

## Why is Good Attendance Important?

Good attendance maximises your child's educational opportunities and helps them achieve their full potential. This in turn, improves their chances and choices in adult life.

Regular attendance and punctuality prepares your child for the world of work, where good attendance and punctuality is required.

Regular attendance at school improves your child's social skills and supports development of friendships and relationships.

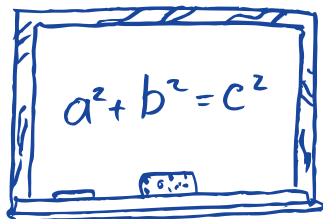
## What is Good Attendance?

All Academies will strive for 100% attendance for all students. Each Academy will set its own attendance target. Any student with attendance below this is a concern.

The Government considers that any student with attendance of 90% and below is a Persistent Absentee.

We will work hard to reduce the number of students who are Persistent Absentees, in order to maximise educational opportunities for all students.

Students' end of year attendance percentage will fall by 1% for every 2 days of absence they have during the academic year.



## Reporting an Absence

Please call your Academy's main telephone number.

(You can leave a message 24 hours a day)

Please let us know your child's name, year group, the date of the absence, the reason for absence, and, if you can, the expected date of return.

Please complete a note in your child's planner for them to bring to the Attendance Office on their return to the Academy.

If you wish to discuss your child's absence, please ask us to return your call.

## Useful Links

[www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence](http://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school\\_attendance](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school_attendance)

[www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice/attendance](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice/attendance)

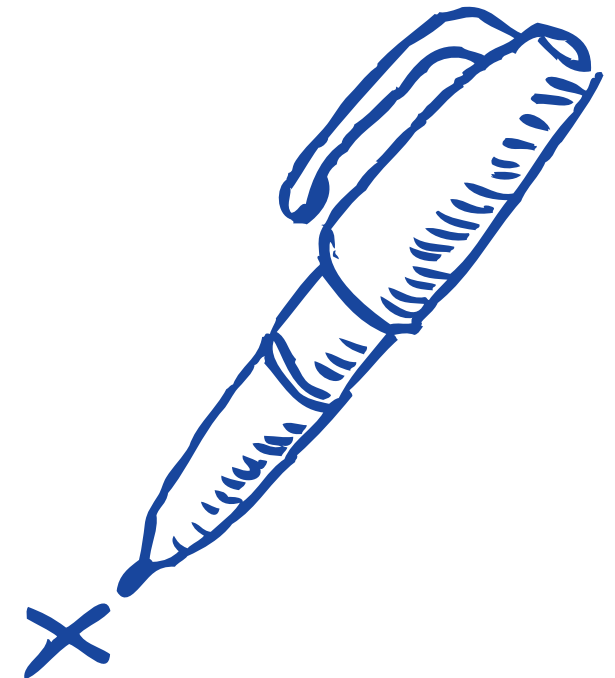
Local Council Education Welfare Service website

Your individual Academy's website

[www.outwood.com](http://www.outwood.com)



# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



A Guide for Parents/Carers

## Parents' Responsibility

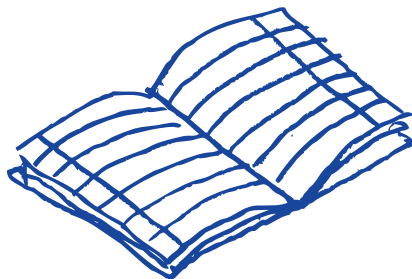
As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child is educated.

You must ensure that your child attends the school at which they are registered until the last Friday in June in the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure all parents fulfill their responsibility.

## What can Parents/Carers do?

- Take an interest in your child's school work and talk to your child about school.
- Support the school - attend parents evenings.
- Be positive about school, even if there are problems. Your child will not want to attend if they think you aren't happy. Contact us as soon as possible to discuss any problems so that we can support you to resolve them.
- Ensure your child attends every day unless they are too ill to do so. Keeping your child off when it is avoidable gives them the message that school is not important.



