

Attendance Policy



Exeter
a learning community

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Jennifer Doherty** and can be contacted via info@exeteralc.com FAO: J Doherty

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Head of School
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is **Tonia Shalgosky** and can be contacted via info@exeteralc.com FAO: T Shalgosky.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. This must be done by:

- 9am for the morning registration
- 1:10 pm for the KS1 afternoon registration
- 1:40 pm for the KS2 afternoon registration

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer should they notice any patterns or trends with attendance.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and be on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 am and will be kept open until 9:20 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00 pm for KS1 and at 1:30 for KS2.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office.

- A message on the school absence voicemail by 9am on the morning of absence (01536 204765)
- A message to the school office via the 'My Child at School App'
- An email to the school office via info@exeteralc.com
- A text message or What's App to our school absence number 07342 993795

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please complete a 'Term Time Absence Request form' available from the school office to advise the school of your child's absence. You may also complete this online form, which will go directly to the school office:

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (9:20 am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The school regularly monitors patterns of attendance, including punctuality,

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will carry out a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer from the local authority.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This is done verbally via parent's evening appointments which take place twice a year (Autumn and Spring Term) and also via the child's annual report shared in the summer term.

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance, concerns will be shared at the initial point of concern via letter or parent meeting.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via [insert where parents can access the form]. The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head of School, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Assemblies
- Displays
- Time with Henry, our school dog.
- Sharing information with parents about the importance of attendance and their own child(ren)'s attendance.
- A whole school approach to attendance, including sharing information with school staff about school attendance, trends and patterns.
- Attendance action plan
- Weekly class attendance trophy/Percy Pig
- Attendance raffle for punctuality

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Liaise with external agencies that can support in reducing and removing barriers to attendance e.g. Social care, Education Inclusion Partnership Team and Family Support Teams.
- Initiate Early Help Assessments to support with attendance as required.
- Send letters to parents where there are concerns about attendance.
- Implement parent contracts to set clear expectations with regard to attendance.
- Make referrals to social care when there are concerns about a child's attendance, especially those children with 'severe absence'.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Jennifer Doherty, Assistant Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

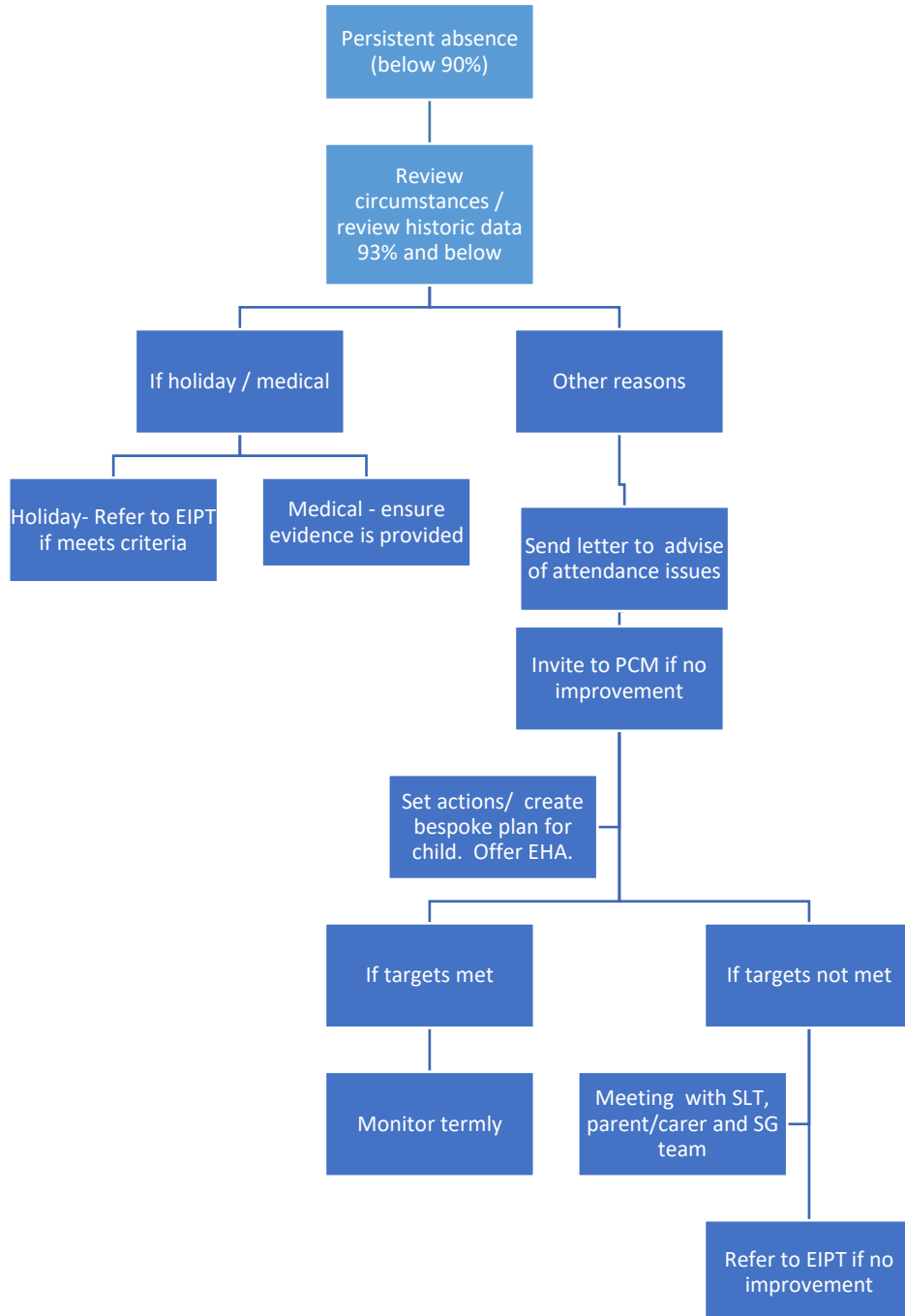
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

