The Gateway Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

September 2026

Written by: Mr Cassem **Date Updated:** September 2026

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Signed by chair of governors:

Signed by Headteacher:

Is this an internal or external policy: External

Is this based on a model policy Yes

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Statement of Intent

The Gateway Primary Academy is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at The Gateway Primary Academy.

1. Aims

At The Gateway Primary Academy, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education statutory guidance on working

together to improve school attendance (August 2024) through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- 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 is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applicable from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

The school recognises that attendance is a safeguarding matter and that poor attendance may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulties or other safeguarding concerns.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Requesting the issue of penalty notices through Kent County Council in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and Kent County Council's Code of Conduct, where the legal threshold has been met and support has been exhausted or deemed inappropriate.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, by establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Discussing with the Senior leadership team when fixed-penalty notices will be issued
- Applying the school's policy fairly and consistently with consideration to the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. This will be with regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010: guidance – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Cassem and can be contacted via office@gateway-pri.kent.sch.uk or 01322 220090.

3.4 The SENCO and Headteacher provide pastoral support

- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- To tackle persistent absence, and where necessary referring to our designated School Liaison Officer (North Kent)
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where a pupil has a social worker, will inform the social worker of any unexplained absences
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

The designated senior lead is supported by the SENCO, Miss Warner, and can be contacted via cwarner@gateway-pri.kent.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office. Registers are taken at 08.45am for KS1 and 08.50am for KS2 each morning and at the start of the afternoon session. The specific afternoon registration time for each phase is determined by the school's timetable and must be applied consistently in Arbor and throughout this policy.
Also see Appendix 2 for class teacher responsibilities.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Make calls where absences have not been explained
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Headteacher or SENCO where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Ensure registers are taken daily

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence where appropriate to do so, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Work with the school and the local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day
- Enter school by 08.45am (KS1) or 08.50am (KS2) daily

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We take the attendance register at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session at the published registration time for each year group. Attendance registers are completed electronically using Arbor.

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:

- (For pupils of compulsory school age) 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.
The school gates open at 08:35am and the official start of school is 08:45am for KS1 and 08:50am 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 09:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office who can be contacted on 01322 220090 and the following email address: office@gateway-pri.kent.sch.uk (see also Section 7). This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that the child is safe.
We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or 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 with 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.

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 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.
Parents and carers should request absence by emailing the office on office@gateway-pri.kent.sch.uk.
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:

- Pupils arriving after the published registration time but before the register closes at 9:15am (KS1) and 9.20am (KS2) will receive code L.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the code N by class teachers and then the appropriate code in appendix 1 by office staff
- All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.
- Ongoing punctuality concerns are monitored and addressed by Mrs Munday (Office Manager) and senior leaders through early communication, meetings with parents and, where appropriate, attendance support processes.

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 may ask a DSL / Senior Leader to make a home visit. Under circumstances where we have concerns for the child's well-being and safety, it may be necessary to contact Integrated Children's Services. If after discussion with social care, school continue to have concerns they may alert the police. See first day absence procedures flow chart (Appendix 3)
- 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 for which the pupil was absent.
- 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 the School Liaison Officer [from the Attendance Service].
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or parents to improve attendance.
- Identify if the family need support from other services and, as quickly as possible, make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below as appropriate.)

The school recognises that poor attendance and unexplained absence may be indicators of safeguarding concerns. All unexplained absences will be considered in conjunction with the school's safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, information will be shared with children's services, social workers and other relevant agencies.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The Department for Education expects schools to regularly inform parents / carers of their child's attendance and absence levels. At The Gateway Primary Academy this is done 3 times annually as a minimum, or more frequently where there are concerns.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service Personnel returning from a Tour of Duty overseas where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be rare, significant, unavoidable and short in duration. A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation will not normally constitute exceptional circumstances.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that

Head Teachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g., poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in writing, through an email to the office with details of the request and full reasons. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration) Where a pupil attends alternative provision, the school remains responsible for monitoring attendance and following up absence concerns.
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Gateway Primary Academy promotes excellent attendance through a whole-school culture that values attendance and punctuality.