## Registers and Absence

The register is taken twice a day and shows whether your child is present or absent. All absences will be followed up, including messages sent home to parents of absent students. It is vital your child follows correct Academy procedures to get their registration mark if they are present.

Absences are either authorised or unauthorised. The law is clear that schools, not parents, authorise absences. You should contact the Attendance Office to ask permission for an absence or to explain why your child is unable to attend. If you don't get permission and keep your child off school, you will be breaking the law and may be fined or taken to court.

## What to do if your Child doesn't want to go to School

**Don't ignore it** - You will need to find out why and act accordingly:

**Problems with learning** - This may not always be obvious. Talk to your child and contact the school to discuss your concerns.

**Problems at home** - Bereavement, divorce, illness, housing problems, debt, stress and domestic violence will all affect your child. Contact us about pastoral support for your child.

**Bullying** - This is a common reason for children refusing to go to school and is a worry for parents. Contact us as soon as possible so we can help.

**Illness/mental health** - Any health problem that keeps your child away from school regularly should be investigated. Contact us as soon as possible to discuss how we can help. You may also need to contact your GP and/or seek specialist help.

## What can the Academy do?

It is important that you let us know about any problems as soon as possible so that we can support your child to improve.

**Learning support** - Support with particular difficulties; short-term help with study skills; look at your child's timetable/subject choices.

**Pastoral support** - Extra help for your child at times of crisis/stress; buddy/mentor support; counselling.

**Support for parents/carers** - Support for you to help with your child's difficulties; links with outside agencies/services who may be able to help.

## What if Attendance doesn't Improve?

If your child's attendance doesn't improve despite support from the Academy, you will be seen to be failing in your responsibility to ensure regular attendance at school.

The Academy can use a Fast Track to attendance process which could mean you are issued with a Penalty Notice if your child's attendance doesn't improve. Penalty Notices can also be issued for truancy, unauthorised leave of absence during term time and excessive unauthorised absence/poor punctuality. For more details regarding Fast Track and Penalty Notices please see separate leaflets.

The Local Authority can take parents to the Magistrates' Court where they can be prosecuted. Parents found guilty can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for up to 3 months. Education Supervision Orders and Parenting Orders can also be made by the Local Authority or the Courts.

## Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

From September 2013, the school attendance regulations have been amended. The amendment makes clear that headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. It removes references to family holidays and the threshold of 10 school days.

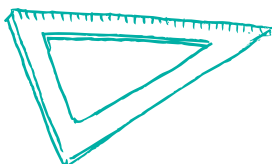
## Holidays

The majority of us look forward to holidays. Whether it's time off work, simply a break from the normal activities of the day, or the trip of a lifetime, we all need time to recharge our batteries and spend some quality time together as a family. There are lots of reasons why we choose to holiday at certain times of the year -

- we get the weather we want
- the price is cheaper
- flights are only available on certain days
- we want to go with other people and it's the only time they can go
- it's easier to get time off work

Although we appreciate the benefits of all the above reasons, if you are wanting to take your child out of school to go on holiday, please think again.

Your child's progress and continuity of learning must come first. We strive for full attendance at Outwood Grange Academies Trust and we want the same for your child. Think about the message you are giving to your child that it's acceptable to miss school to go on holiday.



## School Holiday/Term Dates

Term dates can be found in the front of student planners and on the Academy website. Alternatively, you can telephone your Academy. Term dates for future years are always set well in advance and are published on the Academy website or are available on request.

## Useful Links

[www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence](http://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school\\_attendance](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school_attendance)

[www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice/attendance](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice/attendance)

Local Council Education Welfare Service website

Your individual Academy's website

[www.outwood.com](http://www.outwood.com)

## Attendance Office

If you wish to discuss any leave of absence request, or anything concerning your child's attendance please contact your Academy's Attendance Office.

Please call your Academy's main telephone number.  
(You can leave a message 24 hours a day)



# LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME



## The Facts

Having 10 days' absence in an academic year means that the maximum attendance your child can achieve is 94.7%.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust expects that **all** students will attend every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so.

