

GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL-



Pupil Attendance Policy

Grange Core Values:

Love

Hope

Co-operation

Respect

Grange Primary School is a place where all staff are dedicated to providing a stimulating, exciting environment where everyone feels valued and safe. It is a place where creativity and ideas can flourish and children can maximize their progress. By providing a varied and creative curriculum, which engages our children, and by promoting excellent behaviour, we aim to enthuse in all our children a desire to learn, as well as care and respect each other.

**Approved by
Headteacher:**

Diana Valcheva

Date: 12 October 2018

**Approved by
Chair of Governors:**

Nicholas Bustin

Date: 12 October 2018

Next review due by: 12 October 2019

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. At Grange we fully recognise our responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and that they come in on time. When pupils attend regularly and come in on time, they get access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours across the school year.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning that will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning!

This attendance policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

It applies to all children registered at this school. The policy will be made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at Grange either via the school's website, or as a hard copy document available from school office admin team.

A hard copy is given to all new admissions.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Aims and Objectives

This policy ensures that all staff and governors are fully aware of and are clear in regards to the actions of the school to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve and maintain a whole school attendance of at least 96.5% for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues in line with the national average
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by parents
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Early Help Practitioner and Single Point of Contact (EHP&SPC) from Early Help Service at Southwark Local Authority
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in schools in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance in school which ensures consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Establish the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Ensure parents understand their legal responsibilities
- Ensure parents are fully aware of school systems and procedures
- Provide appropriate advice and support where there are attendance and punctuality issues in order to bring about improvements.

Grange maintains and promotes good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.
- Ensuring protocols are implemented and are monitored weekly and identified to the EHP&SPC from Early Help Service at Southwark local authority.
- Fostering a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the whole school community (parents/carers, pupils, staff).
- Maintaining an average whole school attendance of at least 96% in line with the national average.
- Ensuring that parents understand their legal responsibilities.
- Ensuring that parents are fully aware of school systems and procedures.
- Providing appropriate advice and support where there are attendance and punctuality issues in order to bring about improvements.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

By law all children of compulsory school age (i.e. the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday) must get a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure this happens either by registering the child at a school or making other suitable arrangements. Once a child is registered at a school parents/carers are responsible for making sure the child attends regularly. **If a parent fails to ensure regular school attendance then they are guilty of an offence which could result in prosecution.**

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](#)

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

In order to emphasise the importance of good attendance, an information letter is provided for all new parents and ongoing newsletters to all parents outlining concerns. Details are explained by the headteacher prior to a child starting school

Daily: Class teachers mark registers twice daily; morning register opens at 9:00 and closes 9.05 am, the afternoon register opens at 1:15 am and closes 1:20 pm (in the Nursery registers are taken from 9:00-9:05, 9:30 – 9:35 and 12:30 – 12:35). Any child who is not in the classroom for registration is marked absent.

Once completed, registers are sent to the school office.

Children arriving after 9.00 will be recorded in the late book.

Parents are requested to inform the school on the first day of a child's absence, giving the reason for absence and if possible the likely date of return.

Reasons for absence are logged by school administrative staff as appropriate. A daily late book is kept with reasons for lateness recorded by the school inclusion team.

Attendance and punctuality concerns will be identified with the Inclusion Leader who will write to parent informing them of their statutory duty and fines and enforcement.

The Inclusion Leader will scrutinise attendance/punctuality over a two week period and if necessary invite parents to meet with them in school and if necessary parents will be requested to attend a Court Panel at 132 Queens Road – room 102.

Parents will be notified of the statutory penalty fine for unauthorised absence per parent per child (including unauthorised holidays) of £120 which if paid within 21days will be reduced to £60 Penalties served by the school and the local authority for persistent absence can result in custodial sentence of 90 days and a £2000 fine. Court attendance fines are set the by the judge. Persistent lateness will be marked as half day absence and can also result in a fine

The school follows the Local Authority's 'Children Missing in Education' Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown. Information found on the Southwark Local Authority Website.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason, the school has received notification from a parent or carer, and the school deems it an absence which meets the criteria for authorisation. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer provides medical evidence which explains the absence, e.g. attending a medical appointment and a copy of the appointment letter is provided or the Headteacher authorises an absence due to exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school and none of the above requirements have been met.

