



Policy Statement

Attendance (Learners)

- Produced by: Mr S Bisset, Senior Pastoral Leader
- Ratified by: Mrs N Cooper, Principal
- Review Date: as required

Statement of Intent

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at school is maximised and that unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism is kept to a minimum.

High levels of attendance at school significantly impact upon academic and developmental outcomes. The law relating to school attendance states in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 that the parent of every child of compulsory age shall cause him/her to receive fulltime education suitable:

- a. to age, ability and aptitude and
- b. to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 95% (our school target)
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

The staff at Kepier will engage with parents/carers via the learner planner (where applicable), reports, parent/carer evenings, grade books, phone calls, text messages, in meetings, assemblies and attendance letters to ensure all learners attend the school regularly and punctually. Attendance is high profile in school and the benefits of good, regular attendance is promoted via social media, text messages and through rewards.

The school will challenge those learners and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Parental Responsibility

We endeavour to work in partnership with all our parents/carers. For this to succeed parents/carers need to ensure that:

- Learners arrive on time for school in the correct school uniform and ready to learn with all the correct equipment.
- Learners stay in school all day (unless there has been a pre-arranged appointment where the school has been informed and the absence authorised).

- Wherever possible all personal appointments are made out of school time.
- Contact is made with the school to inform them if a child is going to be absent and when they are likely to return to school.
- When a child returns to Kepier a written explanation of the reason for absence must be given; a slip for this purpose is in the learner's planner.
- For all learners identified with having regular medical appointments, repeated or long spells of absence through illness; medical evidence *may* be requested. Medical evidence can take the form of a Doctor's note, a prescribed medication or a recent prescription, a signed appointment card or any other official medical documentation can be used. We want to support learners during any period of absence; however, without medical evidence the school *may* not authorise absences.

Attendance, trips, visits and events

Learners may not be allowed to participate in some events if statistically overall attendance will finish below school target of 95%. The final decision will be made by the Principal.

Study Leave

Study leave may not be granted once the examination syllabus is complete and learners will be expected to remain in school full time until their last GCSE examination. If study leave is granted, the attendance code 'S' will be entered into the register. DfE guidance (November 2016). DfE guidance states that 'Y11 pupils who are 16 years old are of compulsory school age (up to the last Friday in June) and must be marked on the attendance register accordingly'. A reduced timetable will be implemented to support year 11 learners with independent revision.

Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

Registration

The school is statutorily required to take an attendance register twice daily. This will be managed electronically via the Eportal system. This system will display present/absent, or late marks and absent after registration has closed. The attendance administration assistant, Senior Pastoral Leader (attendance) or Year Managers will update all other marks using the national attendance codes when additional information is received.

- Morning registration takes place in coaching time at 8.30am. Learners are registered by coaches within the first 10 minutes of the day. Registers will close at 9.15am.
- Afternoon registration begins with Lesson 6: 1.10pm. Registers will close at 1.20pm.
- Learners arriving after 8.30am or 1.10pm will be registered as late.
- Learners arriving late must report to the late gate or main reception and sign the late book. Any Learner late after the register closes (9:15am & 1:20pm) will be statistically marked absent on their AM/PM register even though their individual lesson register will record them as late or present.
- There may be occasional periods during the school year when it is necessary to alter the timing of the registration period.

The attendance register should only be altered:

- Where a learner's name has been legally changed

- Where an unexplained absence has been explained
- If an error has been discovered.
- Any alterations will be recorded on Facility as a change of mark (ATC) with reasons for the change; all changes will be dated and initialled (in line with QA document)

First Day Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents/carers must let the attendance administration assistant know before 8.25am on the first day of absence (school number 01915128960). This information will be placed on the register when it has been received.

The attendance administration assistant will produce a report before 9.30am which identifies learners whose absence is unexplained; in this case learners will be marked with 'N' (Reason for absence not yet provided) or 'O' (Absent from school without Authorisation). Contact will be made via text and Year Managers will phone between 9.30am and 10.30am.