If your child is absent for a further 10 days (a total of 20 days' absence), their overall annual attendance would drop to just 89.5%. A student with 90% or below is identified as a 'Persistent Absentee'.

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Research shows, of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and maths. But 73% of pupils who attend 95% of school achieve this.

Two weeks' absence means your child loses 60 hours of learning which they can never get back. Your child could miss a whole topic which won't be re-visited.

A two week holiday during term time every year of your child's life equals almost 2 full terms of education missed over their whole school career.

Friendships suffer - during 2 weeks' absence, social groups change. Your child may not fit back into the same friendship group on his/her return.

Absence causes disruption to other students and staff. Teachers cannot be expected to provide extra work and spend extra time with a student who has been absent without authorisation.



## The Law

The Government advises that only exceptional circumstances warrant authorised leave of absence from school. Leave may only be granted if an application has been made by the parent/carer in advance and the proprietor of the school considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances.

The Regulations make it clear that parents/carers have no right or entitlement to take their children out of school for family holidays.

As a parent/carer, you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

A parent/carer who takes their child(ren) out of school without authorisation could be deemed to be failing in their responsibility to ensure regular attendance at school. This is contrary to Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

Legal proceedings can be instigated against parents/carers by way of:

- Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which could result in a fine of up to £1000, or;
- The issue of a Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. This is £60 per parent for each child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent for each child if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay can result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

In some cases, where a child fails to return from a leave of absence within 10 school days of their expected return date, they may be deleted from the roll of the school. Parents must then re-apply for a school place which could be at a different school if the original place has been filled.

## Important:

Outwood Grange Academies Trust **cannot** and **will not** authorise leave of absence unless the circumstances are exceptional.

## What are 'Exceptional' Reasons?

Each request is considered individually and the reason and duration of the request will be taken into account. A single day absence may be granted for a funeral or significant close family event; or for an educational event e.g. participation in a major sporting or musical event or performance. Absence due to a family crisis or compassionate reasons may also be considered exceptional reasons.

Please note, requests for 'days out' or weekends away, regardless of their educational value, will not be authorised.

Issues such as timing of the absence, student's attendance record, student's educational needs and ability to catch up may also be taken into account.

## Academy Procedures

If you or your child are experiencing any difficulties either in school or out of school, which may impact on his/her attendance, please contact us as soon as possible in order that we may offer support.

If after reading this leaflet, you still need to take your child out of school and consider your reasons to be exceptional, you should ask for a request form from the Attendance Office. Please include as much information as you can to enable us to consider your request. The form should be submitted as far in advance of the proposed absence as possible (we appreciate that in some circumstances this is not practical).

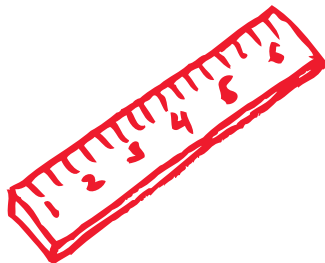
You will receive a letter in response to your request, giving our decision and explaining the reasons for our decision.

## The Importance of Attendance

At Outwood Grange Academies Trust, we strive to provide the best education and subsequent life chances for all our students. Good attendance is vital to ensure that every student achieves his/her full potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind their peers. Each Academy will promote good attendance and support where an improvement is required. Each Academy has a responsibility to promote good attendance and reduce absence and we work together with the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfill their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be used for dealing with unauthorised absence. All sanctions are used to improve school attendance.

## Fast Track to Attendance Process

Students' attendance is closely monitored. If a concern is raised, we will contact parents/carers and students to work together using a range of strategies to help improve attendance. If there is no improvement following this intervention, the Fast Track Process may be the most appropriate action to bring about a timely improvement in school attendance. A Fast Track Panel meeting will be held and parents/carers will be invited to attend. An action plan will be drawn up at this meeting and parents/carers will be notified that a Penalty Notice (fine) may be issued if no improvement is made following an initial 4 week review period.