Strategies include:

- Regular communication with parents regarding attendance expectations.
- Monitoring attendance data weekly and identifying concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Celebrating good and improving attendance through assemblies, newsletters and class-based recognition.
- Early intervention meetings with families where attendance falls below expected levels.
- Attendance support plans and individualised interventions for pupils experiencing barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with external agencies, including Kent County Council, Early Help, social care and health professionals where appropriate.
- Providing additional support for vulnerable pupils: including pupils with SEND, pupils with an EHCP, children in need, children subject to child protection plans, children looked after, previously looked after children, young carers and pupils known to social care services

- Regular reporting of attendance data to school leaders and the Governing Board.

The school adopts the support-first approach described within Working Together to Improve School Attendance and seeks to remove barriers before considering enforcement action.

Additionally, see 'appendix 2 – process for improving and supporting attendance,' for the specific schedule in place for improving and supporting attendance.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where a child has complex barriers that impact on attendance, the school may put in place the following support:

- Reintegration plan co-produced with parents and any other agencies involved to support attendance.
- Inclusion support programme which is reviewed regularly with parents/carers any other involved agencies
- Consultation with Educational Psychologist at the local Emotionally Based School Avoiders consultation forum

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

If a child is absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND, the school works closely with the family and any other agencies to make adjustments to support attendance. This may be with meetings outside of the school hours with the child on the school site, Teams contact, home visits and provision of work. The school may liaise with the local authority for more complex cases.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the Attendance Lead will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When a child has had a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence the school may put support in place to support reintegration if needed. This may be in the form of informal catch ups with the PSO in advance of return to school and when the child has returned to school. If a phased return is appropriate and supportive this could be put in place. Regular review of the child's success in return to school will be carried out between the parents/carers and the class teacher. These may be informal.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The Gateway Primary Academy 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.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The Gateway Primary Academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Gateway Primary Academy will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Data returns

(see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 2, page 21 and regulation 13 of the School Attendance Regulations 2024).

The Gateway Primary Academy follows our statutory duty to share specific information from our registers with Kent County Council at particular points in accordance with Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024, including:

- When any pupil's name is added or deleted from the admission register outside of standard transition times. (The latter is also known as a deletion return).
- Names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who have 10 continuous school days of unauthorised absence (codes N, O, G, U) recorded on their register (known as an attendance return).
- Names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who have accumulated 15 school days of absence (code I) either consecutively and/or intermittently, as well as any pupil the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 continuous school days because of illness (known as a sickness return).
- Deletion, attendance and sickness returns must be made via the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website.

Children Missing Education

The school will fulfil all statutory responsibilities relating to Children Missing Education (CME). Where a pupil fails to attend regularly, cannot be located, or is removed from roll, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries and make all required notifications to Kent County Council in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and local authority procedures. Attendance concerns will be considered alongside safeguarding responsibilities at all times.

Elective Home Education

Where parents express a wish to educate their child at home, the school will follow Kent County Council procedures and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will ensure that parents are provided with appropriate information and that all required notifications are made before a pupil is removed from roll.

8.5 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to identify 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 at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available

- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

- Where necessary introduce an 'attendance contract' whereby school and parents agree to supportive actions and review the implementation of these at regular intervals.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Send early communication to target unauthorised absence through letters, phone calls and meetings. Class teachers to communicate early concerns and interventions strategies as soon as attendance becomes a concern (see Appendix 2)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be revised and reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by the Office Manager, senior leaders and the Headteacher who has responsibility for attendance. The review (and its approval) will be made by the full governing board.

10. 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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied

		that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2 – process for improving and supporting attendance

Support	Staff Member	Description
On-going observation	Class Teacher *Office Manager* *Senior Attendance Champion*	Class teachers will keep an eye on attendance/punctuality and have quick catch-ups with parents and their children where there is an immediate concern.
Parent consultations	Class Teacher	Class teachers will share the attendance figure for the year so far with parents and discuss any concerns.
Data analysis	*Senior Attendance Champion*	SLT will analyse data and share the names and details of those pupils with attendance concerns with class teachers, highlighting those accessing PP.*
Individual Meetings	Class Teacher	Headteacher will arrange to meet with parents of those pupils identified as a concern to discuss the issues. (See agenda, script and strategies sections below)
Data analysis	*Senior Attendance Champion*	SLT will repeat the analysis process above, highlighting improvements/new pupils of concern.
Parent consultations	Class teacher	Low level concerns will be discussed at these meetings. Higher level concerns will be discussed at separate meetings after Easter.
Individual Meetings	Class Teacher	Headteacher will arrange to meet with parents of those pupils identified as a concern to discuss the issues. (See agenda, script and strategies sections below)
Data analysis	*Senior Attendance Champion*	SLT to analyse data and ascertain impact of support and actions. To be shared with class teachers.
Transition meetings	Class teachers and Teaching Assistants	Attendance / punctuality concerns to be shared as part of transition discussions.

