



Barcombe Hamsey Plumpton Iford & Kingston

## Skylark Federation

# Attendance policy

Reviewed and approved by Executive Head Teacher: 01.02.24  
Next review: Summer 2026

## Contents

1. Aims .....	2
2. Legislation and guidance .....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities .....	3
4. Recording attendance .....	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence .....	7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance .....	8
7. Attendance monitoring .....	8
8. Monitoring arrangements .....	9
9. Links with other policies .....	9
Appendix 1: attendance codes .....	9
Appendix 2: Late arrival slip .....	9
Appendix 3: Parent communication .....	9
Appendix 4: Attendance matters .....	10
Appendix 5: School attendance process .....	14
Appendix 6: Attendance tracking .....	15
Appendix 7: Attendance procedure flowchart .....	16

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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our federation culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › 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 meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- › 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [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.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for each school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the executive headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The executive headteacher and each head of school**

The executive headteacher and each head of school is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the schools
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The head of school is responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the head of schools and can be contacted via the school office. The head of school may ask another DSL to support with attendance.

#### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the executive headteacher
- › Advising the head of school (authorised by the executive headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is the school secretaries and can be contacted via the school office.

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.15am.

### **3.6 School [admin/office] staff**

School [admin/office] staff will:

- › Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents and carers to the head of school in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **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 before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), 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

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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:

- › instances 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. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am(Hamsey and Plumpton), 8.45am(Barcombe and Iford and Kingston) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.15. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm.

## **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 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school [admin/office] staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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 about 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 amount of 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. 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:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- › Will need a late arrival slip completed with the time of arrival and the reason for lateness (Appendix 2)

## **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 admin staff will inform the DSL.
- › 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
- › 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 an education welfare officer

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The executive headteacher or head of school will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at their discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unavoidable and a rare circumstance such as a family bereavement or a close family wedding. Such absences would not be expected to be more than one or two days. Holidays attached to such events will not be authorised. Some time away from school due to unavoidable illness already impacts on the child's learning and so to choose to withdraw your child for a reason that is not an exceptional circumstance on top of this means that your child has even less education. The school year is only 39 weeks which leaves 13 weeks in which holidays can be taken without your child missing school.

Children returning from a term time holiday are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other children in the class. This is something we *all* have a responsibility to avoid.

If we suspect a child has been absent from school due to a holiday that we have not been informed about, the absence will be unauthorised and it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide evidence to the contrary. This might be a doctor's certificate, for example.

We hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 14 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The head of school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › 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 parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › 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

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by an executive headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The 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 or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

In each week's assembly we will celebrate the class with the best attendance.

The attendance flowchart to be shared with all families and on the website. (Appendix 3)

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data fortnightly
- › 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.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 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.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find 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 are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum after 3 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. 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
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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		



<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

#### Appendix 2 – Late arrival slip

##### Late Arrival Slip

<b>Date:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Name of Child:</b>			
<b>Year Group:</b>			
<b>Reason:</b>			

#### Appendix 3 – Parent Communication Letters

Dear (Recipients(s) First Name),

After reviewing student attendance and punctuality this week, we are writing to keep you updated on (Student(s) First Name)'s attendance figure as it appears on our records for this academic year to date.

**(Student(s) First Name)'s overall attendance as of (Current date (short with day)) = (Report Field: Attendance)**

We understand that there are a number of reasons why attendance can fall below the expected levels and our aim is to support you and work together to improve your child's attendance in school.

Our school's attendance target, in line with the local authority and Department of Education expectations, is 97%. A child who only attends school for 90% or less of the time is classed as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Missing school means your child will fall behind in lessons and this will impact on their academic progress and achievement.

We will continue to monitor (Student(s) First Name)'s attendance and you may be required to attend a meeting to discuss next steps and how we can support you to improve attendance.

Please inform us if we can support you in any way to continue to improve (Student(s) First Name)'s attendance.

Your sincerely,

Dear (Recipients(s) First Name),

After reviewing student attendance and punctuality this week, we are writing to keep you updated on (Student(s) First Name)'s attendance figure as it appears on our records for this academic year to date.

**(Student(s) First Name)'s overall attendance as of (Current date (short with day)) = (Report Field: Attendance)**

Our school's attendance target, in line with the local authority and Department of Education expectations, is 97%. Please inform us if we can support you in any way to continue to improve (Student(s) First Name)'s attendance.

Your sincerely,

Dear (Recipients(s) First Name),

After reviewing student attendance and punctuality this week, we are writing to keep you updated on (Student(s) First Name)'s attendance figure as it appears on our records for this academic year to date.

