

Attendance Policy

Forest Skies Federation

**Approved by:**

Governing Body
Miss N Haughton
Miss J Bingwa
Mr M Davies

Date: September 2024**Last reviewed on:**

September 2024

Next review due by:

September 2024

Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. School procedures	5
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	8
5. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	9
6. Attendance monitoring	10
7. Roles and responsibilities	12
8. Monitoring arrangements	12
9. Links with other policies	13

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Appendix 2: Absence Monitoring Procedures

Appendix 3: Telephone call to parents / carers

Appendix 4: Parent Contract Meeting

1. Aims

- To emphasise the importance to all pupils and their families that maximum attendance at school is vital for achieving their full potential.
- Parents of all new children arriving to the school will be given a copy of the Attendance Policy and will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read it and will support the school in promoting good attendance.
- To reinforce the notion that every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled and that parents are responsible in law for the regular and punctual attendance of their child.
- To make explicit to all (pupils, parents/carers, teachers) the school's expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help pupils maximise their attendance.
- To stress the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance.

School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school.

It is the schools responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)

- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [DFE School Attendance – Guidance for maintained, academies, independent schools and local authorities May 2022](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

- Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.
- The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session.
- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will be refused with the possible exception being made to those parents work for the emergency services (Police / Ambulance / Fire only) or the Armed Forces.
- Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code – See Appendix 1) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).
- At the start of each academic year each parent will receive a letter explaining the Federation's position on taking holiday during term time including an explanation of the fining process. Any new starters throughout the year will also receive this letter.
- If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Local Authority Policy (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.
- In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local

Authority, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the first session in the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present / Absent
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment

(See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes).

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Birchwood Junior School

Start time – 8.30 am

Finish time – 3.30 pm

Register will be taken from 8.30 am– 8.50 am

Late attendance – from 8.50 am

Unauthorised attendance – from 9.10 am

Lancaster School

Start time – 8.45 am

Finish time – 3.15 pm

Register will be taken from 8.45 am - 9.00 am

Late – from 9.00 am

Unauthorised - from 9.20 am

Woodlands Infant and Nursery School

Start time – 8.45 am

Finish time – 3.15 pm

Register will be taken from 8.45 am - 9.00 am

Late – from 9.00 am

Unauthorised - from 9.20 am

(If a child arrives after the register has been completed then the class teacher must edit their attendance in Scholarpack themselves)

3.2 Unplanned absence

- Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – **by 9:10 am** or as soon as practically possible (see section 6).
- This can be done through ParentMail or leaving a voicemail.
- Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.
- However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Parents must notify school via Parentmail or a note explaining and asking to take their child out of school for a dental or medical appointment. The office reserves the right to ask for proof of this appointment. E.G: Letter or doctor's slip.
- Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

- A pupil who arrives after the class teacher has registered will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L). Birchwood Junior School 8.50 am – 9.10 am. The Lancaster School and Woodlands Infant and Nursery School 9.00 am – 9.20 am.
- A pupil who arrives after the register has formally closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U). Birchwood Junior School after 9.10 am. The Lancaster School and Woodlands Infant and Nursery School after 9.20 am.
- Parents will be notified by letter if their child persistently arrives late. If this continues after the letter then legal advice will be sought by the school which could result in a **£80 fine** per parent per child if paid within 21 days or £160 thereafter.

It is important to be on time, as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise school work for the rest of the day. If a pupil misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often unsettling for the child.

Children who arrive late must enter through the main Reception doors and either the parent or the child themselves must sign themselves in (either using the electronic register system or speaking to a member of the office staff) providing an accurate reason for the lateness.

Early collection from school will also be monitored closely and the 'Stages of Monitoring' process (Section 6) will also be followed where early collection is leading to a concern regarding missing learning, impacting negatively upon a child's social interactions and academic progress.

3.5 Following up absence

- The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.
- The school will use the flowchart to follow accurate absence monitoring procedures (Appendix 2).
- School will make first contact calling for every day the child is absent from school unless parents have informed school.
- If no contact is made by the second day, the Head teacher is informed via CPOMS and the office will contact the emergency contact details on the child's file.
- Where a child is considered to be vulnerable (open to Children's Services, a TAC or EHA) and not been seen by the school for 48 hours a home visit will be carried out by the Attendance Officer and a DSL
- If by the 5th day no contact has been made and the child is still absent, the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Officer) will contact the police to conduct a safe and well check.
- Those pupils presenting with Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) will be supported through the Lincolnshire EBSA Pathway in conjunction with the Pupil Re-Integration Team.

Reporting to parents

- School will report attendance termly through individual progress reports and through parents' evenings. School will also update their attendance percentage weekly on the school website and inform parents regularly through termly newsletters, parent evenings or phone calls.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as: DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave may be considered.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- It is not the policy to authorise holidays in term time. The only exemption to this is where parents serve in the armed forces (this does extend to the emergency services i.e. only Police, Fire, Ambulance). Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Education Welfare Service; the Forest Skies Federation are under a duty to do this.
- Where unauthorised leave is taken, the Governing Body has decided that it will support the imposition of a fixed penalty fine. This will apply to any parents/guardians who book holidays in term time.
- Approved Public Performance where children are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) you are asked to consult with staff about how much time away from school is required. Where possible such requests will be granted provided that the child's education is unlikely to suffer. The school will also be sympathetic towards leave to participate in a recognised city, county or national sporting event.
- Where parents wish to take their child(ren) out of school during term time for purposes other than holidays, they should write a letter and attach any evidence to prove this request.