Appendix 3 – Letter 1, bringing attention to attendance concern

Address

Date

Dear

Re: Name and class

We would like to draw your attention to name's attendance and would like to work with you to improve this. I have attached a summary of his/her attendance data for your information.

At The Gateway, we really want every child to be in school every day but do understand that illness can affect attendance. When a child is absent it really impacts their learning, they miss out on teaching while they are away and are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

We would like to advise you that if a child's attendance remains poor, we may request supporting evidence for absences and appointments, as per our attendance policy.

We want to work with all families to support their child's attendance and encourage you to contact us, if we can assist further.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cassem

Headteacher

Appendix 4 – Letter 2, requesting meeting re attendance concern

Address

Date

Dear

Child's name and class

I am writing to update you with regards to **child's name** attendance, which is currently ??%.

We understand that some illness is unavoidable, however, we encourage our students to maintain a minimum of 96% attendance

I would therefore like to invite you to meet with me in order that we can discuss strategies to further support **child's name** to attend school regularly.

Please contact me on office@gateway-pri.kent.sch.uk to arrange a convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cassem

Headteacher

Appendix 5 – Letter re unauthorised absence

Address

Date

Dear

Request for leave of absence during Term

Time Child's name and class

I have received your **email/written request** to take **child's name** out of school for a **xxx** on **xxx** , a total of **xxx s**chool sessions each.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 only permit a Headteacher to authorise leave of absence during term time in a limited number of prescribed circumstances, including where exceptional circumstances apply. Department for Education guidance states that a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance.

We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open and where there 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered the request but I am writing to confirm that the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take **child's name** out of school the Attendance Service may issue a Penalty Notice.

For your information Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent/carer** of **each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 days period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cassem

Headteacher

Appendix 6 – Letter re lateness notification

Address

Date

Dear

Child's name and class

At The Gateway, we have high expectations of attendance and punctuality from all pupils. We strive for every child to be in school each day and on time. Regular attendance is essential to ensure children reach their potential both academically and socially.

Following a review of the year group's punctuality, we are writing to parents of those children whose punctuality is below expectations.

Child's first name has been late on a number of occasions, and as a result missed **x minutes** of school, and valuable learning time, this academic year. Persistent lateness can be distressing for the child, is disruptive to the class, and can affect learning as much as absence.

We are keen to work with you and to understand if there are any barriers to arriving on time or reasons for lateness, so we can together support your child, to ensure they reach their potential. If you would like to discuss the situation further, please do let me know and we can arrange to meet or have a phone conversation.

The school doors open at 08:35. Pupils must be in class by 08:50 which is the official start time.

We are also obliged to inform you that we may request the support of our Attendance Officer at the Local Authority to identify and support with persistent lateness.

If you have any questions, or there is anything you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cassem

Headteacher

Appendix 7 – letter re meeting request to support lateness

Addr

Date

Child's name and class

Dear

At The Gateway Primary Academy, we have high expectations of attendance and punctuality from all pupils. We strive for every child to be in school each day and on time. Regular attendance is essential to ensure children reach their potential both academically and socially.

Following a review of the year group's punctuality, we are writing to parents of those children whose punctuality is below expectations.

Child's first name has been late on a number of occasions, and as a result missed **x minutes** of school, and valuable learning time, this academic year. Persistent lateness can be distressing for the child, is disruptive to the class, and can affect learning as much as absence.

We are keen to work with you and to understand if there are any barriers to arriving on time or reasons for lateness, so we can together support your child, to ensure they reach their potential. We would like to arrange a meeting with you in school. **Please can you reply with your availability.**

The school doors open at 08:35. Pupils must be in class by 08:45 / 8:50 which is the official start time.