## Relevant Legislation

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Penalty Notices)(England) Regulations 2007 as amended
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders)(England) Regulations 2007
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Children Act 1989

## Further Information

[www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence](http://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence)

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# LEGAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



## The Legislation

### Parental Responsibility

The Education Act 1996 places responsibility on parents to ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education. Where a child is on the roll of the Academy, this parental responsibility is to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren).

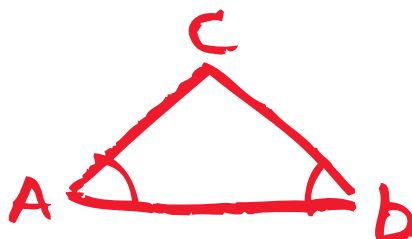
Where a child fails to attend regularly and/or is absent without authorisation, the parents may be guilty of an offence.

### Definition of 'Parent'

For the purposes of non-school attendance, the term 'parent' means all natural parents whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child; and any person who has day to day care of a child.

### The Offence

The consequences of a parent's failure to ensure their child's regular school attendance are that the case could end up in Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 which has two linked offences: 444 (1) - where a parent fails to secure their child's regular school attendance; and 444 (1A) - where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so.



### Sentencing Options

Fines available to the Court if parents are found guilty: Section 444 (1) is a fine of up to £1000;

Section 444 (1A) is a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment for up to 3 months.

There are other sentences at the disposal of the Courts: absolute discharge; conditional discharge; community order; or custodial sentence,

### Penalty Notices (PNs)

Penalty Notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents in the Magistrates' Court for failure to ensure the regular school attendance of their child. Penalty Notices can also be used in cases of unauthorised leave of absence. Penalty Notices are fines of £60 per parent for each child if paid within 21 days; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute parents in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges any liability to conviction for the offence under section 444 to which the notice relates.

There is no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices may also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

### Prosecution

Prosecution is a planned intervention where appropriate. Local Authorities (LAs) have the power to prosecute parents who may be guilty of an offence of failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance.

Local Authorities also have the power to prosecute parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded from school. A fine of up to £1000 may be imposed if found guilty.

### Education Supervision Order (ESO)

A Local Authority may apply to the Courts for an Education Supervision Order instead of, or as well as, prosecuting parents. The Order is placed on the child and the Local Authority is appointed by the Court, usually for a specified period of time, to advise, support and give directions to the supervised child and their parents to ensure the child is properly educated.

### Parenting Contracts and Orders

Parenting Contracts were introduced by section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and can be used in cases of irregular school attendance or misbehaviour. It is a formal, written, signed agreement between the parents and the school. It is voluntary but any non-compliance may be used in evidence in Court where an application is made for a Parenting Order.

A Parenting Order is imposed by the Court following conviction of an offence. Parents' agreement is not required. Parents subject to an Order must comply with the requirements specified in the Order and will also be required to attend counselling or guidance (e.g. parenting/education classes) where they will receive help and support to improve their child's attendance.

## Why is Punctuality Important?

At Outwood Grange Academies Trust, we expect all students to arrive on time ready to start the day and to be punctual to all lessons.

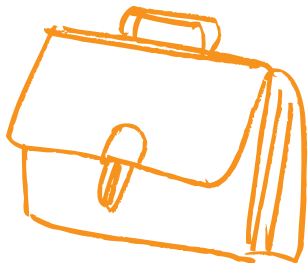
Arriving on time is a great start to the day, putting your child in the right frame of mind to make the most of the day's learning. Good punctuality is linked to good attendance which we know leads to better outcomes for children and young people.

### Arriving on time:

- Sets good habits for adult working life.
- Maximises educational achievement.
- Helps your child develop friendships and relationships.
- Boosts your child's confidence and self-esteem.

### Arriving late, however:

- Puts your child at an immediate disadvantage to other students who have arrived on time.
- Means your child misses important information at the start of lessons.
- Is embarrassing for your child.
- Disrupts lessons for other students.
- Can damage your child's confidence and self-esteem.



## Reporting an Absence/Lateness

Please call your Academy's main telephone number.

