Ravenstone
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy details	
Reviewer	Attendance Lead
Review date	Autumn 2026
Next review date	Autumn 2027
Approver	LAC

1. Policy statement

Ravenstone Primary School is committed to ensuring that every pupil can benefit fully from education, achieve their potential and participate in school life. Improving attendance is a shared responsibility for all members of the staff team.

Regular attendance is essential for pupils' academic progress, social development, emotional wellbeing and safeguarding. We recognise that children may experience barriers to attendance and that these can arise from medical, emotional, family, SEND, disability or other circumstances.

Our approach is to promote excellent attendance, identify concerns early, work in partnership with parents and carers, and provide appropriate support to remove barriers. Where attendance does not improve, or where unauthorised absence or safeguarding concerns warrant it, we will escalate our response in accordance with statutory requirements.

This policy applies to all pupils on roll, with appropriate consideration of compulsory school age and any specific legal requirements.

2. Statutory framework

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the current versions of applicable legislation and Department for Education guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996.
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended.
- Department for Education statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance*.
- Department for Education statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- The Equality Act 2010 and applicable duties relating to disability and reasonable adjustments.
- The Children Act 1989 and relevant safeguarding guidance.
- Relevant local authority attendance procedures and its penalty notice Code of Conduct.
- Supporting pupils are school with medical conditions

The school will follow the latest statutory guidance and any subsequent legislative changes. Where legislation or statutory guidance conflicts with this policy, the legislation and statutory guidance will take precedence.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Local Academy Committee

The local academy committee will:

- Hold school leadership to account for attendance and the effectiveness of its attendance strategy.
- Ensure that attendance is prioritised as a safeguarding and educational matter.
- Review attendance data, trends, persistent and severe absence, and the impact of interventions.
- Ensure that appropriate systems, resources and staff training are in place.

Headteacher

The headteacher will:

- Lead the school's attendance strategy and promote a culture of regular attendance.
- Ensure registers are maintained accurately and statutory duties are met.
- Authorise or refuse leave of absence in accordance with the law.
- Ensure that attendance concerns are addressed promptly and proportionately.
- Liaise with the local authority and other agencies where necessary.
- Act as the main attendance champion for the school.

Attendance lead

The designated attendance lead will:

- Monitor attendance daily and review individual and cohort-level data.
- Identify pupils approaching the school's intervention thresholds.
- Contact families about unexplained absence and emerging patterns.
- Work alongside the headteacher to co-ordinate meetings, support plans, reviews and referrals.
- Maintain records of actions taken and outcomes.
- Escalate cases to the headteacher, safeguarding lead, local authority or other agencies as appropriate.

This person is the family liaison officer, Val Crolle.

Class teachers and school staff

Staff will:

- Take and submit accurate attendance registers at the required times.
- Report unexplained absences, concerning patterns and safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Build positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Reinforce the importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Share relevant information with the attendance lead.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education and attends school regularly.
- Ensure their child arrives punctually and is ready to learn.
- Notify the school promptly of absence, explaining the reason and expected duration.
- Provide further information or evidence where reasonably requested.
- Work constructively with the school to resolve attendance difficulties.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term time unless leave has been authorised.

4. Attendance expectations and school targets

The school will promote excellent attendance which is as close to 100% as possible for all pupils.

Attendance percentages will be used as an early-warning and monitoring tool. They will not be the sole determinant of whether support, safeguarding action or legal intervention is required.

The school will monitor:

- Overall attendance and attendance by year group and cohort.
- Individual pupil attendance and changes over time.
- Persistent and severe absence.
- Unauthorised absence and repeated lateness.
- Patterns of absence, including particular days, lessons or periods.
- The attendance of pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or other vulnerabilities.
- The effectiveness of support and interventions.

A pupil may require intervention even when attendance appears strong, for example where there is a concerning pattern of absence, repeated lateness or a safeguarding concern.

The school day will begin at 8.45am and finish at 3.15pm. Registration will close at 9.15am and 1.30pm. Where children arrive at school after registers have closed this will be logged as an unauthorised absence. For those arriving late but before the registers have closed, this will be logged using an L code.

5. Attendance intervention thresholds

The following thresholds are the school's internal operational triggers. They are not statutory penalty thresholds and do not replace professional judgement.

