



George Mitchell School

Attendance Policy

Approved by: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	4
3. School procedures for Registration	4
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	7
5. Strategies for promoting good attendance	8
6. Attendance monitoring and intervention	8
7. Roles and responsibilities	9
8. Links with other policies	10
Appendices	11

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school and it is the schools responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to nonattendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Ofsted considers the effectiveness of schools attendance figures by:

- Overall absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups, in relation to national figures for all pupils
- The extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low (in the lowest 10%)
- Punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create a safe, happy and rewarding environment for all children so that all children want to attend school. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot be responsible for their own regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children’s learning. Through our home-school agreement, parents agree to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. We keep parents regularly informed about their children’s attendance in a variety of ways.

1. Aims

We aim and work towards ensuring that all pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. No groups of pupils should be disadvantaged by low attendance. We aim to have exceptionally high levels of attendance for all children.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

Reducing absence, including persistent absence

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality at the beginning of a school day and to lessons. We also work with families to ensure they collect their children on time from school in the Early Years and Primary Phases.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures for Registration

Attendance registers

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether a pupil is:

Present

Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The reason for the amended entry e.g.

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Lateness

DfE attendance codes. (**APPENDIX 1 page 11 and 12**)

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Nursery Procedures

The morning session starts at 8.45 am and a register is taken. The afternoon session starts at 12.30pm at which point a register is taken. If a child is attending Nursery full time then the children will be registered at the beginning and end of each session.

A register is taken on SIMS.

Children arriving after the register has been taken will need to enter via the Main Reception to be registered by the Admin team.

Reception and Primary Procedures

A bell is rung at 8.40am. The register is taken at 8.45 by either the class teacher or the PPA cover teacher.

A register is taken on SIMS.

Children arriving after the Register has been taken (8.50) will need to enter via the Main Reception to be registered by the Admin team and they will be marked late.

If children arrive during the day (after a Medical Appointment etc.) they will need to enter via the Main Reception to be registered by the Admin team. Parents need to sign them in and if here for the afternoon, they will be registered then.

The afternoon register is taken at 12.45pm in Reception

The afternoon register is taken at 1.05pm in Key Stage 1

The afternoon register is taken at 1.20pm in Key Stage 2

Secondary Procedures

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 by form tutors.

A register is taken both on SIMS and in paper format. The paper format is used as a back-up and also for fire alarm procedures.

Students arriving after the second bell (8.45) must report to reception and sign in late. This results in a 20 minute payback sanction the same lunch time. Failure to attend this payback means the sanction is escalated in line with our behavior policy.

The register for the second session will be taken at 2.15 by the P5 class teacher.

Unplanned absences

Early Years

Parents must notify the school on the first day and every day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible

Primary

Parents must notify the school on the first and every day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible

For process for unplanned absence see 'First Day Calling Primary' (APPENDIX 2 page 13)

Secondary

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health, they must contact the school as soon as practically possible.

Parents contact the school using the attendance hotline. The attendance hotline is widely published. The Home School Liaison Manager where possible will talk to the parents about the absence. When this is not possible parents are expected to leave a message.

If a pupil is absent and the school has received no contact from the parent then a text message is sent directly to the parent informing them that they must respond with details of the absence.

If by the second day contact between home and school has still not occurred then the HSLM will:

- Make calls to the parents on a regular basis
- Inform the Learning Leader of the absence
- Try and ascertain if there are other numbers on which the parents can be contacted

If by the third day there is still no contact then a home visit is to be conducted where possible.

A full procedural flowchart for Secondary Absence and First Day Calling Protocols is available.

For process for unplanned absence see 'First Day Calling Secondary' (APPENDIX 3 page 14)

Should a child return following an absence without appropriate contact from home to explain the absence then procedures are in place to ensure that school is provided with an appropriate explanation. **(APPENDIX 4)**

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Medical evidence must be provided if the absence is more than three days or the pupil's attendance is under particular scrutiny due to a poor absentee rate.