**(Student(s) First Name)'s overall attendance as of (Current date (short with day)) = (Report Field: Attendance)**

Our school's attendance target, in line with the local authority and Department of Education expectations, is 97%. **Thank you for working to reach this target!**

We hope you have a lovely break and look forward to welcoming you back to school next term.

Your sincerely,

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

### PUNCTUALITY

There are currently concerns regarding your child's punctuality at school. Despite this having previously been brought to your attention, there has been no improvement, and, to date, we do not appear to have been provided with a valid reason for the persistent lateness.

Under the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and failure to do so is therefore an offence.

As discussed on each occasion we have met, I cannot stress enough the importance of XXXX being here, on time, every day. I will continue to monitor XXXXXX's attendance and punctuality, and review this periodically.

**This letter is a warning that should XXXXX accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness during the next 10 school week period I will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.**

If you have any queries, please contact me.

Appendix 4 – Attendance Matters

## **Attendance Matters!**

There is a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement.

Children who regularly attend school:

- Make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with.
- Find learning more satisfying.
- Learn learning habits which will help them later in life.

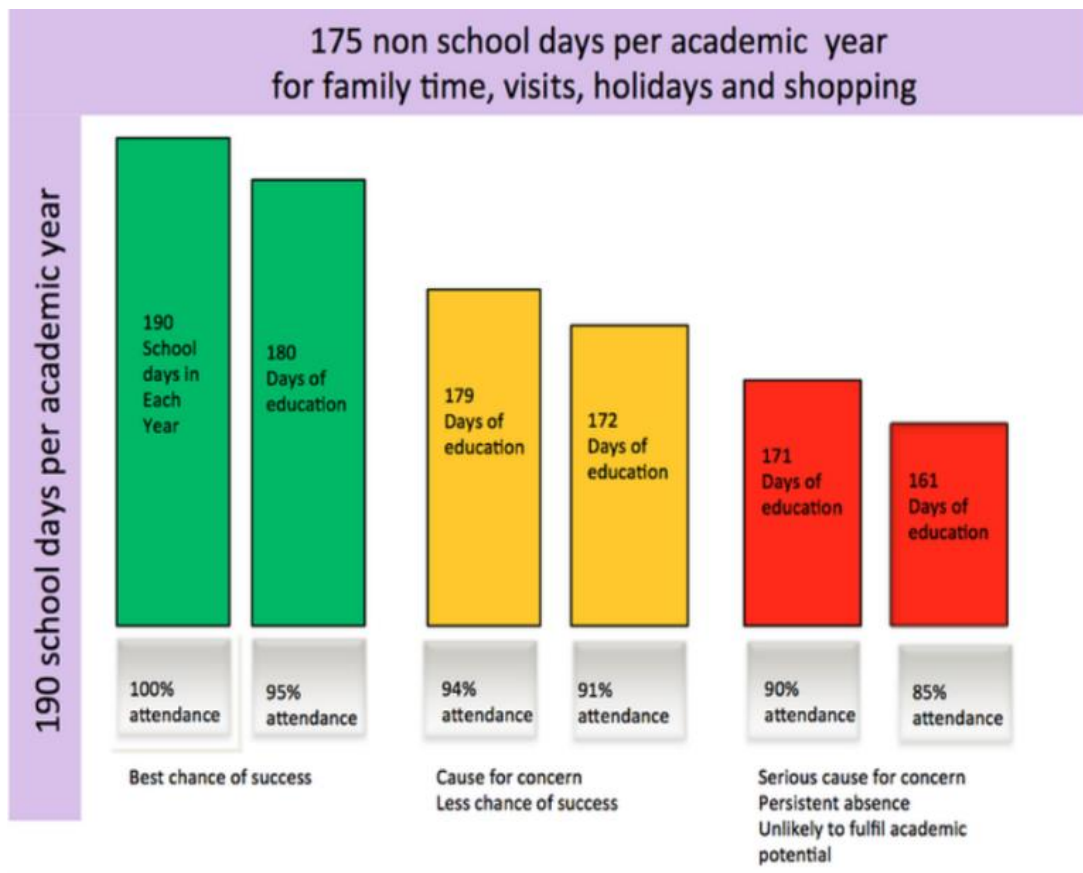
Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Good progress can only take place when children are in the classroom regularly and on time.

We have an attendance target of 97%. Each week in celebration assembly we share which class has the best attendance that week, and that class gets to keep our attendance trophy.

