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# Attendance Policy for Pupils

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## **Contents**

1. School Attendance, Absence and the Law
2. Our Responsibilities as a School
3. Your Responsibilities as a Parent
4. Persistent Absence (PA)
5. Mainstream School and Attendance Prosecution
6. The Importance of Good Attendance
7. Attendance Rewards

## 1. School Attendance, Absence and the Law

At Ethos Academy Trust we understand how important school attendance is and how this relates to outcomes, not only academically but socially and emotionally as well. Pupils who attend school regularly benefit from fulfilling peer relationships, better academic outcomes and a vastly improved school experience which promotes successful transition onto their next stage of education. Our pupils are valued and are missed when they are absent or late. Through the principles of nurture, positive staff/pupil relationships are developed and each individual is an important part of our school community.

The law requires parents to make sure their children receive full-time education suitable to their needs. As a last resort, schools and the Local Authority (LA) have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

Any absence is detrimental for pupils and will impact on their school experience. The academies within Ethos Academy Trust will always work with pupils and families to look at all attendance issues as we realise that there are often other factors to consider that may impact on a child's ability to attend school. Parents/carers are encouraged to speak with staff from their academy to ensure we are working together to address any issues. The majority of pupils on roll are dual registered with their mainstream school who retain responsibility with regard to any significant attendance issues. If we are concerned, we will work with the mainstream school to find a solution that secures improved attendance. In very rare cases we, or the mainstream school, may have to take the decision to pursue persistent absence through a legal route. We will take all appropriate steps to avoid this but it may be used as a last resort.

<https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-attendance-and-absence/>

Ethos Academy Trust will pay due regard to the Education Act of 1996 and its further amendments. Since **September 2015** persistent absence (PA) data includes all pupils whose attendance is 90% or less.

The DfE and Ofsted continue to have a sharp focus on persistent absence as there is a direct link between persistent absence from school, poor attainment and 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) status.

## 2. Our Responsibilities as an Academy Trust

All schools are required to record details of pupils' attendance and absence. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If a child is absent, it is required that parents/carers inform the academy of the reason for the absence.

The academy will record the absence under a particular category pre-set by the Department of Education (DfE). This data is then available to the attendance and pupil support service for each pupil. DfE also receives annually the overall data for each academy.

Every member of staff within Ethos Academy Trust has a responsibility to promote and support attendance.

The Senior Leadership Teams will:

- Continually monitor and implement policies and strategies;
- Regularly produce data to analyse attendance information and ensure procedures are in place to address issues;
- Implement a robust line management system that ensures all concerns are identified and addressed in a timely manner;
- Report to pupils and parents/carers regularly;
- Implement reward systems that motivate pupils to attend well;
- Support colleagues with systems that are accessible and ensure positive outcomes;
- Report regularly to the CEO and Trust board.

All staff will:

- Work to provide an environment that is welcoming and promotes good attendance;
- Ensure relationships with pupils are positive and individual needs are identified and addressed;
- Work with parents/carers to build positive, transparent relationships;
- Contact parents/carers regularly in the case of any absence and to recognise sustained and improved attendance;
- Ensure attendance is recorded including reasons behind any absences;
- Work with the data to address any reoccurring issues or patterns (such as the same day absence every week);
- Liaise with colleagues and be aware of any related issues;
- Promote a culture of mutual respect and ensure pupils are valued every day;
- Work closely with colleagues to communicate any issues that may impact attendance;
- Meet regularly with parents/carers and related professionals to address any issues affecting attendance;
- Ensure support plans are in place that make clear the roles and responsibilities of school/parent/carer and other professionals (including the mainstream school);

- Reward good and improved attendance in a fair and equitable way ensuring parents / carers are informed.

### 3. Responsibilities of Parents

- Inform school of any circumstances that may impact on attendance;
- Attend regular review meetings and meet with staff on request;
- Arrange holidays out of term time;
- Actively promote good attendance by encouraging and supporting your child to attend;
- Make medical or other appointments out of school time unless unavoidable;
- Work with staff to implement agreed strategies and actively promote good attendance.

