



# HCAT Attendance Policy 2021



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# **Attendance Policy**

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## **Section 1 - Introduction and Aims**

HCAT are committed to promoting a culture of high expectation, achievement, and excellence. Good attendance is crucial if students are to take advantage of the opportunities available to them and complete a successful journey through their time at our schools and as they move on into higher education or the world of work.

At Horizon, for our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive, on time, every day that the College is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will affect their learning. Any student's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a student's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason may result in a fine or prosecution.

We are committed to working with Parents and Carers to maximise the achievement and attendance for all students. There is a clear link between good attendance and punctuality with educational achievement.

In our schools, in order for an attendance record to be deemed acceptable, it should be 97% or above:

100% - Outstanding Attendance

97 – 99.9 % - Good Attendance (97% is College target)

95 – 96.9% - Requires Improvement

92 – 94.9% - Inadequate

90.1 – 91.9% - At risk of Persistent Absenteeism

Below 90% - Persistent Absentee

Students with an attendance of 90% or below are classed as persistent absentees. Persistent absenteeism is when a student misses 10% or more of the possible sessions in an academic year. Evidence suggests that students with an attendance of below 97% have a significantly lower chance of achieving their potential, regardless of their ability.

### **The legal framework**

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

## **Registration**

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – once for the morning session and once in the afternoon. Students are also registered at the start of every lesson of the day.

The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes. Guidance on applying Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations can be found in 'Advice on School Attendance' published by the DfE –

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818204/School\\_attendance\\_July\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf)

## **Section 2 - College Expectations and Responsibilities**

**We expect that all students will:**

- attend College regularly
- attend College punctually
- attend College appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their Teacher / School Teams and Attendance Team any problems that may affect their attendance

**We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility will:**

- encourage regular attendance
- encourage punctual attendance
- ensure that the child/children are appropriately prepared for the day
- contact College before morning registration, on each day of the child's absence, by:
  - phoning College and making the appropriate selection when prompted to do so and then stating the reason for absence or
  - completing the form on the Attendance section of our school website or
  - emailing [attendance@horizoncc.co.uk](mailto:attendance@horizoncc.co.uk).

Alternatively, a letter can be sent for the attention of the Attendance team. The letter should explain the reason and date(s) of absence, giving the student's full name. Any unexplained absence is treated as unauthorised absence

- contact College if a student will be arriving late and provide a reason for lateness. If the reason is deemed acceptable by the College, the student will be exempt from a late mark. Alternatively, a letter can be sent for the attention of the Attendance Team. The letter should explain the reason the child is late, giving his/her full name
- reply to the automated text message, requesting reasons for absence
- contact the College promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the student away from College

**We expect that Tutors have a responsibility to:**

- promote the 97% threshold for students in order for them to attend any rewards trips, visits which are not linked to the curriculum or the Prom if they are in Y11
- complete registers accurately and promptly at the start of registration. Persistent issues with incomplete or inaccurate registers will be addressed with the individual member of staff
- amend the register for late comers
- inform the attendance team of any information provided by students regarding their current or future attendance
- follow up on student's absence with a 'wellbeing call' at any point during the day and report any absence concerns to the School teams and the Attendance team
- discuss the weekly attendance and punctuality PowerPoint with all students during Tutor period on Mondays
- pass on any notes received regarding attendance to the Attendance Office

**We expect that Teachers have a responsibility to:**

- promote the 97% threshold for students in order for them to attend any rewards trips, visits which are not linked to the curriculum or the Prom if they are in Y11
- complete registers accurately and promptly at the start of the lesson. Persistent issues with incomplete or inaccurate registers will be addressed with the individual member of staff
- respond to reminders (via email or SIMs) to complete registers immediately

- amend the register for late comers who are late by more than 5 minutes without a note and add the minutes late to the register. The teacher will then record a negative conduct point in the student's planner
- inform the Attendance Team of any information provided by students regarding their current or future attendance
- report any absence concerns to the Head of School / School teams and the Attendance team
- inform the Head of School / Attendance Office prior to any trip/activity if any student is to be absent from "normal" lessons. The trip organiser to ensure that the Attendance Team has a full list of the students involved in the trip/activity

