

# Nether Edge Primary School

## School Attendance Policy



Revised September 2020

*Highlighted text refers to updated Covid-19 guidance*

## Attendance and punctuality at Nether Edge Primary

### 1. Attendance Aims

Here at Nether Edge we recognise the impact good attendance has on a child's ability to reach their full potential. We aim for all children and parents to:

- Attend school as often as possible
- Not take extended leave in term time
- Talk to school about issues that are impacting on school attendance so we can work together to address these
- Work with school to address medical or SEND needs to ensure plans are in place to fully support their time in school
- Be on time for school every day so they are ready to learn

Poor attendance and punctuality can result in:

- Feeling unsettled
- Reduced abilities to form secure friendships
- A negative impact on confidence and resilience
- Struggles to achieve academically

It is the duty of the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. This duty is to ensure that your child receives full time education.

### 2. The School Day

#### 2.1 - The Main School Day

**8.00am:** Breakfast club begins

**8.30am:** Main gates open for children to enter the playground

**8.45am:** Reception doors open for children to enter the classroom

**8:50am:** Bell goes, children line up and teachers arrive to collect them

**8.55am:** Registration in classrooms.

**9am:** Shutter is closed.

Children arriving after 9am must report to the Office and be signed in by their parents. A late mark will be recorded by the office team.

All gates are locked by 9am

**1pm:** Reception and KS1 to return to return to classroom to be registered

**1:15pm:** KS2 to return to classrooms to be registered

**3:10pm:** Shutter is opened

**3:15pm:** Children are dismissed

*As part of Government advice regarding social distancing, the following changes have been adopted temporarily:*

- *The school gate will open at 8:30am and children will enter school at staggered times. This is to reduce the number of children entering the school grounds at one time and to allow parents to safely drop their children at the school gate.*
- *As a result of this, registers will remain open until 9:15am to allow for all children to have safely entered the building and reached their classrooms.*
- *Afternoon register times will also be affected and will happen at slightly different times*
- *Dismissal will happen at 3pm with parents arriving at staggered times*

## **2.2 - The Nursery School Day**

**8:45am:** Gates open for morning children to arrive

**9am:** Morning session starts and gates are closed

**11:45am:** Gates open and children are dismissed

**12:30pm:** Gates open for afternoon children to arrive

**12:45pm:** Afternoon session starts and gates are closed

**3:30pm:** Gates open and children are dismissed

*As part of Government advice regarding social distancing, the following changes have been adopted temporarily:*

- *The Nursery gate will open at 8:30am and again at 11:45am and children will enter school at staggered times. This is to reduce the number of children entering the nursery at one time and to allow parents to safely drop their children at the nursery door.*
- *Children will be dismissed at staggered times also.*

## **2.3 - Collection of Children**

- The end of the school day is 3.15pm for the Main School.
- The end of the day for Nursery is 3:30pm.
- Nursery children are collected from the Nursery door.

- Reception children are collected from the Reception class doors
- Y1-Y6 are collected from the closest external door or designated point on the playground.
- Y6 children are allowed to walk home alone if parents have previously completed a 'Walk home' form given to all parents at the start of Y6. Parents telephoning school requesting their child walks home alone, will only be authorised if the forms have been completed.

*As part of Government advice regarding social distancing, the following changes have been adopted temporarily:*

- *The school gate will open at 3pm for collection. Children will all be taken to the yard and wait in a designated zone with at least one adult from their classroom.*
- *Parents will enter the school grounds in a one way system and collect their children from their zone.*
- *They will continue to walk the length of the one way system until they are back out of the school gate.*
- *Y6 children will still be allowed to walk home with permission and will leave the school site at 3pm.*

#### **2.4 – Safeguarding the collection of children**

- It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure their child is collected from school, on time, by an adult known to us.
- During the admissions process, parents/carers are asked to complete a form naming those adults with permission to collect their child. Parents/carers are reminded to update this annually.
- No child will be released to an unknown adult without prior consent either in person or via the telephone. They will also need to provide the password set by parents/carers during the admissions process.

### **3. Absence**

Children should attend school every day. If they are unable to attend school parents/carers are requested to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not in school. We provide a telephone answering machine for parents to leave these messages if the phone isn't answered. The appropriate code will then be entered in the attendance register by a member of the office team. A follow up call may be required.

