

## Green Ridge Primary Academy

### Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Audience:	Parents/Carers Academy staff and volunteers Local Governing Bodies Trustees
Approved:	February 2019 Trust Senior Leadership Team
Other related policies:	Safeguarding and Child protection, Home Visits, Health and Safety, Admissions.
Policy owner:	Stephen Foster – Director of Behaviour & Attendance, Green Ridge Primary Academy
Policy model:	Trust
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At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones:

- Integrity** We recognise that we lead by example and if we want children to grow up to behave appropriately and with integrity then we must model this behaviour
- Responsibility** We act judiciously with sensitivity and care. We don't make excuses, but mindfully answer for actions and continually seek to make improvements
- Inclusion** We acknowledge and celebrate that all people are different and can play a role in the REAch2 family whatever their background or learning style
- Enjoyment** Providing learning that is relevant, motivating and engaging releases a child's curiosity and fun, so that a task can be tackled and their goals achieved
- Inspiration** Inspiration breathes life into our schools. Introducing children to influential experiences of people and place, motivates them to live their lives to the full
- Learning** Children and adults will flourish in their learning and through learning discover a future that is worth pursuing
- Leadership** REAch2 aspires for high quality leadership by seeking out talent, developing potential and spotting the possible in people as well as the actual

## Contents

	Page
<b>Mission Statement</b>	
<b>Legal Framework</b>	
<b>Schools Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Registration</b>	
<b>Parents / Carers Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Pupil Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Governors responsibilities</b>	
<b>Collection and analysis of data</b>	
<b>Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance</b>	
<b>Term-time absence</b>	
<b>Appendix 1 – Registration codes</b>	
<b>Appendix 2 – Term Time leave request</b>	
<b>Appendix 3 – Interventions – Who does what and when</b>	
<b>Appendix4 - Flow Chart for Attendance Letters/Interventions</b>	

## 1. Mission statement

Green Ridge Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils. At Green Ridge Primary Academy we consider good and regular attendance to be above 95%. A key element is a child's attendance at school; 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. Regular school attendance is a major factor in ensuring that children are safe, achieve well and develop socially, emotionally and behaviourally. Good school attendance prepares children well for their future, preparing them for high school, further education, employment and training, and plays a crucial role in enabling them to become happy, healthy and successful adults. High achievement depends on good attendance. Children who miss out on lessons are vulnerable to falling behind and statistics show that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The whole school community; pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and governors, have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this. The policy is based on current statutory and Local Authority guidance. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approx. days lost per year</b>	<b>Approx. weeks lost per year</b>
99-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
95%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-94%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and all members of the Governing body – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this. The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. Legal framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

- The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable
  - a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
  - b) to any special educational needs, they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A person begins to be of compulsory school age
  - a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
  - b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.
- A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year.
  - a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
  - b) if they attain that age on that day, or
  - c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

Green Ridge Primary Academy is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance and punctuality policy accordingly.

### **3. School's roles and responsibilities**

**3.1** All staff at Green Ridge Primary Academy have a key role to play in the safeguarding of children and in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. All staff 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.

**3.2** A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be delegated to take the school's strategic lead on attendance and will be responsible for overseeing, directing and coordinating the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance. They will ensure that the school's Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school and will be responsible for analysing attendance data. They will also be responsible for reporting on attendance to the Senior Leadership Team and governing body.

**3.3** The Education, Welfare & Pastoral Support Lead will be responsible for attendance on a day-to-day basis and will provide support to any pupils whose attendance drops below 96%. They will be responsible for liaising with the class teacher and will contact the parents/carers to discuss the child's attendance, and offer support when needed. They will collate attendance data and provides this along with information on the impacts of the school's actions to improve attendance to the attendance strategic lead on a regular basis.

**3.4** The Education, Welfare & Pastoral Support Lead is also responsible for maintaining the electronic registers, signs children in who arrive late, carries out first day calling and, produce and send letter to parents and carers, as directed by the Director of Behaviour and Attitudes.

### **4. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

Parents/carers are required by law to ensure that their children receive an appropriate and fulltime education.

Green Primary Academy expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly (96% or more) and on time
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school
- parents will also be expected to:
  - notify school on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence, unless medical evidence is provided which defines the necessary length of absence.
  - provide specific medical evidence for absences when attendance falls below 95%

### **5. Pupils' responsibilities**

- All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality.
- ensure they attend the school regularly (96% or more) and on time
- If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly or are causing them to arrive at school late, they should speak to their class teacher, a member of the pastoral team or the attendance lead.