**We expect that Subject Leaders have a responsibility to:**

- promote the 97% threshold for students to achieve in order for them to attend any rewards trips, visits which are not linked to the curriculum or the Prom if they are in Y11
- inform the Head of School / attendance team of any trips/activities from within the Department
- liaise with Class teachers/School teams /Attendance Team to discuss attendance concerns for individual students

**We expect that Heads of School and Deputy Heads of School have a responsibility to:**

- promote the 97% threshold for students in order for them to attend any rewards trips, visits which are not linked to the curriculum or the Prom if they are in Y11
- have weekly meetings with the Attendance Officers to discuss students of concern and highlight students who they can intervene with
- ensure there is communication with parent/carer to enquire why the student is absent from College and advise them to send the student into College unless he/she is too unwell to be in lessons. In the absence of contact, a home visit may be made
- monitor and analyse their year group attendance data on a regular basis
- liaise with the Attendance Office to introduce intervention strategies to improve the attendance of all groups of students

**We expect that Student Wellbeing Officers have a responsibility to:**

- accompany the Attendance Officer or EWO when visiting the student at home (if and when required) to enquire about his/her absence or bring them into College

**We expect that the Attendance team has a responsibility to:**

- promote the 97% threshold for students in order for them to attend any rewards trips, visits which are not linked to the curriculum or the Prom if they are in Y11
- send a text message if no information is received from the parent/carer. In the event of no response being received for the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a home visit may take place
- phone parent/carer to enquire why the student is absent from College and advise them to send the student into College unless he/she is too unwell to be in lessons
- have weekly meetings with EWO and Head of school / Deputy Heads of School to discuss students of concern and highlight students who Teachers / School teams should intervene with
- analyse College and Year Group attendance data daily and weekly
- visit the student at home to enquire about his/her absence or bring them into College. Home visits are prioritised based on need and levels of concern - this determines who should make the home visit and when it should take place. Details of the home visit are recorded
- monitor absence regularly in conjunction with the Head of School /School team.

**Failure to improve attendance may result in further action, such as a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.**

### **Section 3 - Rewards and Sanctions**

#### **Rewards**

Students are rewarded:

- If they achieve 100% attendance for a week – they automatically receive an achievement point
- If they achieve 100% attendance for the full academic year - they receive a certificate

- If a student achieves 100% attendance each half term, they receive a praise postcard home.
- By a half termly prize draw for '100% attendance since September' and the '100% in the previous half term'
- In various other ways by the Attendance Team and School Teams

### **Sanctions**

Students must be in their timetabled room at the start of the lesson or tutor period dependent on Year (Tutor period – Y7, Y9 or Period 1 – Y8, 10 and 11).

Students will be challenged for poor punctuality as follows:

- Late to College of more than 1 hour without a valid reason will result in a C5 (1 hour) detention on the following day.
- Late to lesson without a note will result in a negative conduct point being recorded in the student's planner by the teacher. 5 negative conduct points will result in a C5 (1 hour) detention.
- Truancy to lessons or form period will be dealt with by School Teams

## **Section 4 - Definitions**

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

Every half-day absence from the College counts as one session and this has to be classified by the College (not the parent/carer) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised Leave of Absence is an absence from the College for a valid reason such as:

- Genuine illness
- Medical/dental appointments which fall unavoidably in school time
- Other emergencies and exceptional circumstances as determined at the discretion of the Head of School

Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of any medical/dental appointments and, wherever possible, arrange these appointments outside of the school day. **If this is unavoidable, the student must attend before and after the appointment wherever possible otherwise the absence will not be authorised.** If a student has an



appointment to be attended during the College day, he/she must have a signed note in their planner from their parent/carer which must be countersigned by a member of the School Team – the student must show this note to the staff member supervising Student reception who will then allow the student to attend the appointment. You can email evidence of appointments to [attendance@horizoncc.co.uk](mailto:attendance@horizoncc.co.uk).

Unauthorised Leave of Absence is an absence which the College does not consider reasonable and for which a 'leave of absence' request has not been agreed. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which are not explained properly
- Students who arrive at school after **the register has closed**
- Students who have been permitted to stay up late the previous night
- Shopping
- Looking after other children
- Birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be absent from College because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed between the College, the parents/carers and the child. If the parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they fall below 90% attendance for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly.

PA Students are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. Persistent Absenteeism can also lead to legal proceedings and the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (fines).