If a parent/carer fails to notify the school the attendance officer will call home. This is known as 'First Day' absence calling. If no response is received, to the phone call, a home visit may be required and a letter will be sent home requesting a reason for absence and will be kept on file. If no explanation remains forthcoming then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

(See Appendix 1 – **Attendance procedures**)

(See Appendix 2 - **Home visit thresholds**)

*In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the government made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.*

*Now the circumstances have changed and school attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:*

- *Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;*
- *Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence*
- *The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct*

### **3.1 - Authorised/unauthorised absence**

**It is important to note that a letter or phone call from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation can authorise the absence.**

Absences from Nether Edge Primary School may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Days of religious observance – Request for Exceptional Leave to be completed.
- Exceptional family circumstances, e.g. bereavement.
- Medical/dental appointment - Medical evidence may need to be provided.
- Pre-arranged visits to another school / educational setting.
- Exams e.g. Music, Dance, Gymnastics etc.

Absences will not be authorised for the following reasons:

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation given.
- The child is staying at home to look after siblings, mind the house or because their parent/carer is ill.
- Keeping off all day due to late riser.
- Holidays.

### ***Pupil's who are shielding or self isolating***

*We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. You should note however that:*

- *A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)*
- *Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.*
- *If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent (see below).*
- *Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment).*

*Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity.*

*Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.*

### **3.2 - Arrangements for medical or dental appointments**

Where possible all medical appointments should be made outside of school hours. If this is not possible then the child must be collected from school by a parent/carer and signed out on the Electronic Entry System.

An appointment card, letter or text must be shown at the school office in order to authorise the absence. Failure to provide this may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

The school must be informed if a child has an emergency appointment, and will not be in school for morning registration.

Children are expected, where time allows, to be in school before a medical or dental appointment, and to return afterwards. If school believes there is time to do this and the child does not attend, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

## **4. Part-time table tables**

In some exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a part-time timetable to meet a pupil's needs. Where this occurs, the school will:

- Discuss the part time timetable with parents, and ensure full understanding and agreement;
- Review any part time timetables regularly, and meet with parents regularly to discuss whether a child is ready and able to move back to full time provision;
- Provide alternative provision where appropriate;
- Record all part time table absence as authorised (as per DfE guidelines).

Any child who is working under a part time timetable will be offered additional provision, relevant to the needs of the individual at that time. This may include 1:1 support, pastoral intervention or time working in our SEND base for a period of time. The decision for this would be taken by the Head Teacher and the SENCo, in discussion with class teachers and parents.

(See Appendix 3 – **Part time Home School Agreement**)

## **5. Attendance Expectations**

It is expected that:

### **Parents will:**

- Ensure their child attends regularly and on time.
- Notify school on the first day of absence.
- Only request a holiday in term time in exceptional circumstances.
- Not keep their children away from school for trivial reasons.
- Not keep their children off school during SATs or at times of testing.
- Discuss any concerns which may impact on their child's attendance with staff in school

### **The school will:**

- Regularly communicate the Attendance Policy to parents/carers.
- Share children's current attendance regularly or make figures available upon request.
- Ensure that the Head Teacher is informed about any attendance matters and is in agreement with any action taken.
- Have an expectation that full time, punctual attendance will be the norm and all persistent absences/lateness will be followed up.
- Monitor attendance through checking registers and the computerised attendance system.
- Identify and act upon problems with attendance.
- Liaise with the Local Authority over attendance concerns.

***Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school***

- *All other pupils must attend school. Schools should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.*
- *If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend schools discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school. Schools should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).*

### **Supporting anxieties**

In response to potential anxieties arising from the pandemic, the following has been put in place to support both children and parents/carers feel confident to send their children to school in September:

- Updates of the school site, preparation for September and the safety measures in place will be shared via Class Dojo by HT/DHT during the summer break
- Parents/carers will be notified of the current local authority attendance expectations via Class Dojo by the attendance lead during the summer break. This will be a series of short informative posts
- Those families identified to be the most vulnerable to anxieties (from evidence collected during lockdown phone calls) to be contacted during week 5 of the holidays by the attendance team. A follow up call will be made in week 6 if required
- All 2019/20 persistently absent children to be contacted in week 5 or 6 by the attendance team to remind them about current attendance expectations
- All school staff to be on hand to support return to school whether face to face when children arrive or via messages on Class Dojo

### **6. Monitoring**

Attendance and punctuality is monitored in the following ways:

- The registers are monitored on a regular basis by staff responsible for attendance.
- Attendance patterns are monitored every 4 weeks by the attendance team.
- Parents/carers will be informed as soon as their child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern
- Individual records of children who raise concerns will be discussed within school, with the Local Authority Attendance Team and MAST (The Multi Agency Support Team).

