accountability measure to ensure students with attendance concerns do not remain unnoticed.

Failure to improve attendance will result in the students entering the Fast Track to Attendance process.

### **Attendance Team**

The Attendance Officer monitors daily registration, signs in late pupils, collects persistent absence data and the accumulated attendance records.

Target percentages are set for each year group at the beginning of each term. These are based on the previous term's percentages.

The families of absent pupils are contacted on the first day of absence unless we have received information about the absence.

### **Registration**

It is a legal requirement to register students for am and pm sessions. All registration is done using lesson monitor on SIMS. AM registration is done by class teachers in lesson one. This must be complete and saved by 8:50am. The afternoon registration is done during period 4.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

1. Certificate and celebrations for full attendance to be awarded at the end of year presentation.
2. Regular raffles, spot prizes and certificates for 100% attendance for half and full term
3. Attendance above 95% will aid a student being chosen for work experience possibilities

### **Holiday taken in term time**

From September 2017 the threshold for requesting the LA to issue a Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday in term time is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous three months. Where an unauthorised holiday is taken and school does not wish a Penalty Notice to be issued a request for a holiday warning letter can be made. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from Main Reception) in advance and before making any travel arrangements. Requests will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.

### **Truancy**

All the staff at Studio West are concerned about students' regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. The threshold for requesting legal monitoring will be 90% or less in line with the threshold for PA. There will have to be 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 10 school weeks. One session is either am or pm. During the four week monitoring period a pupil will fail the monitoring period if there are four or more unauthorised absences. If truancy is suspected, a member of staff contacts the parent, usually by telephone. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then a member of staff talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or

problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the staff team and appropriate action is taken. The school will work in partnership with the City Council to tackle pupils who fail to attend regularly. The City Council can issue penalty notices or prosecute unless:

- The pupil was absent through leave authorised by the Principal
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable circumstances
- Absence was due to religious observance
- The pupil's parents are travellers
- The school is not within walking distance and the Council has not made suitable arrangements for transport

Upon conviction fines can be up to £1000 and £2500 for aggravated offences and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months and/or a community penalty. Parents can be subject to a prison term conviction if they fail to comply with a school attendance order.

The school will pursue a policy of using legal sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices. The flow chart describing this process is attached in Appendix 1.

Authorised Absence can only be authorised by the Principal or her representative - not the parent. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (Section 8) provides details of the circumstances under which pupils may be removed from a school roll. Enquiries that have taken place in authorities around the country following the death or disappearance of a child, have highlighted the crucial role which school registration plays in the monitoring and tracking of students in need and those at risk of significant harm. It is extremely important that pupils are not removed from the school register except in circumstances listed in the regulations and that schools actively consult with the Education Welfare Officer or an Officer of the City Council, if there is any doubt whatsoever as to an individual child's whereabouts or safety.

The School is rightly concerned at the level of absence caused by parents removing students from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time. The Government does not allow Principals to authorise holiday absences and so Studio West has adopted the "zero tolerance" of this category of absence. The school cannot authorise holiday periods during term time and this decision has been communicated to all parents via letter. The school will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to enforce this policy.

The policy is in line with Newcastle City Council Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices and falls under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set the framework for the operation of the Penalty Notice scheme. The Code of Conduct states that a Penalty Notice may be issued where there are at least 5 sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised absence due to a holiday in term-time.

Payment of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 42 day period the LA must either prosecute under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice. Penalty Notices will be issued for each individual child and to each individual parent.

