



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Version 3

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B

Belonging

We build a culture where every child, colleague and community member feels safe, valued and included, creating a strong sense of family across our Trust.



F

Flourishing

We enable every child and adult to flourish through rich opportunities, high quality education and exceptional care, so that all can achieve their full potential.



L

Leadership

We lead with integrity, ambition and professionalism, empowering others through strong governance, expert practice and moral purpose.



P

Partnership

We work in partnership across our academies and communities, sharing expertise, building capacity and achieving more together than we could alone.



T

Transformation

We transform lives through education by raising aspirations, tackling disadvantage and creating brighter futures for every child and young person.



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Policy Statement

The Trust recognises that regular school attendance is essential to ensuring that children and young people receive their full educational entitlement, achieve their potential and remain safe.

High attendance is a shared responsibility between the Trust, each school/UTC, pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors, the Local Authority and other relevant partners.

The Trust is committed to establishing a culture in which attendance is valued, understood and actively promoted. We will maintain high expectations for attendance and punctuality while recognising that absence is often a symptom of wider barriers or unmet need.

Our approach is therefore based on the principles of:

Identify → Understand → Support → Escalate → Record → Review

The Trust and its schools/UTCs will:

- promote high expectations for attendance and punctuality;
- accurately record attendance in accordance with statutory requirements;
- identify emerging attendance concerns as early as possible;
- work with pupils and parents/carers to understand barriers to attendance;
- provide appropriate, proportionate and personalised support;
- consider the needs of pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions, mental health needs and other vulnerabilities;
- work with the Local Authority and other agencies where appropriate;
- use attendance data intelligently to identify pupils and cohorts requiring support;
- respond promptly to persistent and severe absence;
- recognise that attendance is a safeguarding issue where absence or patterns of absence indicate potential risk;
- use formal and legal intervention where support has not been successful, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate;
- comply with the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments where required; and
- regularly review the effectiveness of attendance systems and interventions.

The Trust will apply this policy fairly and consistently while ensuring that individual circumstances and barriers to attendance are properly considered.

Aims and Objectives

The Trust aims to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to benefit fully from education through regular attendance and good punctuality.

The Trust's aspiration is for every pupil to achieve **100% attendance**, recognising that individual circumstances, including illness, disability, SEND, medical conditions, mental health and other exceptional circumstances, may affect attendance.



The Trust's objectives are to:

- establish a whole-school culture in which attendance is everyone's responsibility;
- promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that attendance is accurately recorded and monitored;
- identify emerging attendance concerns before patterns become established;
- identify and remove barriers to attendance wherever possible;
- work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals;
- provide a graduated response to attendance concerns;
- provide additional and targeted support for pupils who are persistently or severely absent;
- ensure that safeguarding concerns associated with attendance are identified and acted upon promptly;
- ensure that pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions and mental health needs receive appropriate and individualised support;
- ensure that attendance data is used to identify pupils and cohorts requiring additional support;
- maintain effective partnerships with the City of Doncaster Council and other relevant local authorities and agencies;
- use formal attendance support and legal intervention appropriately where required; and
- monitor and evaluate attendance performance at school, Trust and governance level.

The Trust recognises that improving attendance is a continuous process. Attendance strategies, systems and interventions will therefore be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain effective and responsive to changing barriers and pupil needs.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation, statutory guidance and national requirements, as applicable to the Trust and its schools/UTCs:

Legislation

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7, 444 and 444A–444B;
- Education Act 2002;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;



- Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations, as amended; and other relevant legislation and regulations relating to attendance, safeguarding, education and children missing education.

Statutory Guidance and National Requirements

The Trust will have regard to, and where applicable comply with:

- Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance – current statutory guidance
- Department for Education, Communicating with parents about school attendance;
- Department for Education, *Keeping children safe in education 2026*;
- Department for Education, *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*;
- Department for Education, *Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools*;
- Department for Education guidance relating to school attendance codes and the School Census;
- Department for Education guidance relating to pupils with medical conditions and children unable to attend school because of health needs;
- Department for Education guidance relating to alternative provision;
- Department for Education guidance relating to 16–19 study programmes and funding requirements, where applicable;
- relevant Department for Education attendance data and reporting guidance; and
- current City of Doncaster Council attendance, penalty notice, Children Missing Education and attendance support arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed and amended where statutory legislation, regulations or statutory guidance changes.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Improving attendance is the responsibility of the whole school/UTC community. Specific responsibilities are set out below.

Trust Board

The Trust Board will:

- ensure that attendance is recognised as a strategic priority;
- approve the Trust Attendance and Punctuality Policy;
- monitor attendance performance across the Trust;
- challenge leaders regarding attendance trends and vulnerable groups;
- ensure that appropriate resources and systems are available to support attendance improvement; and
- ensure that attendance arrangements comply with statutory requirements.



Principal / Headteacher

The Principal/Headteacher will:

- have overall responsibility for implementing this policy;
- establish a culture in which good attendance is promoted and valued;
- ensure that statutory attendance requirements are met;
- ensure that appropriate attendance systems and processes are in place;
- ensure that attendance data is used effectively to identify pupils and cohorts requiring support;
- ensure that persistent and severe absence are subject to appropriate intervention;
- ensure that safeguarding concerns relating to attendance are identified and acted upon;
- ensure that staff receive appropriate training;
- ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to attendance improvement; and
- report attendance performance to the governing body and Trust in accordance with Trust requirements.

Senior Attendance Champion

Each school/UTC will designate a Senior Attendance Champion.

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- provide strategic leadership for attendance;
- ensure that the school's attendance policy and procedures are implemented;
- monitor attendance data and trends;
- ensure that pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence are identified;
- oversee the school's graduated attendance response;
- ensure that attendance support is appropriately targeted;
- work with the Local Authority and external partners where appropriate;
- ensure that attendance is considered alongside safeguarding, SEND and inclusion;
- report attendance performance to senior leaders and governors; and
- ensure that the effectiveness of attendance strategies is reviewed regularly.

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion will be published in the school's attendance information.

Each school/UTC will also publish the contact details of the staff responsible for day-to-day attendance enquiries and for providing more detailed attendance support, so that pupils and parents/carers know who to contact when attendance concerns arise.



Attendance Team / Attendance Lead

The Attendance Team will:

- monitor attendance and punctuality daily;
- undertake first-day contact and follow-up of unexplained absence;
- maintain accurate contact information and, where reasonably possible, more than one emergency contact number for each pupil;
- identify pupils and cohorts requiring intervention;
- contact parents/carers;
- support the development and monitoring of attendance plans;
- maintain appropriate records of attendance interventions;
- work with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies;
- identify cases requiring safeguarding consideration;
- prepare attendance reports;
- liaise with the Local Authority;
- where a pupil has a social worker and/or Youth Offending Team worker, share relevant unexplained absence information with the appropriate professional in accordance with current Department for Education guidance, safeguarding procedures and lawful information-sharing arrangements;
- support the preparation of legal intervention cases where appropriate; and
- ensure that attendance information is communicated to relevant staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- ensure attendance-related safeguarding concerns are considered promptly;
- provide advice where absence may indicate neglect, abuse, exploitation or other safeguarding risk;
- ensure appropriate safeguarding referrals are made;
- work with the Attendance Team to ensure that safeguarding and attendance processes complement one another;
- ensure that pupils whose whereabouts cannot be established are considered under safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures; and
- contribute to multi-agency working where appropriate.

SENDCo

The SENDCo will:

- support staff to identify and address SEND-related barriers to attendance;
- ensure attendance support considers the pupil's SEND and/or EHCP;
- advise on reasonable adjustments;
- work with pupils, parents/carers and external professionals;
- contribute to attendance support plans and reintegration plans where appropriate; and
- liaise with the Local Authority where an EHCP or specialist support package may need review.



Heads of Year / Learning Managers / Pastoral Leaders

They will:

- monitor attendance and punctuality;
- identify emerging patterns;
- discuss attendance with pupils;
- support parental engagement;
- contribute to attendance plans;
- monitor the impact of interventions;
- escalate concerns to the Attendance Team and/or DSL where appropriate; and
- promote good attendance through assemblies, tutor time and pastoral systems.

Tutors / Form Tutors (Secondary)

Tutors will:

- promote good attendance and punctuality;
- discuss attendance regularly with pupils;
- identify emerging concerns;
- reinforce attendance expectations;
- recognise improvements in attendance;
- refer concerns to the appropriate staff; and
- support attendance interventions.

Teachers

Teachers will:

- take accurate registers promptly;
- use the correct national attendance and absence codes;
- identify pupils who are absent from lessons;
- follow the school's procedures for unexplained absence or missing pupils;
- identify attendance patterns or concerns and report them;
- promote a positive culture of attendance and punctuality; and
- ensure that pupils understand the importance of attendance.

Reception / Administration

Reception and administration staff will:

- receive and record absence notifications;
- maintain accurate contact information and, where reasonably possible, more than one emergency contact number for each pupil;
- support first-day absence processes;
- record late arrivals and departures accurately;
- follow safeguarding procedures where concerns arise; and
- pass attendance information to the appropriate staff.



Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school/UTC regularly and punctually;
- attend all timetabled lessons, activities and placements;
- provide information about barriers to attendance where support is required;
- engage with agreed attendance support; and
- take responsibility for improving attendance where appropriate to their age and circumstances.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually;
- inform the school/UTC promptly when absence is unavoidable;
- provide accurate reasons for absence;
- work collaboratively with the school/UTC to address barriers to attendance;
- attend meetings and engage with agreed support where appropriate;
- avoid unnecessary absence during term time; and
- keep contact information up to date.

Governors / Local Governing Body

Governors will:

- monitor attendance performance;
- challenge leaders regarding attendance trends;
- consider attendance across key pupil groups;
- monitor persistent and severe absence;
- ensure that attendance remains a strategic priority; and
- receive appropriate reports on attendance, intervention and legal action.

Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is a key protective factor in safeguarding children and young people. Changes in attendance, unexplained absence, persistent absence, severe absence and patterns of non-attendance may indicate that a pupil is experiencing difficulties or may be at risk of harm.

Schools/UTCs will therefore consider attendance alongside the pupil's wider circumstances and safeguarding information.

Attendance concerns may indicate:

- neglect;
- abuse;
- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- domestic abuse;



- mental health difficulties;
- bullying;
- vulnerability to peer-on-peer abuse;
- children missing education;
- homelessness or housing instability;
- family difficulties;
- caring responsibilities;
- exploitation or trafficking; or
- other circumstances affecting the pupil's safety or wellbeing.

Where a safeguarding concern is identified, staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

Safeguarding escalation must be based on the level of risk and must not be delayed because an attendance threshold has not been reached.

Where the whereabouts of a pupil cannot be established, the school/UTC will take proportionate steps to establish the pupil's whereabouts and consider whether the circumstances meet safeguarding or Children Missing Education thresholds.

Attendance interventions will continue alongside safeguarding arrangements where appropriate. Staff will ensure that attendance procedures do not undermine safeguarding plans or delay necessary safeguarding action.

The school/UTC will work with the Local Authority, children's social care, police, health services and other relevant agencies where required to safeguard the pupil and promote regular attendance.

Principles

The overarching strategic approach to improving attendance and reducing persistent and severe absence across all key groups is captured through the following six principles.

These principles underpin the Trust's attendance strategy and should be applied consistently across all schools/UTCs, while allowing schools/UTCs to adapt their operational arrangements to meet local circumstances.

1 Policies and procedures

The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT), as a collective of schools/UTCs, will maintain clear, comprehensive and evidence-informed attendance policies, procedures and operational guidance.

The Trust will ensure that attendance arrangements are aligned with current legislation, statutory guidance and Local Authority requirements, including the Department for Education's Working together to improve school attendance, current attendance and absence coding requirements, safeguarding guidance and the arrangements of the relevant Local Authority.



Policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain current, effective and compliant with statutory requirements.

Each school/UTC will have clear procedures covering:

- daily registration and accurate attendance recording;
- first-day response to unexplained absence;
- identification of emerging attendance concerns;
- persistent and severe absence;
- persistent lateness;
- safeguarding and attendance;
- identifying and removing barriers to attendance;
- SEND, disability, medical conditions and mental health;
- children missing education;
- part-time timetables;
- reintegration following extended absence;
- alternative provision and off-site education;
- parental engagement;
- attendance support and attendance contracts;
- Local Authority involvement;
- Penalty Notices and other legal intervention; and
- monitoring, reporting and governance.

The Trust will provide operational guidance and flowcharts to support consistent implementation across schools/UTCs. These are contained within the relevant appendices to this policy.

The Trust will work collaboratively with the relevant Local Authority, including the City of Doncaster Council where applicable, to support attendance and ensure that local procedures are followed.

2 Personalisation

BFLPT recognises that there is no single reason why a pupil may experience difficulties attending school/UTC and that effective attendance support must take account of individual circumstances.

Every pupil will be treated as an individual and schools/UTCs will seek to understand the reasons for absence and identify the barriers preventing regular attendance.