- Information on attendance and punctuality is returned termly to the Local Authority who monitors the attendance of all pupils.

(See Appendix 4 - Attendance Monitoring sheet)

### 5.1 - Attendance Procedures

If a poor pattern of attendance is formed:

- Individual records will be looked at to ascertain reasons for absence.
- Parent/carers will be informed via letter or phone call.
- A meeting may be arranged with Parents/carers (LA may also attend these) to discuss and implement strategies for improving attendance.
- Home visits may be made if absence persists.
- The Local authority will keep in contact with parents where appropriate.
- If Attendance does not improve a further follow up letter will be sent or meeting arranged
- If Attendance does not improve following the issue of a series of follow up letters and meetings a final warning will be issued by the Local Authority.
- Parents may receive a penalty notice or a court summons.

### 6.2 - Punctuality procedures

If a poor pattern of punctuality is formed:

- Staff who have responsibility for attendance will monitor lateness.
- Late arrivals must report to the school office, where their parent/carer must sign them in. A dinner is ordered at this point.
- Staff with responsibility for attendance input this information to SIMs
- A letter is sent to parents/carers of children who are persistently late. (A persistent late attender is defined as a pupil who is late (before registers close) for more than 15% of all possible days)
- Parents will be contacted to discuss any problem which may contribute to a lack of punctuality.
- A referral will be sent to MAST (The Multi Agency Support Team) if necessary.

### 5.3 - Penalty Notices

Where a child's attendance is consistently poor (less than 90% with at least 20% of the absence being unauthorised) and all steps have been taken to rectify this by the school and the Local Authority working with the child and the parents/carers, but have been unsuccessful. MAST (the Multi Agency Support Team) will, after consulting with the school, consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

## 7. Children missing from education (CME)

If a child is absent from school without being informed the Attendance Team will liaise with the Children Missing from Education Team if a child is absent from school for consecutive days and unaccounted for. Home visits will be completed. Social Care is also informed at this time. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered as missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and they will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

## **8. Children in public care**

The Office receive the Welfare call on a daily basis and inform them of any absences on the day.

The Attendance Officer will monitor their attendance and report this to the SLT who will inform Looked after Children Team on request.

The school's co-ordinator for looked after children is Michele Nott (Headteacher)

## **9. Holidays during term time**

At Nether Edge we are led by guidance issued by Sheffield City Council. When referring to holidays in term time, they state the following:

- *We won't approve holiday time for children during term time. If you take your child out of school for a holiday or other unauthorised absence, we will issue a penalty notice on behalf of your school.*
- *We believe that regular attendance at school is vital to help children and young people achieve their full potential and get the best possible start in life. This will be our approach unless the legislation or guidance from the government changes.*
- *We are aware that the outcome of a court case in the Isle of Wight has generated some public debate and enquiries about the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absence in Sheffield.*
- *The Isle of Wight case has not changed the law or set a legal precedent. This means magistrates courts will continue to consider the legislation on term time absences on a case by case basis.*

Sheffield City Council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, parents/carers may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

If prosecuted, parents/carers can be fined up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

If a parent/carer would like to request holidays in term time, the steps outlined below must be followed:

1. Parent/carer informs the school office that they would like to request term time leave.
2. A meeting is arranged with HT or attendance lead to discuss reasons for this holiday, share details about fines and ascertain if there are any exceptional circumstances.
3. If the parent/carer still wishes to take their child on holiday, a request form will be given at the meeting.
4. This should be handed in as soon as possible, with at least 20 days before they are due to leave.
5. The headteacher's written confirmation of the decision will be sent within 10 days.

Nether Edge Primary School is committed to raising the profile of attendance and its link to achievement. It is important that parents/carers work with school to ensure that all children attend on time, every day and do not take holidays in term time.

## **10. Re-integration into School after Absence**

Any child who does not return to school by the date specified on the holiday request form, is at risk of losing their place at school.