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

Child Missing Education (CME)

The school will continue to try and establish contact with home via various means including student's friends and parental acquaintances. However, if after 10 days no contact has been made then CME proceedings are initiated utilising the LA's BACME service. A full procedural flowchart is available

'Absence Protocols' **(APPENDIX 5)**

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an unauthorised absence unless advance notice is provided.

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

Students will not be allowed to sign out of school to attend a dental or medical appointment without it first being authorised by the Learning Leader (Secondary) or SLG (Primary Phase).

Parents must use official appointment cards or letters when informing the school about medical or dental appointments.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The school values good punctuality as much as it values good attendance. Pupils and parents are constantly reminded via: newsletters, school magazines, letters, assemblies, parent's evenings, annual reports, parent meeting about the benefits of having good punctuality.

Reporting to parents

Parents will be kept appraised of their child's ongoing attendance via a number of means:

- Parent/teacher meetings, annual reports and parent's evenings,
- Phone calls from Head of Primary and attendance officers
- Phone calls from, class teachers, tutors and learning Leaders (secondary)
- Pre As and AS 1 Letters
- NPR meetings
- SAP meetings

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad 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 close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport, operating at a high level of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs" The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c).
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.

We will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (with medical evidence if required)
- Bereavement
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. A maximum of two days is granted.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default, and is only granted to pupils in year 11. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school

Should the school not deem an absence as authorised, then it will be recorded in the register and monitored in case of repeat offences.

As the school believes that poor attendance prejudices achievement, attainment and progress **it will not sanction 'term time holidays'**. All requests to remove a student from school to attend a holiday during term time will be denied.

All absences during term time for holiday purposes will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in 'parental fixed penalty fines'. (See Legal Sanctions Section)

Legal sanctions

George Mitchell School reserves the right to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

5. Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

Good attendance is promoted throughout the school. We engage with families to ensure that they understand the value of ensuring that their children attend every day. Letters, texts, parent information evenings, newsletters, school magazines and the website all promote an ethos of high expectations and standards of attendance and punctuality.

Pupils are rewarded for good, and just as importantly, improved attendance and punctuality. Initiatives such as:

Secondary

- 100% attendance certificates
- End of year trips
- Weekly attendance rewards and prize draws.
- Postcards
- Class/tutor group awards

Primary

- Star of The Week Certificate for highest class attendance and punctuality
- Published results weekly in Primary Newsletter
- 100% attendance medals for outstanding achievement at the end of academic year

6. Attendance Monitoring and Intervention

The Home School Liaison Manager and Head of Primary are constantly monitoring school attendance and pupil absence. As safeguarding our pupils at George Mitchell is of paramount importance, the HSLM works extremely closely with all members of the pastoral and safeguarding teams.

The HSLM meets on a regular basis with all Learning Leaders (Secondary) and SLG (Primary). At these meetings every pupil's attendance and absence patterns are monitored and scrutinised.

Where necessary measures are put in place to support pupils and their families understand the necessity for good attendance and inform them that should the attendance not improve without authorised reasons then further measures will be sanctioned which may include the involvement of the Education Welfare Service. Measures include:

Meetings with pupils

Attendance reports

Formal letters being sent (Pre AS1 & AS1)

Parental meetings (Including 'parental attendance contracts' **APPENDIX 6**)

NPR proceedings (involving the EWS)

SAP meetings (involving the EWS)

Attendance Contract Meetings

Court action. George Mitchell will always pursue this course of action when all other measures have been exhausted.