Schools/UTCs will:

- listen to the pupil and their parent/carers;
- understand the individual circumstances contributing to absence;
- consider the pupil's attendance history and patterns of absence;
- consider SEND, disability, medical conditions and mental health;
- consider safeguarding and wider vulnerability;



- consider family circumstances and wider barriers;
- identify what support is required;
- agree clear and achievable actions;
- identify who is responsible for each action;
- establish review dates; and
- evaluate whether the intervention has improved attendance.

Support will be proportionate to the level of concern.

Where appropriate, schools/UTCs may work with external agencies, the Local Authority, health services, social care, Early Help, SEND services or other relevant partners.

The Trust recognises that support may need to be increased, reduced or changed as circumstances develop.

3 Practice

Safeguarding

Attendance is also a safeguarding matter.

Where absence, patterns of absence or a pupil's whereabouts indicate a safeguarding concern, the school/UTC will act immediately in accordance with its safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding action will not be delayed because an attendance threshold has not been reached.

4 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Attendance support for pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions and/or mental health needs will be personalised and proportionate.

Schools/UTCs will seek to understand how the pupil's individual needs may affect their ability to attend and will work with the pupil, parent/carers and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support.

Attendance support will be coordinated with the pupil's:

- SEND Support Plan;
- Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- healthcare plan;
- individual support plan;
- pastoral plan; and/or
- safeguarding plan,

where appropriate.

Schools/UTCs will consider reasonable adjustments where required under the Equality Act 2010.



This may include consideration of:

- sensory needs;
- communication needs;
- physical accessibility;
- transitions;
- anxiety;
- changes to routines;
- arrival arrangements;
- curriculum access;
- the school environment;
- timetable arrangements;
- reintegration arrangements; and
- other reasonable adjustments appropriate to the individual pupil.

Mental health needs will be considered as part of attendance support where relevant, and appropriate internal or external support will be considered.

Where an EHCP assessment or review is underway, the school/UTC will continue to work with the pupil, parent/carer and Local Authority to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate education and support.

The fact that an EHCP assessment is underway does not, in itself, mean that a pupil must maintain full attendance regardless of their individual needs or barriers.

Where a pupil's health or SEND needs significantly affect their ability to attend, the school/UTC will consider whether additional support, reasonable adjustments, a reintegration programme, alternative provision or other lawful educational arrangements are required.

The Trust recognises that high expectations for attendance and appropriate individualised support are not mutually exclusive.

5 Technology and Data

BFLPT will use accurate, timely and appropriate attendance data to promote regular attendance, identify concerns, target support and evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies.

Schools/UTCs will maintain accurate attendance records in accordance with statutory requirements and the current Department for Education attendance coding requirements.

Attendance data will be used to identify and monitor:

- whole-school attendance;
- attendance by year group;
- tutor/form group;



- Persistent Absence;
- Severe Absence;
- persistent lateness;
- disadvantaged/Pupil Premium pupils;
- pupils with SEND;
- pupils with EHCPs;
- children with social workers;
- looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- young carers;
- pupils with medical conditions;
- pupils experiencing mental health difficulties;
- pupils accessing alternative provision; and
- other vulnerable groups identified by the school/UTC.

Schools/UTCs will use data proactively rather than relying solely on headline attendance percentages.

Data will be reviewed regularly to:

- identify emerging concerns;
- identify pupils requiring support;
- identify patterns and trends;
- identify inequalities in attendance;
- evaluate interventions;
- inform strategic planning; and
- determine whether further action is required.

Attendance information will be shared appropriately with pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors, the Trust and relevant external agencies.

Statutory attendance returns will be completed accurately and within the required timescales. This includes pupils with 10 school days (20 sessions) or more of continuous unauthorised absence and pupils who have not attended regularly, in accordance with current Department for Education and Local Authority requirements.

All attendance data will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation, the Trust's data protection policies and statutory requirements relating to attendance and admission registers.



6 Parental engagement

BFLPT recognises that positive and effective relationships with parents/carers are central to improving attendance.

Communication between schools/UTCs and families should be a reciprocal process based on honesty, respect and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for the pupil.

Schools/UTCs will:

- communicate attendance expectations clearly;
- provide parents/carers with information about the importance of regular attendance;
- contact parents/carers promptly when attendance concerns arise;
- seek to understand the family's circumstances;
- identify and address barriers to engagement;
- provide accessible methods of communication;
- adapt communication where appropriate to meet individual needs;
- signpost families to relevant support;
- agree practical actions with parents/carers;
- monitor the impact of support; and
- escalate intervention where attendance does not improve.

Schools/UTCs will consider whether communication barriers are contributing to non-engagement.

This may include:

- literacy difficulties;
- language barriers;
- disability;
- digital exclusion;
- previous negative experiences of education;
- family circumstances; or
- other factors affecting engagement.

Where appropriate, schools/UTCs may use:

- telephone contact;
- written communication;
- email;
- face-to-face meetings;
- home visits;
- interpreters or translation services;
- Early Help;
- family support;
- mentoring; and
- other appropriate communication or support mechanisms.



Parents/carers will be expected to engage with attendance support where possible and to work collaboratively with the school/UTC.

Where parents/carers do not engage with support, the school/UTC will consider whether further attempts to remove barriers are required and whether formal or Local Authority intervention is appropriate.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles underpin the Trust's approach to attendance and punctuality and should inform the day-to-day practice of every school/UTC.

Shared Responsibility

Improving attendance and punctuality is a shared responsibility across the whole school/UTC community.

All staff have a role in promoting regular attendance, identifying concerns and supporting pupils to attend regularly.

Attendance should not be regarded solely as the responsibility of the Attendance Team. Effective attendance requires a coordinated approach involving school/UTC leaders, teachers, tutors, pastoral staff, SEND staff, safeguarding staff, pupils, parents/carers and external partners where appropriate.

Every Pupil's Right to Education

Every pupil has the right to receive a suitable, full-time education that enables them to develop academically, socially and personally.

Schools/UTCs will work to ensure that attendance difficulties do not unnecessarily prevent pupils from accessing their education.

Where barriers to attendance exist, the school/UTC will seek to understand and address those barriers and will consider appropriate support, reasonable adjustments and other arrangements where required.

A Safe, Inclusive and Welcoming Environment

Each school/UTC will strive to provide a safe, inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment in which pupils feel that they belong and are able to attend and participate successfully.

Schools/UTCs recognise that a pupil's experience of school can affect their attendance.

Where a pupil identifies concerns such as bullying, anxiety, friendship difficulties, unmet SEND needs, difficulties with transitions or other school-based barriers, these will be explored and addressed through appropriate school processes.

Attendance concerns will also be considered alongside safeguarding and wellbeing.



High Expectations with Appropriate Support

Schools/UTCs will maintain high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils. At the same time, high expectations will be accompanied by an appropriate understanding of individual circumstances.

Schools/UTCs will not assume that poor attendance is simply a matter of parental choice or pupil behaviour. Staff will seek to understand the reasons behind absence and identify appropriate solutions.

The Trust's aspiration is for every pupil to achieve 100% attendance, recognising that illness, disability, SEND, medical conditions, mental health and other exceptional circumstances may affect individual pupils.

Listening to Pupils and Families

Schools/UTCs will listen to pupils and parents/carers and seek to understand their experiences of attendance.

Pupils should be given an appropriate opportunity to explain the barriers they are experiencing.

Parents/carers will be encouraged to share relevant information that may help the school/UTC understand and address attendance difficulties.

Conversations about attendance should be respectful, constructive and solution-focused.

Where appropriate, pupil and parent/carer views will inform attendance support plans and reviews.

Removing Barriers to Attendance

Schools/UTCs will take reasonable and proportionate steps to identify and remove barriers to attendance.

Barriers may arise from:

- the pupil;
- the family;
- the school/UTC;
- the wider community;
- health or medical needs;
- SEND or disability;
- mental health;
- transport;
- safeguarding concerns;
- family circumstances; or
- other individual circumstances.



Schools/UTCs will consider what support can reasonably be provided and will work with other agencies where additional expertise or resources are required.

Early Identification and Intervention

Schools/UTCs will seek to identify attendance concerns as early as possible.

Intervention should not wait until a pupil reaches the Persistent Absence threshold where there are already clear concerns.

Attendance data, staff observations, pupil voice, parent/carers information and safeguarding information should be considered together to identify emerging concerns.

Early intervention should be proportionate to the circumstances and should focus on preventing attendance difficulties from becoming established.

Graduated Response

Each school/UTC will follow the Trust's graduated approach to attendance.

The approach will normally involve:

Prevent → Promote → Identify → Understand → Support → Monitor → Formalise → Escalate

The response will be proportionate to the pupil's circumstances and the level of attendance concern.

Where voluntary support is successful, it should be sustained and reviewed.

Where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or not appropriate, further formal or statutory intervention may be considered.

Where voluntary support has not secured sufficient improvement, or where formalised support is considered appropriate, the school/UTC may use an Attendance Contract with the parent/carers and/or Local Authority. An Attendance Contract will set out the attendance concerns, the barriers identified, the support to be provided, agreed actions, attendance expectations and review arrangements. Attendance Contracts are supportive rather than punitive and are not legally binding.

The operational arrangements for this graduated approach are set out within the relevant policy sections and Appendix 2 – Attendance Operational Flowcharts

Accurate Attendance Information

Each school/UTC will maintain accurate and timely attendance records in accordance with statutory requirements.

Attendance information will be used to:

- identify pupils requiring support;



- identify patterns and trends;
- monitor Persistent and Severe Absence;
- monitor vulnerable groups;
- evaluate interventions;
- inform strategic planning; and
- support safeguarding.

All staff responsible for registration will ensure that attendance is recorded accurately using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes.

Effective Communication

Each school/UTC will maintain effective communication with pupils, parents/carers and relevant agencies. Information about attendance expectations, concerns and support should be communicated clearly and in an accessible manner.

Schools/UTCs will consider individual communication needs, including language, literacy, disability and other barriers to communication. Communication should be timely, respectful and proportionate.

Partnership Working

Schools/UTCs will work collaboratively with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the Local Authority and other agencies to improve attendance.

This may include working with:

- Doncaster Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service;
- Children's Social Care;
- Early Help;
- SEND services;
- health professionals;
- mental health services;
- alternative provision providers;
- other education providers; and
- other relevant agencies.

Information will be shared appropriately and lawfully where this is necessary to support attendance, education or safeguarding.

Safeguarding

Attendance is an important safeguarding consideration.

Schools/UTCs will consider whether absence, persistent absence, severe absence, changes in attendance patterns or unexplained absence indicate that a pupil may be at risk of harm.

Where a safeguarding concern exists, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.



Safeguarding action will not be delayed because an attendance threshold has not been reached.

Equality and Inclusion

The Trust and its schools/UTCs will apply attendance procedures fairly and consistently and will have regard to their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Where a pupil has a disability or other protected characteristic, the school/UTC will consider whether reasonable adjustments are required.

Attendance support will take account of SEND, disability, medical conditions, mental health and other individual circumstances.

The Trust will seek to ensure that attendance procedures do not unfairly disadvantage any pupil or group.

Continuous Improvement

Schools/UTCs will regularly review the effectiveness of their attendance systems, interventions and strategies.

Attendance data and feedback from pupils, parents/carers and staff will be used to identify areas for improvement.

The Trust will share effective practice across schools/UTCs and will update its policies, procedures and operational guidance where legislation, statutory guidance, Local Authority arrangements or evidence-informed practice changes.

Registration

The law requires the attendance register to be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Each school/UTC will determine and publish the specific times at which its registers are taken and the point at which each register closes, in accordance with statutory requirements and Department for Education guidance.

The attendance register is a legal record and must be completed accurately and promptly by the member of staff responsible for registration.

Schools/UTCs must use the current national attendance and absence codes prescribed by the Department for Education. These codes provide a consistent national approach to recording attendance and absence.

Staff must use the most appropriate attendance code for each session and must not use a code simply because it is convenient or because it has previously been used for a pupil.



Where the reason for absence is not known when the register is taken, Code N – absence not yet established should be used until the reason for absence has been established.

Where Code N is used, the school/UTC must make reasonable and proportionate efforts to establish the reason for absence. The register must be updated with the appropriate code as soon as the reason is established and no later than 5 school days after the session. Where the reason remains unknown after this period, the entry must be amended to Code O – absent for other circumstances.

The register must remain open for the same length of time for each session and must not remain open for longer than 30 minutes, in accordance with statutory requirements and Department for Education guidance.

The full current attendance and absence code definitions are provided in Appendix 1 – Attendance and Absence Codes and must be read alongside the current Department for Education attendance guidance.

Register Amendments

Where an attendance entry needs to be amended after the register has been completed, the school/UTC must ensure that an appropriate audit trail is maintained.

The record should identify:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made; and
- the person making the amendment.

Attendance and admission registers are legal records and must be retained in accordance with statutory retention requirements.

Schools/UTCs must ensure that attendance data recorded within their management information system and submitted through statutory returns is accurate and consistent with the attendance register.

Attendance and admission registers are legal records. Attendance register entries must be preserved for 6 years from the date on which the entry was made. Admission register entries must be preserved for 6 years from the date of the last entry relating to the pupil. Where amendments are made to an attendance register, the school/UTC must retain an appropriate audit trail in accordance with statutory requirements.