Attendance level	School response
95–100%	Maintain positive communication, recognise good attendance and monitor any emerging patterns.
93–94.9%	Early monitoring. Review the attendance pattern, identify any emerging barriers and contact parents where appropriate.
90–92.9%	Attendance concern. Contact parents, discuss barriers and agree proportionate actions. Consider an attendance meeting and a written support plan if concerns persist.
Below 90%	Urgent targeted intervention. Arrange a formal attendance meeting, assess barriers and safeguarding risks, develop a time-bound support plan and consider referral to the local authority or other services.
Below 80%	Intensive intervention. Headteacher and attendance lead review; hold a multi-agency discussion where appropriate; consider early help, health, SEND or other specialist support. Review progress at least fortnightly, or more frequently where risk requires.
Below 50%	Severe absence. Prioritise the case for intensive, coordinated support involving the local authority and relevant services. Complete a robust safeguarding assessment and consider whether further action is needed to protect the child.

How thresholds will be applied

1. Attendance will be reviewed at least fortnightly, with daily monitoring of unexplained absence and urgent concerns.
2. Thresholds may be triggered at any point in the year; staff will not wait until the end of a term.

3. The school will consider both the percentage and the circumstances, including the length and pattern of absence, the reason given, the pupil's needs and any safeguarding risks.
4. Where attendance deteriorates rapidly, the school will act immediately rather than waiting for a percentage threshold.
5. Where a pupil's attendance improves, support may be adjusted following review, but monitoring will continue until improvement is sustained.
6. Authorised absence will still be included in the attendance percentage. It will not automatically lead to punitive action.
7. Attendance percentages will not be used as an automatic trigger for a penalty notice. Legal action will follow the relevant statutory framework and local authority procedures.

6. Attendance procedures and escalation

Stage 1: Daily monitoring and first contact

The school will:

- Check attendance registers and identify unexplained absence.
- Make contact with parents promptly on the first day of unexplained absence.
- Continue reasonable attempts to establish the child's whereabouts and welfare where contact cannot be made.
- Follow safeguarding procedures if the child's whereabouts are unknown or there are concerns about safety.
- Record contact attempts, explanations and decisions.

First-day contact does not replace the school's duty to take further action where absence continues or safeguarding concerns arise.

Stage 2: Early concern — 93% to 94.9%

The attendance lead will review the pupil's attendance and any emerging pattern.

Actions may include:

- An informal conversation or telephone call with parents.
- A letter informing parents of the attendance concern.
- Discussion with the class teacher about barriers to attendance.
- Advice on routines, punctuality and access to support.
- Monitoring over the next four to six school weeks.

Where a clear medical or other barrier is identified, the school will consider appropriate adjustments and support.

Stage 3: Attendance concern — 90% to 92.9%

The attendance lead will contact parents to discuss the concern and understand the reasons for absence.

Actions will normally include:

- A review of the attendance record and absence pattern.
- An attendance meeting with parents, in person or remotely.

- Agreement on practical steps to improve attendance.
- Consideration of pastoral, family, SEND, disability, medical or mental health needs.
- A written attendance support plan where appropriate.
- A review date, normally within four school weeks.

The school will explain the concern clearly and offer support before considering escalation, unless the circumstances require more immediate action.

Stage 4: Persistent absence — below 90%

The school will treat attendance below 90% as a priority for intervention.

Actions will normally include:

- A formal meeting with parents and relevant school staff.
- A written, pupil-specific attendance improvement plan.
- Identification of barriers, named responsibilities and review dates.
- Consideration of early help, school nursing, health services, SEND support or other relevant agencies.
- Referral to or consultation with the local authority attendance service where appropriate.
- Consideration of a parenting contract or other formal measures where suitable.
- Consideration of legal intervention where absence is unauthorised and support has not resolved the issue, or where the circumstances otherwise justify escalation.

Progress will normally be reviewed every four school weeks. The frequency may be increased where the pupil is at risk or attendance continues to decline.

Stage 5: Severe or escalating absence — below 80%

The headteacher and attendance lead will review the case urgently.

Actions may include:

- A comprehensive assessment of the child's circumstances and barriers.
- A multi-agency meeting or coordinated family support plan.
- Liaison with the local authority and relevant health, social care or SEND services.
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments, reintegration support or alternative arrangements where lawful and appropriate.
- A clear plan setting out responsibilities, timescales and the intended improvement in attendance.
- Regular review, normally at least fortnightly.