(You can leave a message 24 hours a day)

Please let us know your child's name, year group, the reason for lateness, and, if you can, the expected time of arrival.

Please write a note in your child's planner for them to bring to the Attendance Office/Reception on arrival at the Academy and remember to obtain confirmation of any appointments from doctor or dentist, etc. if this is the reason for your child's lateness.

If you wish to discuss your child's absence/punctuality, please ask us to return your call.

### Further Information

[www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence](http://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school\\_attendance](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school_attendance)

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# PUNCTUALITY



## Registration Procedure

- Students are expected to arrive by 8:15am (8:30am at Ripon).
- The first bell sounds at 8:20am (8:40am at Ripon) and students arriving after this time will be marked as late and have their planner stamped.
- The gates close at 8:20am (8:40am at Ripon) and access after this time is by the main entrance.
- The second bell at 8:25am (8:45am at Ripon) signals the start of lessons. Any student arriving after this time must sign in where they will receive a C4 detention of 1 hour the following day unless they have a valid reason for lateness.
- The registers will close at 9:00am (9:20am in Ripon). Any student arriving after this time without a valid reason will receive an unauthorised absence mark.

## Appointments

Appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever possible. If it is unavoidable, ideally students should attend before their appointment, sign out and then return to the Academy after their appointment.

If the appointment is early and your child will not be coming to the Academy on time, please notify the Attendance Office, write a note in your child's planner and send confirmation of the appointment in with your child. When your child arrives at the Academy, he/she should sign in and will receive a late mark. No detention will be issued for students with genuine reason for lateness if supported by an appointment card. Confirmation of all appointments is now a requirement. This can be an appointment letter, card or confirmation slip. Without this confirmation, absence will remain unauthorised and students may receive a detention for late arrival.

## What to do if your child is late

You should notify the Attendance Office as soon as possible that your child is going to be late.

Write a note in your child's planner explaining the reason for their lateness.

## What can parents/carers do?

- Encourage your child to be independent and prepare for school the night before - uniform, books, equipment, PE kit, cooking ingredients, etc.
- Encourage your child to get into the habit of doing homework at night - rather than rushing to do it over breakfast.
- Encourage your child to develop a good bedtime routine so they have plenty of rest - have a set bed time, no tv, computers or games consoles and switch off mobile phones.
- Invest in a reliable alarm clock and encourage your child to be independent in getting themselves up.
- See that your child has a drink and some breakfast before leaving home. Alternatively, breakfast is available in the restaurant before 8:20am.
- Allow plenty of time for the journey to school, allowing for traffic hold ups, etc.
- Have a back-up plan in case there is a problem - friends/family, neighbours or parents of school friends who can help out.
- Above all, if you're having problems, contact us as soon as possible for support.

## How can we support you?

At Outwood Grange Academies Trust, we firmly believe that working in partnership with parents/carers is the best way to improve outcomes for our students. If you are worried about your child's punctuality, please contact us to discuss any issues you may be having.

We monitor attendance and punctuality closely and if your child is regularly late, we may contact you to discuss how we can work together to improve the situation. In some cases, we may invite you into school for a meeting to discuss how we can best support you to improve your child's punctuality.

## How we deal with lateness

Students arriving late without a valid reason will receive a C4 detention of 1 hour. Your child will be given a sticker in their planner for them to take home informing you of this.

Any student who fails to attend this detention will receive a C5 isolation and a 1 hour detention on the same day as the isolation.

## What does the law say?

As a parent/carer, you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time. Parents/carers whose children regularly arrive late could be deemed to be failing in their responsibility to ensure regular attendance at school and parents/carers can be issued with a Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. The Education Act 1996 (section 444) allows for legal proceedings to be instigated by Local Authorities.





## Parental Responsibility

The Education Act 1996 places responsibility on parents/carers to ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education. Where a child is a registered pupil at a school, it is the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure the child(ren) attend school regularly.

Where a child fails to attend regularly and/or is absent without authorisation, the parents/carers may be guilty of an offence.

## Definition of 'Parent'

For the purposes of non-school attendance, the term 'parent' means all natural parents whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child; and any person who has day to day care of a child.