If contact has not been made or there has been no response from parents/carers then the Senior Pastoral Leader (attendance) will be informed and may make a home visit. The outcome of this visit will be shared with the relevant Year Manager and the attendance administration assistant. A written or verbal explanation from a parent/carer for the learner's absence is required when the learner returns to school.

Authorised Absence

Every absence (am/pm) will be classified as authorised or unauthorised. This will be confirmed using the National Attendance Codes. Authorised absences include events such as:

- Illness
- Bereavement
- Interview
- Medical appointments (where every eventuality has been made to make this outside School hours)
- Approved sporting activities.

Unauthorised Absence

'Unauthorised Absence' is a period of absence which the school does not consider reasonable and no leave of absence has been issued. This may include events such as:

- Family holidays
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences

A parent can offer an explanation for their child's absence, but the law clearly states that it is the Headteacher's decision as to whether it is felt the explanation offered by a parent for an absence is justified.

Truancy

We run a computerised registration system whereby truancy can easily be identified on a lesson by lesson basis. Truancy checks are carried out on a daily basis. When a learner is found to be truant, the Year Manager/Senior Pastoral Leader (attendance) will:

- Interview the learner and discuss the reasons for truancy.
- Inform the parents/carers of the truancy.
- Ensure the truancy is recorded on the learner's attendance record.
- Apply appropriate sanction/intervention for the truancy.

Holiday Absence

Holidays in term time are classified as unauthorised and marked on the register as G. This should not change unless it is at the discretion of the Principal and only under exceptional circumstances can a holiday be authorised.

Alternative Education Placements/Reduced Timetables.

Where learners are involved with alternative education placements, the provider must inform the school of the learner's presence or absence. This can be done by a phone call, email or fax. If a parent/carer knows that their child is unable to attend their placement they must inform the school. For learners on a reduced timetable, there must be a risk assessment in place and a signed parent/carer responsibility form which explains that the parent/carer takes responsibility for the learner when they are not present in the school.

Long Term Absence

If there is a long term absence for medical reasons where external tuition has been put in place, for example hospital schooling or home tutors a 'B' should be marked on the register. If a child has been in hospital and discharged under medical supervision work packs should be provided for the learner for up to two weeks. If the learner has not returned to school the Senior Pastoral Leader (attendance) should complete a home visit and discuss the appropriate intervention which needs to take place.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If a learner is late he/she can miss work time with the class teacher getting vital information. Being late can also cause disruption to the lesson for others.

Learners will be expected to complete a late detention at break time. Should a learner fail to attend a break time detention, they will have a lunch time detention supervised by the Senior Leadership Team. Year managers monitor late marks and Senior pastoral Leader / Year Manager will apply appropriate sanctions.

Persistent Lateness

The following procedures will happen for persistent lateness:

STAGE 1 - Late 4 times: Learner meets with Year Manager

STAGE 2 - Late 8 times: Punctuality letter home

STAGE 3 - Late 12 times: An additional 1 hour detention

STAGE 4 - Late 16 times: Parental meeting with SPL for attendance: Mr Bisset.

Being late after the register closes is classified as an unauthorised absence and counts towards non-attendance to school which in turn could count towards a referral to the Local Authority.

Attendance Procedure for Absence

Any communication with parents/carers regarding attendance will be logged.

The following procedure is followed by the School but depending on the nature of absence a Final Warning Notice (FWN) can be issued at any time.

Attendance Thresholds

The following table shows estimated cumulative absent sessions thresholds

10% absence <u>threshold</u> for Learner (recognised as persistent absentee)	
Half Term 1	7 or more sessions 3.5 or more days
Half Term 1-2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions 7 or more days
Half Term 1-3	20 or more sessions 10 or more days
Half Term 1-4 (autumn term and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions 12.5 or more days
Half Term 1-5	31 or more sessions 15.5 or more days
Half Term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions 19 or more days

Attendance Procedures at Kepier

Letter of Concern

Initial attendance concerns will be addressed by the Year Manager who will send a Letter of Concern.