4.2 Legal sanctions

What is considered as poor attendance?

- 96% to 100% is regarded as good attendance. 90% to 96% is below our minimum expectation. Anything below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. The Forest Skies Federation, are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96%.
- School monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each pupil's attendance. At

the end of each half term, school will identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and issue a courtesy letter or make a telephone call informing parents. The attendance officer will then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing. If there is no change in improved attendance the following could occur:

- Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Parents can support regular school attendance by:

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parent's evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance

School can support regular attendance by:

- Working with parents / carers with regular communication about attendance.
- Rewards such as certificates and trips E.G: Active Nation climbing wall
- Providing a Breakfast Club that encourages children to start their day in the right manner as well as an after school club to eliminate the need for early collections.
- The use of different strategies such as class incentives and timetabled activities
- Parental workshops to discuss the impact of poor attendance.
- Promoting positive attendance at all times
- Children who maintain 100% attendance for their whole time at the school will receive a special award
- The class with the highest attendance each week will have the 'Best Attendance' plaque on their classroom door (KS2) or the 'Best Attendance Bear' (KS1) join their

class for the following week

- Each large term there will be voucher/ prize raffle for those children who have had 100% attendance
- The Attendance Officer, DSL's, FSW and SENCo will support families through Early Help Assessments and where necessary the Team Around the Child process to promote positive attendance

6. Attendance monitoring

- The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly, termly and annually basis.
- Parents are expected to call or send a parentmail to the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (Section 3.2)
- Parents are expected to call school every day their child is absent from school.
- If a pupil's absence (illness) goes above 4 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.
- If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
- Attendance data is compared to the national average and shared with governors.

All absence data is recorded on the school's MIS system and reports are generated in line with the correct absence monitoring. All absence data is securely stored through encryption via the school server which is securely backed up to the cloud. Only relevant and correct absence data is sent to parents in relation to their child/children. The school publishes overall absence percentages on its website, no formal names are given.

Stages of monitoring

Step 1 – Letter 1

- For those pupils who have been identified for the first time with attendance falling below 90%, a letter will be sent out to the parents / carers. A copy will be held on the child's file on CPOMS.
- Should the pupil's attendance improve, but the improvement fails to be sustained, a further copy of the letter may be sent at a later date.

Step 2 – Telephone call to parents / carers

- If attendance does not improve, parents / carers will be contacted by phone to advise them of this. They will be reminded about the importance of regular school attendance and any immediate issues will be discussed.

- The Headteacher / attendance officer / DSL will discuss barriers to the pupils' regular school attendance and identify any possible solutions.
- A target of 96% attendance over a specified monitoring period will be set and medical evidence will be required for any further absences to be recorded using the 'I' code.
- This call will be documented on Scholarpack (and if there are safeguarding concerns, logged on CPOMS). Parents / carers will be informed that a penalty notice could be issued by county if targets are not met.

Step 3 - Letter requesting formal Parent Contract Meeting

- Following the sending of a letter and the telephone call, should the pupil's attendance fail to improve within a six week period, or should it fall to a lower level, parents / carers will be sent a further letter.
- They will be invited to attend a Formal Parent Contract Meeting with the Headteacher / Attendance Officer / DSL to discuss issues that may be affecting the pupil's attendance and identify how the school can help address this. This meeting will be formally documented (Appendix 4) and parents / carers will be reminded that it is their "legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually."
- During the meeting, a minimum attendance target over a 6 week monitoring period will be set. The Headteacher / Attendance Officer / DSL will sign this formal agreement and all parents/carers present at the meeting will be asked to sign that they understand and agree to this.
- Parents/carers will be requested to contact the school within seven days receipt of the letter to arrange a date to attend a formal Parent Contract Meeting with the Headteacher / Attendance Officer / DSL

Step 4 – Request for second Parent Contract Meeting or Penalty Notice

- Following the formal Parent Contract meeting, should the pupil's attendance fail to improve within the agreed 6 week monitoring period, or should it fall to a lower level and no satisfactory explanation for the absences has been provided, then the school may request:
- A further Parent Contract Meeting (Appendix 4) to discuss extending the monitoring period
- A penalty notice for non-attendance form will be completed and sent to the county's Legal Panel for discussion.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed and may write to parents/carers requesting their attendance at a Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) meeting.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board (Forest Skies Federation Strategic Committee) is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The school attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors the attendance data at the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and DSL
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording and monitoring attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Registers must be completed at 8.50 (Birchwood Junior School), 9.00 (The Lancaster School and Woodlands Infant and Nursery School) and 1.40 each day.

Class teachers are responsible for noting patterns in changes in attendance and or lateness and bringing this to the attention of the school attendance officer and the DSL.