## Relevant Legislation

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# FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE



A Guide for Parents/Carers

## What is Fast Track to Attendance?

Where a student's attendance is cause for concern, we will contact parents/carers and students to work together using a range of strategies to help improve attendance. If this intervention fails to bring about an improvement, the Fast Track to Attendance process may be used (in appropriate circumstances).

Fast Track is used as a positive measure to support parents/carers to fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of their child.

The Fast Track process sets clear expectations for attendance and punctuality and gives a fixed period for improvement to be made. It explains procedures should parents/carers fail to meet their legal responsibility.

## How does it work?

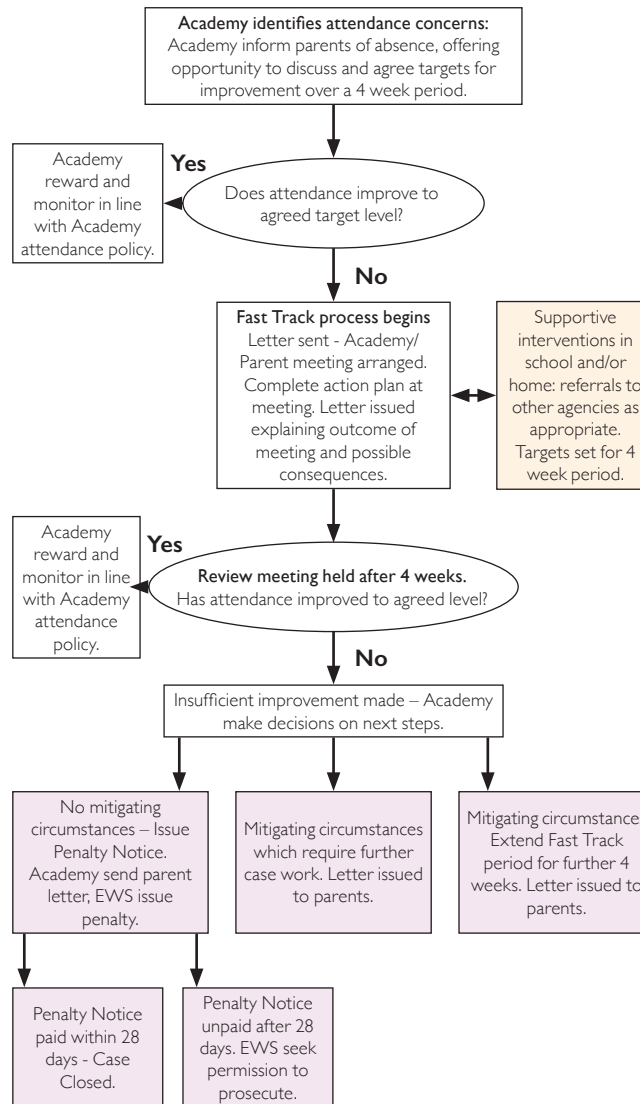
The Academy will inform parents/carers if the Fast Track process is to be used. Parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting to discuss attendance issues.

An action plan will be completed and signed by all parties.

A 4 week period will be given for improvements to be made and a target will be set. At the end of this period, a review meeting will be held and if attendance has not improved to the agreed level, a decision will be made on the next steps.

In cases of continuing unacceptable attendance, the Academy may refer to the Local Authority where legal action may be instigated. This may be a Penalty Notice or referral for prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

## Fast Track to Attendance Academy Flow Chart



## Penalty Notices (PNs)

Penalty Notices were introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 as an alternative to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices may be used by the Academy where:

- A parent/carer fails to ensure their child's regular school attendance and punctuality
- A child has an unauthorised leave of absence
- A child is persistently late for school after registers close
- An excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

## The cost of a Penalty Notice

A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 per parent/carer for each child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent/carer for each child if paid between 22-28 days.

Failure to pay will result in referral to the Local Authority who may prosecute parents/carers in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges any liability to conviction for the offence under section 444 to which the notice relates.

There is no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice.