See 'Persistent Absence Attendance Flowchart Primary' **APPENDIX 7**

See 'Persistent Absence Attendance Flowchart Secondary' **APPENDIX 8**

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Vulnerable students including CP, CIN and LAC are monitored on a daily basis and parents, carers and CSC are constantly updated and informed of any absence.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body:

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher and Head of Primary Phase:

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Home School Liaison Manager:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Meets with class teachers/tutors, Learning Leaders and SLG to implement strategies to combat poor attendance of individuals and groups
- Arranges meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Works with education welfare Service to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Learning Leaders & Senior Leadership Group:

- Promote good attendance and its ethos
- Devise motivational initiatives to improve year group and phase attendance
- Monitor absence and attendance alongside the HSLM
- Meet with pupils and parents of concern

- Conduct home visits

Class teachers/Form tutors:

- Ensure that registers are accurately taken
- Support the ethos of good attendance
- Monitor patterns of attendance and punctuality, informing Learning Leaders, SLG and HSLM with concerns.
- Use provided data enable pupils to engage with their own attendance profile

Admin Team at Primary :

- Carry out primary first day calling procedures

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

Exclusions Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

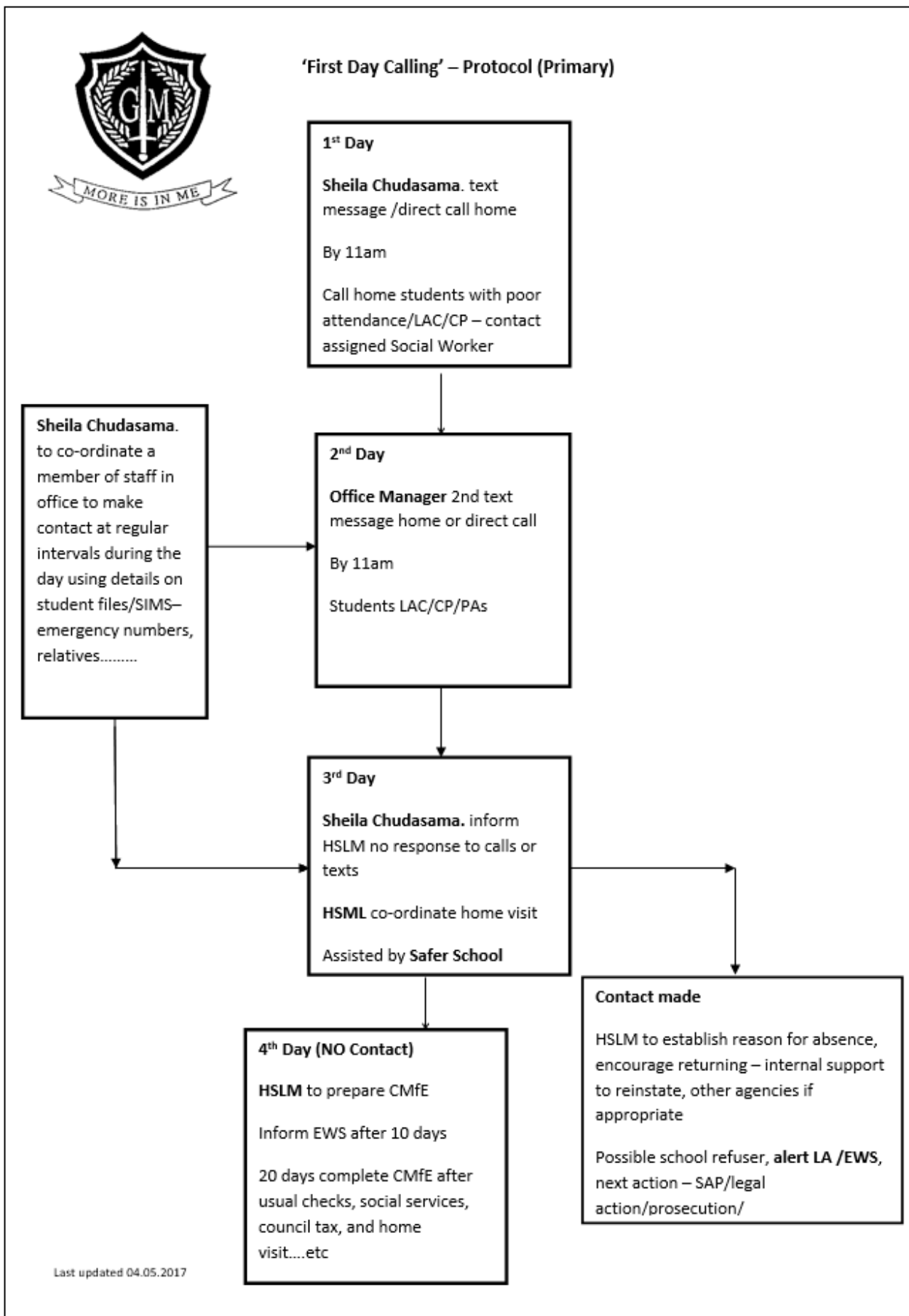
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

