



Harton
Academy



Attendance Policy
February 2026

Harton Academy Attendance Policy

1.0 Visions and expectations

At Harton, we believe there is a strong correlation between good attendance and attainment. Our aim is to encourage and maintain high levels of attendance across the school. The school expectation is that students achieve 96% attendance. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for this is unavoidable.

Our policy and procedure relates to children who are on the Harton Academy school roll, and the measures we will take to protect them and their educational opportunities.

1.1 The school day

New school day

Time	Activity
8:40am – 9:40am	Period 1
9:40am – 10:40am	Period 2
10:40am – 11:00am	Break
11:00am – 12:00pm	Period 3
12:00pm – 1:30pm	Lunch and period 4 (details below)
1:30pm - 2:10pm	Intervention time
2:10pm - 3:10pm	Period 5
3:10pm (School day finish)	Enrichment and engagement

Time	Lunch block 1	Lunch block 2	Lunch block 3
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Period 4 (1 st half)	Lunch	Period 4
12:30pm – 1:00pm	Lunch	Period 4	Period 4
1:00pm – 1:30pm	Period 4 (2 nd half)	Period 4	Lunch

* Y12 and Y13 take lunch in a block of their choosing.

1.2 The Role of the school

We will promote good attendance and ensure that our teaching and learning encourages regular attendance. Pupils will be taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement. Teaching and appropriate support staff will ensure that attendance is recorded accurately and promptly, to ensure that non-attendances are dealt with without unnecessary delay. We will ensure that our pastoral team monitor attendance, including daily registers and on-going issues, as well as being aware of factors which may affect a pupil's attendance.

1.3 Parents and Carers

It is the responsibility of parents or carers to do everything they can to prevent unnecessary absences. A parent or carer must inform the school of any circumstance which may affect the child's attendance, and work with the pastoral team as required securing any improvements in attendance.

We hope that parents/carers will assist us in our work of raising attendance levels throughout the school by:

- Ensuring the regular attendance of their child.

- Informing the school when their child is absent from school.
- Providing a reason for the absence.
- Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, where necessary.

1.4 How we define 'Attendance'

Every absence from school has to be classified by the school as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. It is important for parents and carers to advise the school for each absence so this can be done accurately.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been approved. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Holidays/leave of absences, unless in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher
- Truancy
- Absences which are not properly explained

Harton Academy reserve the right to issue penalty notices to parents/carers who take their child out of school for unauthorised absence.

Late arrivals and absences:

Pupils who arrive after 08:40 am are required to register with the attendance team.

Persistent Absentees (PA) are those pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. Pupil progress is carefully monitored by pastoral staff, with a view to preventing students from falling into this category.

Severe Absentees (SA) are those pupils whose attendance falls below 50%. Interventions are closely monitored by pastoral staff with referrals to the safeguarding team made at this point due to the lack of attendance of a student.

2.0 Procedure for dealing with absences – in all cases

2.1 Notification of an absence

Parents or Carers are required to contact school on (0191) 4274050 the first day and every day after of a child's absence, at the earliest opportunity. They should advise of the reason for the absence and a likely day/date when they expect the child to return to school.

Please note that it is parents' / carers' responsibility to inform school of the reason for absence. If your child is absent and we do not receive any communication regarding this, we will endeavour to contact you on the first day of absence to request a reason. At this point your child will be marked on the register using the 'N' code (not present.) If after five days we have not been provided with a reason for absence that would allow us to authorise this absence, our school attendance officer will change the code on the register to an 'O' (unauthorised absence.) Ten sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence

within a 10-week period may lead to a referral to the Local Authority, and may incur a penalty notice warning and / or a fine.

Authorising absence

Parents and carers do not have the legal right to authorise absence, as this is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school have 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 in due course.

Where a pupil has not returned to school within a week a home visit/welfare check may be carried out by pastoral staff, to identify the reasons for the absence and determine the appropriate course of action.