The school will consider whether the absence raises concerns about any safeguarding risks. Where a safeguarding concern arises, the school will follow its safeguarding and child protection procedures without delay.

Stage 6: Attendance below 50%

Pupils who miss 50% or more of possible school sessions will be treated as severely absent and prioritised for intensive support.

The school will work with the local authority and relevant agencies to establish the causes of absence, identify appropriate support and agree a coordinated plan to improve access to education.

Where appropriate support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, the school will consider whether a safeguarding referral or further statutory action is required.

No pupil will be excluded from consideration for support solely because their attendance is extremely low.

7. Review and monitoring of support plans

Each written support plan will identify:

- The attendance concern and relevant evidence.
- The barriers identified by the pupil, family and school.
- The actions to be taken by the school, parents and other agencies.
- Any adjustments or support to be provided.
- A review date and measurable indicators of progress.
- The next steps if attendance does not improve.

Plans will be proportionate to the circumstances and reviewed at the agreed intervals. If agreed actions are not effective, the school will reconsider the approach rather than simply repeating the same intervention.

Where parents do not engage, the school will document its attempts to offer support and consider appropriate escalation. A lack of engagement will not, on its own, remove the need to assess the child's circumstances and safeguarding needs.

8. Unauthorised absence and penalty notices

The school will distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence in accordance with the applicable regulations and statutory guidance.

A penalty notice will not be issued automatically because a pupil falls below a particular attendance percentage.

Under the national framework, schools must consider a penalty notice when a pupil reaches **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. This may include a combination of unauthorised absence, such as term-time holiday and arrival after the register has closed.

The school will:

- Consider the individual circumstances and whether further support is appropriate.
- Follow the local authority's current penalty notice Code of Conduct.
- Consider whether a Notice to Improve is appropriate where required by the framework.
- Refer cases to the local authority or take other action in accordance with the applicable arrangements.
- Record the rationale for decisions and ensure that action is proportionate and lawful.

Penalty notices are subject to statutory rules, including limits on repeat notices. The school will use the current statutory penalty amounts and procedures rather than reproducing potentially outdated amounts in this policy.

The school may also consider other lawful interventions where appropriate, including referral for prosecution, education supervision orders or other measures available to the local authority. Such decisions will be made in accordance with the law and relevant procedures.

9. Punctuality

Punctuality is important because late arrival can disrupt learning and affect a pupil's sense of belonging.

Parents should ensure that children arrive in time for the start of the school day. The school gates are open between 8.30am and 8.45am and all children must arrive by 8.45am to be registered as being on time for the school day.

The school will:

- Record lateness in accordance with statutory registration requirements.
- Monitor repeated lateness and contact parents where patterns emerge.
- Discuss practical barriers and agree steps to improve punctuality.
- Record arrival after the register has closed using the appropriate attendance code.
- Consider unauthorised late marks as part of the national penalty notice framework where the relevant conditions are met.

Persistent lateness will be addressed through the same supportive and proportionate approach used for other attendance concerns.

10. Reporting and authorising absence

Parents must notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, giving the reason and expected duration. This should be through a phone call or email to the school office.

The school may request further information where necessary to determine whether an absence can be authorised.

The headteacher or delegated member of staff will decide whether absence can be authorised in accordance with the law and statutory guidance. Parental notification does not automatically make an absence authorised.

Where there is doubt about the reason for absence, the school will make reasonable enquiries and record the decision. Unexplained absences will be logged with an N code until resolved; this must be for no longer than 5 school days at which point an unauthorised absence will be logged.

The school will not routinely require medical evidence for every episode of illness. It may request evidence where there is a genuine and proportionate need to understand repeated or prolonged absence.

Where a child has a medical condition, disability or other recognised barrier, the school will consider the individual circumstances and any relevant legal duties.

11. Medical needs, SEND and mental health

The school recognises that some pupils face additional barriers to regular attendance because of illness, disability, special educational needs, anxiety, mental health difficulties or other circumstances.

The school will work with pupils, parents and relevant professionals to identify and address these barriers.

Support may include:

- A meeting with parents and appropriate school staff.
- Reasonable adjustments and consideration of the school's Equality Act duties.
- Advice or input from the SENCO, school nurse, health professionals or other services.
- A supported return to school after a prolonged absence.
- A phased reintegration plan where appropriate and lawful.
- A review of whether existing support or provision meets the child's needs.

The school will not assume that absence associated with mental health or SEND is deliberate. Equally, it will not allow a pattern of absence to go unaddressed simply because the underlying barriers are complex.