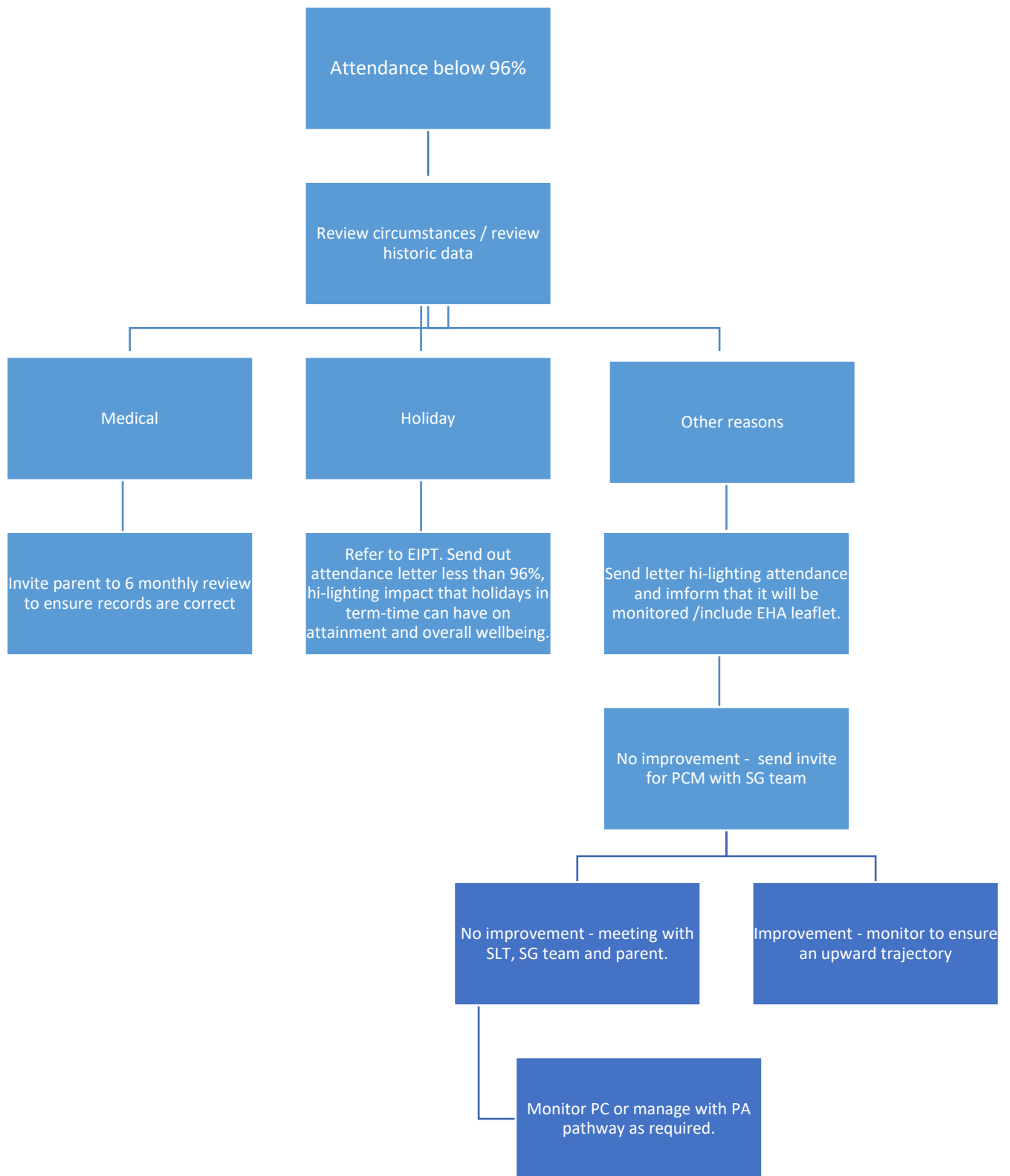
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or