We are also obliged to inform you that we may request the support of our Attendance Officer at the Local Authority to identify and support with persistent lateness.

If you have any questions, or there is anything you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cassem

Headteacher

Appendix 8 – notice to improve letter

Address

Date

Dear

Child's name and class

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school or fails to attend regularly, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996. If your child is a registered pupil at an alternative provision in the circumstances set out in section 444ZA of the Education Act 1996, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence.

You, **«FORENAME» «SURNAME»** are a parent/carer of **«Students_Name»**, (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at **«School_Name»**.

The school have offered support to you and your family to try and help improve «Students_Name»'s attendance, including *(delete as appropriate):*

1. **Telephone calls.** The school contacted you every day your child was absent to understand why your child was absent and to offer their support with any issues your child may be having.
2. **An Attendance Overview Letter**. The school wrote to you, letting you know about «Students_Name»'s attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.
3. **An Attendance Support Meeting Invite**. The school invited you to a meeting to discuss your child's unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. You were notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and you did not effectively engage with the support offered.
4. **Reasonable Adjustments.** The school offered your child temporary changes to their normal timetable to support improved attendance,
5. **Improving Attendance Contract.** The school agreed a contract with you to improve your child's attendance. This included actions that both the school and you as a parent committed to.
6. **Referrals to external agencies:** The school referred your child to external agencies so they could access additional support.

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered to your family, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between **«WARNING_START_DATE»** and **«WARNING_END_DATE»** the pupil failed to attend regularly at **«School_Name»**, which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

You now have twenty school days (4 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, *a Penalty Notice may be issued / a referral may be made to the Local Authority requesting they issue you with a Penalty Notice.* **A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days if this is the first offence.**

NB – A Penalty Notice may be issued as soon as an unauthorised absence is recorded.

If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact our team as soon as possible:

Yours sincerely

Mr Cassem

Headteacher

Appendix 9 – Attendance support plan

Attendance Support Plan (Initial meeting)		
Date of meeting:	**Time of meeting:**	**Face to face or virtual:**
Chair of meeting:	**Role of Chair:**	**Lead professional for parenting contract:**

Pupil name:	**Pupil DoB:**	**Year Group:**	**School:**
Pupil address:			
Pupil's attendance % (Sep to present):	**Authorised absence % (Sep to present):**		**Unauthorised absence % (Sep to present):**

Parent / carer (1) full name:	**Parent / carer (2) full name:**
Parent / carer (1) address (if different from pupil):	**Parent / carer (2) address (if different from pupil):**
Parent / carer (1) Date of birth:	**Parent / carer (1) Date of birth:**

MEETING PARTICIPANTS			
Full name	**Role (School, Parent etc)**	**Present (Y / N)**	**Contact number and email address**

BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE: What are the reasons for the pupil's absences?			

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENT(S): What do/does parent(s) need to do to help unblock the barriers to the pupil's attendance?			
Action point	**Action to be taken**	**Who may be able to help with this?**	**When will this need to be done by?**
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
VOICE OF THE PUPIL: What does the pupil feel they can do to help? *(If the pupil attended the meeting and they are age and ability appropriate to be able to participate).*			

SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL			
Action point	**Support to be provided and for whom is it?**	**Which action in the requirements for parent(s) section does this relate to?**	**When will this be put in place or completed?**
1			
2			

3			
4			
5			
SUPPORT FROM SERVICES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL (I.e., multi-agency teams such as Early Help)			
Action point	**Support to be provided and for whom is it**	**Which action in the requirements for parent(s) section does this relate to?**	**When will this be put in place or completed?**
1			
2			
3			
4			

5			

ANY OTHER COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS PRESENT:

Parental consent to information sharing: I/we understand that information about me/us has been and will continue to be collected by schools and local authority services (where relevant) to assess and provide appropriate support. I understand the school and/or local authority may also use this information for monitoring and safeguarding purposes and information could be shared with external agencies and service providers, without parental consent.

A copy of this parenting contract will be circulated to all participants present as well as any relevant professionals unable to attend the meeting. As stated in part (7), section 19 of the ***Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003*** a parenting contract must be signed by parent(s) and signed on behalf of the governing body, therefore this contract may be viewed by the chair of governors.