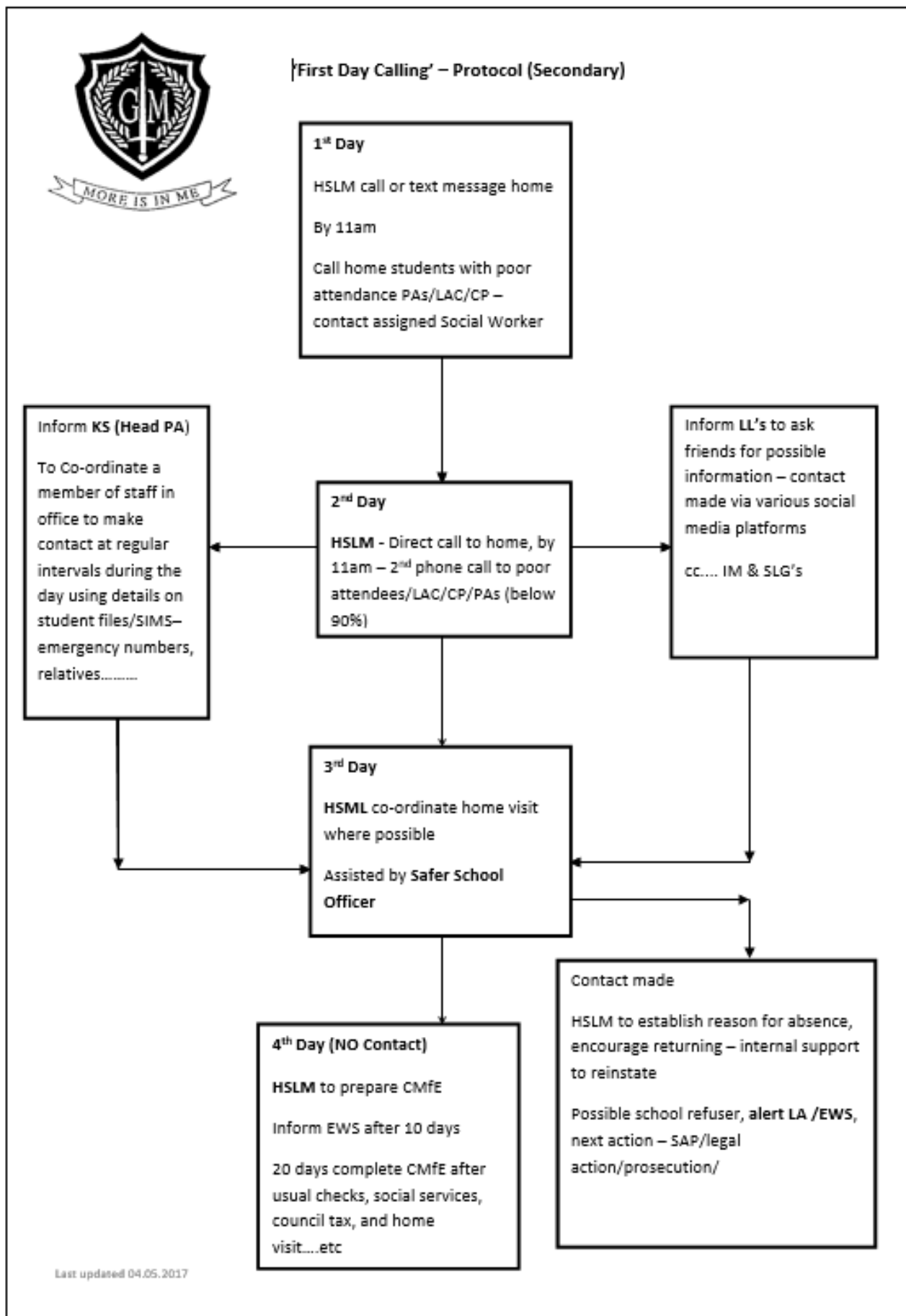
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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