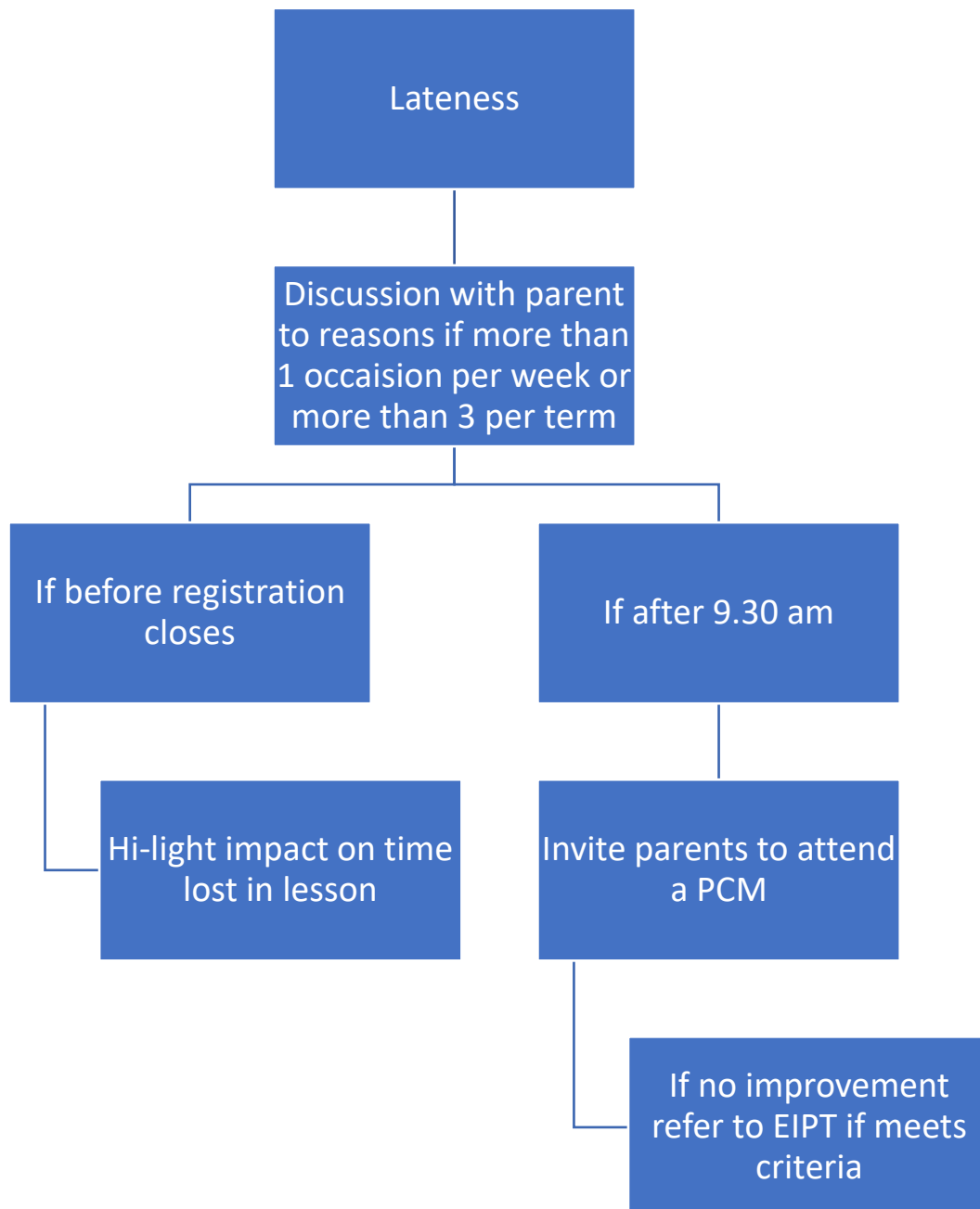
		replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Response to Poor Attendance