Similarly, those who are taken on holiday without school being informed, will also be at risk of losing their place. In this circumstance the child will be referred to CME as soon as possible.

To minimise the impact of long absences, parents/carers are asked to encourage children to read daily and complete learning tasks discussed in advance with the class teacher.

When a child returns to school after a long period of absence (10 days minimum) they will be supported to transition back into school life.

This re-integration will include:

- An initial 'welcome back' meeting. Attendance lead, parents/carers, class teacher and child to all attend where possible
- Updated assessments completed by school staff as soon as possible
- 1:1 support from the classroom staff to rebuild friendships, particularly for younger children and when outside at playtimes and lunchtimes

## **11. Celebrating attendance**

Attendance rewards will be based on individual attendance rather than a whole school or whole class strategy.

How it works:

- All children who attend school for a full week will receive a raffle ticket. One ticket for every full week

- This raffle ticket will be added to the pot (1 pot for Y3-Y6, 1 pot for YN-Y2)
- A draw will take place either fortnightly, monthly or half termly depending on current attendance figures
- A selected number of tickets will be drawn and prizes given to the winners

Towards the end of the year there will be an opportunity for a big final raffle to win a place on the coach to the seaside. All raffle tickets will be saved throughout the school year and entered into this final draw.

**12. Communicating attendance**

Attendance will be communicated with parents/carers in the following ways:

- A fortnightly newsletter shared on Class Dojo – whole school figure
- A regularly updated display at the front of school – whole school figure
- At three parents/carers meetings throughout the year – individual figure
- On end of year reports – individual figure
- On cause for concern letters or via phone calls – individual figure
- At attendance or term time leave meetings – individual figure

Review: September 2021

This Policy will be reviewed annually or in accordance with changes in Government Guidance.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Head Teacher

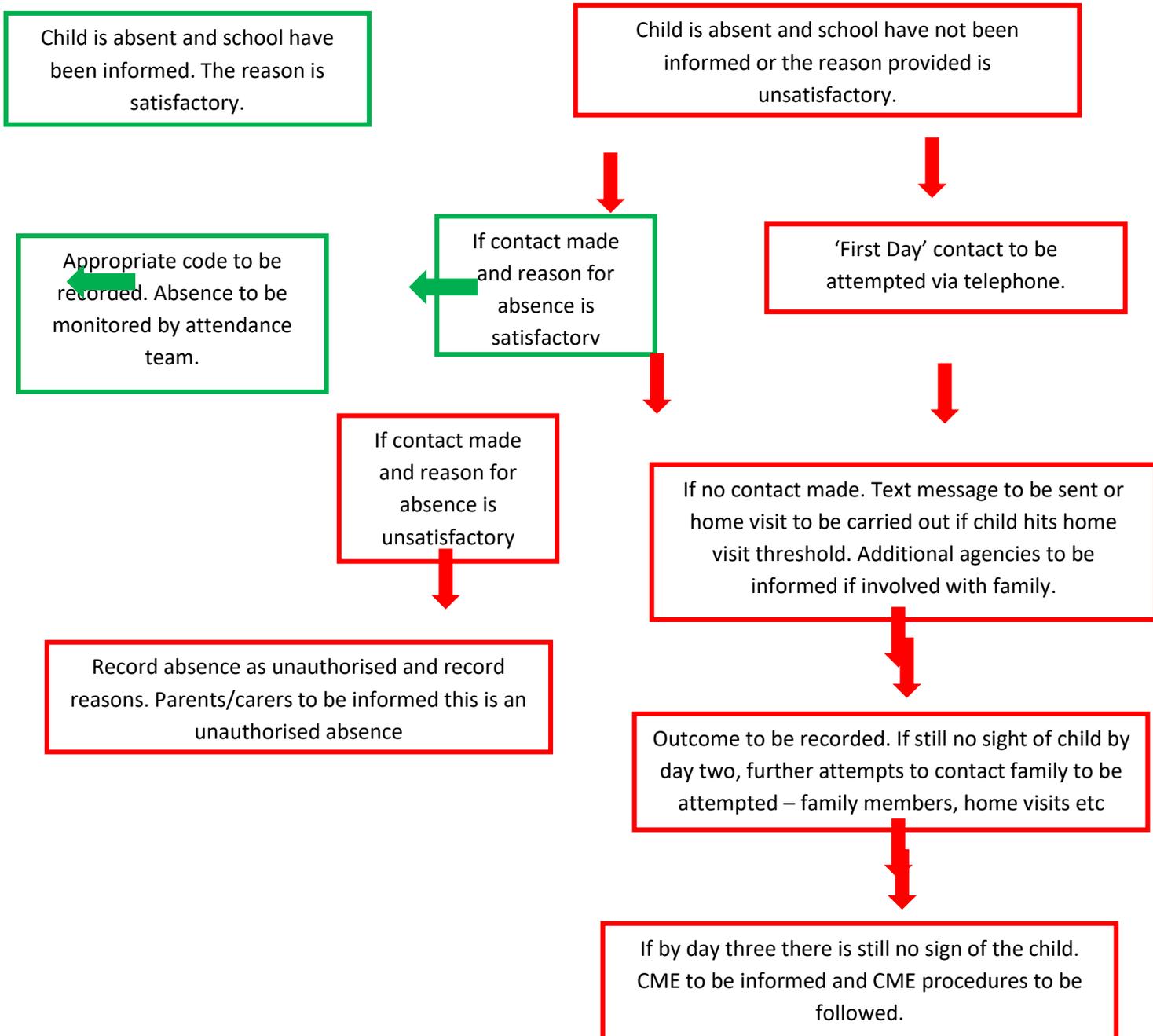
Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chair of Governors.