## **The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

Parents are expected to contact the College at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the College may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance are available from the College or Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or students may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help and information. They are independent of the College and will give impartial advice. Their number is available from the School office or by contacting the Local Education Authority. If a child's attendance gives cause for concern and sickness is continually reported, support will be sought through the School Nursing team.

## **Children Missing Education**

All schools, including academies and free schools, must monitor students' attendance through their daily register. We work closely with the Local Education Authority and will inform them of students who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. Students who remain on school roll may not necessarily be missing education, but we should monitor attendance and address it when it is poor. It is also important that students' irregular attendance is referred to the authority. Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their students, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

Academies must also arrange full-time education for excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the school exclusions guidance.

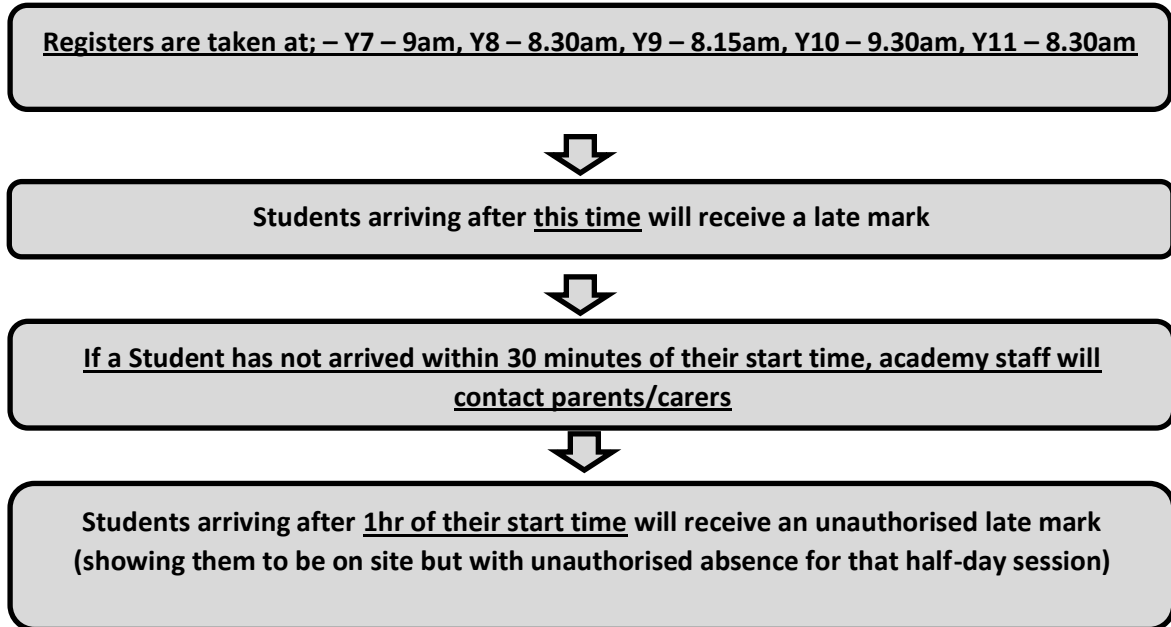
If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Head of School / Principal must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from roll until we have been notified by another School / College that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from roll. They are reported to the Local Authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

## **Section 5 - Punctuality and Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable, and all students must arrive on time. If a child misses the start of the day/lesson, they can miss learning and vital information and news for the day. The late arrival of students also disrupts lessons. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider

world. We will encourage good punctuality by being positive role models to our students and by celebrating good punctuality.

