# London South East Educational Trust

Attendance Policy

| | |
|---|---|
| **Responsible post holder** | Executive Headteacher |
| **Approved by / on** | September 2017 |
| **Reviewed** | September 2018 – September 2019 |
| **Next Review** | September 2020 |

**Contents**

1. Introduction

2. Aims of Trust

3. Legal Framework

4. Categorising Absence
   Illness
   Medical/Dental Appointments
   Other Authorised Circumstances
   Excluded (No alternative provision made)
   Family Holidays and Extended Leave
   Religious Observance
   Study Leave
   Traveller Absence
   Late Arrival
   Unauthorised Absence

5. Deletions from the Register

6. Roles and Responsibilities

7. Using Attendance Data

8. Support Systems

9. Legal Interventions
   Prosecution
   Parenting Contracts
   Penalty Notices

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 London South East Academies Trust believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 London South East Academies Trust values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.4 London South East Academies Trust recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole Trust community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying and behaviour. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

1.5 The DfE advice on school attendance October 2014 has been consulted before reviewing this policy.

1.6 At London South East Academies Trust in order for an attendance record to be deemed good, it must be 95% or above:

- 100% Excellent Attendance
- 97% Good Attendance
- 95% Expected Attendance
- 90% attendance means a student is missing half a day of education every week.
- Students with 90% and below are classified as Persistent Absentees
- 80% attendance all the way through secondary school is the equivalent of missing a whole year of education.

## 2. Aims of the Trust

2.1 To improve the overall percentage attendance and reduce unauthorised absence.

2.2 To develop a learning environment for the Trust where students are encouraged to attend regularly and to be punctual because students feel valued members of the Trust community and that they are safe and secure.

2.3 To offer students and parents/carers good support, advice and guidance on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

## 3. Legal Framework

3.1 Under the Education Act 1999, parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under this Act.

3.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the statutory school leaving age.

3.3 The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

**4. Categorising absence**

4.1 Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

4.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

4.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

**Absence will be categorised as follows:**

4.4 Illness In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

4.5 Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

4.6 Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or a personalised timetable agreed in special circumstances as part of a reintegration package.

4.7 Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

4.8 Family Holidays and Extended Leave Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

4.8.1 The Department for Education has issued advice regarding absence from school and prosecution; in force from 1 September 2013; which makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

4.9 Religious Observance London South East Academies Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals

may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

4.9.1 Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

4.9.2 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

4.10 Study Leave Study leave **may** be granted in certain exceptional circumstances for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

4.11 Late Arrival Students arriving after registration time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 09:20, pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, 'U' Code

4.12 Missing/did not arrive in School If your child is not in school after 09:30, telephone calls and emails will be sent to parent/carer requesting a reason for the absence. If a Parent/Carer does not know why their child has not arrived in school they must inform the Police and report them as 'missing'. School procedures for Missing Child in Education will then be activated.

## 5. Deletions from the Register

5.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

5.2 London South East Academies Trust will follow Bromley Local Authority Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 London South East Academies Trust believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, the Trust, parents/ carers, pupils and the wider Trust community.

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers
- Annually review the Trust's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy

- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor each school's attendance and related issues through weekly, termly and yearly reporting to the appropriate Senior Leadership Team and the Trust
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and DfE as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager at each school to lead on attendance
- Ensure that each school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention

6.2 **Parents/Carers will:**

- Talk to their child about school and take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance

**7. Using Attendance Data**

7.1 Students attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if it is a cause for concern

7.2 Attendance Data will be used to identify sub-groups that may require additional resources

7.3 Attendance data will be used to Safeguard the pupils at London South East Academies Trust and implement appropriate interventions. Please see individual school procedures for this.