## Appendix 1

### Absence procedures at Nether Edge



## Appendix 2

## **Home visit thresholds**

### **When do we conduct a home visit?**

A home visit will be made for child if they meet any one of these criteria:

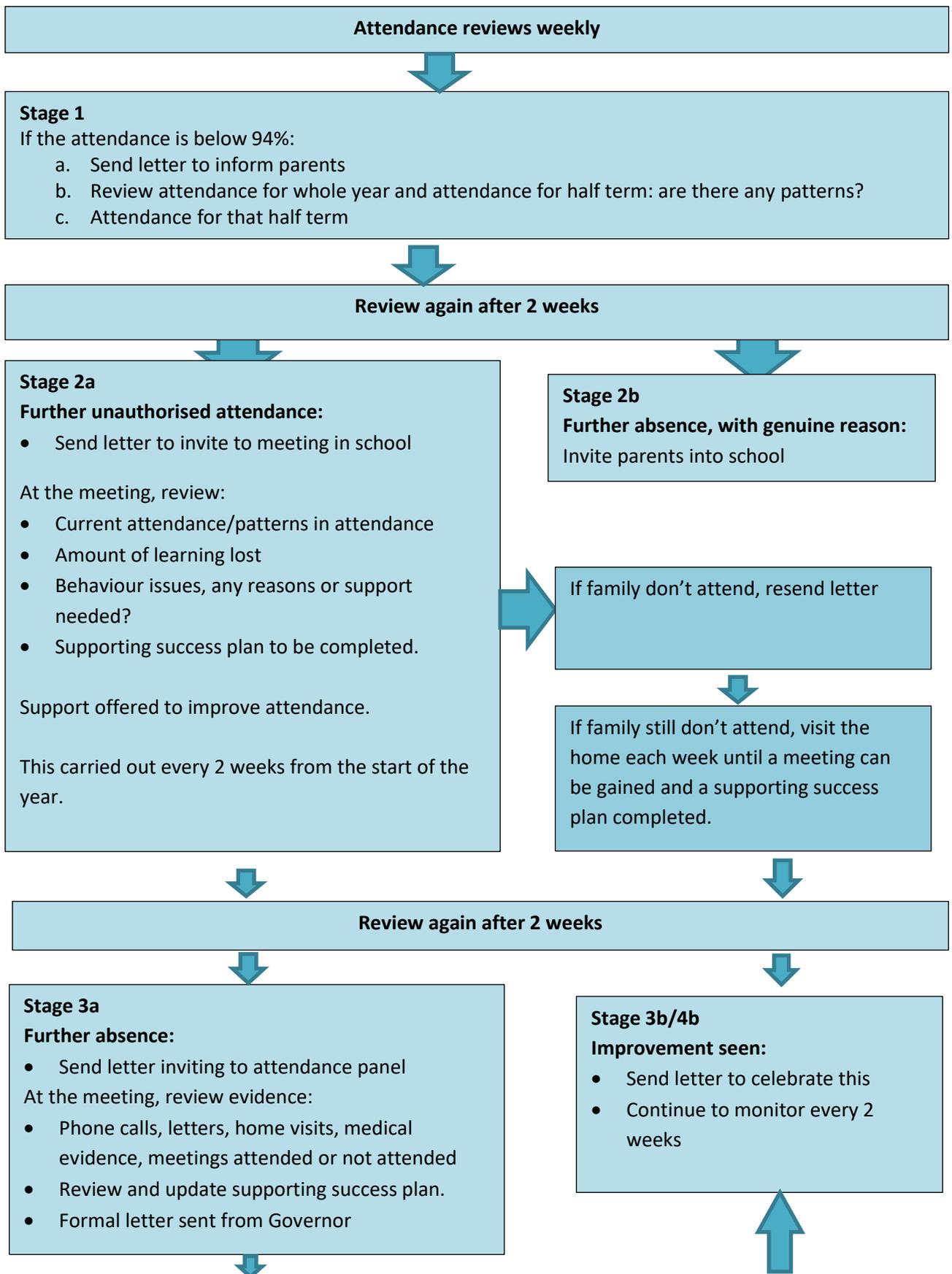
#### First day absent

- A child is on the child protection register
- There are other serious safeguarding concerns about the child
- The child has more than 10% of absence unauthorised

#### Two or more days absent

- No response to first day contact or from other contacts on SIMs
- The child is suspected to have left the country
- The child has been unwell for a full week. School to visit and discuss administering of medicine if appropriate
- Other concerns raised about the child from school staff or other members of the community

## Attendance monitoring at Nether Edge



**Review again after 2 weeks**



**Issue 15 day Penalty Warning letter if no improvement.**



**Stage 4**

**Decision made re issuing penalty notice**

## Appendix 4

### Home school agreement for part time timetables

#### Home School Agreement

Your child \_\_\_\_\_ has been placed on a reduced timetable.

In order for your child to be able to be successful in school, it is vital that home and school work together to build a supportive partnership. As part of that;

School will:

- ensure that there is a clear plan to reintegrate the child back into school as quickly as possible
- ensure that all agencies that can support this are involved as quickly as possible
- provide work to be completed at home in a specific exercise book which will be marked daily by school
- hold meetings every two weeks to review the timetable
- provide specific interventions to help the child address any needs they have in order to be successful.

Home will:

- ensure work is completed and returned to school daily for marking
- ensure that the child will attend school every day, as agreed, dressed appropriately in the correct school uniform