School registers are checked regularly by the Head of School, secretary and class teachers, and poor attendance is followed up. The Head of School undertakes a fortnightly attendance check to look at any

children whose attendance has fallen below our target. Once attendance figures have been reviewed, we follow a process to support families to improve. Please see below and appendix 1 – Attendance Flowchart.

Attendance %	Stage	Action
95% - 97%	1	Fortnightly monitoring, which will be escalated to Stage 2 if attendance does not improve or drops below 95%.
90% - 95%	2	A warning letter will be sent home; attendance is closely monitored. If attendance does not improve within two weeks, you will be asked to attend a meeting with your child’s class teacher and/or the Deputy Head of School. Attendance will be escalated to Stage 3.
Below 90%	3	Your child is now classed as a <u>Persistent Absentee</u> . You will be asked to attend a meeting with the Head of School. A second warning letter will be sent home with a target for improvement. If your child now misses 10 sessions within 10 weeks, you will be issued with a fine. The Head of School may refer you to the East Sussex Attendance Lead.



## Attendance in Numbers:

Attendance %	Attendance in Days	Absence in Days	Hours of Lost Learning
100%	190	0	0
97%	184	6	30
95%	180.5	9.5	47.5
90%	171	19	95
80%	152	38	190

### Every Minute Counts

Lateness = Lost Learning (the figures below are calculated over a school year)

5 minutes late each day = 3 days lost!

10 minutes late each day = 6.5 days lost!

15 minutes late each day = 10 days lost!

20 minutes late each day = 13 days lost!

30 minutes late each day = 19 days lost!

## Unauthorised Absence

**There is no entitlement to time off during term time.** If children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law, or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Term-time holidays
- Absence following or prior to a school closure or authorised leave
- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is a child's birthday
- Parent/carer's illness (other than in an emergency)
- Frequent unsubstantiated claims of illness
- Where there is no explanation for an absence

## Attendance and The Law

### The legal duties of schools:

Schools have a legal duty to monitor student attendance daily and to inform the local authority of any student who is regularly absent from school. They must also investigate any unexplained absences as part of their legal safeguarding duty.

### The legal duties of parents and carers:

You must make sure your child gets a full-time education that meets their needs. If your child is registered at school, you must ensure they attend regularly and arrive on time. Children must get an education between the school term after their fifth birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

### When your child is not receiving an education:

The school will contact you if your child is enrolled in school and does not attend (even if they're only absent for a day). The local authority will contact you if your child has irregular school attendance or the school makes a referral to the local authority for further investigation and support

You can be prosecuted if you do not give your child an education. Prosecution is a last resort. You will normally get offers of support first. Then, if appropriate, the local authority may issue warnings.

### Legal action to enforce school attendance:

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. They can give you:

- A Parenting Order
- An Education Supervision Order
- A School Attendance Order
- A fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