Expectations

Students/Pupils

- Students/pupils are expected to attend school/UTC every day and on time, unless they have a valid reason for absence.
- Students/pupils are expected to arrive sufficiently early to be ready for the start of the school/UTC day, including tutor time or their first timetabled lesson. Each school/UTC will publish its own expected arrival time and arrangements for the start of the school day.
- Students/pupils are expected to attend all timetabled sessions, including tutor time, lessons, examinations, work experience, employer placements, educational visits and other planned educational activities, as applicable.
- Students/pupils are expected to arrive punctually for each session and to follow the school's/UTC's procedures for reporting unavoidable absence or lateness.

Registration

- The statutory attendance register will be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Secondary schools/UTCs may also operate lesson-by-lesson registration systems to monitor attendance, punctuality, engagement and safeguarding throughout the school day.
- The attendance register will be completed using the current Department for Education national attendance and absence codes. The full codes and definitions are provided in Appendix 1 – Attendance and Absence Codes.
- Where a pupil is not present when the register is taken, the appropriate attendance or absence code must be recorded.
- Where the reason for absence is not yet established, Code N will be used until the reason has been established. The register must then be updated with the appropriate code as soon as the reason is known.

Lateness

- Students/pupils arriving after the start of the school/UTC day but before the register closes will be recorded using the appropriate late code.
- Students/pupils arriving after the register has closed will normally be recorded as absent for that session using the appropriate national attendance code.
- Schools/UTCs will publish their own registration and register-closing times. These arrangements will be clearly communicated to students/pupils and parents/carers.
- Lateness will be monitored as part of the school's/UTC's attendance strategy. Repeated lateness will be addressed through the school's graduated attendance response.
- Where lateness is caused by circumstances outside the pupil's control, the school/UTC will consider the individual circumstances and any appropriate support or reasonable adjustments.

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Reasons for Absence

- Parents/carers are expected to notify the school/UTC promptly when their child is unable to attend and to provide the reason for the absence.
- Schools/UTCs will consider the reason provided and record the absence using the appropriate national attendance and absence code.
- Schools/UTCs will not routinely require medical evidence, prescriptions or appointment documentation as a condition of recording illness appropriately.
- Medical evidence may be requested where the school/UTC has a genuine and reasonable need to establish the reason for absence, understand a longer-term medical barrier or determine the appropriate attendance code. Any request will be proportionate to the circumstances.
- Where a pupil has a long-term medical condition, disability, SEND or mental health need affecting attendance, the school/UTC will work with the pupil, parent/carer and relevant professionals to understand the barrier and identify appropriate support.

Attendance Expectations

- Regular attendance is essential to pupils' education, attainment, wellbeing, safeguarding and future opportunities.
- The Trust's aspiration is for every pupil to achieve 100% attendance, recognising that individual circumstances, including illness, disability, SEND, medical conditions and mental health needs, may affect attendance.
- Schools/UTCs will respond to attendance concerns through the Trust's graduated approach:

Prevent → Promote → Identify → Understand → Support → Monitor → Formalise → Escalate

- Where attendance concerns arise, schools/UTCs will seek to understand and address barriers to attendance and will provide appropriate support before considering formal or legal intervention, unless immediate escalation is appropriate because of the circumstances.
- Where attendance or absence raises a safeguarding concern, the school/UTC will follow its safeguarding procedures immediately. Safeguarding action will not be delayed because an attendance threshold has not been reached.

National Guidance

The school/UTC will maintain attendance registers and record attendance and absence in accordance with the current Department for Education statutory attendance guidance and national attendance and absence codes.

The full current attendance and absence codes are set out in Appendix 1 – Attendance and Absence Codes.

The school's/UTC's operational attendance procedures, including daily, weekly and escalation processes, are set out in Appendix 2 – Attendance Operational Flowcharts



Punctuality

Punctuality is an important part of regular attendance. Arriving on time ensures that pupils/students are present for the full educational experience, minimises disruption to learning and supports positive routines and expectations.

Each school/UTC will publish its expected arrival time, registration arrangements and register-closing times.

Schools/UTCs will monitor punctuality alongside attendance and will take a graduated approach where persistent or concerning patterns of lateness emerge.

Primary and Infant Expectations

Sign-In Procedure

Any pupil arriving after the start of the school day must follow the school's published late-arrival procedure.

This will normally include reporting to Reception or the designated school office, where the pupil's arrival will be recorded and, where appropriate, the reason for lateness established.

Schools will ensure that late arrivals are recorded accurately using the appropriate national attendance code.

Monitoring and Reporting

Schools will monitor patterns of lateness and will communicate concerns to parents/carers where appropriate.

Repeated or persistent lateness will be considered alongside the pupil's overall attendance, individual circumstances and any barriers affecting punctuality.

Where appropriate, schools will work with the pupil and parent/carer to identify the reasons for lateness and agree appropriate support.

Supportive Measures

A graduated approach will be used to address persistent or concerning lateness.

This may include:

- discussion with the pupil;
- communication with parents/carers;
- identification of barriers;
- punctuality targets;
- attendance or punctuality support plans;
- pastoral support;
- adjustments to arrival arrangements where appropriate;



- support from the Attendance Team or other relevant staff; and
- Local Authority or external agency involvement where appropriate.

The response will be proportionate to the individual circumstances of the pupil.

Catch-Up and Missed Learning

Where appropriate, schools may provide opportunities for pupils to catch up on learning missed because of lateness.

Any catch-up arrangement will be proportionate, educationally appropriate and consistent with the school's Behaviour and Attendance Policies.

Schools will avoid routinely using break, lunchtime or after-school activities as a punitive response to lateness where alternative supportive approaches would be more appropriate.

Early Years (EYFS)

For pupils in Early Years, schools will work closely with parents/carers to promote regular attendance and punctuality.

Where concerns arise, schools will discuss the importance of regular attendance with parents/carers and, where appropriate, agree an attendance or punctuality support plan.

Any approach will take account of the child's age, developmental stage and individual circumstances.

Persistent Lateness

Repeated lateness will be monitored and addressed through the school's graduated attendance approach.

Where a pupil arrives after the register has closed, the appropriate national attendance code will be recorded. This will normally be Code U, unless another national code is appropriate to the circumstances.

Persistent lateness may contribute to Persistent Absence where sessions are recorded as absence. Where persistent lateness remains a concern despite appropriate support, the school may consider formal attendance intervention and, where the statutory threshold and circumstances are met, seek support from the Local Authority or consider legal intervention in accordance with the National Framework and local arrangements.

Where lateness or associated absence raises a safeguarding concern, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures.



Secondary Expectations

Sign-In Procedure

Students arriving after the start of the school/UTC day must follow the school's/UTC's published late-arrival procedure.

This will normally include reporting to Reception or the designated attendance point so that their arrival can be recorded and, where appropriate, the reason for lateness established.

Where applicable, the student may be issued with a late slip or other confirmation of their arrival.

Lesson Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive punctually for all timetabled sessions, including tutor time, lessons, examinations, work experience, employer placements and other planned educational activities.

For UTC students, punctuality to each timetabled session, including employer and work-related learning activities, will be monitored where applicable.

Where a student is recorded as absent from a lesson despite being present on site, the school/UTC will follow its attendance and safeguarding procedures to establish the student's whereabouts.

Behaviour and Lateness

Schools/UTCs may use appropriate consequences for lateness in accordance with their Behaviour Policy.

Any consequence should be proportionate and should not replace the school's responsibility to identify and address the underlying reasons for persistent lateness.

Where lateness is linked to SEND, disability, medical needs, mental health or other individual circumstances, the school/UTC will consider appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where required.

Notification of Detentions or Catch-Up

Where a detention or other consequence is issued for lateness, schools/UTCs will follow their published Behaviour Policy and arrangements for communicating consequences to parents/carers.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed during the school day. Schools/UTCs will ensure that any detention or catch-up arrangement is reasonable, proportionate and consistent with the pupil's individual circumstances.

Supportive Measures

A graduated approach will be implemented where a student demonstrates repeated or persistent lateness.



The school/UTC will seek to understand the reasons for lateness and identify appropriate support before escalating intervention, unless the circumstances require immediate formal or safeguarding action.

Support may include:

- discussion with the student;
- communication with parents/carers;
- punctuality targets;
- attendance or punctuality support plans;
- pastoral support;
- mentoring;
- reasonable adjustments;
- support with identified barriers;
- attendance team intervention; and
- Local Authority or external agency support where appropriate.

Verification of Arrival

Students arriving late must follow the school's/UTC's published signing-in procedure.

Where a student arrives at their first lesson without having followed the required sign-in procedure, the member of staff should direct the student to the appropriate attendance/sign-in point so that their arrival can be accurately recorded.

Schools/UTCs will ensure that their systems allow staff to identify students who are on site but have not been recorded as present.

Persistent Lateness

Repeated lateness will be monitored and communicated to parents/carers where appropriate.

Where a student arrives after the register has closed, the appropriate national attendance code will be recorded. This will normally be Code U, unless another national code is appropriate to the circumstances.

Persistent lateness may contribute to Persistent Absence where sessions are recorded as absence. Where persistent lateness remains a concern despite appropriate support, the school/UTC may consider formal attendance intervention and, where the statutory threshold and circumstances are met, seek support from the Local Authority or consider legal intervention in accordance with the National Framework and local arrangements.

Persistent lateness will not automatically result in a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Any legal intervention will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis and in accordance with the current Department for Education guidance and relevant Local Authority arrangements.



Where lateness or associated absence raises a safeguarding concern, the school/UTC will follow its safeguarding procedures immediately.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

An authorised absence is defined as an instance where the School/UTC has granted prior approval for the absence or has accepted the explanation provided after the absence as a valid justification. It is important to note that only the School/UTC has the authority to authorise absences; parents or carers do not have this authority.

Notification of Absence

Parents or carers are required to notify the school/UTC of their child's absence by contacting the School Reception (for Primary and Infant pupils) or the Attendance Office (for secondary students). This should be done by telephone or email on the morning of the absence, preferably before the start of the school day. The reason for the absence and the expected date of return should be provided.

Circumstances Under Which Absences Will Not Be Authorised

Absences will not be authorised for the following reasons:

- Caring for siblings or unwell parents/carers.
- Celebrating birthdays.
- Attending events such as the Yorkshire Show or similar outings.
- Engaging in shopping trips.
- Taking family holidays - (please note that family holidays during term time will not be approved).
- Attending special occasions where the school/UTC does not agree that the absence should be granted.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Whenever possible, medical, dental and other appointments should be scheduled outside of school/UTC hours.

Where an appointment necessitates time away from school/UTC, parents/carers should provide the school/UTC with as much notice as reasonably practicable and, where appropriate, ensure that the pupil attends school before and after the appointment.

Schools/UTCs will not routinely require medical evidence, prescriptions or appointment documentation as a condition of recording illness or a medical appointment appropriately.

Appropriate medical evidence may be requested where the school/UTC has a genuine and reasonable need to establish the reason for absence, understand a longer-term medical barrier or determine the appropriate attendance code.

Any request for evidence will be proportionate to the individual circumstances.

Where a pupil has a long-term medical condition, disability, SEND or mental health need affecting attendance, the school/UTC will work with the pupil, parent/carer and



relevant professionals to understand the barrier and identify appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where required.

Pupils Unable to Attend School Because of Illness – Sickness Returns and Section 19

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is recorded in the attendance register as absent using Code I – Illness and the school/UTC has reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will be, or will have been, unable to attend school because of sickness for 15 school days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively during the school year, the school/UTC will make a sickness return to the relevant Local Authority in accordance with Regulation 13(9) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The sickness return is a statutory notification and does not, in itself, mean that the pupil is automatically entitled to education arranged by the Local Authority under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

The purpose of the sickness return is to enable the school/UTC and Local Authority to consider the pupil's circumstances and determine what education and support may be required to ensure continuity of education.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because of illness, the school/UTC will continue to work with the pupil, parent/carer, health professionals and relevant agencies to identify barriers to attendance, consider reasonable adjustments and put appropriate support in place.

Where it is determined that the pupil is unable to receive suitable education because of illness and that the Local Authority's Section 19 duty is engaged, the Local Authority will determine and arrange appropriate education in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.

Schools/UTCs will follow the current City of Doncaster Council arrangements for pupils unable to attend school because of health needs, including the submission of sickness returns and liaison with the Local Authority where additional education or support may be required.

Determination of Authorisation

Upon receiving an explanation from parents or carers regarding a student's/pupil's absence, the school/UTC will assess the explanation and determine whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absences

Where the reason for an absence remains unknown after reasonable and proportionate attempts have been made to establish the reason, the absence will be recorded using the appropriate national attendance code. Where Code N has been used, the entry must be updated in accordance with the statutory five-school-day requirement.



Leave of Absence During Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted where the school/UTC considers that the circumstances meet the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current Department for Education statutory guidance.

A leave of absence request will be considered individually, taking account of the specific circumstances and relevant context.

There is no automatic entitlement to leave of absence during term time.

Parents/carers should submit requests for leave of absence as early as possible and, where practicable, before the proposed absence. Each school/UTC will publish its own procedure for requesting leave of absence.

Where leave is not authorised and the pupil is absent, the absence will be recorded using the appropriate national attendance code.