Attendance Blitz

- An Attendance Blitz is an intervention that provides Kepier with the support to target persistent pupil absentees to help encourage, promote and sustain more regular attendance.
- Appointments are booked in over the phone followed up by letters to those parents outlining the school's concern with their child's attendance inviting them to a meeting with a Senior member of staff.
- The meetings are 15 minutes long to draw up an action plan to support the child and parent/carer in improving their attendance.
- Follow up visits are then conducted in the same week for those parents who are unable to or do not attend.

Attendance Intervention Support

When a Learner's attendance dips below 95%, for regular unexplained absence will work with a dedicated member of the teaching staff to look at support and improve their overall attendance. This will include the completion of an attendance report over a period of four weeks with specific 1:2:1 work looking at improving barriers to their attendance.

When a Learner's attendance dips below 90% they are classified as a persistent absentee (PA). It is likely learners in this category (and where unauthorised absence exists) the following stages will be applied:

Stage 1 - Stage 1 Warning Letter

This will be completed and sent by the Senior Pastoral Leader to inform parents/carers that their child's attendance is a concern and that it is being stringently monitored. A record of this letter being sent will be kept.

This is followed by a monitoring period of up to 4 weeks which can include phone calls, text messages and home visits by the Senior Pastoral Leader (attendance) – all contact will be recorded. If, after monitoring period, there have been further unauthorised absences or any initial improvement has not been sustained, then further action will be taken.

Stage 2 - Stage 2 Letter: Invites parent/Carer to a formal meeting in school with the Senior Pastoral Leader for attendance.

Parents/carers will be invited to Kepier to discuss their child's attendance with the Senior Pastoral Leader (attendance) and the child. Minutes of the meeting will be taken and copies

distributed to those who attend.

Stage 3 - The monitoring period of 4-6 weeks following a stage 2 meeting (or invite to the meeting if meeting wasn't attended). During the monitoring period intervention can include phone calls, text messages and home visits by the Senior Pastoral Leader (attendance) – all contact will be recorded.

Stage 4 – Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team

Referral Threshold:

1. The child must be of statutory school age.
2. No improvement in the pupil's attendance following intervention by school and there are a minimum of **10 unauthorised absences** during the previous 10 weeks (some absence must be recent i.e. in the **last two week and all unauthorised absences need to be correctly coded i.e. there are no "N" codes included in the 10 unauthorised absences**).

City of Sunderland Attendance Enforcement Team

Fixed Penalty Notice

The Local Authority will, from 1 September 2014, issue Fixed Penalty Notices in line with the Local Code of Conduct. Fixed Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate. Fixed Penalty Notices can be an effective tool as an alternative to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. **See appendix 2 – Fixed Penalty Notice-PARENTS-Frequently Asked Questions.**

Fixed Penalty Notices are aimed at reducing the levels of unauthorised absence from schools, where parents/carers are considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. As with all Attendance Enforcement legislation FPNs are not issued as a punishment to parent but as a means to improve a child's attendance.

- A FPN warning letter may be sent to a parent if their child has 20 or more unauthorised absences during a 10 week period.
- A FPN may be issued to a parent if their child has further unauthorised absences during the 15 school days following the receipt of the final warning letter.
- A FPN may be issued if a pupil has unauthorised absence resulting from an unauthorised holiday in term time
- A FPN currently requires payment of £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days, and will result in prosecution for unauthorised absence if unpaid.

Statistics:

A pupil who takes 10 days holiday during the academic year can only attain 94.7% attendance.

A pupil who takes 10 days holiday in each academic year could lose the equivalent of 22 weeks (almost 6 months - about 2 terms) during their formal school career.