Persistent Lateness

A late is classified as unauthorised when a child arrives after 9.00 without permission of the school

Procedures

The school will undertake to implement the following procedures to support good attendance:

- maintain appropriate registration processes.
- maintain appropriate attendance data.
- communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- strongly discourage absence through holidays taken during term time.
- work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- refer to the Early Help Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- report attendance statistics to Southwark Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- ensure staff awareness of the need to raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Inclusion Team.
- parents/carers who take their children out of school on holiday may be subject to a Penalty Notice being issued under the Educational Penalty Notices (England Regs 2007). The EHP& SPC will instruct the Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. (£60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.)

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities that individuals might have.

Headteacher

The Headteacher has delegated day-to-day responsibilities for ensuring good attendance and punctuality to the Inclusion Leader (and Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer) who is responsible for:

- Monitoring of school attendance
- Identifying trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including issuing appropriate letters and arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which must be noted on the electronic register
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Recording details of children who arrive late
- Making referrals to the Early Help Service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EHP&SPC
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Administrative staff

The School Business Manager is responsible for ensuring effectiveness of the school's Administrative office on a day-to-day basis. On a day-to-day basis the School Admin team is responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Notifying parents on first day of absence to ensure the safety of the child
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Passing reasons for absence to the Inclusion Leader and the Headteacher to request judgement whether the absence be authorised or not
- Bringing to the attention of parents the content of this policy
- Recording details of children who go home at times other than the end of the school day

Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing members of the school's senior leadership team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Emphasising with the class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Discussing attendance issues during meetings with parents

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we require evidence from the doctor, hospital or dentist. (appointment card/letter).
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

Registration is completed electronically. However, in the event that the system fails, the school admin team will provide a paper register.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded as such at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The class teacher must complete the attendance register by 9.05 am and by 13.20 (Nursery by 12.35). If a paper register is used these must be returned to the school office as soon as completed.

All attendance records are documented using ScholarPack software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Children who arrive after 9:00 will be recorded in the late book. Children who arrive after the register has closed at 9:05am are marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child, who arrives for school later than 9:30am, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who come to school later than 9:15am after attending a medical appointment and can provide evidence of attendance will have the absence recorded as authorised (Attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter from the Inclusion Leader advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

If issues are identified at the weekly attendance monitoring checks with the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer, parents/carers may receive follow up letters (sent out by the Inclusion Lead).

Attendance Monitoring

The EHP&SPC works with the school to monitor attendance. A register check is completed to identify children with low attendance (usually below 92%).

The Inclusion Leader and the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Class teachers also monitor pupils' attendance in their weekly evaluation.

In line with Local Authority procedures and Government guidance, school absence data will be shared with the Attendance Inclusion Participation Service and Governors. If a known vulnerable pupil is absent from school the learning mentors will make a welfare visit to the home. Where absence is persistent and impacts negatively on pupil's learning, a referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Team in Social Health & Care.

Reporting an absence

Parents/carers must contact the school on the first day of their child's absence by leaving a message on the dedicated absence notification line (02077716121 – option 3)

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, we then initiate a first day contact process. Once all registers are completed, the admin team inputs all information relating to known absences. A text message is then sent to parent/carers of pupils for whom no reason for absence has been given.

It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. It is the Headteacher who has the responsibility to make this decision.

Where a reason for a child's absence has not been provided, and the parents/carers have not provided a reason for absence by a specified date, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O) and this may be referred to the EHP&SPC.

Illness

Medical or dental appointments are counted as authorised if evidence is provided. However, the school encourages parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. We do not expect a child to be absent for a whole day for medical appointments.

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Where a child has repeated periods of illness over the course of an academic year, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission to make our own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence, specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. **We do not authorise term time holidays.**

Parents/carers must inform school, in writing, of their intention to remove their child from school, clearly stating the dates of absence and reasons.