#### What we will do if a pupil does not attend

- In case of absence we will contact parents/carers by phone and, if this is not possible, a home visit will be arranged. An absence will be discussed with the mainstream school, siblings' schools will be contacted and a mainstream colleague or APSO will implement a joint visit if applicable. Any concerns will be passed to the relevant services. If there are sufficient concerns and a pupil is not seen or a parent/carer cannot confirm their whereabouts a 101 call will be made to inform the police.
- Ethos Academy Trust colleagues will work with parents/carers from the first day of absence to ensure that any underlying issues are addressed in a timely manner with the relevant services. Working together with parents/carers is essential to ensure good attendance and only when this working relationship is effective can we manage any issues.
- If the non-attendance continues we will continue to communicate with parents/carers and mainstream schools. In a small number of cases if there are no unmet needs that staff can work to address, we would discuss with all stakeholders whether our academies are the correct provision to meet need. For some young people the placement may not be successful and in cases where pupils are dual-registered, the referring mainstream school would consider alternatives. All related agencies would be consulted and a joint decision would be made in the pupil's best interest.

### 4. Persistent Absence (PA)

- The Government identifies persistent absence as any pupil who has attendance of less than 90%. Ethos Academy Trust recognises this figure and aspires to set this standard for all its pupils. Personalised attendance targets may be adjusted dependent on the needs of the individual pupil. Ethos Academy Trust will put into place all reasonable measures to secure and sustain improved attendance.

## 5. Mainstream Schools and Attendance Prosecution

As the majority of our pupils are dual registered with a mainstream school, on rare occasions a decision may be made by the school to proceed with a prosecution for non-school attendance. This is considered only when all other strategies have been exhausted and when a parent/carer does not comply with the school policies, once all available interventions have been exhausted. In these rare cases academies within the Trust will work with the mainstream school to present evidence to support a prosecution if this becomes necessary.

## 6. The Importance of Good Attendance

As stated previously we have high expectations for our pupils and as such the expected attendance standard is 95%. Anything less than this is a concern and we take all appropriate measures to ensure we are addressing any barriers to attendance. We will always work to find solutions and promote the benefits of good attendance rather than implementing a punitive response.

8 days absence in a year = 96%. 19 days absence = 90%

- 90% attendance = ½ day missed every week.
- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost.
- Over the 5 years at school the pupil will have missed half a year.
- What impact might this have on a child's future?
- 17 missed school days mean that secondary school pupils could drop a whole GCSE grade.

Pupils being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

We provide a healthy breakfast at our academies and we know that this starts the day positively and pupils can then focus and learn. If the pupil is late then an important part of the day is missed and this can then lead to an unsettled day. It is important that we work together to ensure pupils arrive on time and ready to learn.

We aim to ensure that all pupils recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality for the next stage of their education or training as it is a vital life skill.