Appendix 3: Home Visits Process

Purpose of home visits

1. Visits to families in their homes are necessary in order to provide relevant support and/or advice regarding attendance (first day response), school and welfare issues.
2. To make contact with families during the period of home schooling (Covid-19) where contact via other means has not been possible and/or a concern has been raised during communication that warrants a home visit.
3. Home visit for new pupils to meet key staff (Appointments will be pre-arranged). Depending on the reason for the home visits some will be pre-arranged, however for the purposes of promoting attendance and safeguarding pupils, ad-hoc home visits will also be necessary at times. Home visits should be conducted in pairs, under no circumstances are school staff to make lone visits. Staff should always request to see the child on a home visit, where this is not possible ensure that the reason is logged on the home visit report on the portal. Where any concerns are raised either prior, during or after a home visit these must be recorded via CPOMS

Before the visit

Prior to conducting a home visit, a risk assessment must be done with support from the Safeguarding Team ensuring the following are considered:

- Are there concerns about the intended visit e.g. potential threat or aggression from occupants of household; any concerns must be raised with Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and discussed prior to visiting – decision to be made as to whether extra precautions are necessary in order to preserve staff safety e.g. staff required to attend, police visit etc. If additional risks are identified but school can visit without Police support, they will speak to the office before, during and when the visit is complete.
- Staff members making the visit must advise the school office staff when going on visits and must sign in and out in via Inventory
- Staff members making the visit on the Home visit log which is held on the portal (within Covid 19 folder, home visits folder). Details must include the family name and address and contact details, estimated duration of visit, staff members details of who is attending visit, contact details, transport method (if via car – details of the car must be included).
- If extra visits are necessary whilst already conducting the scheduled visits they must be telephoned through to the school office and duly noted on the home visit record.

Conducting the visit

When conducting a home visit staff should ensure that:

- Knock the door and stand at a safe distance away. (In the case of Covid – 19 a distance of 2 metres must be kept, staff are not permitted to enter a home during this period until the government deems it safe to do so);
- If concern has been raised prior to the visit but it is deemed safe for staff members to visit without Police, arrange for School Office Staff to call 5-10 minutes into the visit; ensure that the call is overheard and the address being visited is confirmed aloud – purpose: identifies that visit location is known to others;
- Do not enter the house if the parent/carers is not present and the child is alone; if this is the case then this should be recorded and followed up in line with safeguarding procedures, taking immediate action if required e.g. contacting police;

- Avoid visiting out of hours (after the close of school office). If a visit is after this time then approval must be requested from SLT;
- Carry a mobile phone in order to be contacted or make contact in the event of an emergency;
- Carry a school identification badge and ensure this is shown prior to entering the house;
- Be mindful of where their vehicle is parked i.e. park in a manner that allows ease of escape with the car facing in the direction of exit;
- Ensure they are aware of exit route from the property i.e. make a mental note of house layout.