Additional information for schools parents and local authorities about parenting contracts can be found in Department for Education guidance, including Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures.

PARENT DECLARATION	**PARENT (1)**	**PARENT (2)**
By signing this contract, I agree to comply with requirements for parent(s) specified within it for duration the contract runs. I am aware that refusal to commit to meeting the expectations set out in this contract may result in its termination and other routes being pursued by the school, including a referral to the local authority which could subsequently lead to prosecution in accordance with the Education Act	**SIGNATURE:** ……..	**SIGNATURE:** ……
	PRINT NAME:	**PRINT NAME:**
	RELATIONSHIP TO PUPIL:	**RELATIONSHIP TO PUPIL:**

1996 444(1), 444(1A); or 444(ZA) in the case of an alternative curriculum provision.	**DATE:**	**DATE:**

SCHOOL DECLARATION

By signing this contract, I agree to provide support to the parent(s) to help achieve the requirements as outlined above and that a signature by a member of school staff is made on behalf of the governing body as set out in section 19 of the ***Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003*** part (7).

NAME	**JOB TITLE**	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**

Date of next meeting:	**Time of next meeting:**	**Location of next meeting:**

PARENTING CONTRACT (Review meeting)

Review number:	Date of meeting:	Time of meeting:
Location:	Chair of meeting:	Lead professional for parenting contract:

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Full name	Role (School, Parent etc)	Present (Y / N)	Contact number and email address

Pupil's attendance % (Sep to present):	Authorised absence % (Sep to present):	Unauthorised absence % (Sep to present):
Attendance % change since previous meeting:	Authorised absence % change since previous meeting:	Unauthorised absence % change since previous meeting:

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS REQUIREMENTS

No	What was the requirement?	Who was helping to achieve the requirement?	Was the requirement achieved?	What is needed next? (If requirement not achieved)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

7				

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS:

DECLARATION

For parents, a signature is acknowledgement that failure to comply with the requirements set out without justifiable reasons may result in the contract being terminated and other routes being pursued, including prosecution by the local authority in accordance with the Education Act 1996 444(1), 444(1A); or 444(ZA) in the case of an alternative curriculum provision.

For schools, a signature by a member of staff is made on behalf of the governing board as detailed in part (7), section 19 of the ***Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003***

FULL NAME	ROLE	SIGNATURE	DATE

Date of next meeting:	**Time of next meeting:**	**Location of next meeting:**

Appendix 10 – First day absence flow chart

Responsibilities:

Mr Cassem

Miss Warner

Mrs Munday

Morning Absence Process

Important

Children with social services support – Contact DSL if any of the children on the list are not in first thing.

Did you hear an overseas ring tone – is the family taking a holiday they haven't told us about?

Listen to absence messages on the phone and check emails for absences, mark on Arbor

Get registers in promptly (completed by class teachers by 9:00 am)

Late marks added to the register (manually from the signing in system) and lunches added on Arbor

Bring together registers, lates, absence calls – produce the list of children absent with no explanation (from Arbor) Share with Headteacher / Deputy Head

Check classroom for any missing pupils as they might have come in late not via the office, or not marked on the register. (through in person check)

Start first day calling for children absent without explanation, ***call everyone on the contact list until we get an answer.*** Leave messages if there is a voicemail option and send text / email messages. Call contact list twice if we do not receive a response first time round.