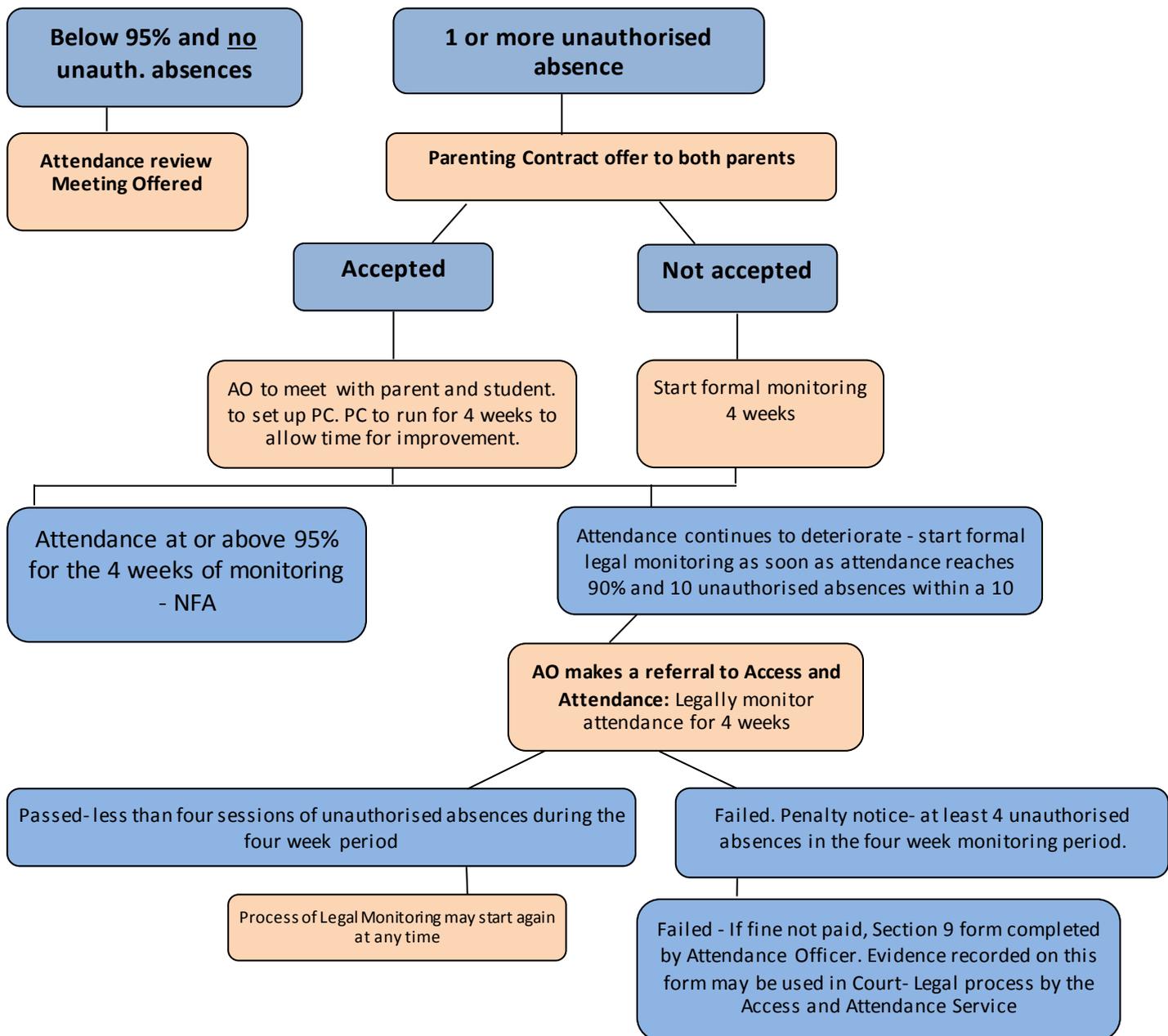
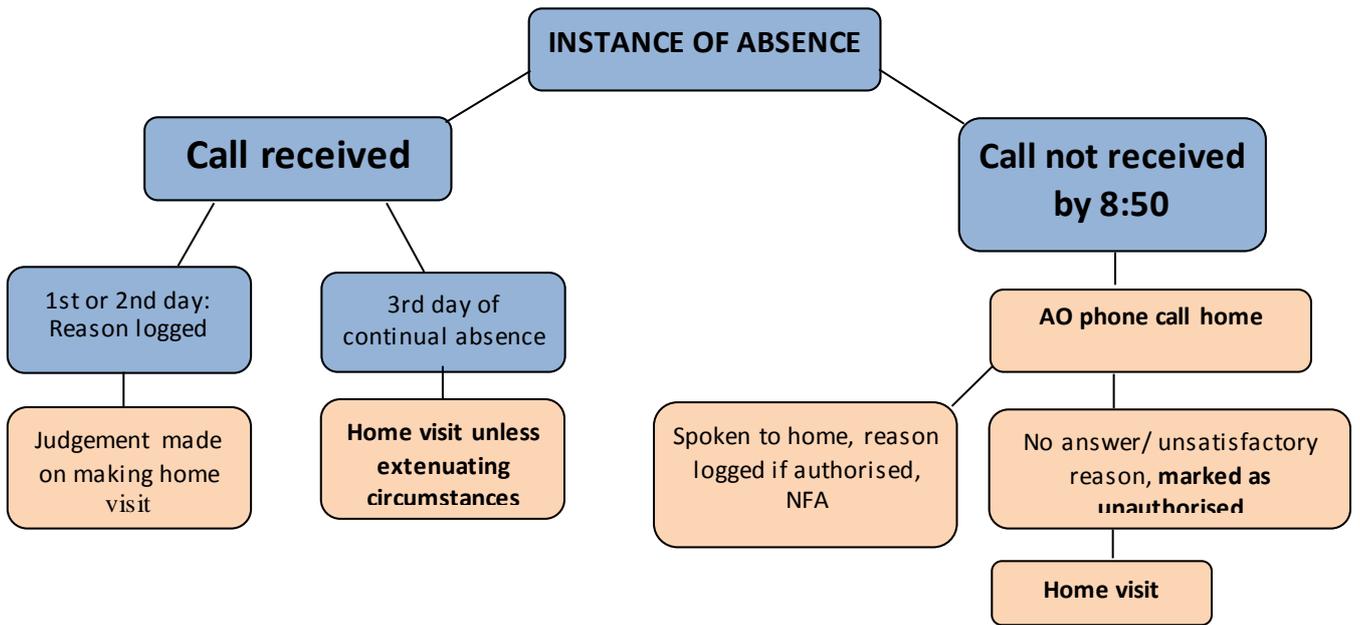
### **Attendance Policy Performance**

Attendance and Truancy will be monitored by Governors with an annual report to the full Governing body by the Principal.

Progress of the annual attendance figures will be monitored on a termly basis.

# Attendance Procedures—At A Glance

Current Attendance Target (September 2018): **96.5%**



### **Local Authority Timelines for referrals:**

Referral from school for monitoring letter to be sent within 10 working days	2 weeks
Monitoring letter sent giving 4 weeks monitoring period	4 weeks
Paperwork to be provided by schools	2 weeks
PACE questions letters sent and two weeks for parents to respond	3 weeks
(Possible request for interview)	2 weeks
Case review	1 week
Decision letter and Penalty Notice issued	1 week
28 days to pay the penalty notice	4 weeks
Witness statements written and sent to legal services	1 week