### **6. Governors' responsibilities**

The Governing Body will make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the practices of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## **7. Registration**

### **7.1 Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded using Arbor. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

### **7.2 Morning registration**

Green Ridge Primary Academy will be open to pupils from 8.:40am and the morning the registers will be taken from 8:50am. Children who arrive after this time will need to report to main school office and sign in as late (L). The registers will close at 9:00am across the school. Anyone who arrives after this time will be marked as unauthorised (U).

### **7.3 Afternoon registration**

Registers must be submitted straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence at 13:00 for Key Stage 1 and 13:15 for Key Stage 2.

### **7.4 First-day calling**

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The Education, Welfare & Pastoral Support Lead follows this system:

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- If no reply by 10:00am, this is followed up with an automated Arbor text message.
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on Arbor.
- When no contact has been established for 2 consecutive days, the school will consider conducting a home visit or request a 'safe and well check' from the police, if the absence is unusual or school has concerns regarding the child's welfare. This may also result in a referral to Buckinghamshire Children Services.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will routinely monitor the attendance of any vulnerable children. Where attendance drops below satisfactory levels, they will consider appropriate support that can be provided to the parents/carers to improve attendance.

## **8. Categorising absence**

Any child who is not present during registration will be marked as absent, unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher or other designated staff. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.

Green Ridge Primary Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and achievement, and attendance and the safeguarding of children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence. If absence is frequent or continuous, we will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or

explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If no suitable explanation for the absence is received by the school within 1 week, from the main carer of the pupil, the absence will remain unauthorised.

## 8.1 Authorised Absence

Absences may be authorised by the Headteacher or other designated staff in the following circumstances;

- Leave has been granted by the school in advance (see page 9 section 12)  
NB An application must be made in writing on the prescribed form (Appendix 2), with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended circumstance wherever possible. Amendments have been made to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. From 1st September 2013 If absence during term time is to be authorised by the school then it will only be under exceptional circumstances. (Schools may decide not to authorise any absence due to holidays during term time)
- The school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend. (Code I)
- The pupil has a medical appointment (code M) (although parents should endeavour to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand)
- There is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions (code Y)
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parent belongs. This must be a well-recognised and published religious observance from one of the six major religions e.g. Eid, Orthodox Christmas (code R)
- The pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months (code T)
- In other exceptional circumstances (see page 9 section 12) and for a very limited period which is at the discretion of the head teacher and never more than 10 school days (code C)

## 8.2 Unauthorised absence

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be (this is not an exhaustive list):

- no explanation has been given by the parent
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house
- Staying at home to care for a sick or disabled parent / carer / family member.
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence
- the parent / carer has medical appointment

### **8.3 Persistent absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

### **8.4 Term-time absence due to exceptional circumstances (where school's decide to authorise)**

The Headteacher will consider each application individually. An application must be made in writing on the prescribed form (Appendix 2), with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended circumstance wherever possible. Green Ridge Primary Academy will only consider authorising leave of absence for the following: -

- Serious and sudden illness of a close relative and you must leave in an emergency
- A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, eg wedding/funeral.
- Any religious observance
- A significant educational opportunity afforded to the child by a national organisation e.g. ballet exams, filming for a TV commercial, taking part in a theatre production, trials for a sporting club.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school

### **8.5 Approved educational activity**

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

### **8.6 Religious observance**

Green Ridge Primary Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parent/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

## **9. Early Years expectations (remove if no Early Years)**

The expectations for pupils in our school under the age of 5 years is the same for those who are of statutory school age. The early years are a critical time to establish the good habits and routines needed throughout life and to get the key messages about the importance of attendance and punctuality at school across to parents and carers.

Regular attendance from the point that a child attends an educational provision has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

Families should know that good attendance and being punctual are expected when their child takes up a school place. As attendance is an issue that affects all age groups, there needs to be as much consistency as possible between early years and school settings. This includes expectations around holidays, which for school-aged children are not permissible in term time.

## **10. Staff training**

The Education, Welfare & Pastoral Support Lead will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately. The Senior Leadership team will also ensure that attendance is a regular discussed during staff meetings and INSET days.

## **11. Collection and analysis of data**

The school uses Arbor to keep an electronic record of attendance.

The Director of Behaviour & Attitudes will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team on a weekly basis, and to parents and the Governing body as appropriate. The report should be contextualised and include commentary on the progress towards achieving the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by individual child, year group, class group and by reasons of absence. It is also analysed by specified groups such as Pupil Premium, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance (this is not an exhaustive list). This data is used to identify where intervention and support is required to improve attendance (See Appendix 3).

Accurate attendance returns are made to the Department of Education (DfE) within the stipulated time frame.