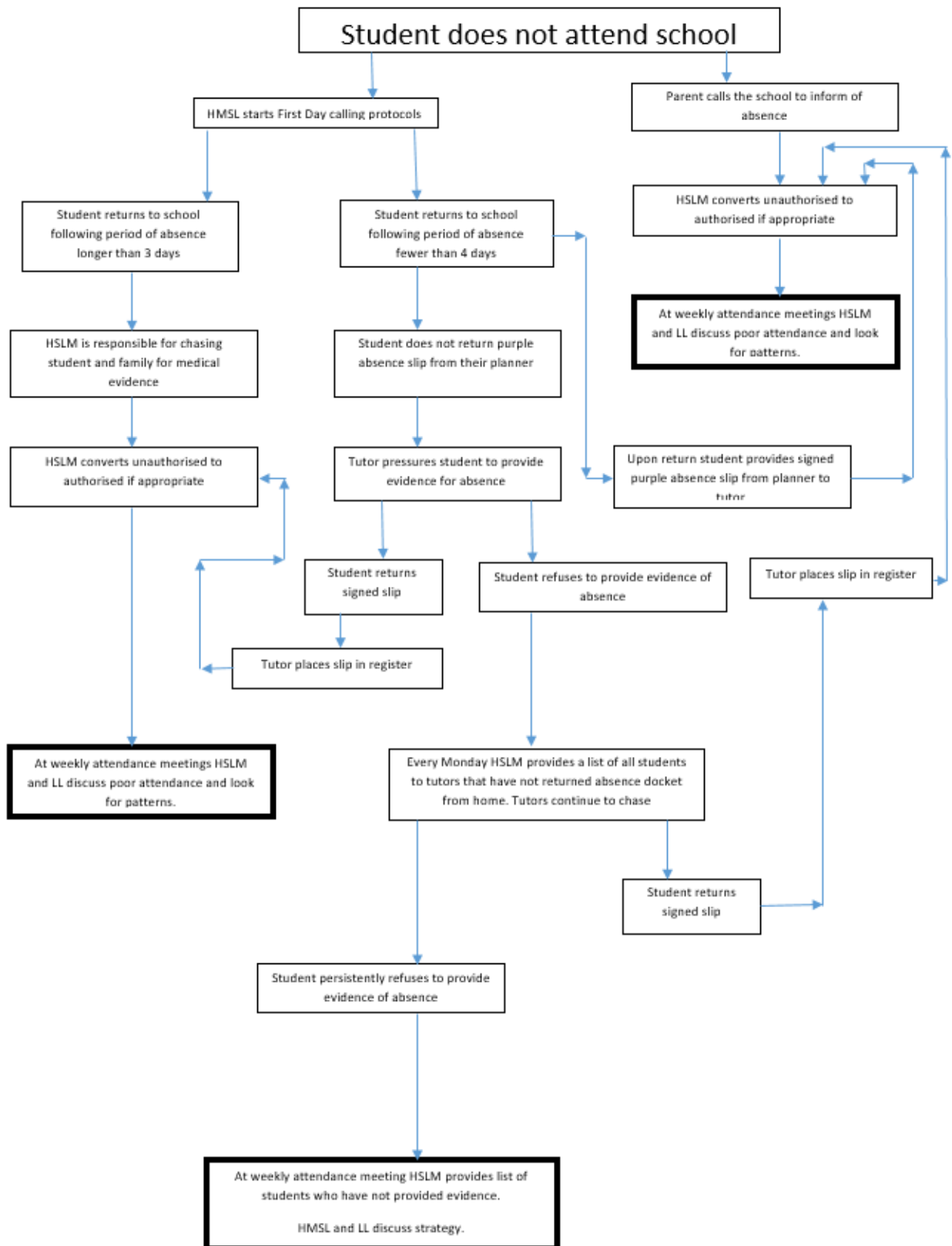
Appendix 2:



Appendix 3:

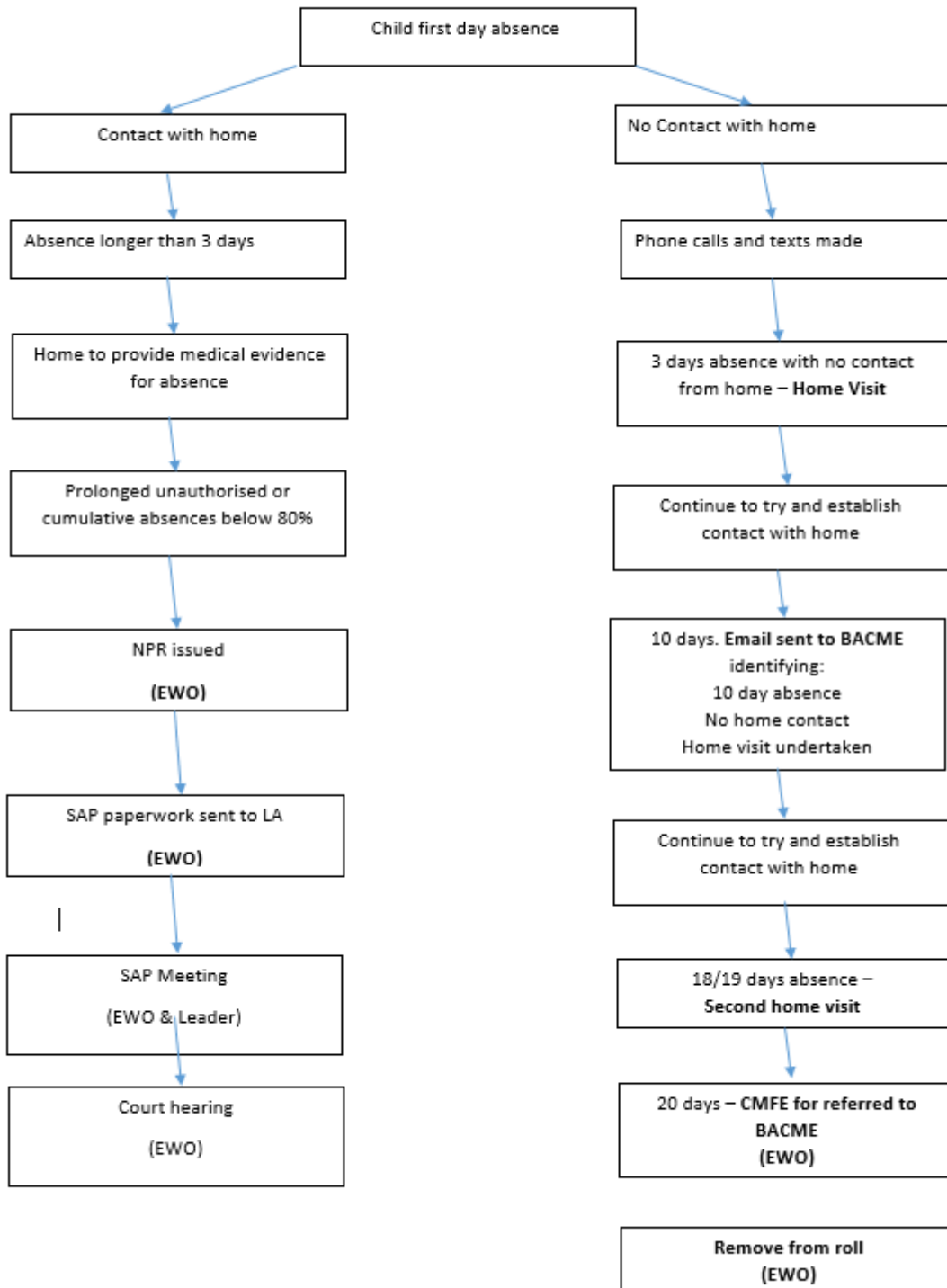


Appendix 4:



Appendix 5:

Absence Protocols



Appendix 6:
Parent Attendance Contract

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
School:	

Present at meeting:	
----------------------------	--

Action agreed
<p><i>ACTION AGREED:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pupil will arrive at school by 8.30 a.m. every day.</i> • <i>Parent will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence and provide a note upon pupil's return.</i> • <i>Parent will provide medical evidence for every sickness absence pupil may incur.