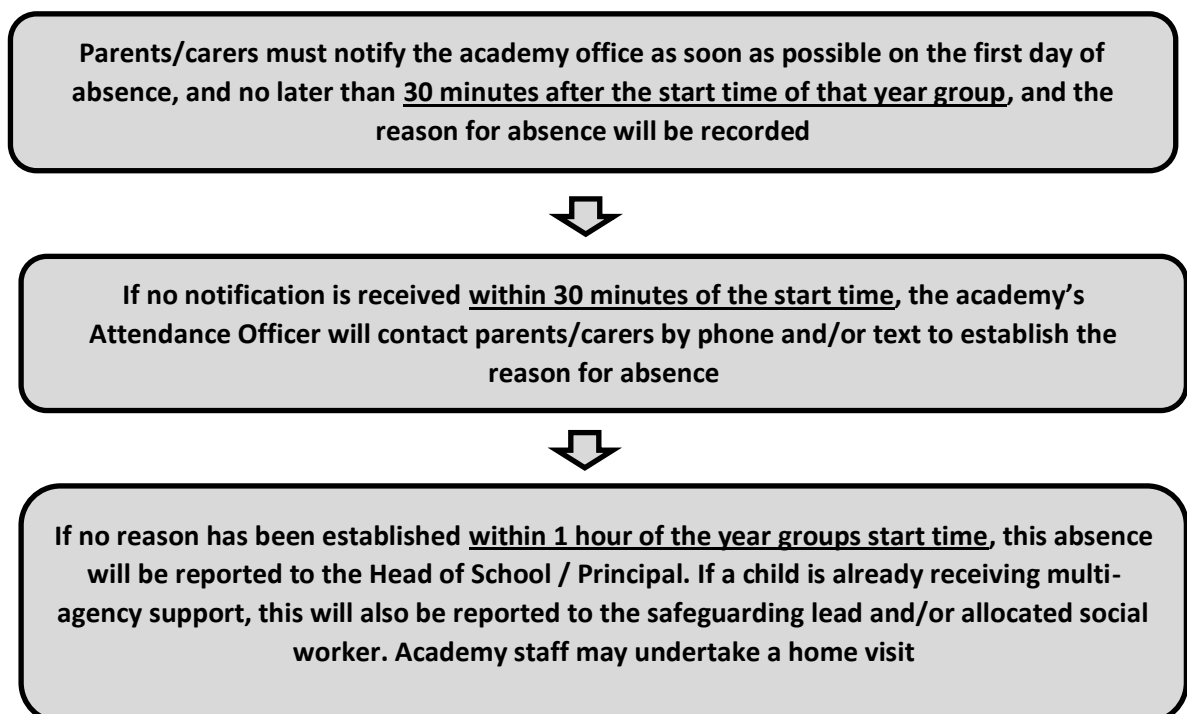
How we manage lateness:



Late marks will be monitored by the School teams. Concerns will be acted upon immediately and Parents/Carers will be notified.

### Daily Absence Procedures

How we manage absence:





If a student's attendance continues to give cause for concern, support may be sought from the Education Welfare Service. If sickness is continually reported, support may be sought from the School Nursing team

## **Section 6 - Holidays, Absences and Penalty Notices**

### **Holidays**

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that from September 2013, no holidays will be authorised by the College in term-time. Holidays in term-time will be recorded as unauthorised and will incur a fine, unless the below exceptional circumstances apply:

#### **Exceptional Circumstances**

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad
- Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Principal

To request a holiday in term-time, parents/carers must request a holiday form and send the completed form, clearly stating the reasons for taking the holiday into College. The form can also be found on our school website.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the College, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract a Fixed Penalty Notice. A separate penalty notice will be issued to parent/carer for each child who has unauthorised absence.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

The Principal, within the context of the law, can authorise absence. If a parent/carer has offered a note or an explanation in relation to a particular absence this does not oblige the Principal to accept it if it is felt that the explanation is not a valid reason for absence. If there are doubts about the explanation that remain after further investigation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem the College will involve the Education Welfare Officer.

Unauthorised absences, including truancy, are recorded on a student's registration certificate, which may be used as a point of reference for future employers, colleges or universities.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

The Local Authority have revised their policy, and this is effective from 2019/20 academic year.

The updated code of conduct provides clarity to schools and families as to when a penalty notice can be issued in Barnsley.

The main change to the code is the removal of the following criteria which head teachers were previously required to consider when assessing the merits of a leave of absence request during term time:

- Previous periods of leave of absence
- leave of absences taken in the first term
- exams and assessments
- employers' letter(s)

Under the new code, penalty notices could be issued if any of the following three conditions applies:

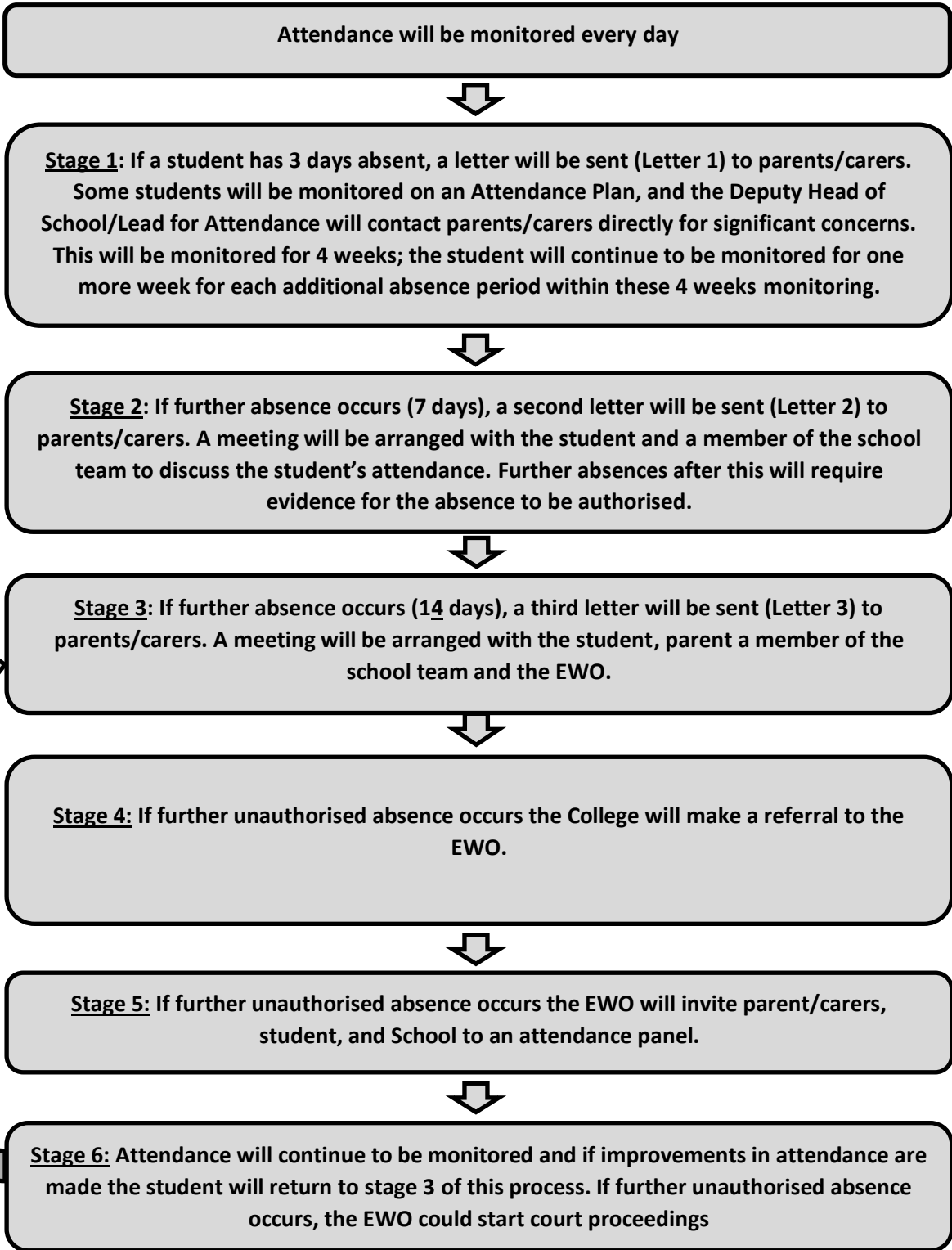
- A pupil has accumulated five or more consecutive days of unauthorised leave of absence (holiday in term time)
- if due to sporadic absences, then, other than in specific circumstances, the parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. If there are further absences within the 15-day monitoring period, then a Penalty Notice may be issued
- an excluded pupil present in a public place without justification, during the hours of the school day where the pupil is on roll, during the first five days of each fixed period or permanent exclusion.

The amount payable on issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice is £60, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## **Section 7 – Unauthorised Absence Procedures**

The College will monitor attendance on a weekly basis.

When a student's attendance or punctuality begins to be a concern, parents will be informed and subsequently become involved as outlined on the next page:



**At any point - 10+ sessions of unauthorised absence in a term or half term can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. Further absences in the 15-day monitoring period could lead to a fine being issued.**