## **12. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance / punctuality**

Green Ridge Primary Academy School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Green Ridge Primary Academy also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. For more information on the strategies used to manage and improve attendance, please see Appendix 3

### **12.1 Profile & Rewards**

To ensure that good attendance is valued, Green Ridge Academy employs a number of strategies to reward and recognise those with high attendance. These include:

- Attendance data is published, class by class, in the school newsletter each week.

- At the end of the school year certificates are presented to children with 100% attendance.
- At the end of each term, certificates are presented to children. They get a Gold certificate for 100%, a silver certificate for 97% and a bronze certificate for 95%.
- There is an 'Attendance Tree' on display outside the main hall to recognise those with high attendance.

## **12.2 Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8:50am, every day.

Update: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school has introduced staggered starts. For this reason, some classes are now required to arrive by 8:55am. This information can be found in the 'Reopening Plans' letter sent on 25 02 2021).

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 as 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. For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the School Office on arrival with their parent/carer who must sign them in and provide an explanation for the late arrival. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure. For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign out and provide a reason for leaving early. On his/her subsequent return to school, they must sign in again to say that they have returned.

## **12.3 School Strategies to tackle absence**

The Director for Behaviour and Attitudes is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Green Ridge Primary Academy intervenes in non-attendance at an early stage. The Director for Behaviour and Attitudes and the Education, Welfare & Pastoral Support Lead communicate on a weekly basis to review any pupils where attendance concerns exist and to monitor the impacts of any actions taken. Our policy states that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, or designated member of staff (see authorised absence), irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for term time leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school.

Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence or if staff are particularly concerned, the school will contact the parents to discuss reasons for the absences with them. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. If the pattern persists a Penalty Notice referral may be issued where there is no improvement seen.

## **12 Referral to the Child Missing Education (CME) Service**

In line with Children Missing Education (2016) and Buckinghamshire's procedures, we will work with local agencies and make timely referrals as required to ensure that circumstances where children are missing from education are swiftly and appropriately responded to.

## Appendix 1 – Attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on a holiday due to exceptional circumstances – this has been agreed by the HeadTeacher
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
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 GCSEs
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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
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 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

# Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time\*

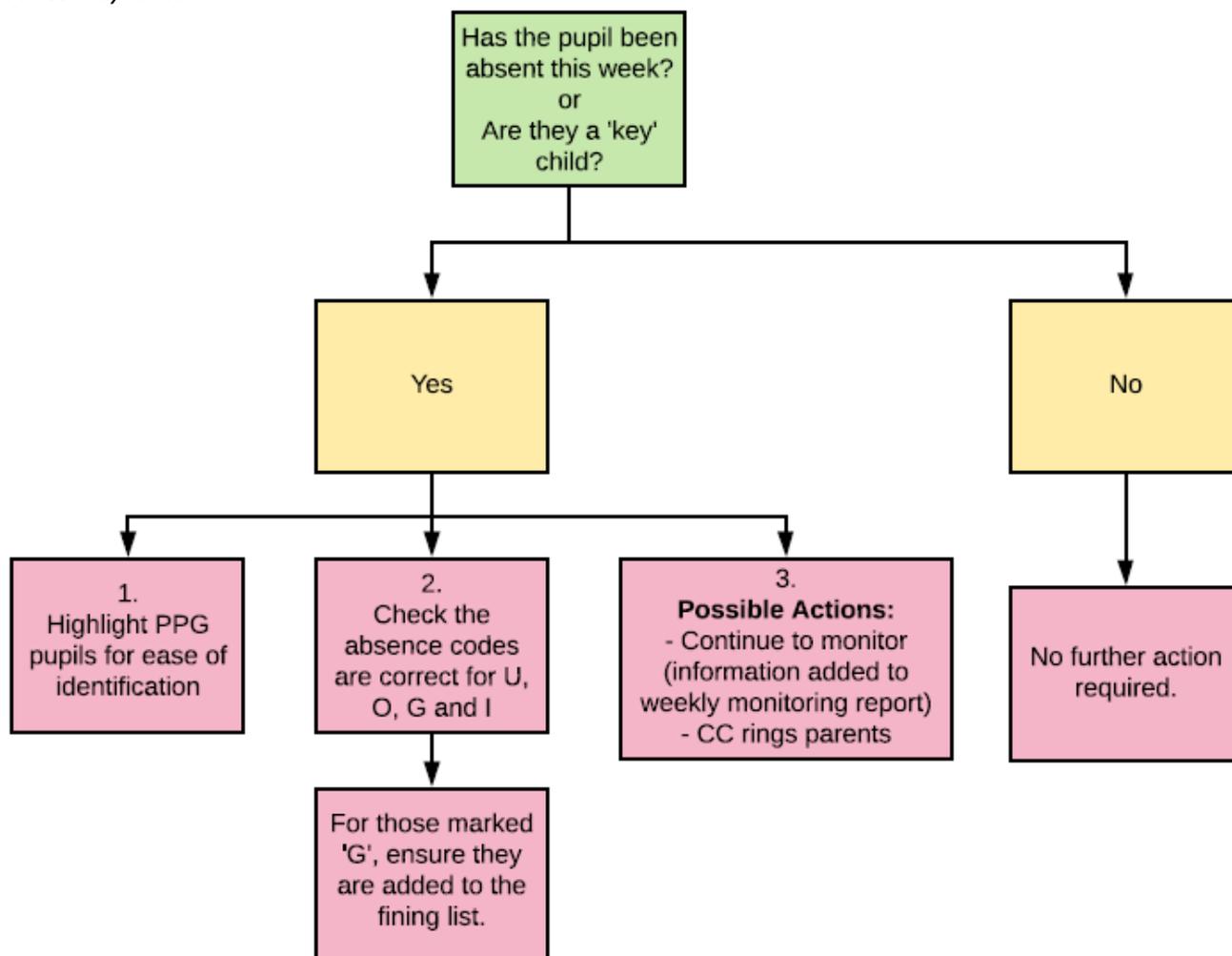
\*To be completed and returned to the school prior to the leave, along with a letter detailing the “exceptional circumstance for which the leave of absence is required.