See appendix 3 Fixed Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absences and appendix 4 Fixed Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Leave During Term Time

Final Warning Notice

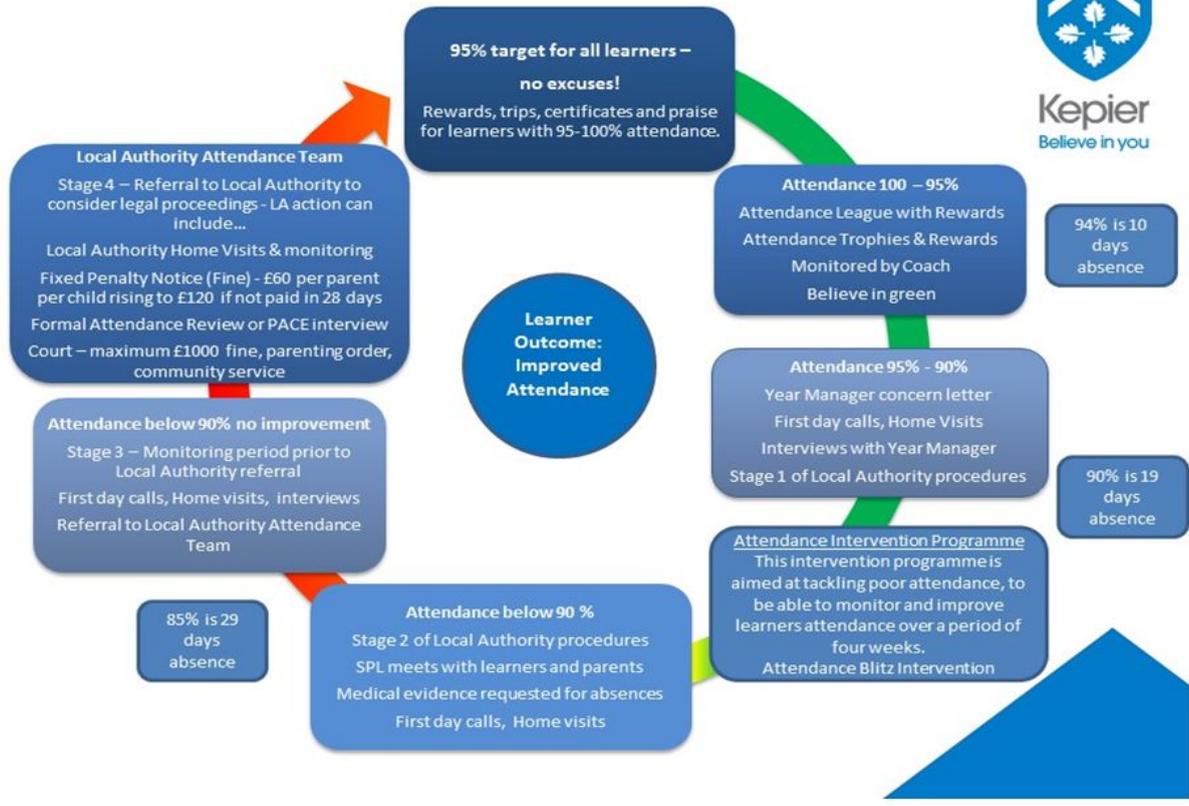
When the School/CSAET (City Sunderland Attendance Enforcement Team) decide that a FWN should be issued (which can be at any time), the ADO (Attendance Development Officer) will request a Final Warning Notice Application which should be faxed to CSAET. The notice once agreed, is forwarded to the school. The ADO will distribute the notice by hand ensuring that it is delivered. During the pursuant 14 day monitoring period, intervention will consist of phone calls/home visits by ADO and the involvement of any other outside agencies when needed; all contact will be recorded. In some cases it may be necessary to open an early help episode which will support any case which is taken to the Magistrates Court. The referral should include the DoB of parents/carers as without this a summons cannot be requested from the Magistrates Court).