Response to Unexplained Absence

Every unexplained absence will be followed up promptly.

Schools/UTCs will make appropriate and proportionate attempts to establish the reason for absence and confirm the pupil's whereabouts.

The response will take account of:

- the pupil's age;
- individual circumstances;
- attendance history;
- safeguarding information;
- known vulnerabilities;
- previous unexplained absence; and
- any information already known to the school/UTC.

Contact may include:

- automated messages;
- telephone calls;
- emails or written communication;
- contact with the pupil;
- contact with other professionals;
- home visits; and
- referral or escalation to the Local Authority or safeguarding partners where appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns will be acted upon immediately and will not be delayed until a specified number of days of absence has elapsed.



Schools/UTCs will maintain clear operational procedures for first-day contact, unexplained absence, welfare checks, home visits and escalation. These procedures are set out in Appendix 2 – Attendance Operational Flowcharts

Persistent/ Severe Absence

A pupil is classified as Persistently Absent (PA) where they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions over the relevant period.

A pupil is classified as Severely Absent (SA) where they miss 50% or more of their possible sessions over the relevant period.

Schools/UTCs will identify pupils approaching the Persistent Absence threshold and will intervene early rather than waiting until the threshold is reached.

Severe absence will receive particular attention because of the significant barriers to education and the potential safeguarding risks associated with very low attendance.

Schools/UTCs will monitor Persistent and Severe Absence at individual, cohort and vulnerable-group level and will evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Pupils whose attendance reaches or is at risk of reaching the Persistent Absence threshold will be prioritised for intervention. The school/UTC will use the graduated approach set out in this policy to identify barriers, provide support, monitor progress and consider further intervention where required.

Persistent absenteeism data is reported to the relevant Local Authority through the school census on a termly and annual basis.

Re-integration following Long-term Absence

In the event that a student/ pupil has been absent from the school/UTC for an extended period, such as due to illness, the school/UTC will undertake the following measures to support the student's/pupil's reintegration:

- Welcoming the Student/Pupil: The School/UTC will warmly welcome the student/pupil back and recognise the significance of their return.
- Providing Support: In collaboration with parents or carers, the school/UTC will offer support to facilitate a smooth and successful re-entry.
- Informing Relevant Staff: All relevant staff members will be informed of the student's/pupil's circumstances to ensure appropriate support and understanding.
- Collaborating with Other Agencies: Where necessary, the school/UTC will engage with external agencies to support the student's/pupil's reintegration and ensure a positive outcome.
- Considering a Personalised Programme: The school/UTC will evaluate the need for a personalised return-to-school program, if deemed appropriate.
- Designating a Key Staff Member: A designated key member of staff will be appointed to oversee and review the student's/pupil's return and progress.



These measures are intended to support the student/pupil effectively and to ensure a successful transition back into the school/UTC environment.

Where a temporary part-time timetable is considered necessary as part of a pupil's reintegration, it must be exceptional, time-limited, clearly documented, regularly reviewed and accompanied by a clear plan for the pupil's return to full-time education. A part-time timetable must not be used as an informal exclusion or as a behaviour management strategy.

Temporary Part-Time Timetables

A temporary part-time timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests and forms part of a clear plan to support the pupil's return to full-time education.

The arrangement will be agreed with the parent/carer, time-limited, clearly documented and reviewed regularly.

The arrangement will be linked to identified barriers and appropriate support and will include a clear plan for returning to full-time education.

Where Code C2 is used, the school/UTC will ensure that the arrangement complies with current Department for Education guidance and statutory requirements.

For students aged 16–19, attendance will be monitored against the requirements of the student's study programme, including timetabled learning, work experience and other planned programme activity, with appropriate action taken where attendance or engagement places successful participation at risk.

Attendance Data and Targets

State-funded schools/UTCs will comply with the statutory requirements for sharing attendance data with the Department for Education.

Attendance data will be used to:

- identify pupils requiring support;
- identify emerging attendance concerns;
- monitor Persistent and Severe Absence;
- identify patterns and trends;
- monitor vulnerable groups;
- evaluate attendance interventions;
- inform school and Trust strategy; and
- support safeguarding.

Schools/UTCs will provide attendance information to the Trust in accordance with Trust reporting requirements.



Attendance data will also be shared with the relevant Local Authority and other agencies where required by law or where appropriate to support education, attendance or safeguarding.

Data will be transferred securely through the school's/UTC's approved management information systems.

Schools/UTCs will produce regular attendance reports for senior leaders, governors and the Trust.

The Trust's aspiration is for every pupil to achieve 100% attendance, recognising that illness, disability, SEND, medical conditions, mental health and other individual circumstances may affect attendance.

Each school/UTC will monitor attendance at least weekly and use attendance data to identify emerging concerns, evaluate interventions and direct support.

Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

Schools/UTCs will comply with the current statutory requirements relating to school attendance, registration, absence, legal intervention and the responsibilities of parents/carers.

The Trust and its schools/UTCs will work with the relevant Local Authority to promote regular attendance, identify barriers, provide support and, where appropriate, use formal or legal intervention.

For schools/UTCs within the City of Doncaster Council area, current Local Authority attendance, legal intervention, Penalty Notice and Children Missing Education procedures will be followed.

For schools/UTCs operating within other Local Authority areas, the relevant Local Authority's current arrangements will apply.

Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

Schools/UTCs will follow the Department for Education National Framework for Penalty Notices and the current Local Authority arrangements.

The national threshold for consideration of a Penalty Notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks, subject to the circumstances of the individual case and the support-first approach.

Where support is appropriate but has not been engaged with or has not been successful, a Notice to Improve may be used as a final opportunity for the parent/carer to engage with support and improve attendance.



A Notice to Improve will not necessarily be required where support is not appropriate, including certain cases of unauthorised leave of absence during term time, in accordance with the National Framework and Local Authority arrangements.

Under the current City of Doncaster Council arrangements:

- the first Penalty Notice is £160 per parent, per child, reduced to £80 where paid within 21 days and payable at £160 where paid within 28 days;
- the second Penalty Notice within three years is £160 per parent, per child, with no reduced payment option; and
- where a third offence occurs within three years, a further Penalty Notice will not normally be issued and the case may be considered for prosecution or other legal intervention.

Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued. Legal intervention will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis in accordance with the current National Framework and relevant Local Authority arrangements.

Where appropriate, prosecution may be considered under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Other statutory interventions may be considered by the Local Authority where appropriate, including Education Supervision Orders and Parenting Orders, in accordance with the relevant legislation, statutory guidance and Local Authority arrangements. Such interventions will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis and will not be automatic.

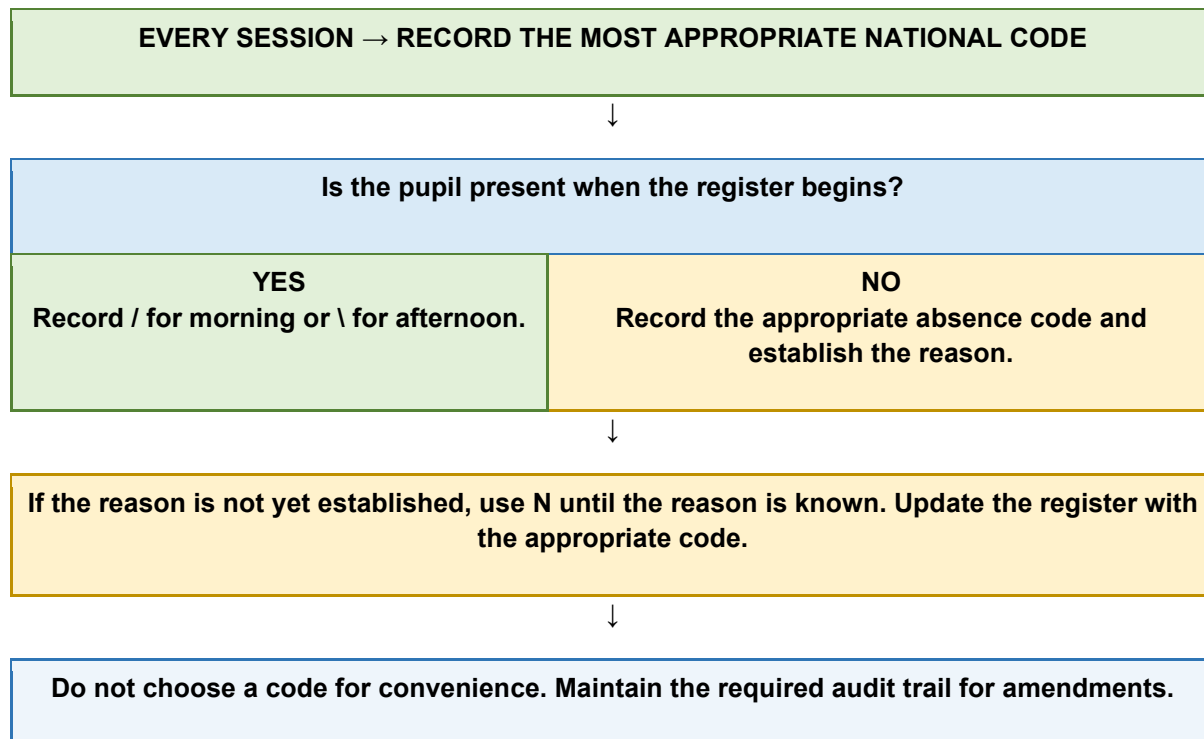
Attendance and Punctuality Policy Version 3 agreed at Trust Board September 2026



Appendix 1 - Attendance and Absence Codes

How to use the Attendance codes

The attendance register is a legal record.



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Present and Late Codes

Codes counted as possible attendance sessions

Code	Meaning	When to use
/	Morning present	Present when the morning register begins.
\	Afternoon present	Present when the afternoon register begins.
L	Late – before register closes	Arrives after registration begins but before the register closes.
U	Late – after register closes	Arrives after the register has closed; records an absence for the session.

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Authorised / Approved Absence Codes

Use only where the circumstances meet the relevant DfE definition

Code	Meaning	When to use
B	Approved educational activity	Attending another place for approved educational activity; the nature of the activity must also be recorded.
C	Leave of absence – other	Absent with leave for other circumstances where the school has authorised the absence.
C1	Regulated performance	Absent with leave to participate in a regulated performance.
C2	Temporary reduced timetable	Compulsory school-age pupil is absent because a temporary reduced timetable does not require attendance.
D	Dual registered	Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered.
E	Suspension/exclusion – no AP	Absent because suspended/permanently excluded and no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	Unable to attend because of sickness; do not use for medical/dental appointments.
J1	Interview	Interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
K	LA-arranged education	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority.
M	Medical/dental	Absent for a medical or dental appointment.
P	Approved sporting activity	Participating in an approved sporting activity.
R	Religious observance	Absent for qualifying religious observance.
S	Study leave	Absent on study leave in accordance with examination arrangements.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Absent because a parent/carer is travelling for occupational purposes, where statutory conditions apply.
V	Educational visit/trip	Attending an educational visit or trip.
W	Work experience	Attending approved work experience.

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Unauthorised / Not Yet Established Absence

Apply consistently and update N when the reason becomes known

Code	Meaning	When to use
G	Unauthorised holiday	Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.
N	Reason not yet established	Absent and the reason has not yet been established; update once known.
O	Other unauthorised absence	Absent for other circumstances which are not authorised by the school.



N is temporary. Once the reason is established, update the register with the correct national code.

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Unable to Attend / Not Possible Sessions

These codes are not counted as possible attendance sessions

Code	Meaning	When to use
Q	Lack of LA access arrangements	Unable to attend because required Local Authority travel/access arrangements have not been provided, where the statutory conditions apply.
X	Non-compulsory school age	Not required to attend because the pupil is not of compulsory school age and is not timetabled to attend.
Y1	Transport unavailable	Normally provided transport is unavailable.
Y2	Widespread travel disruption	Emergency has caused widespread disruption to travel.
Y3	Part of premises closed	Part of the premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil cannot reasonably be accommodated elsewhere.
Y4	Whole premises closed	School had been planned to open but had to close unexpectedly.
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Unable to attend because the pupil is in criminal justice detention.
Y6	Public health guidance/law	Attendance or travel would be contrary to relevant public health guidance or prohibited by law.
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	An emergency or other unavoidable cause prevents attendance and no other Y code applies.