</i> • <i>Are any issues preventing pupil from attending regularly, school staff will be informed?</i>

Current attendance;/Punctuality		
Attendance target:	100%	
Timescale for improvement:		

Date for review meeting:	
---------------------------------	--

I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

..... Parent/carers

..... Pupil

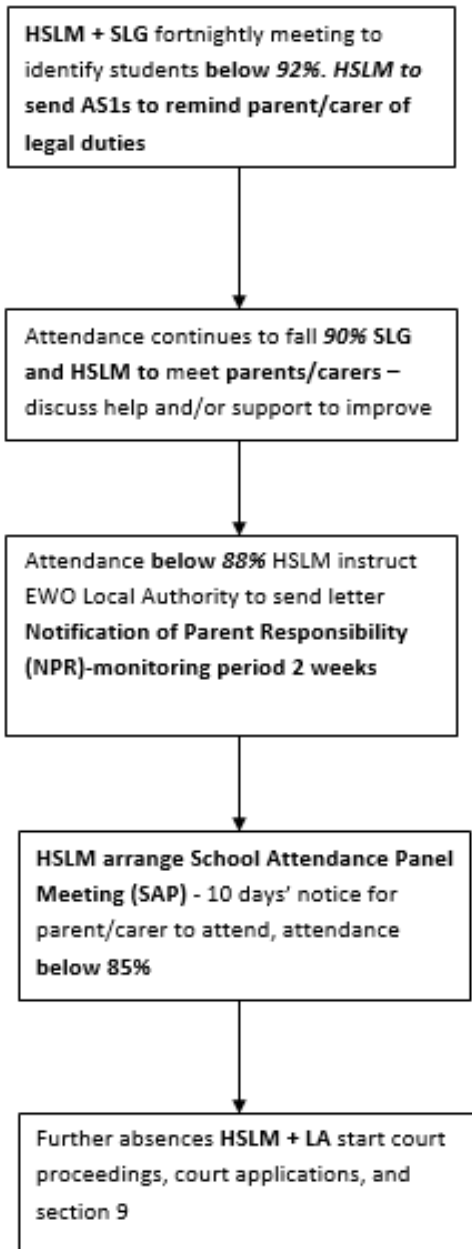
..... School Representative

..... Other Agency

Appendix 7: Persistent Absence Attendance Flow Chart (Primary)



Persistent Absence Attendance Flow Chart (Primary)



Appendix 8: Persistent Absence Attendance Flow Chart (Secondary)