2.2 Monitoring attendance

2.2.1 All staff monitor attendance by means of the electronic registration system used by the school.

In addition to this, all staff will be vigilant over attendance and will notify the attendance team about unauthorised absences during the school day.

The attendance team should be notified immediately if a pupil is found to be missing from a lesson. The relevant member of the pastoral team will be informed.

The electronic registration system records attendances, and allows the attendance team to quickly identify absentees in order to take the appropriate action.

2.2.2 In using the electronic registration system, and information provided by staff, patterns of absence or issues of concern will be identified. This will result in further action being taken, when pastoral staff meet weekly to discuss attendance issues.

Pupils and parents will be contacted by the school and meetings held with a view to improving the pupil's attendance.

3.0 Different Reasons for Absence

3.1 **Illness** – most cases of illness are short term. For longer periods of absence, parents or carers may be asked to provide medical evidence, such as an appointment card or a prescription. Where this is required, parents or carers will be advised of this.

3.2 Medical or dental appointments – every effort should be made to make these outside of school hours. Where this cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of the day as possible. Children will be asked to produce an appointment card or parental/carer note will be required.

3.3 Leave of absence

Some parents arrange holidays/leave of absence during term time, which may lead to the following problems:

- The child's education may suffer.
- Lessons and extra-curricular activities will be missed.
- Continuity of work is lost.
- Classes are disrupted.

Parents who wish to request leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday should obtain a holiday application form from the attendance team and return it at least four weeks prior to the proposed holiday.

The leave may be granted under exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher (or representative) has the discretion to determine 'exceptional circumstances'. Under all normal circumstances the 'representatives' of the Headteacher will be the attendance team and the pastoral leaders. Both will consider and sign all applications.

Working together to improve school attendance (update from August 2024) states 'the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Children who are taken on holiday without parents seeking permission or where permission was not granted will be marked as being an unauthorised absentee. The LA may issue a fixed penalty notice in all such cases, making a parent liable to a fixed penalty fine for each child involved.

In addition to this, if your child is absent on either the days before or the days after a requested leave of absence, we will not authorise these absences without medical evidence.

4.0 Instigating further action

4.1 Where the school has undertaken reasonable steps to deal with attendance problems, and the required improvement is not being achieved, the school may resort to seeking to issue a Local Authority Penalty Notice.

The trigger point at which a Penalty Notice will be considered is where the pupil has recorded at least 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in the preceding 10 school weeks.

5.0 Promoting good attendance

The nearer pupils come to full attendance, the greater the probability that they will achieve their

potential. Good attendance is therefore encouraged in the following ways:

- Pupils achieving 100% attendance over a full term will be awarded an 'Attendance Certificate.'
- Each week, attendance data is produced for every individual pupil, tutor group, year group and the whole school. This data included lists in rank order, graphs for display and certificates for all pupils who have 100% attendance for that period of time.
- Attendance matters are regularly addressed during assembly time and tutorial.

6.0 Part-time timetables

All pupils are entitled to a full-time education. Reducing a pupil's timetable is rarely in their best interests. The school will only ever agree to a part-time timetable in the most exceptional circumstances, and this will be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team. If the exceptional decision is made to reduce a pupil's timetable, it will be very time limited and only to support the pupil to build up their ability to attend full time.

7.0 Staff responsible for attendance matters

Our Attendance Officer is Mrs Ruth Greenwell (Assistant Attendance Officer is Miss Dixon). Her role is to deal with attendance and punctuality throughout the school and to promote safeguarding and the welfare of students. Mrs Greenwell can be reached on extension number 202.

On a daily basis, Mrs Greenwell and Miss Dixon will:

- Call parents on the first day of absence
- Follow up on unauthorised absences

And on a routine basis, Mrs Greenwell and Miss Dixon will:

- Make home visits and arrange parental meetings in school. For cases where it is not advisable for Mrs Greenwell to make home visit this will be referred to other senior pastoral staff.
- Contact key members of staff and students in obtaining high levels of attendance and arrange meetings with those staff.
- Contact the Local Authority in cases of continued absences implementing legal proceedings.