## 7. Attendance Rewards

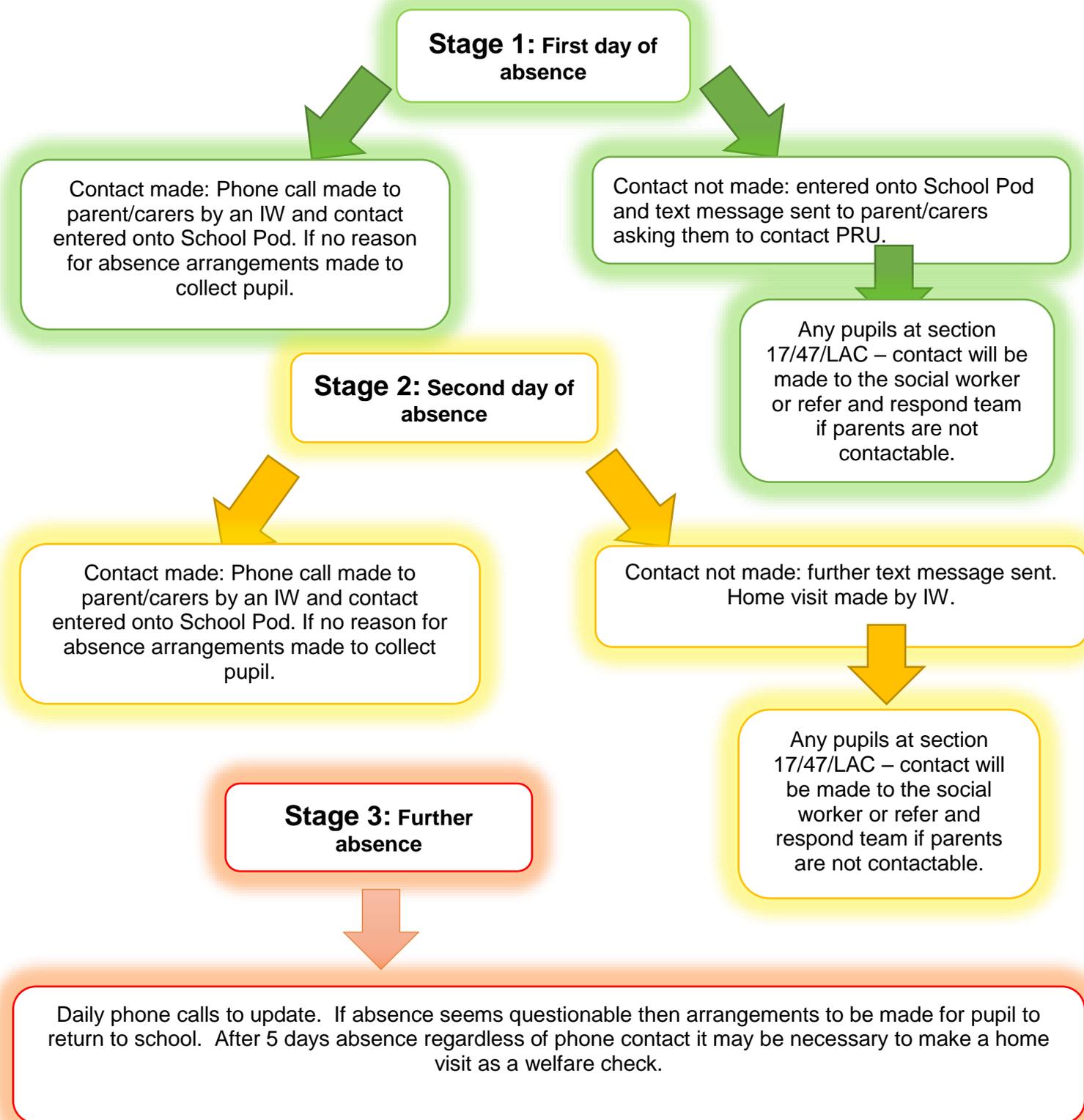
At Ethos Academy Trust we understand how important it is that pupils attend and are punctual every day. We work to ensure that our pupils understand this also and that

they attend school because they are aware of the benefits to them.

Our reward system is in place to further motivate pupils and to demonstrate the benefits of school attendance. The rewards available could include:

- Regular postcards and phone calls home to ensure parents/carers are kept informed
- Half termly reward assemblies. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate success as a whole school.
- Reward points that equate to financial benefits that pupils can use, under staff supervision to purchase items. This promotes their ability to budget and consider other people as the rewards are often used to make charity donations and to support other causes.
- Promoting competition by comparing the attendance of the groups and rewarding the winning group.
- Termly reward trips that the pupils have identified as of value to them and will motivate them to keep attending.
- Invite parents/carers to celebrate success in school half-termly at assemblies.
- Considering personalised motivational strategies that will work for individuals.

**Appendix – Attendance flowchart for each academy**  
**Engage Academy Attendance Flow Chart**



## Reach Academy Attendance Flow Chart

### Stage 1: First day of absence

Contact made: Phone call made to parent/carers by Group SIW or Attendance Officer and contact entered onto School Pod

Contact not made: entered onto School Pod and text message sent to parent/carers asking them to contact PRU. Consider home visit depending on circumstances.

Any pupils at section 17/47/LAC – contact will be made to the social worker or refer and respond team if parents are not contactable. Home visit to be conducted by attendance officer or SIW.

### Stage 2: Second day of absence

Contact made: Phone call made to parent/carers by Group SIW or Attendance Officer and contact entered onto School Pod.

Contact not made: further text message sent. Home visit by SIW or Attendance Officer arranged. Email sent to contact teacher informing them of absence.