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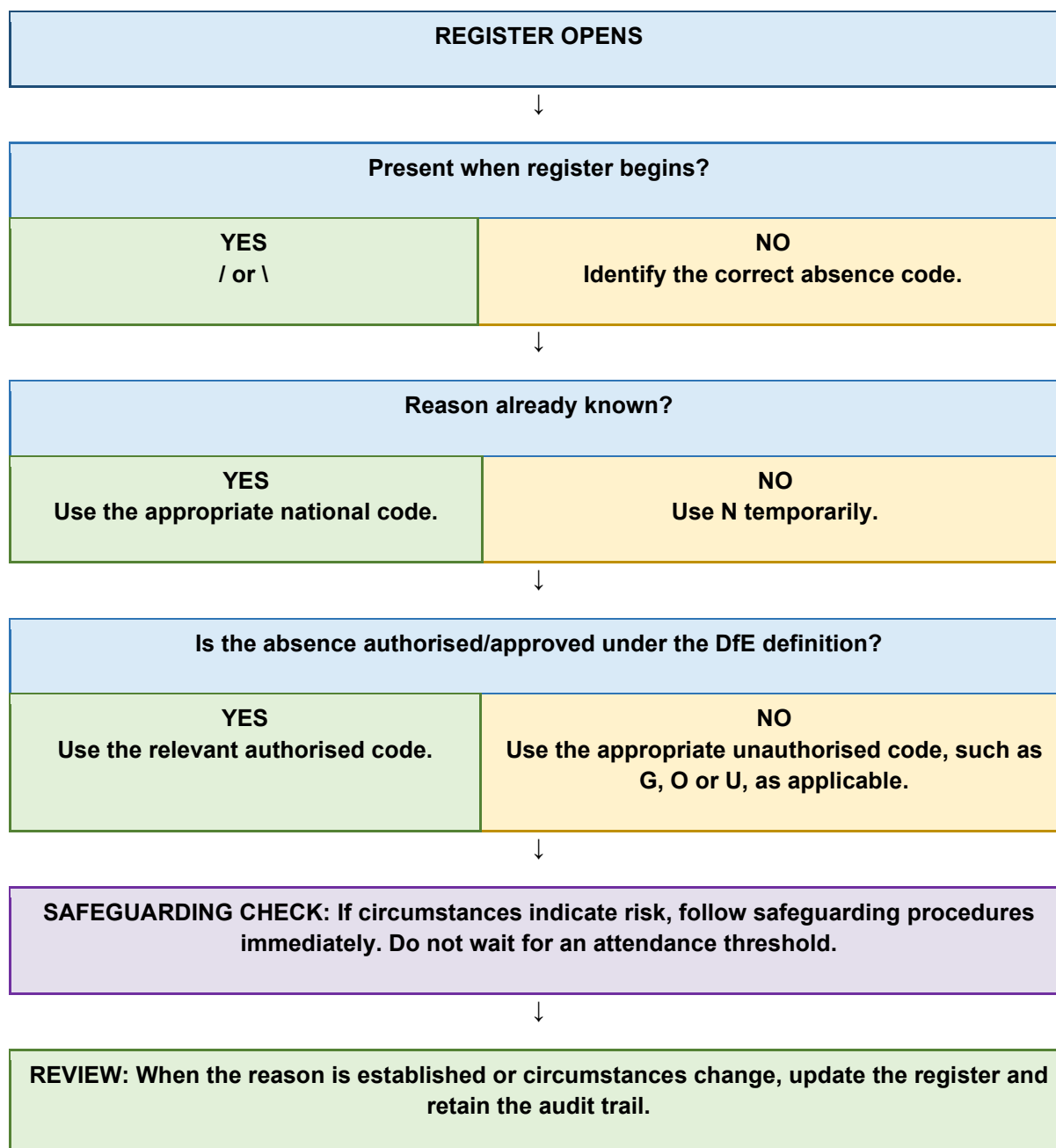
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Quick Decision Flowchart

Use this when selecting an attendance code



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Key Recording Rules

Minimum expectations for every school/UTC

ACCURACY	Registers are completed promptly and accurately.
CORRECT CODE	The most appropriate current national code is used.
N	Code N is used only while the reason is genuinely not established.
AMENDMENTS	Amendments retain the original entry, new entry, reason, date and person making the amendment.
MIS / CENSUS	Attendance data is consistent between the register, MIS and statutory returns.
LEGAL RECORD	Admission and attendance registers are maintained and retained in accordance with statutory requirements.
CURRENT GUIDANCE	Where circumstances are unclear, staff consult the current DfE guidance rather than creating a local code.

Current source: DfE Working together to improve school attendance (updated 9 July 2026) and School Census 2026/27 guidance (updated 6 August 2026).

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Key References

DfE – Working together to improve school attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

DfE – Complete the school census: Data items 2026 to 2027

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2026-to-2027>

DfE – Find a school census code

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/find-a-school-census-code>

DfE – School census 2026 to 2027: technical information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2026-to-2027-technical-information>

Review requirement: This appendix must be checked against the current DfE attendance guidance and national codes whenever the main Attendance and Punctuality Policy is reviewed.

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Appendix 2 - Attendance Operational Flowcharts

Contents

1. How to use this appendix
2. Flowchart 1 – Daily Attendance Routine
3. Flowchart 2 – Unexplained Absence / First-Day Response
4. Flowchart 3 – Weekly Attendance Review
5. Flowchart 4 – Persistent Absence / Approaching PA
6. Flowchart 5 – Severe Absence
7. Flowchart 6 – Safeguarding and Attendance
8. Flowchart 7 – SEND, Medical Needs and Mental Health
9. Flowchart 8 – Persistent Lateness
10. Flowchart 9 – Leave of Absence and Penalty Notices
11. Flowchart 10 – Children Missing Education (CME)
12. Flowchart 11 – Part-Time Timetable / Reintegration / Alternative Provision
13. Flowchart 12 – 16–19 / UTC Attendance
14. Key statutory and local references

Important: This appendix is an operational guide. It does not replace the statutory Attendance and Punctuality Policy, safeguarding procedures, Trust procedures or current DfE/Local Authority requirements. Where a safeguarding concern exists, staff must act on the concern immediately and must not wait for an attendance threshold to be reached.

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How to use this appendix

The flowcharts translate the Attendance and Punctuality Policy into a practical school-level operating framework. Schools may adapt job titles and internal systems but must not lower the statutory or Trust expectations.

DAILY	Registers, first-day response, unexplained absence, safeguarding checks and same-day recording.
WEEKLY	Whole-school and pupil-level analysis, vulnerable groups, PA/SA, persistent lateness and intervention review.
SUPPORT	Understand barriers and agree proportionate, personalised support with the pupil and family.
ESCALATE	Increase the level of intervention where attendance does not improve, engagement is poor or safeguarding/legal thresholds require action.
RECORD	Maintain clear, contemporaneous records of attendance decisions, contact, support, referrals and outcomes.
REVIEW	Evaluate whether intervention is working and step up, maintain or step down support.

Colour key: **Promote / monitor** **Support / decision** **Escalate** **Safeguarding**

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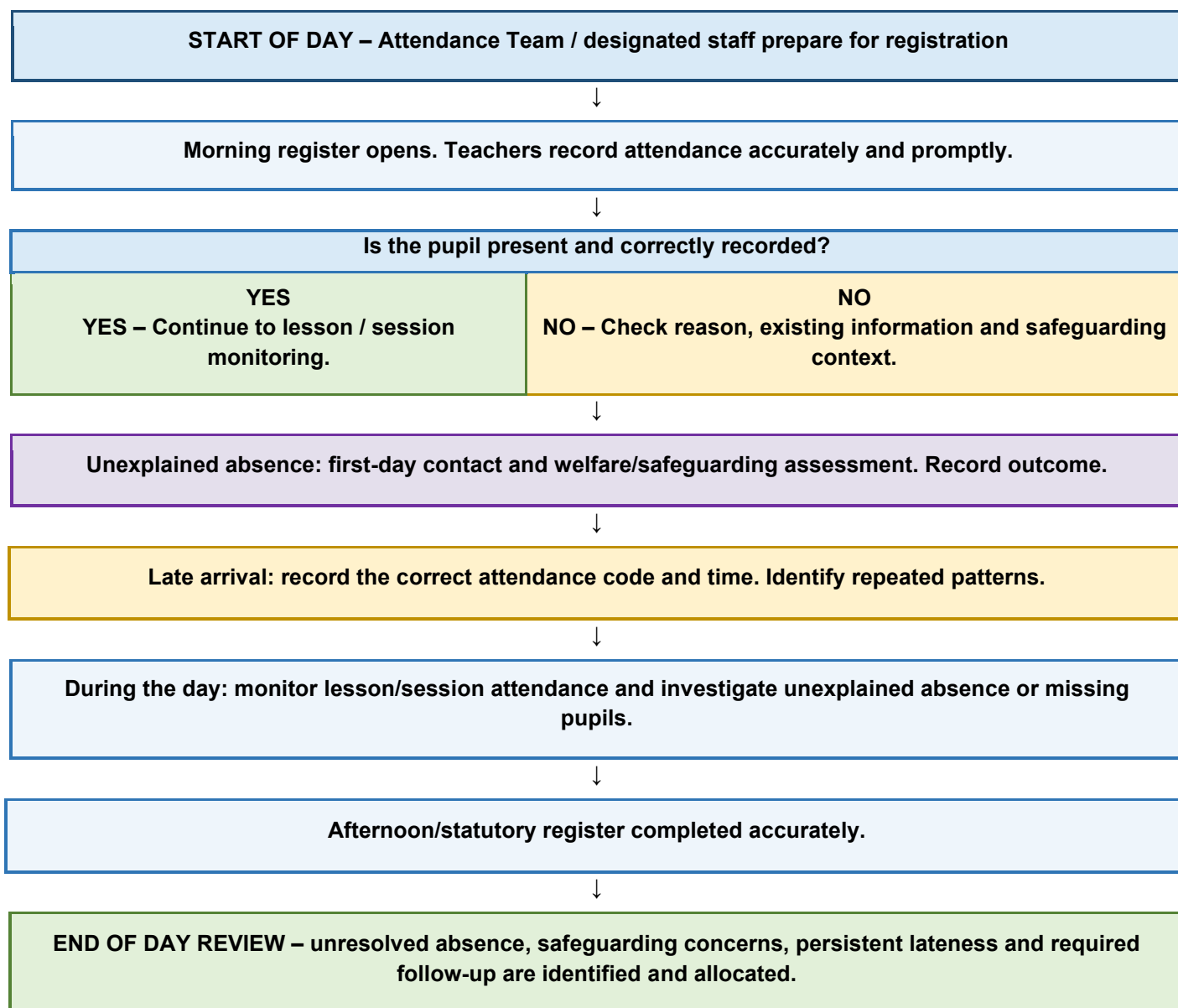
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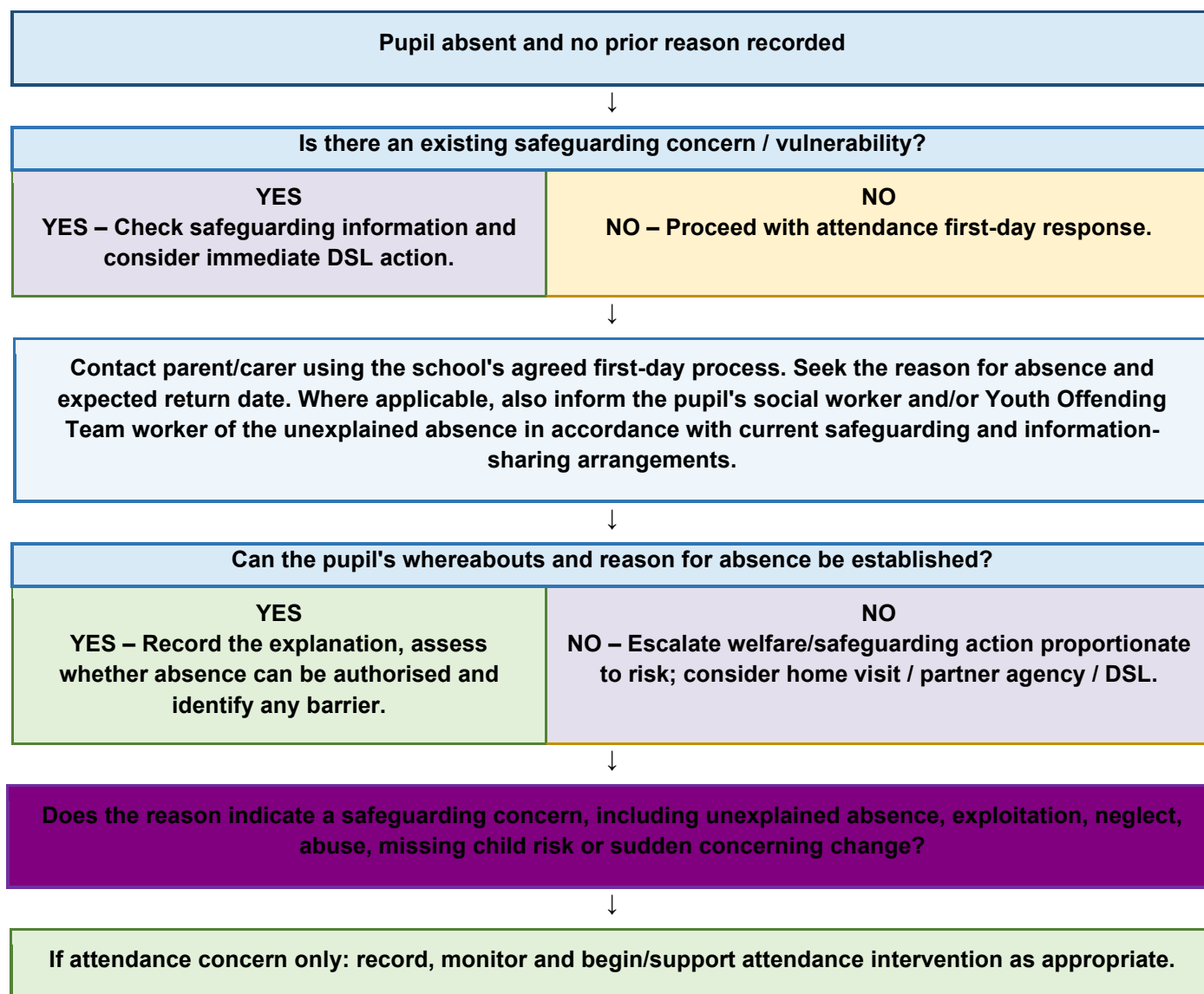
Flowchart 1 – Daily Attendance Routine
Every school day – operational minimum



Schools should use their local MIS and safeguarding systems. Safeguarding action is risk-based and must not be delayed because an attendance threshold has not been reached.