Police and Criminal Evidence Review

The FWN gives 14 days to improve attendance. If there is no improvement a PACE review is convened (parents/carers can attend a formal interview or complete the necessary paperwork). The PACE review is chaired by the Local Authority (Currently Sandra Thompson - Court Liaison Officer). Parents/carers are formally cautioned and told that attendance must improve or the case will be taken to the Magistrates Court.

Appendix 1

Attendance at Kepier – Every School Day Counts



Appendix 2

Fixed Penalty Notice –PARENTS - Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gave the Local Authority the power to introduce Education Penalty Notices aimed at reducing the levels of unauthorised absence from schools, where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. As with all Attendance Enforcement legislation Fixed Penalty Notices are not issued as a punishment to parents but as a means to improve a child's attendance. This is an additional strategy to be used as a sanction when parents do not fulfill their responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly.

Why introduce Fixed Penalty Notices?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Whilst a FPN is a way of speeding up sanctions for unauthorised absence consideration needs to be given to "every aspect of a pupil's case" before considering whether a FPN would be appropriate. If a parent fails to pay the FPN the case must be progressed to court under a S444 (1).

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

You commit an offence if your child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Fixed Penalty Notice can be used within certain criteria as an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the penalty means that you can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

Who can decide that a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued?

Sunderland's Local Code of Conduct states that the final decision as to the issue of a penalty Notice rests with the Attendance Manager. The Attendance Manager must ensure that a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued fairly and consistently across the City and complies with legislation. Fixed Penalty Notices can only be issued within the parameters of the Local Code of Conduct.

Where can I find a copy of the Local Code of Conduct?

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8415>

What is the cost?

If paid within 21 days of receipt of a Notice, the cost is £60, but if paid after this and up to 28 days of receipt of the Notice, the cost is £120. Fixed Penalty Notices' must be paid in full.

How are they issued?

Fixed Penalty Notices will always be issued by post.

When will penalty notices be used?

They are used as a measure to address unauthorised absence at an early stage before non-attendance becomes entrenched, but they can also be used as a response to unauthorised term time absence.

What is an unauthorised absence?

An unauthorised absence occurs when a parent fails to give a reason for their child's absence or the Head teacher does not agree to accept a parent's reason for a pupil's absence. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Regulation 7) states that only a head teacher or their representative can determine if an absence is to be authorised.

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Is a warning given?

Yes, written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued will be sent to the parent. This will inform the parent of the extent of their child's absences and give them 15 school days in which to bring about an improvement. In that time, the pupil should have no unauthorised absences from school.

There is no limit to the number of formal warnings which can be issued.

In the case of unauthorised term time leave the warning will be the Head teacher's letter confirming that requested leave of absence has not been authorised. This letter includes a warning that a penalty notice may be issued.

Can a parent receive a Fixed Penalty Notice for more than one child?

Multiple Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parents during the year.

Is there an appeal process?

Fixed Penalty Notice fines are set by government regulation and are not based upon ability to pay. There is no provision for payment instalments nor is there a statutory right of appeal once a fixed-penalty notice has been issued. Fixed Penalty notices can only be withdrawn if they were issued in error or to the wrong person or there is material evidence of error.

How do parents pay the Penalty Notice?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Fixed Penalty Notice.

Can a parent be prosecuted if they pay the Penalty Notice but their child is still missing school?

Not for the period stated in the Fixed Penalty Notice, since payment of the penalty discharges their liability for that period. However, it could be the case that a prosecution could be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice,

depending on the circumstances.

How many penalty notices can be issued to a parent?