**8. Sanctions**

8.1 The Trust will use interventions to improve attendance such as

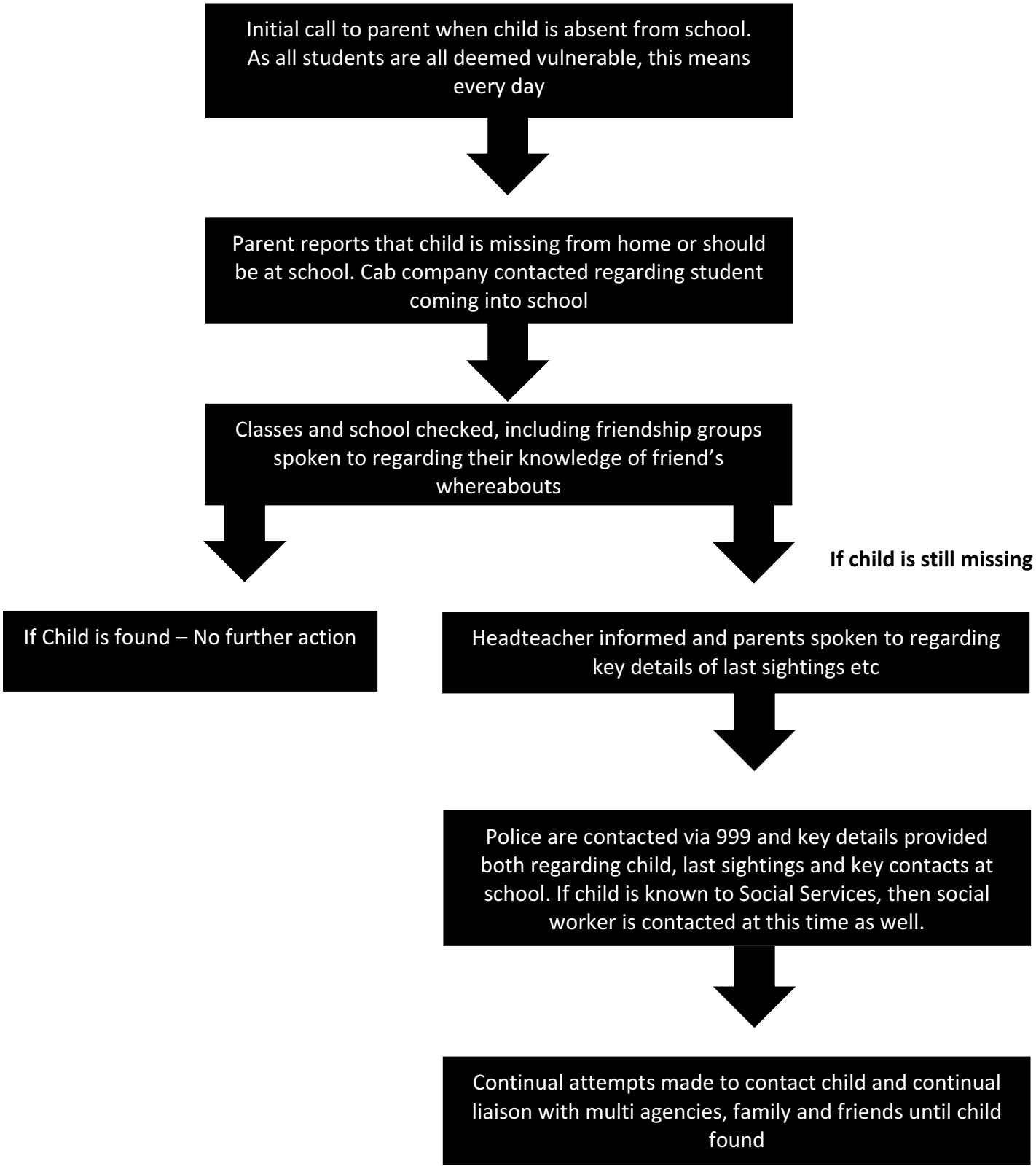
- Telephone Calls
- Emails
- Parent Meetings
- Warning Letters
- Home Visits
- Punctuality/Attendance Contracts
- Undertake a Common Assessment Framework
- Referral to Agencies such as:-
  Bromley Children's Project

8.2 When avenues of supportive intervention as listed above have been utilised and there has been no improvement in attendance then we will use the legal avenues that are open to us by way of the Education Welfare Service.

8.3 **Education Welfare Service**

The Trust will inform and submit the evidence required to The Education Welfare Service who has a statutory duty to investigate referrals where it appears that a young person is not attending school regularly. The following legal disposals will be considered if an offence has been committed:

- Education Supervision Order
- Penalty Notice
- Summons Section 444(1) / 444(1a)Education Act 1996
- School Attendance Order
- Simple Caution

## Appendix One - Child Going Missing Protocol

Initial Operational Procedures that need to be followed by Senior Leaders if child goes missing from Home/ School