Flowchart 2 – Unexplained Absence / First-Day Response

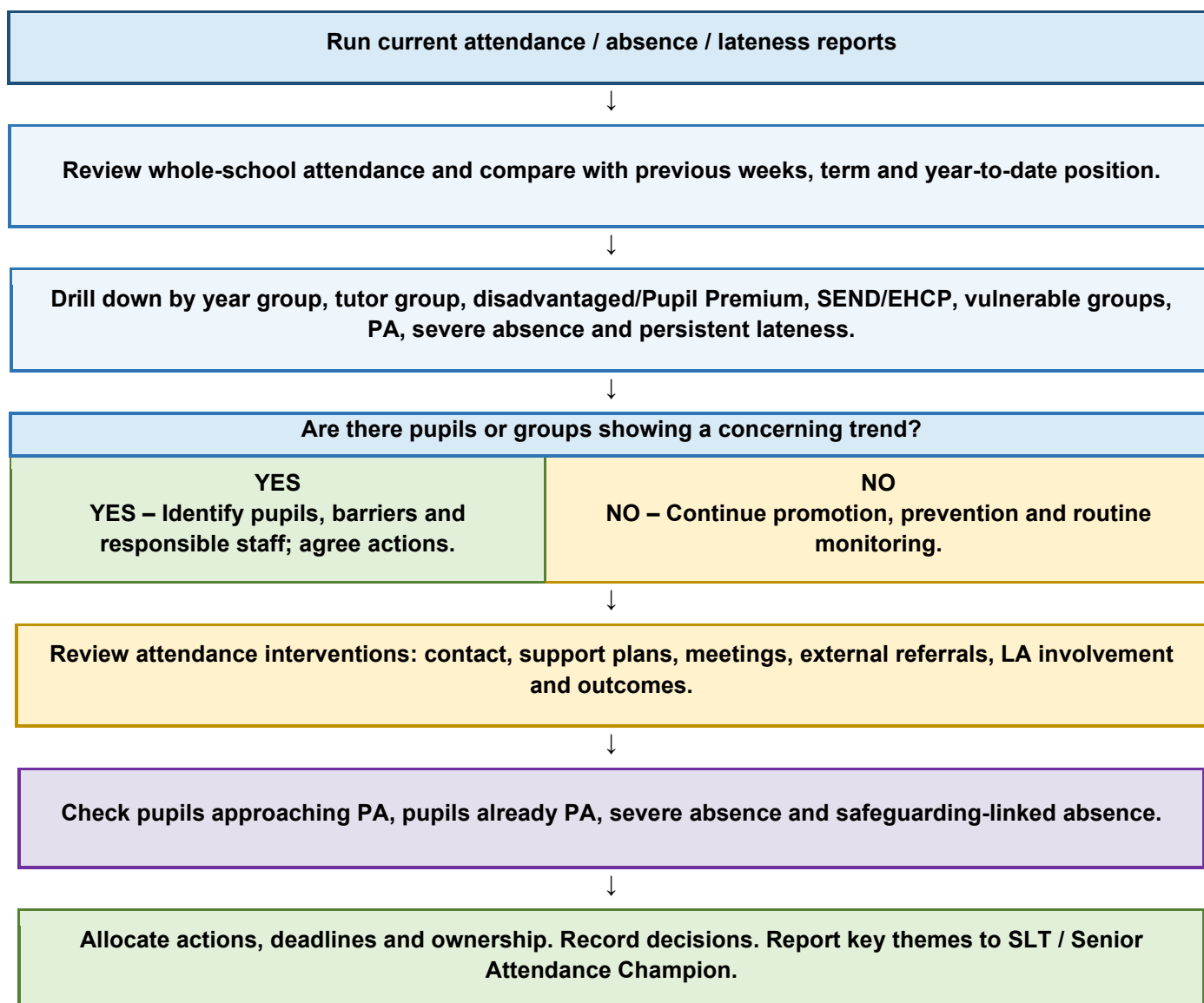
Use on every day that a pupil is absent without a satisfactory explanation



Do not use a fixed number-of-days rule for safeguarding escalation. The response must reflect the child's circumstances, vulnerability and the nature of the concern.

Flowchart 3 – Weekly Attendance Review

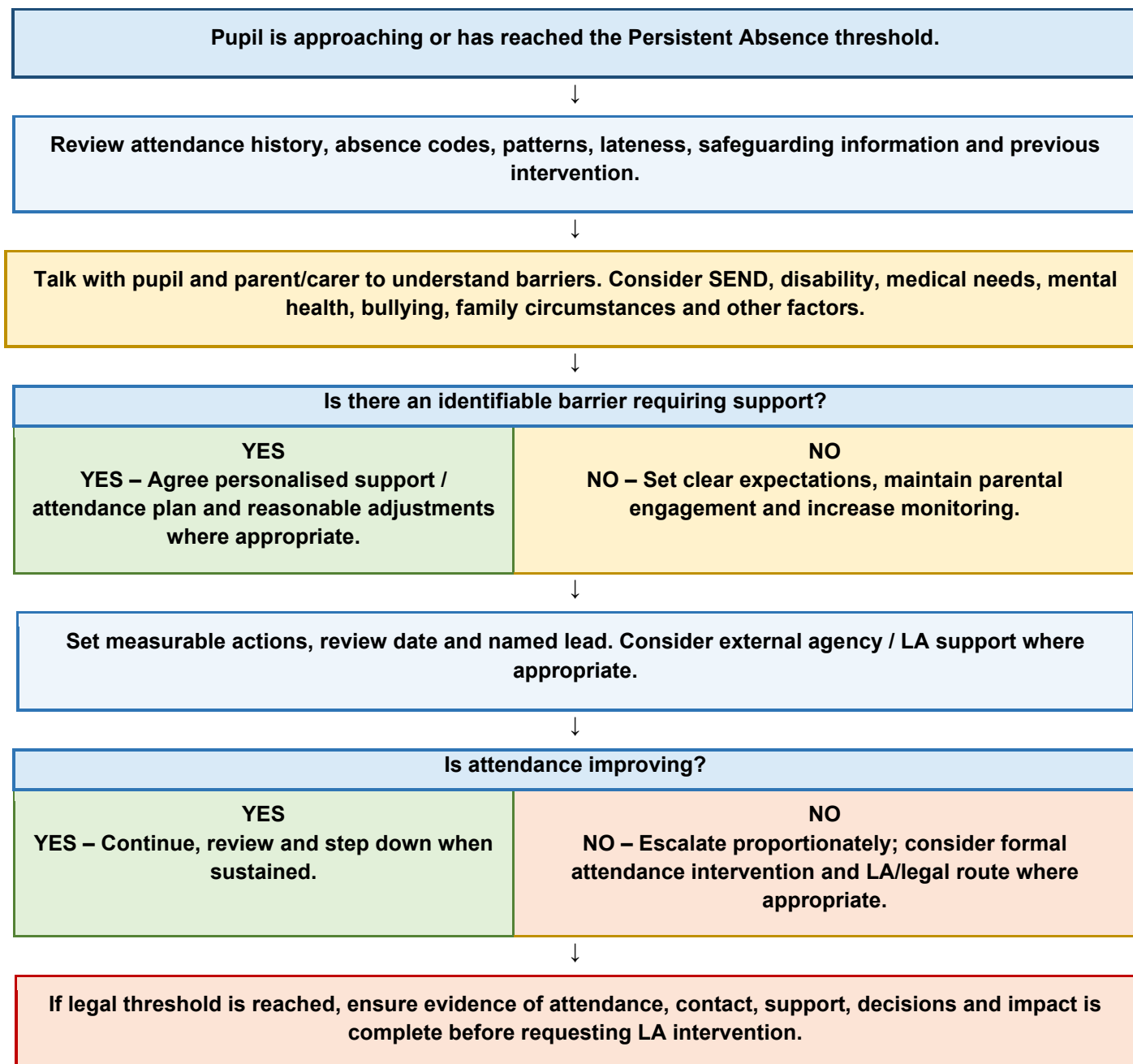
Recommended minimum weekly school review



The review should be analytical rather than purely numerical: identify patterns, understand barriers and evaluate whether intervention is improving attendance.

Flowchart 4 – Persistent Absence / Approaching PA

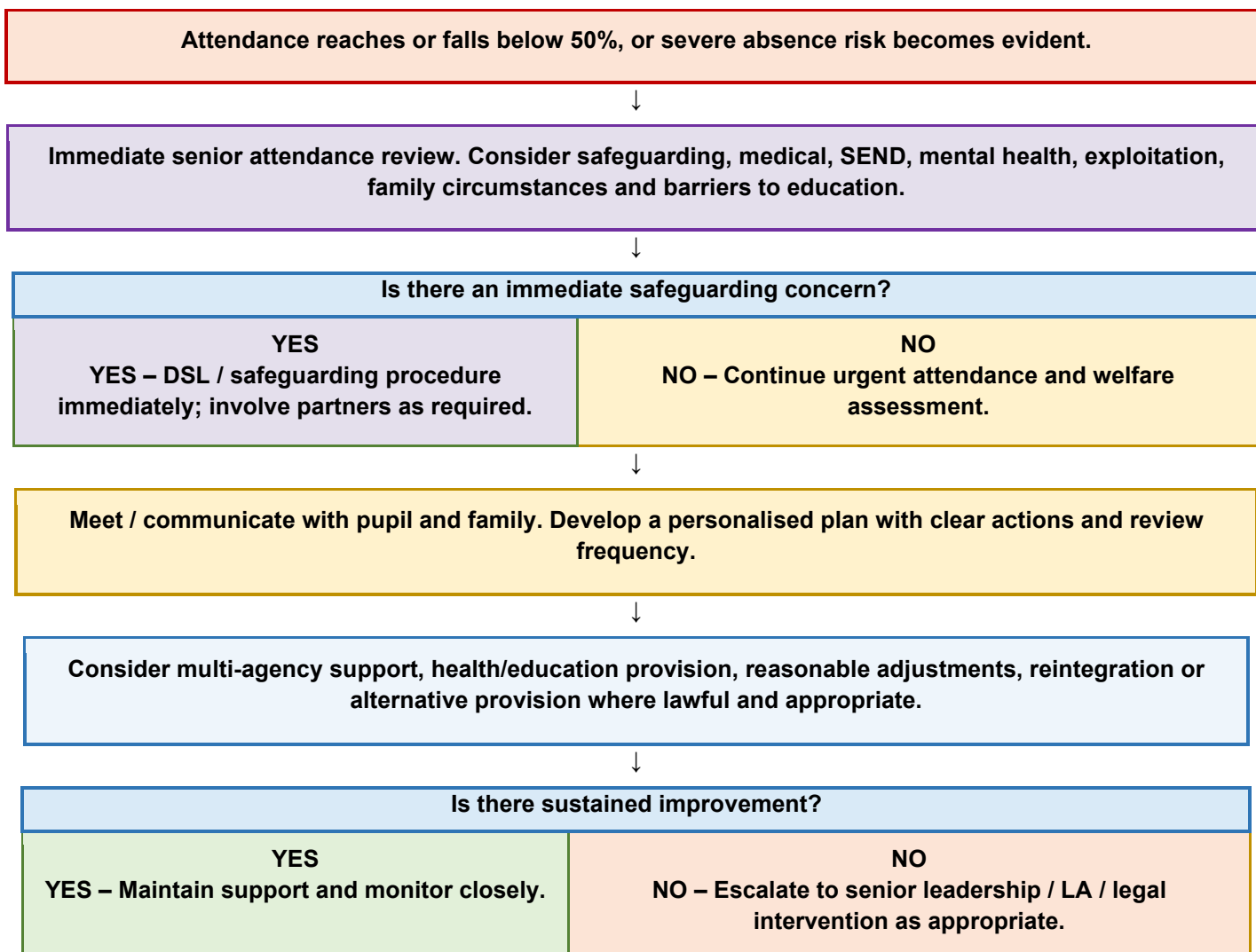
Persistent Absence: a pupil is Persistently Absent where they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions (attendance of 90% or below).



PA is a trigger for targeted action, not an automatic sanction. The graduated response should be proportionate and personalised.