Where a pupil is unable to attend because of health needs, the school will consider its duties and work with the local authority and relevant professionals to ensure that suitable education arrangements are made where required.

12. Leave of absence during term time

Parents must request leave of absence in advance. Leave may only be granted in accordance with the applicable regulations, including where the headteacher considers that exceptional circumstances justify it.

The school will consider each request individually. Family holidays, convenience, cost savings or routine family events will not normally constitute exceptional circumstances.

The headteacher will decide whether leave is authorised and for what period. Parents should not assume that leave has been approved unless the school confirms this.

Unauthorised term-time absence may result in a referral for a penalty notice or other lawful action, subject to the national framework and local authority procedures.

13. Safeguarding and children missing education

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Unexplained or prolonged absence may indicate that a child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk.

The school will follow its safeguarding procedures where:

- A child's whereabouts or welfare cannot be established.
- Absence is prolonged, unexplained or unusual.
- There are concerns about neglect, abuse, exploitation, family circumstances or unmet needs.

- A pupil is at risk of becoming a child missing education.
- The pattern or circumstances of absence give rise to concern, regardless of the attendance percentage.

The designated safeguarding lead will be involved where appropriate. The school will liaise with the local authority and other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements.

14. Data, records and reporting

The school will maintain accurate attendance and admission registers in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Attendance records, parental contact, meetings, support plans, decisions about authorisation and referrals will be recorded appropriately and retained in accordance with the school's record-management and data protection arrangements.

The headteacher and attendance lead will review attendance information regularly. The local academy committee will receive reports on whole-school attendance, persistent and severe absence, trends, interventions and outcomes.

Information will be shared with relevant agencies where lawful and necessary to safeguard children and support attendance.

15. Equality, accessibility and inclusion

The school will apply this policy fairly and consistently, taking account of pupils' individual circumstances and the school's legal duties.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where required. The school will seek to ensure that communication and attendance meetings are accessible to families and that barriers relating to disability, language, health or disadvantage are taken into account.

The policy will not be used to penalise pupils or families unfairly for circumstances outside their control.

16. Complaints

Parents who disagree with a decision or have concerns about the implementation of this policy should raise the matter with the headteacher in the first instance.

Where concerns remain unresolved, parents may use the school's published complaints procedure.

This process does not prevent the school from taking urgent action where safeguarding or statutory attendance duties require it.

17. Policy review

The headteacher and local academy committee will review this policy at least annually and sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local authority procedures or school circumstances.

The school will ensure that staff are informed of relevant changes and that this policy remains consistent with the current statutory framework.

Appendix 1: REGISTER CODES

The following codes are used in the Arbor system when marking a register:

CODE	**DESCRIPTION**	**MEANING**
/	Present (AM)	Present
****	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Exceptional circumstance	Authorised absence
C1	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Pupil on part time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
K	Education provision arranged by council	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
Q	Pupil unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence

U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available	Authorised absence
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Authorised absence
Y3	Partial closure of a school	Authorised absence
Y4	Unexpected whole school closure	Authorised absence
Y5	Pupils in the criminal justice system	Authorised absence
Y6	Absence due to public health guidance or law	Authorised absence
Y7	An other unavoidable cause	Authorised absence
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PANEL MEETING RECORD

Name of Child	
Year Group	
Meeting Date	

Notes from previous meeting, dated:

Attendance & Punctuality (including authorised & unauthorised absences)		
A1:	Sp1:	Su1:
A2:	Sp2:	Su2:

Please see attached sheet for reasons given for absences.

Discussion notes – what are the barriers to your child attending school?