- drop off and collect promptly as agreed in their timetable
- talk to the child about the importance of returning to school full time.

Signed (home) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (school) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reduced Timetable Contract

<b>Child's name</b>			
<b>School</b>			
<b>Date Plan Started</b>			
<b>Key Staff</b>			
<b>Year Group</b>			
<b>FSM</b> Y/N	<b>BME</b> Y/N	<b>EAL</b> Y/N	<b>SEN need:</b>

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full time education. Sheffield City Council remains committed to every child's right to a full time education and endorses the requirement that a reduced timetable **cannot be implemented without the agreement of the parent/carer**. By signing this contract the parent/carers and school are indicating they are agreeing to a temporary reduced timetable to meet their child's individual need with the arrangements for this detailed below

**Detail regarding the temporary barriers to \_\_\_\_\_ having a full time timetable in school (e.g. SEND/medical condition/young carer/travel)**

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**Is an updated My Plan attached to this contract?**

**Proposed timetable:**

	<b>AM</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
<b>Monday</b>			
<b>Tuesday</b>			
<b>Wednesday</b>			
<b>Thursday</b>			
<b>Friday</b>			
<b>Involvement of any relevant agency</b>			
<b>Additional assessment arrangements</b>			
<b>Arrangements to supervise the child whilst not in school</b>			

\_\_\_\_\_’s part time timetable will remain in place for as long as necessary in order to support their success.

**This timetable will be reviewed every 2 weeks.**

The next 3 reviews of this timetable will take place on:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Review Date	Any changes to the timetable? (+/-)	Additional Information

	Signature	Date
Parent/carer		
Parent/carer		
School staff		
Headteacher		
Any other agency		