Flowchart 5 – Severe Absence

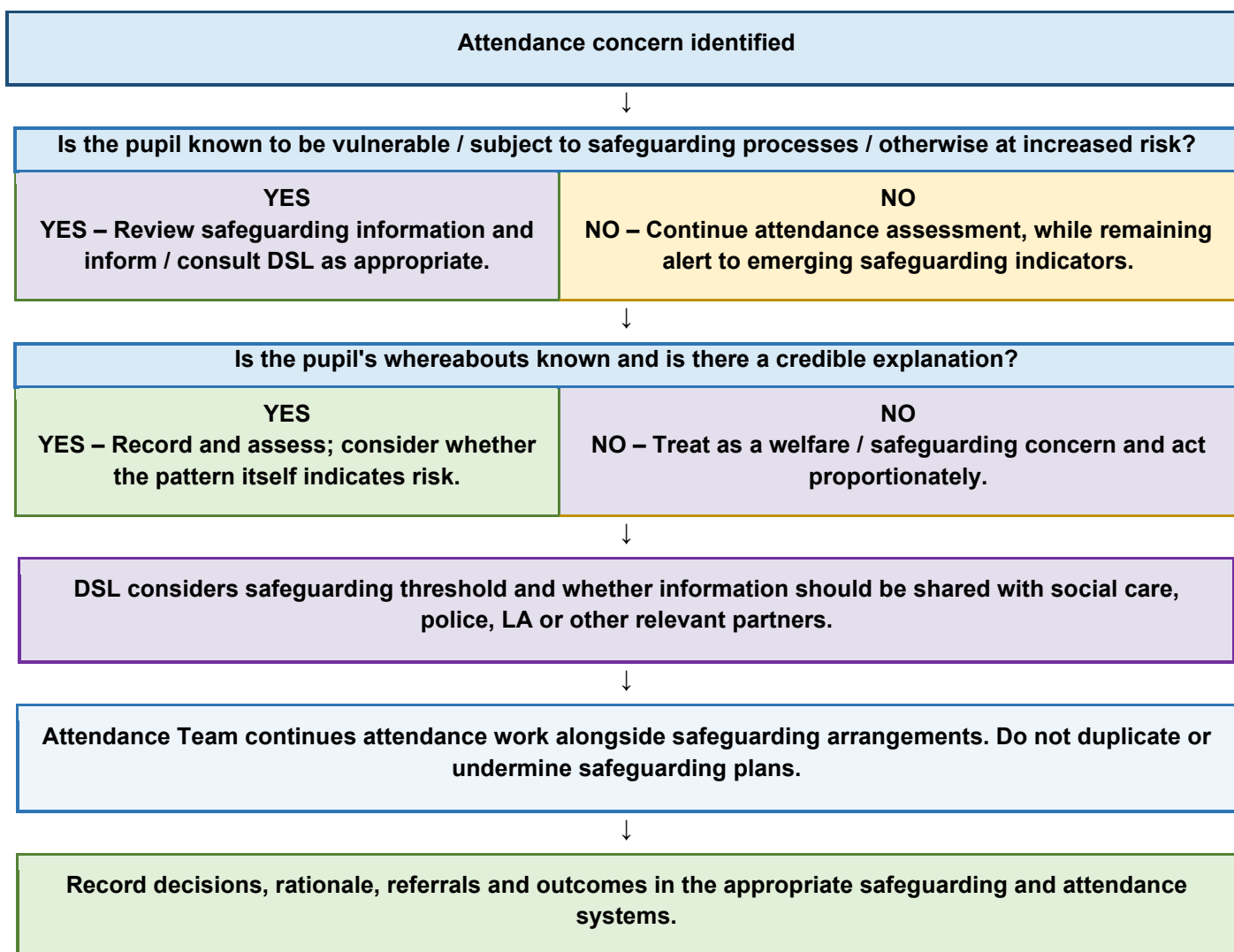
Severe absence: a pupil is Severely Absent where they miss 50% or more of their possible sessions (attendance of 50% or below).



Severe absence requires a safeguarding-informed response. Do not treat it simply as a higher PA threshold.

Flowchart 6 – Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is a safeguarding matter where absence, patterns or non-attendance indicate risk



Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 reinforces shared responsibility, information sharing and multi-agency safeguarding. Attendance concerns must be considered alongside the child's wider circumstances.

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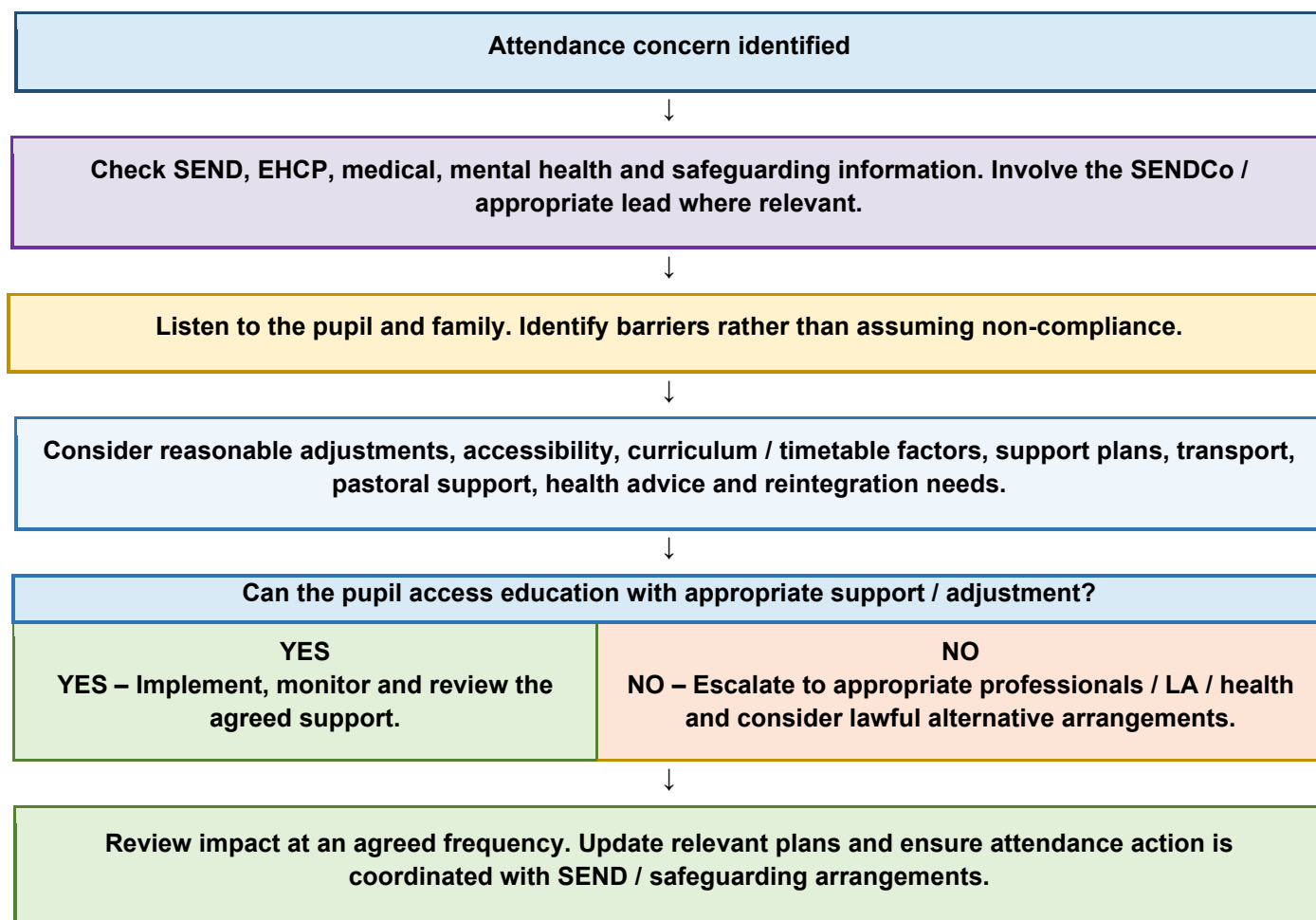
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Flowchart 7 – SEND, Medical Needs and Mental Health

Use where disability, SEND, health or mental health may be contributing to absence



Avoid absolute statements that a pupil must maintain full attendance simply because an EHCP assessment is underway. The expectation is high, but support must be individualised and lawful.

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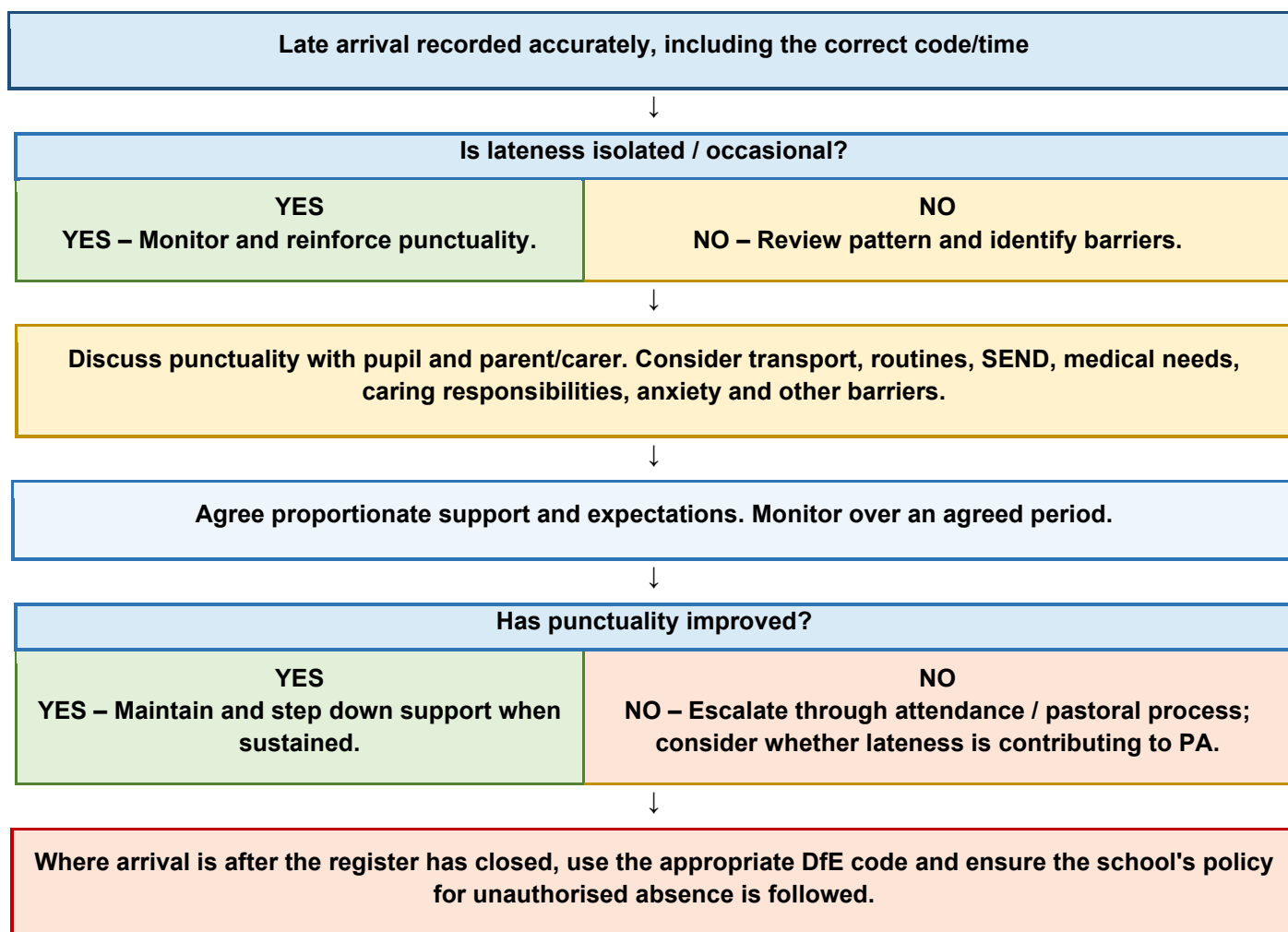
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Flowchart 8 – Persistent Lateness

Persistent lateness should be identified early and treated as an attendance issue