Managing an unexpected concern

Home Visit Procedure if an unexpected concern arises about safety...

If concern is noted prior to entering the property:

- Risk assess whether it is safe to continue with the visit;
- Arrange for school office to call once inside the property as per above instructions.

If the concern arises during the visit:

- If you feel intimidated/threatened or uncomfortable – terminate the home visit in a courteous way, making up an excuse to leave if necessary;
- If you feel you are in immediate danger – do not excuse, leave the property immediately.

Return from a visit

It is the responsibility of the staff members conducting the home visit(s) to ensure the School Office team or SLT (if appropriate) are aware that they are safe following completion of the visit(s).

Failure to do so will result in the following actions:

Procedure if staff conducting a visit fails to return or make contact with school

If staff have not returned to school with the expected time frame, the following process will take place.

- Office Staff to contact the members of staff via mobile;
- If no contact can be made raise concern with SLT;
- SLT will attempt to make contact with the staff member again via mobile, and if required, with staff member's next of kin to check if any contact has been received. SLT will then also try to contact families on scheduled visit list using contact numbers on BROMCOM to identify the address member of staff was last seen;
- If contact cannot be made - Police to be informed.

Dealing with aggression

Action following an incident of verbal or physical aggression by a Parent/ Carer or Student whilst conducting a home visit. The incident must be reported and logged with the Senior Leadership Team and Safeguarding Team. In respect of the student the Safeguarding Team will follow up with the parent and student. In respect of parent/carer this will be passed on to SLT to follow up with the parent/carer. A log of concern must also be raised to record the incident. A log will also be held on the portal within the Safeguarding folder to be used to risk access further visits.

Appendix 4: Guide for Parents – Minor Illness and School Attendance

Children who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve well at school and reach their full potential.

Missing school disrupts school routines and learning. The most common reason for children to miss school is illness, however most of the time childhood ailments can be managed in school.

Please remember that early morning aches often pass, so don't keep your child at home 'just in case' when they could be learning in class.

Tell school staff and they will phone you if your child continues to have symptoms or report that they are unwell.

Please make sure that the contact details the school has are current and up to date.

It is important that the school is able to make contact with you during the day if your child is not well enough to stay in school.

Medical appointments

Where possible please arrange doctor, dentist and optician appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, your child should attend school for the remainder of the day.

Other Useful Links

www.hpa.org.uk

www.dh.gov.uk

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

www.dfes.gov.uk

www.immunisation.nhs.uk

Minor Illnesses and school attendance

To help avoid unnecessary school absences, we have produced this leaflet as a general guide to help you decide whether your child is well enough to attend school.



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Infections in Children

Fever

As a general rule, a temperature of 38C (100.4F) or above is classified as a fever in children.

Chicken Pox and Shingles

Your child should be absent from school for at least 5 days. Your child can return to school once the spots have dried and crusted over.

Conjunctivitis

Your child can return to school once their eyes have been treated with eye drops.

Impetigo

Your child can return to school once the lesions are crusted and healed.

Common Cold

Your child can attend school if they have a cold. Your child will only need to be absent if they have a high temperature.

Tonillitis

Your child can attend school as long as your child does not have a temperature. If your child has been prescribed antibiotics, these can be administered at school.

Diarrhoea

Your child can return to school 24 hours after their last bout of diarrhoea.

Vomiting/Sickness

Your child can return to school 24 hours after their last bout of sickness.

Scarlet Fever

Your child can return to school when they feel well. If your child has been prescribed antibiotics, these can be administered at school.

Chest Infection

Your child can return to school when they feel well and they no longer have a temperature. If your child has been prescribed antibiotics, these can be administered in school.

Ear Infection

Your child can return to school when they feel well and they no longer have a temperature. If your child has been prescribed antibiotics, these can be administered in school.

Hand Foot and Mouth Disease

Your child can return to school when they feel well and the blisters have dried.

Contact Information

Exeter a learning community
01536 204765

Please ensure that you contact the school on the first day of absence.

Attendance policy can be reviewed at
www.exeteralc.com