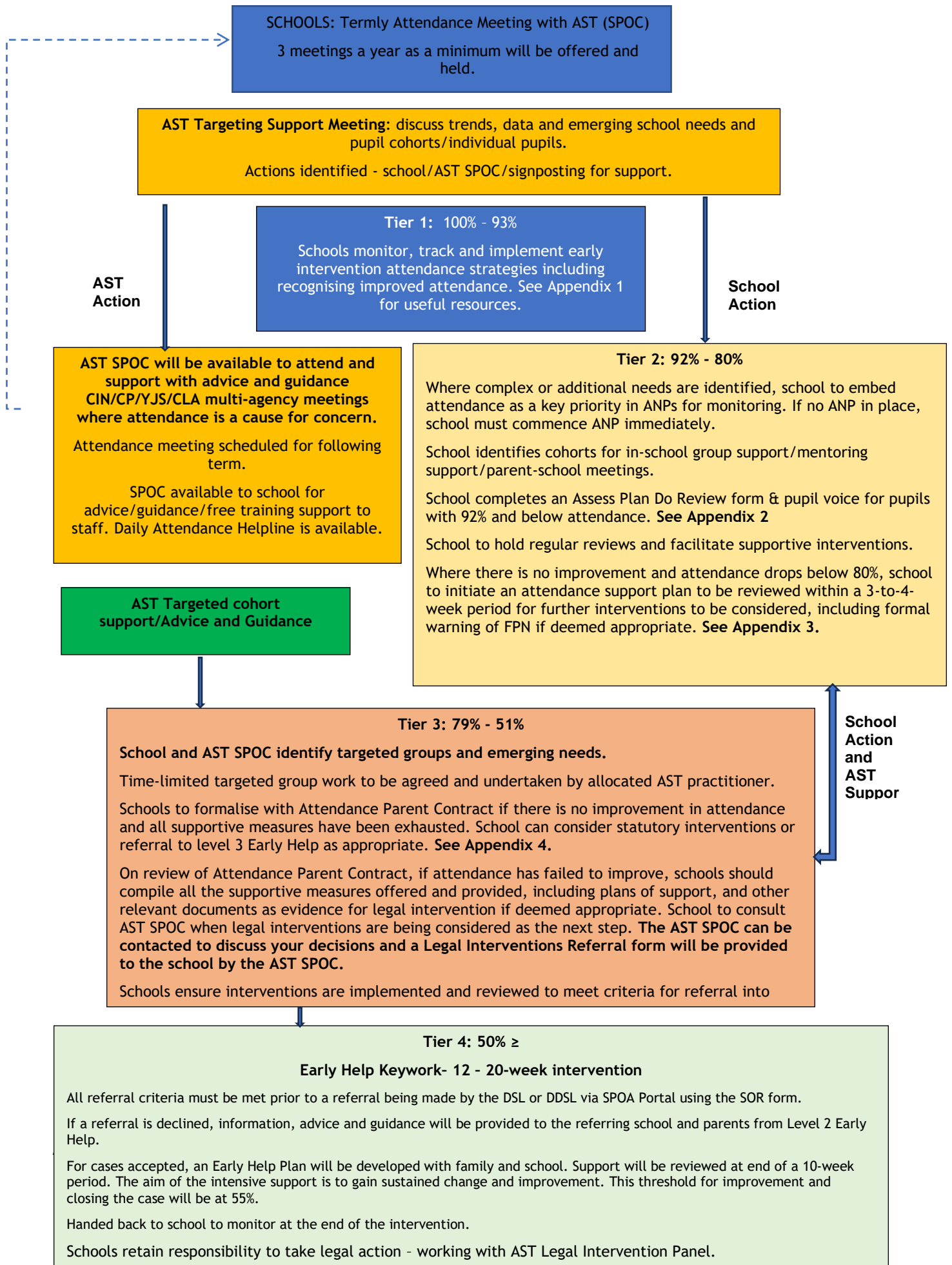
**Parenting Order:** This means you must go to parenting classes. You'll also have to do what the court says to improve your child's school attendance.

**Education Supervision Order:** If the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of prosecuting you, or as well.

**School Attendance Order:** You'll get a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks your child is not getting an education. You have 15 days to provide evidence that you've registered your child with the school listed in the order or that you're giving them home education. If you do not, you could be prosecuted or given a fine.

**Fine:** Your local council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if you do not pay within 21 days. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days, you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

**Prosecution:** You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order.





**Attendance Tracking in a Day at Hamsey and Plumpton**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1	8:40am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gate closes</li> </ul>	Head of School
2	8:40am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell rung on playground</li> <li>• Children line up for class</li> </ul>	Playground Supervisors (TAs) Class Teachers
3	8:40am onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any pupils arriving after this time come in via school office – family complete red punctuality slip</li> </ul>	Families School Secretary
4	By 9:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registers taken in class</li> </ul>	Class Teachers
5	9:15am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registers close</li> <li>• Pupils arriving after this time are marked as /U/ - unauthorised absence for that session</li> </ul>	School Secretary
6	9:15am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absentee Report printed from Arbor and given to Head of School</li> </ul>	School Secretary
7	9:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone calls home to any families we have not heard from who are absent</li> <li>• Incident/ actions added to CPOMS</li> </ul>	School Secretary
8	3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly phone call home to check in, with a brief discussion about the next day's school adventures!</li> </ul>	Class Teachers

Attendance Tracking in a day at Barcombe and Iford and Kingston

<b>Step</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1	8:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gate closes</li> </ul>	Head of School
2	8:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell rung on playground</li> <li>• Children line up for class</li> </ul>	Playground Supervisors (TAs) Class Teachers
3	8:45am onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any pupils arriving after this time come in via school office – family complete red punctuality slip</li> </ul>	Families School Secretary
4	By 9:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registers taken in class</li> </ul>	Class Teachers
5	9:15am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registers close</li> <li>• Pupils arriving after this time are marked as /U/ - unauthorised absence for that session</li> </ul>	School Secretary
6	9:15am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absentee Report printed from Arbor and given to Head of School</li> </ul>	School Secretary
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8	3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly phone call home to check in, with a brief discussion about the next day's school adventures!</li> </ul>	Class Teachers

# Attendance Procedure – Flow Chart