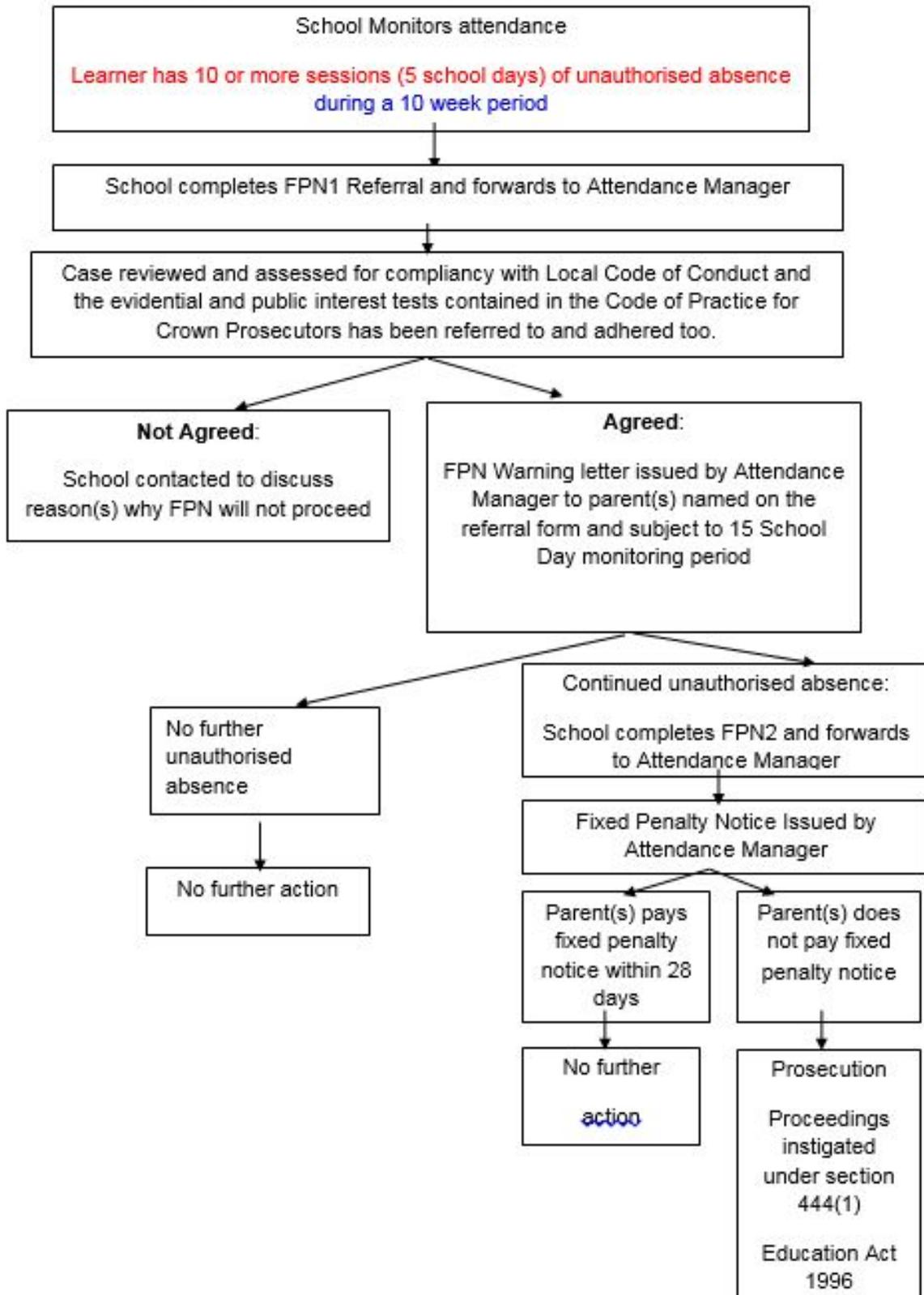
Each parent can receive up to two penalty notices for the same child in any one academic year.

What happens if the Penalty is not paid?

Parents have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty in full, after which the Authority is required under the legislation to commence proceedings in the local Magistrates' Court for the original offence of failing to ensure the child attended school regularly. If proven, this can attract a range of sentences including fines of up to £1,000. Costs may also be imposed and the parent will be the subject of a criminal record.

Appendix 3

Fixed Penalty Notice Process for Unauthorised Absences



Appendix 4

Fixed Penalty Notice Process for Unauthorised Leave During Term Time