Please Note: A Fixed Penalty notice may be issued (see Page 5)

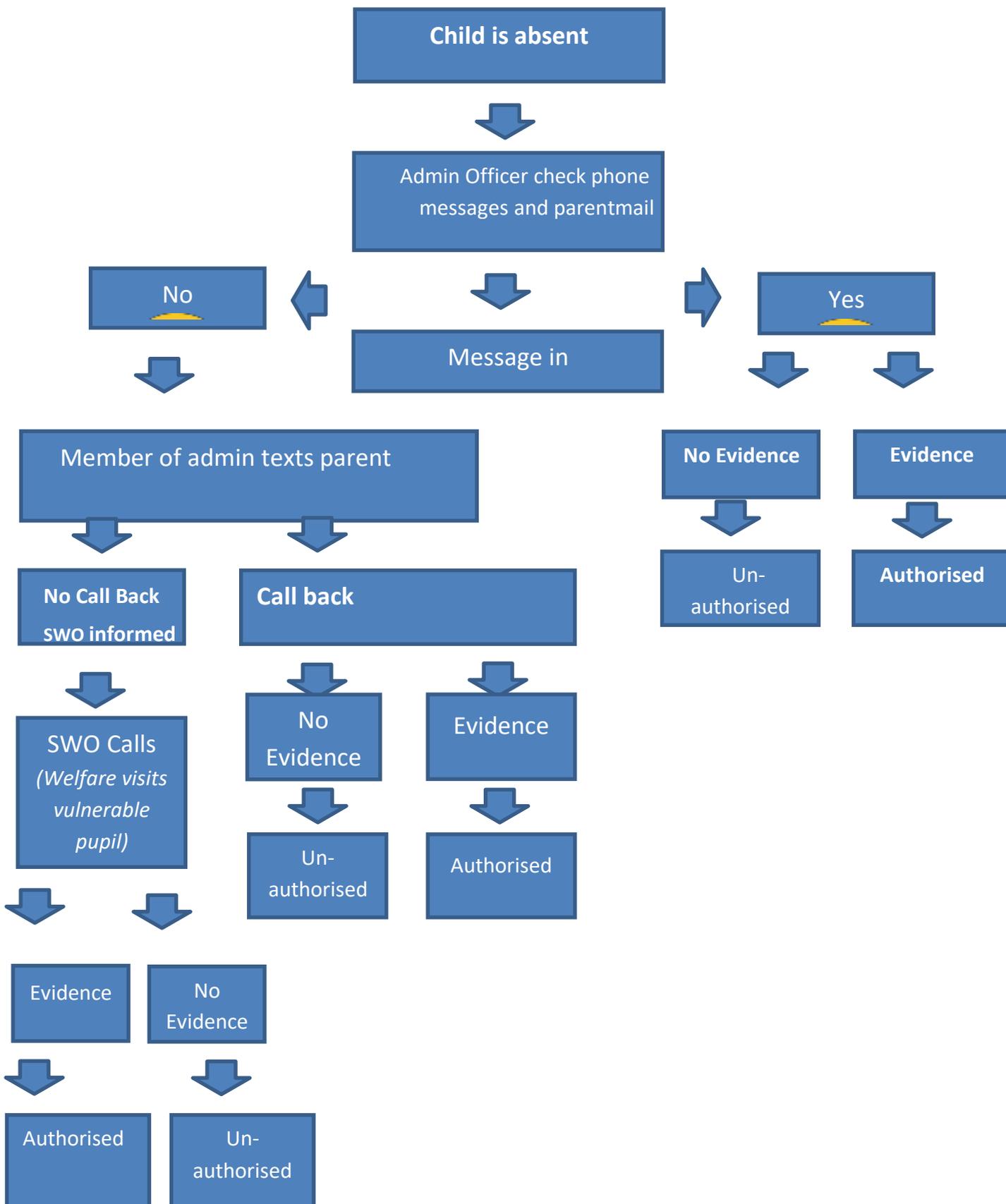
Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96.5%.