Parent/Guardian Name and Address	Guidance
	<p>Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school. As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are <b>exceptional circumstances</b> relating to the application.</p> <p>Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress. There is <u>no</u> entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time, however, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances.</p>
How to use this form	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use for all absences other than sickness.</li> <li>▪ <b>Return form to school in <u>advance</u> of requested absence otherwise the absence will automatically be unauthorised.</b></li> <li>▪ Use a separate form for each child and each absence.</li> </ul>	
Name of child:	Class:
Is this the first request for absence this academic year? <span style="float: right;">YES / NO</span>	
Dates of absence requested: The 1 <sup>st</sup> day of absence from school is..... I will return to school on..... at 8:50am	No. of school days requested:
<b>Which exceptional reason does your request fulfil? (please tick)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious AND sudden illness of a close relative and you must leave in an emergency</li> <li>• A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, eg wedding/funeral.</li> <li>• Any religious observance</li> <li>• A significant educational opportunity afforded to the child by a national organisation e.g. ballet exams, filming for a TV commercial, taking part in a West End production</li> </ul>	<b>Please explain in more detail.</b>
<b>Please provide the names of all siblings that attend any other education provisions</b>	
Name of sibling	Name of education provision

<b>Contact details whilst abroad/absent from school</b>	
If your child is being taken out of school during term time and the details of their location is not provided, this could turn into a serious safeguarding issues. When a child is absent or missing from school, they could be at risk of harm. The school has a duty to keep children safe and this includes knowing where they are. If the Parent/Carer fails to provide the required information, then the school may make a referral to the police or the Local Authority.	
<b>Address whilst away:</b>	
<b>Telephone number whilst away:</b>	
<b>Email address whilst away:</b>	
<b>Please attach proof of where you will be whilst away</b>	
<b>I make application for my child to have authorised absence from school. I understand that if this is not agreed then any subsequent absence will be treated as unauthorised and this could lead to a penalty notice or a summons to court for irregular school attendance.</b>	
<b>I have read and understood the guidance above.</b>	
Parent 1*: Title: _____ Full Name: _____ Tel: _____	
Relationship to child: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Parent 2*: Title: _____ Full Name: _____ Tel: _____	
Relationship to child: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	
<b>*This is defined as any adult with legal parental responsibility for a child.</b>	
<b>School to complete</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child's current attendance: _____%</li> <li>• How many days' holiday already taken this academic year? _____</li> <li>• Is the Education Welfare Officer working with the family? Yes/No</li> <li>• Is Children's Services supporting the family? Yes/No</li> <li>• Is the request for leave during the exam period? Yes/No</li> <li>• Has the school received proof of where the child is stay during absence? Yes/No</li> <li>• Does the request fit the exceptional criteria? Yes/No</li> <li>• Has a written response been sent to all parents/carers? Yes/No</li> <li>• Penalty notice to be issued? Yes/No</li> </ul>	
<b>This request for term time leave is:</b>	Authorised / Unauthorised.
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	
Signed: _____ Headteacher Date: _____	

### Appendix 3 – Flowchart for Attendance Letters/Interventions

#### 3A - Weekly Actions



3B - Half-Termly Actions