Class teachers are responsible for making contact with parents to discuss and support positive attendance.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. The office staff are also directed to follow the flowchart with regard to first day calling as per **Appendix 2**.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed in 2024 by the Headteacher's of the Forest Skies Federation. At every review, the policy will be shared and approved with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the Forest Skies Federation Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Appendix 1: The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

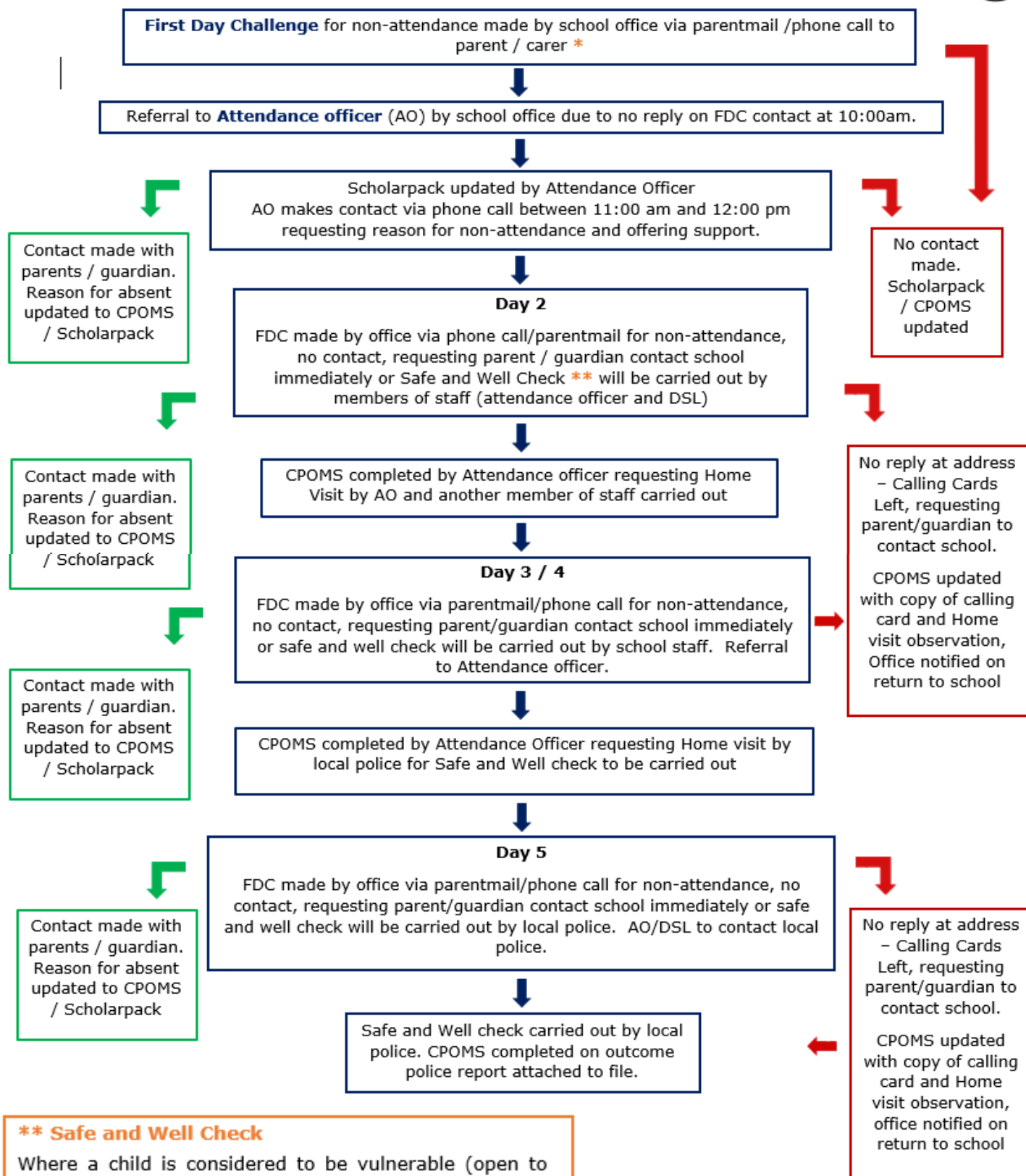
Attendance codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Appendix 2: Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Attendance Monitoring Procedures Forest Skies Federation




** Safe and Well Check

Where a child is considered to be vulnerable (open to Children's Services, a TAC or EHA) and not been seen by the school for 48 hours a home visit will be carried out by the attendance officer and a DSL.

* Separated parents

When a child is absent FDC to be made to both parents providing there are no contract restrictions highlighted on Scholarpack – check with a DSL if necessary.

Appendix 3: Parent Contract Meeting



Attendance Review – Parent Contract Meeting

Forest Skies Federation

Name:	Year:	Current Attendance:
DOB:	Class:	Date of meeting:
SEND:	PP:	TAC / CIN / CP / LAC:

Needs identified:	What is working well?	What is not working well?	What needs to happen?
Child:			
Parent:			
School:			

Actions agreed: <i>(eg. EHA / TAC / Treehouse)</i>	
Review date:	
Signed:	<div>Parent:</div> <div>School:</div>