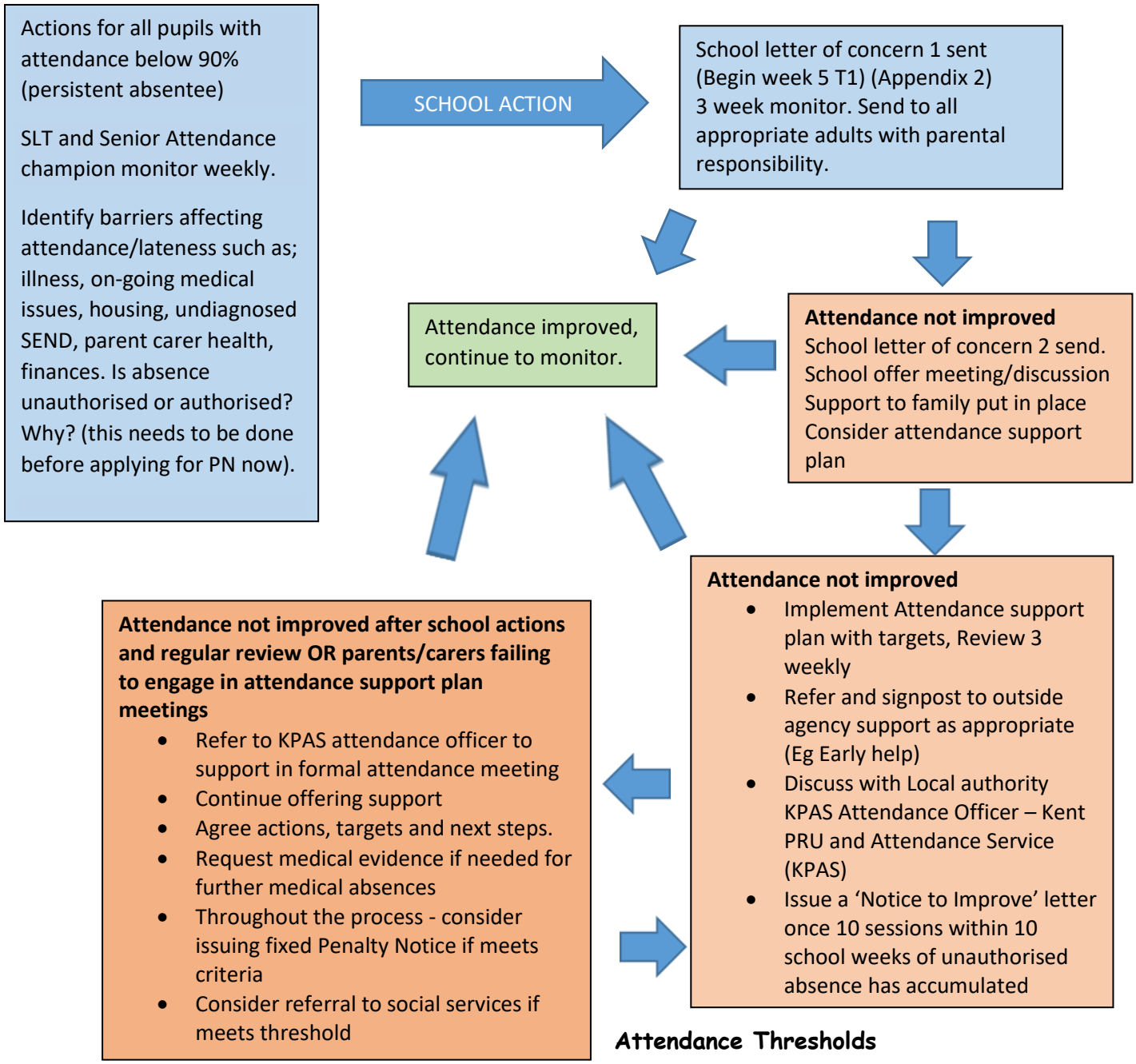
If no reply to calls contact Headteacher immediately with all unexplained absences. Consider whether any children have additional agency support, social worker for example. Contact them if necessary. Think about if we have any school intelligence, does anybody know the family?

If still not heard by 12pm, SLT to conduct a home visit. If no answer, refer immediately to Social Services and if deemed necessary contact Police and request a welfare call. (If they can be seen inside the house avoiding the knock, don't refer – unless it is believed the children are at risk of significant harm.)

Update Arbor under Edit marks, class, pupil and add comment and code with the information you have received either via phone, email, or home visit, with the reason for absence.

Appendix 11

The Gateway Primary Academy Attendance Management Persistent Absentee (below 90%) flow chart



Attendance Thresholds

- 96% and above: Expected attendance
- 95% to 90.1%: Attendance concern
- 90% and below: Persistent absence
- Below 50%: Severe absence

Attendance not improved

Review support options with LA KPAS Attendance Officer

Initiate Pathway 8 - Statutory Referral request

Further action of issuing Fixed Penalty

Pupils approaching persistent absence thresholds will receive support and intervention at the earliest opportunity.