	Targets	**How will we achieve this? What do we need to do?**
1		
2		
3		

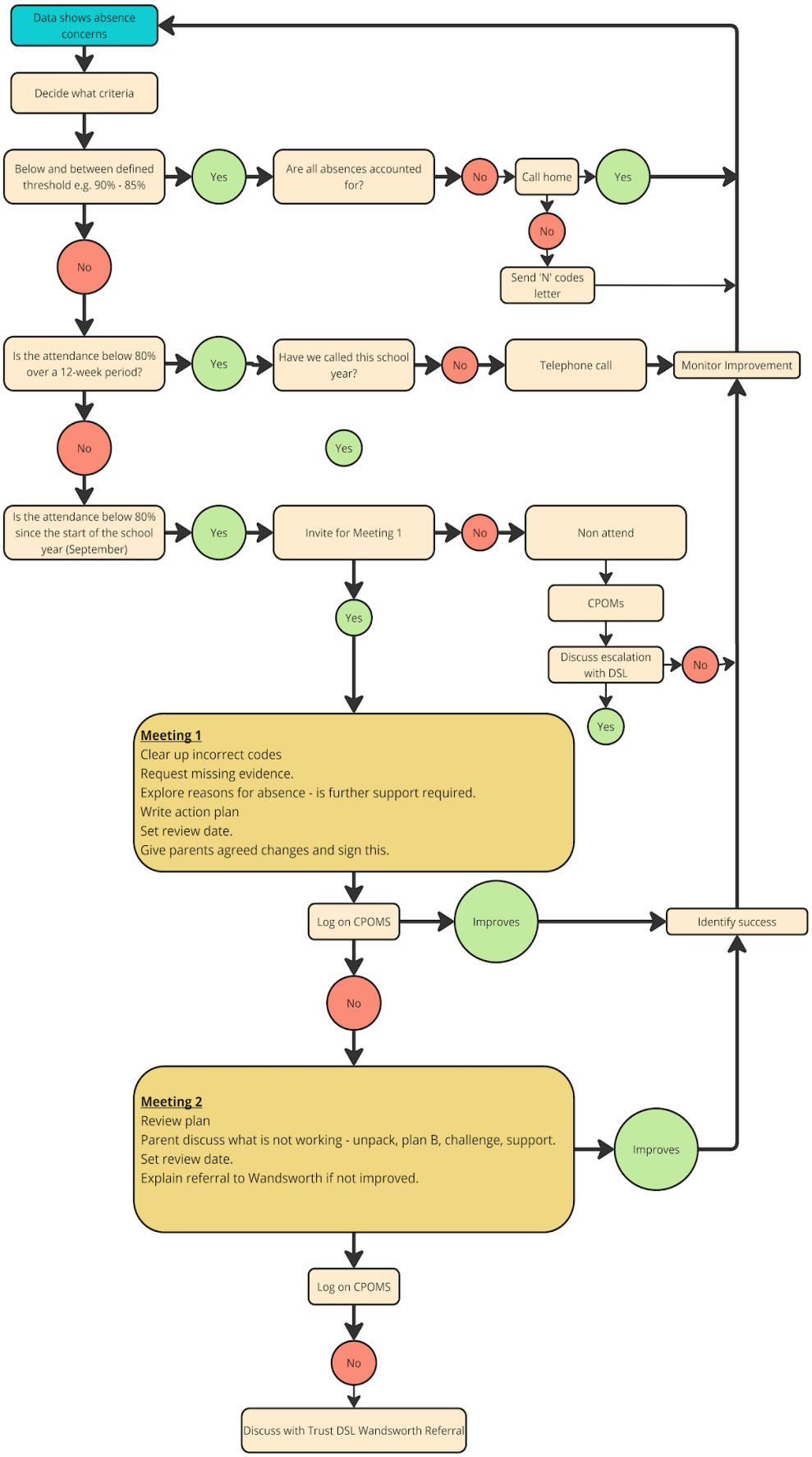
Staff member

Signed: _____

Parent

Signed: _____

Appendix 3: PROCEDURE FOR PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM


Data shows absence concerns
Decide what criteria
Below and between defined threshold e.g. 90% - 85%
Yes
Are all absences accounted for?
No
Call home
Yes
No
Send 'N' codes letter
No
Is the attendance below 80% over a 12-week period?
Yes
Have we called this school year?
No
Telephone call
Monitor Improvement
No
Yes
Is the attendance below 80% since the start of the school year (September)
Yes
Invite for Meeting 1
No
Non attend
CPOMs
Yes
Discuss escalation with DSL
No
Yes
Meeting 1
Clear up incorrect codes
Request missing evidence.
Explore reasons for absence - is further support required.
Write action plan
Set review date.
Give parents agreed changes and sign this.
Log on CPOMS
Improves
Identify success
No
Meeting 2
Review plan
Parent discuss what is not working - unpack, plan B, challenge, support.
Set review date.
Explain referral to Wandsworth if not improved.
Improves
Log on CPOMS
No
Discuss with Trust DSL Wandsworth Referral

Appendix 4: DAILY ABSENCE AND REGISTER PROCEDURE