### Stage 3: Third day of absence

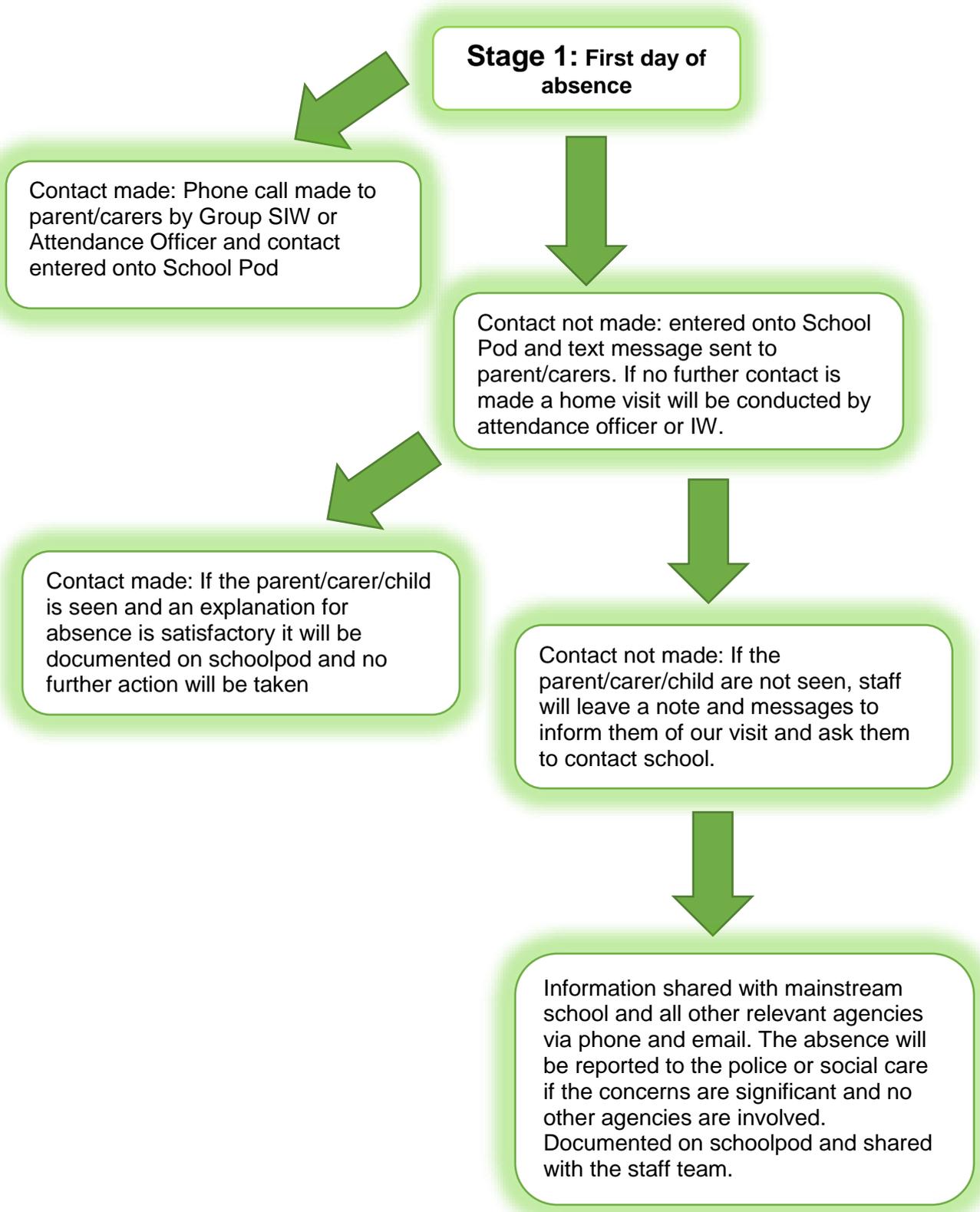
Contact made: consultation made with contact staff for individual pupils, assess what actions/support is needed. Letter sent out on 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence to inform parent/carers of absence percentage and absence procedures. If PA, then an attendance contract between school/pupil/parent/carers should be drawn up

Contact not made: Another home visit made by SIW/Attendance Officer. If no response, pupil to be reported to appropriate agencies (referral and response/police/APSO).

### Stage 4: further absence

Continue to make contact and liaise with appropriate professionals. Review attendance contract as necessary.

## Ethos College Attendance Flow Chart



**Stage 2: Second day of absence**

Contact made: Phone call made to parent/carers by Group SIW or Attendance Officer and contact entered onto School Pod.

No Contact made: Phone call made to parents/carers; another home visit will be conducted.

Contact made: If the parent/carer/child is seen and an explanation for absence is satisfactory it will be documented on schoolpod and a discussion with the family around absence and reporting.

No Contact made: All agencies informed and, if necessary, referrals made to external agencies.

**Stage 3: Absence Persists**

If absence persists, Ethos College will work with the mainstream school and family to address issues and seek solutions to improve attendance. Review of whether the provision is right for the child.