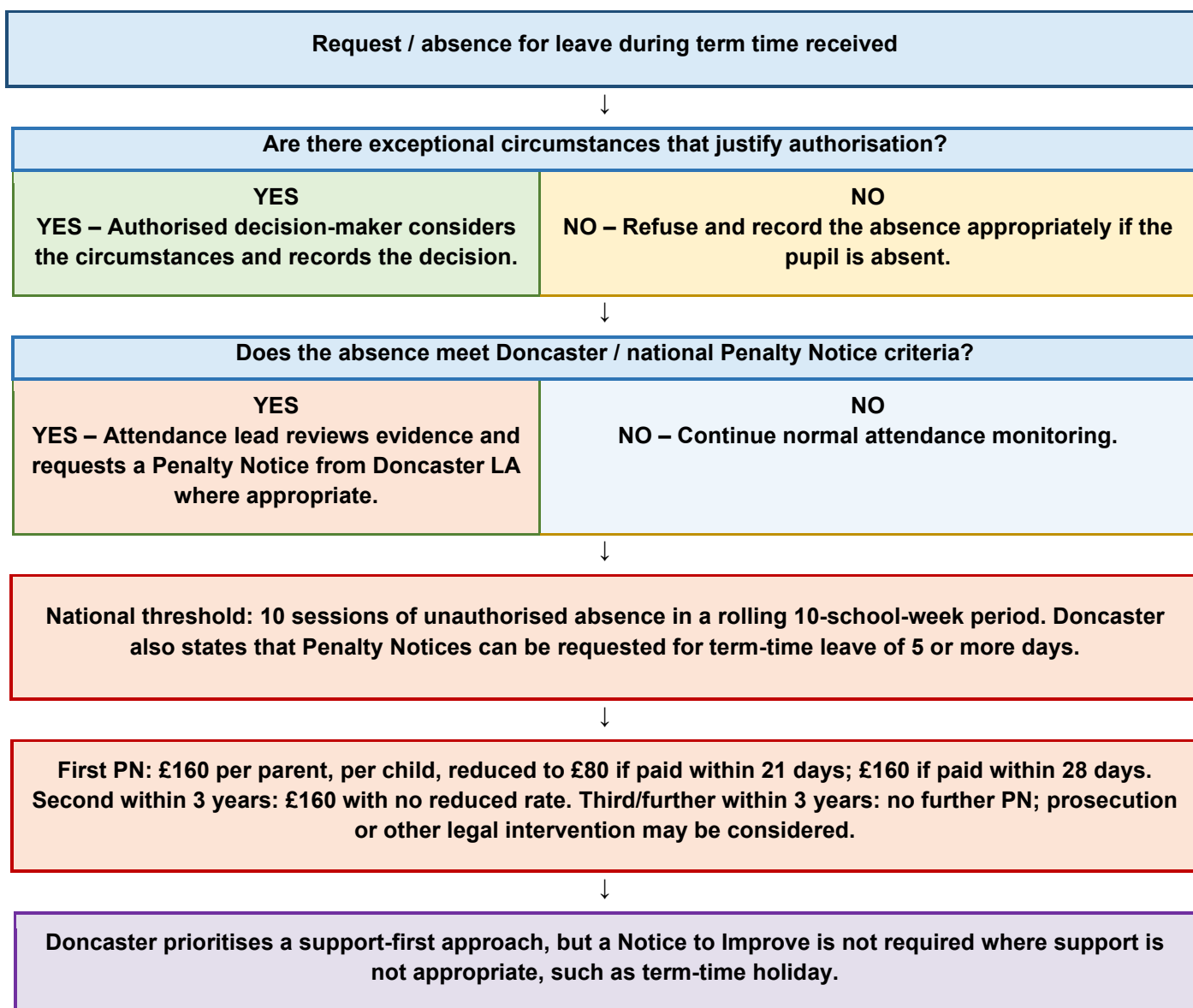


Schools should distinguish ordinary lateness from arrival after the register closes and use the DfE attendance codes correctly.

Flowchart 9 – Leave of Absence and Penalty Notices

Doncaster-specific operational framework

Schools/UTCs operating in other Local Authority areas must follow the current Penalty Notice and attendance enforcement arrangements of the relevant Local Authority.



Schools should always use the current Doncaster Penalty Notice guidance and current statutory attendance guidance when requesting legal intervention.

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Flowchart 10 – Children Missing Education (CME)

Use where a child may not be receiving suitable education or their destination is unknown

Concern: pupil absent / withdrawn / moves address / leaves provision and destination is not confirmed



Make reasonable checks: contact family, confirm destination, check admissions / transfer information and liaise with relevant schools / LA where appropriate.



Has a suitable education placement been confirmed?

YES

YES – Record destination and complete transfer / safeguarding checks.

NO

NO – Treat as potential CME and escalate promptly.



Consider safeguarding risk, vulnerability, exploitation, neglect, radicalisation and whether the child may have moved out of area.



Refer / notify Doncaster Council through the current CME process where applicable and continue to pursue confirmation of education.



Do not remove a pupil from the admission register solely because of prolonged absence or because their whereabouts have not been established. The relevant statutory ground for deletion must be satisfied and the required checks and notifications completed before the pupil is removed from the admission register. Retain evidence of checks, decisions and notifications.

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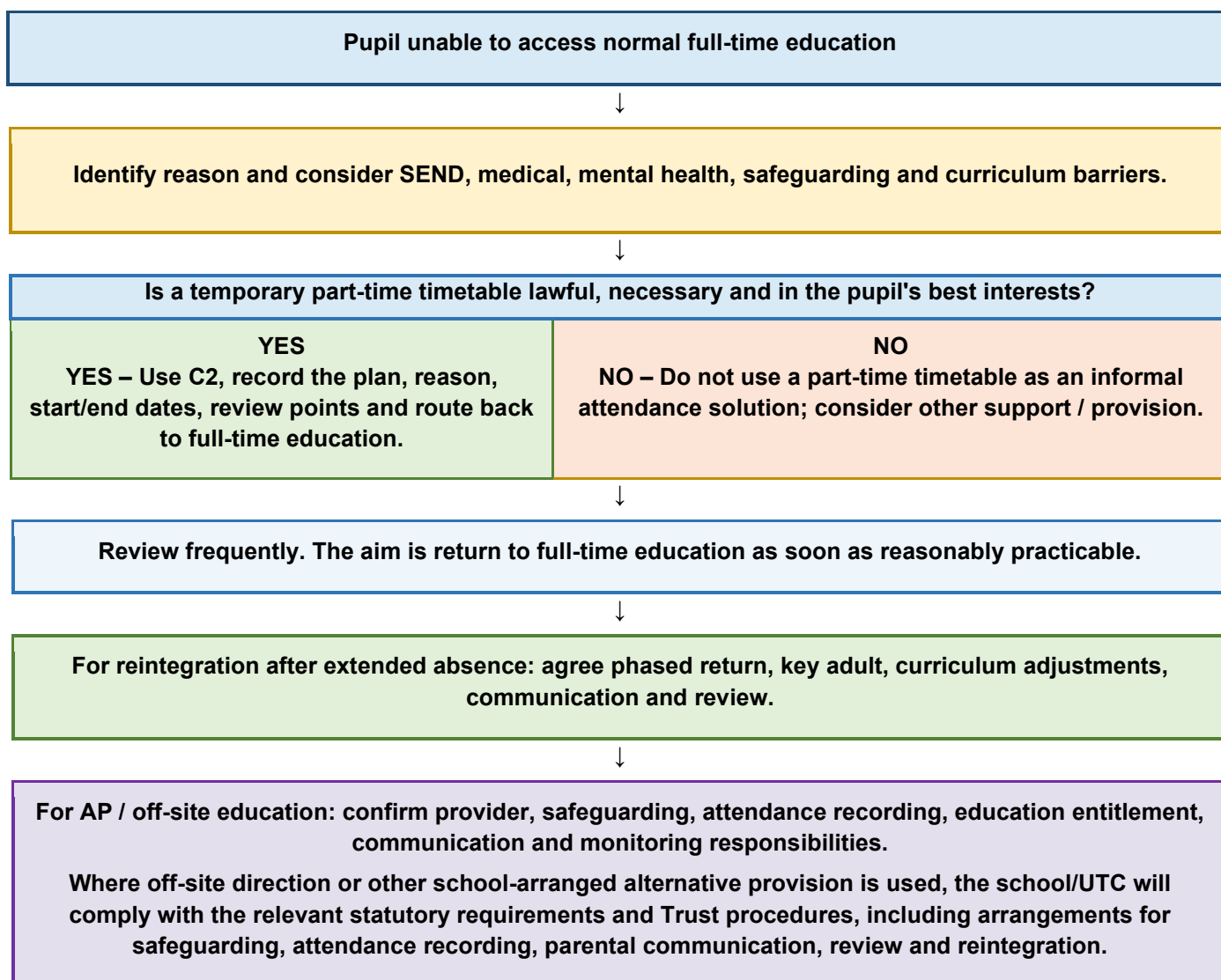
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Flowchart 11 – Part-Time Timetable / Reintegration / Alternative Provision

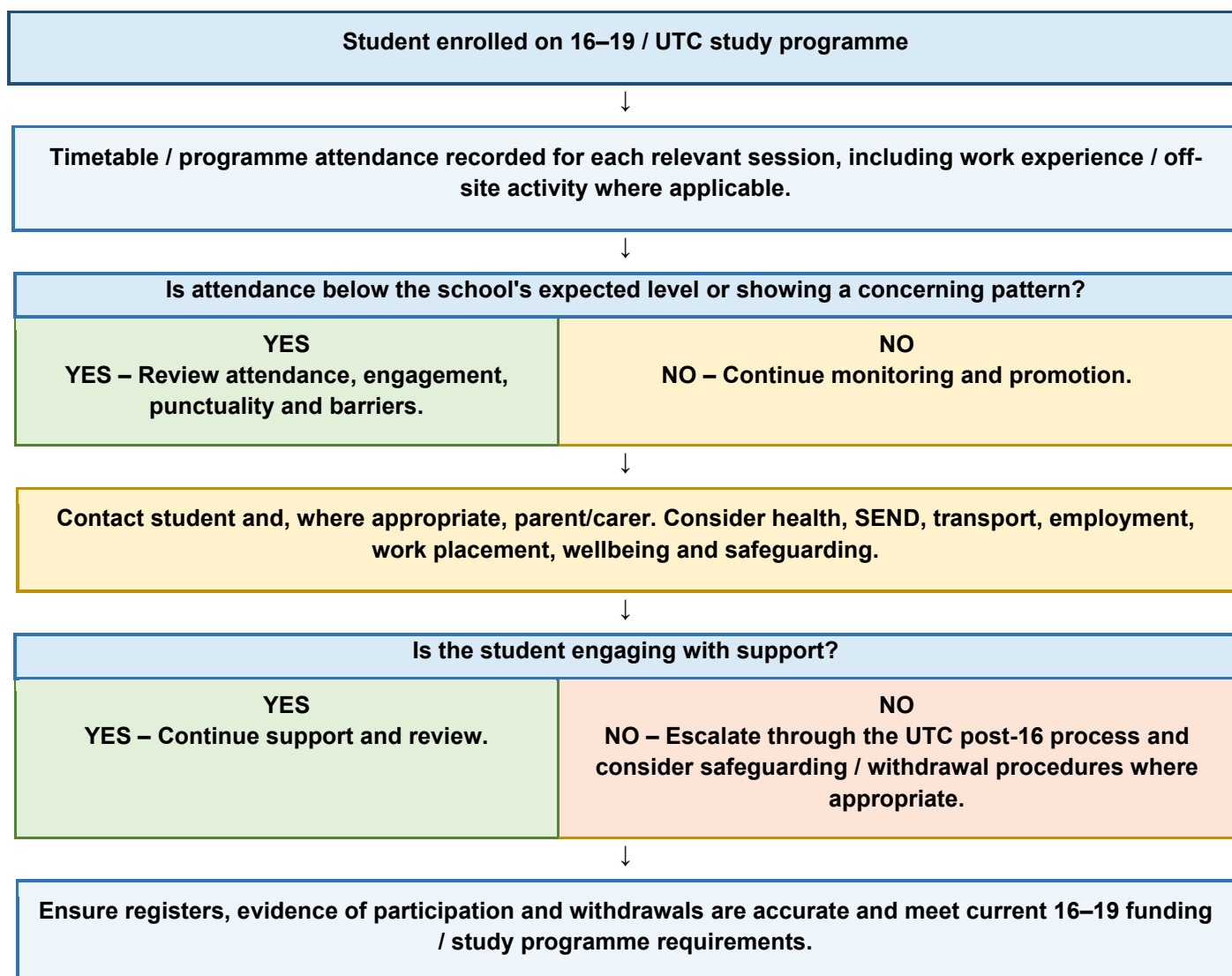
Use where a pupil cannot currently access the normal full-time timetable



Part-time timetables should be exceptional, time-limited and planned, not used simply to reduce recorded absence.

Flowchart 12 – 16–19 / UTC Attendance

Attendance arrangements for post-16 students should reflect study programme requirements and safeguarding



For students aged 18+, parental involvement must be handled appropriately. Safeguarding duties continue for children under 18 and relevant safeguarding procedures apply to the wider student body as appropriate.

Key Statutory and Local References

Checked for the September 2026 operating context

Working together to improve school attendance – DfE, updated 9 July 2026 –
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Keeping children safe in education 2026 – DfE, in force from 1 September 2026 –
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 – DfE –
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Children Missing Education – statutory guidance –
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

RISE attendance improvement resources – DfE – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rise-support-for-improving-attendance-in-schools>

City of Doncaster Council – Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service –
<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/attendance-and-pupil-welfare-service>

City of Doncaster Council – Penalty Notices Quick Information Guide –
<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/eduhub/penalty-notices-quick-information-guide>

City of Doncaster Council – Children Missing Education –
<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/children-missing-education>

City of Doncaster Council – Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality –
<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/promoting-good-attendance>

Local Authority contact: Doncaster Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service – 01302 736504 |
 APWS@doncaster.gov.uk

Document control note: This appendix should be reviewed whenever the main Attendance and Punctuality Policy is amended, DfE statutory guidance changes, attendance codes are revised, or Doncaster Council changes its local attendance/legal procedures.