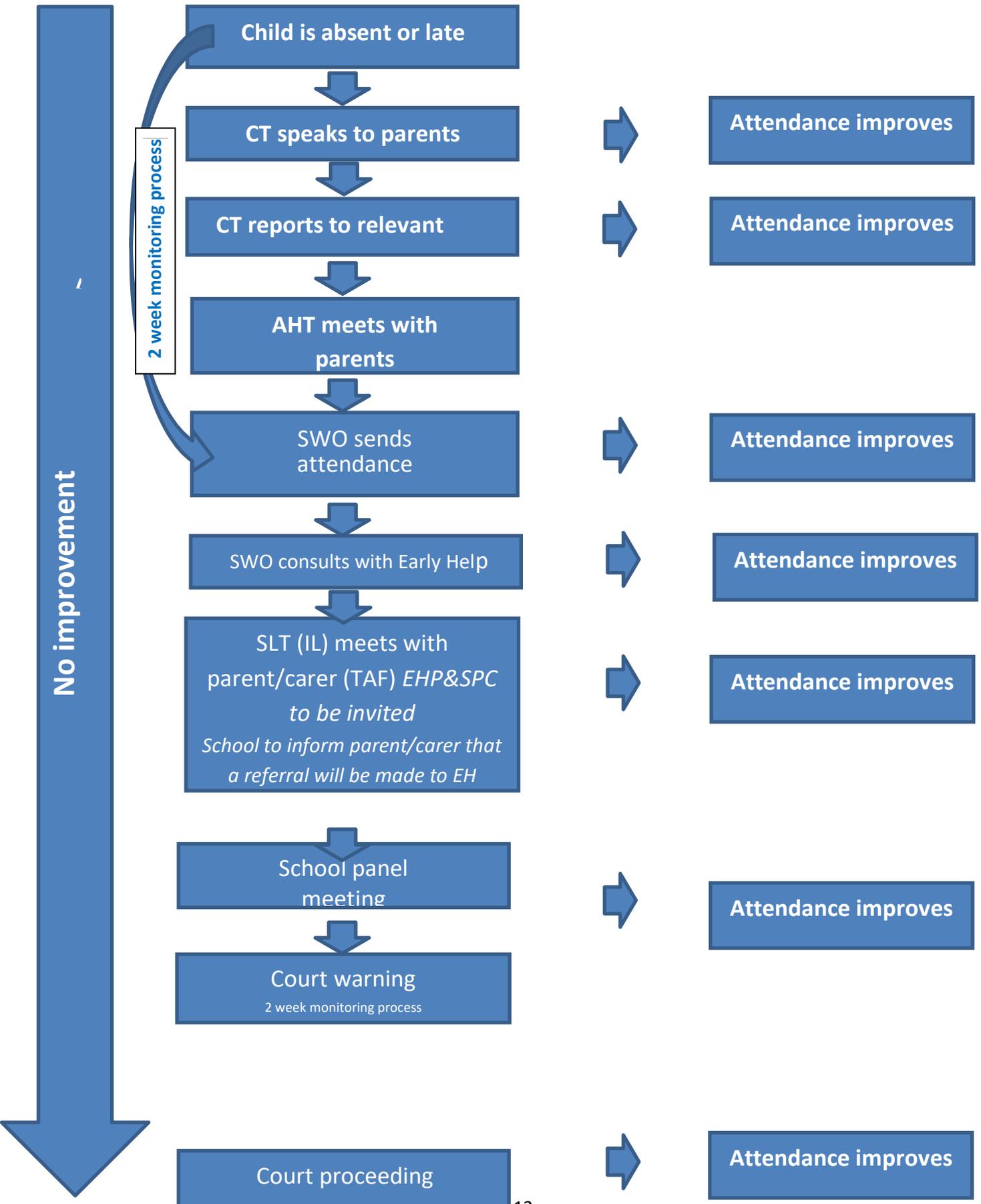
It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school, we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters, which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Attendance Service.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or Local Authority to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the Local Authority for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Monitoring Absence Procedure



Monitoring Persistent Absentees Procedure (pupil attendance below 92%)





Attendance improves



Attendance improves