All members of staff have a responsibility in maintaining accurate registers and reporting instances of truancy. In addition to Mrs Greenwell and Miss Dixon the following members of staff have additional responsibilities in this area.

- Mr G Varley, Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Key Stage Directors and assistants
- Pastoral Support
- Form Tutors.
- Local Authority Services for Young people.

8.0 Punctuality

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of the 1996 Education Act.

Once the gates are closed at 8.40 am the only way to gain access to school is via the attendance office in the 1936 building. Any student who enters school from 8.40 am, will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those students who are late.

Pupils who are late for school will receive an automatic late detention on the same day. All parents/carers will be informed of all pupil detentions. Any late detentions will only be cancelled in exceptional circumstances.

9.0 Truancy

Pupils who truant from school will face a robust sanction. Pupils will be required to, at least, make up the time for which they have truanted via detention(s); detentions for such will only be cancelled in extreme circumstances. In the more serious cases of truancy, pupils will be referred to the Learning Support Centre.

10.00 Students leaving Site

If a student is assessed by First Aid or Pastoral Support and determined to be too unwell to remain at school, they must be collected by a parent, guardian, or another responsible adult. This policy is in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student, as it cannot be guaranteed that they will be able to travel home safely on their own.

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the day to collect uniform, books, PE kit, or other work from home. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they bring all necessary items with them each day. This policy is in place to minimise disruption to learning and to maintain the safety and security of all students on site.

Appendix One

Electronic registration

- The register is a document which must be kept up to date both for legal reasons and so that tutors, the pastoral team, the Attendance Officer, senior staff and local authority staff can monitor attendance and deal effectively with non-attenders. Accurate and up-to-date registers are also essential for the pastoral team to carry out her own weekly monitoring exercises. The school is also obliged to submit accurate figures on attendance and types of absence to the LA on a daily basis. The latter statistics are used by the DfE to compile 'league tables'.
- Pupils' names will be presented on the electronic system in one alphabetical list. The school office should be notified of any errors on form lists.
- Registers should be completed in line with the symbols on the computerised system. Whilst an absence remains unexplained the symbol is an 'N'. This symbol will remain until such times as staff become satisfied that the absence is authorised at which time (five days) the appropriate symbol should be entered.

- Every effort should be made to ascertain reasons for absence. Where such efforts, whether by note or by telephone, have not succeeded in obtaining authorisation for any absence within five days of the pupil's return to school, the Attendance team will take appropriate action.
- Parents have been requested to inform school on the 'First Day' of a pupil's absence. If the parent does not notify the school, then the Attendance Officer will make contact with the home.
- Lesson attendance register should be completed as soon as is practicable at the beginning of every lesson.

Appendix Two

The Local Authority Penalty Notice

For Harton Academy, a Local Authority Penalty Notice is issued by the Local Authority. These can be requested by schools, Police and neighbouring Local Authorities. Requests meeting with the above criteria will be actioned within 10 school days by the school through the following process:

- The Local Authority will receive, from the school, a referral stating the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and agree a period of at least 15 school days within which the pupil must have no further unauthorised absence.
- The Local Authority will monitor attendance and where further cases of unauthorised absence have occurred; a Penalty Notice will be issued through the post.

No one parent will receive more than 2 penalty notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in an academic year September to August. Any further concerns that require a formal response will be referred to the Magistrates Court.

****The rules for unauthorised absence have changed. Penalty notices can now be issued for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period, even if those sessions are not consecutive. So, if you have 10 individual days of unauthorised absence within that timeframe, it would meet the criteria for a penalty notice.***

Please see the below link for more information on penalty notices:

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/2467/Penalty-notices>

Withdrawal of a Penalty Notice

Once issued, a Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn where there is proof it has been issued to the wrong person or where it can be shown the Penalty Notice was not issued within the terms of the Code of Conduct.

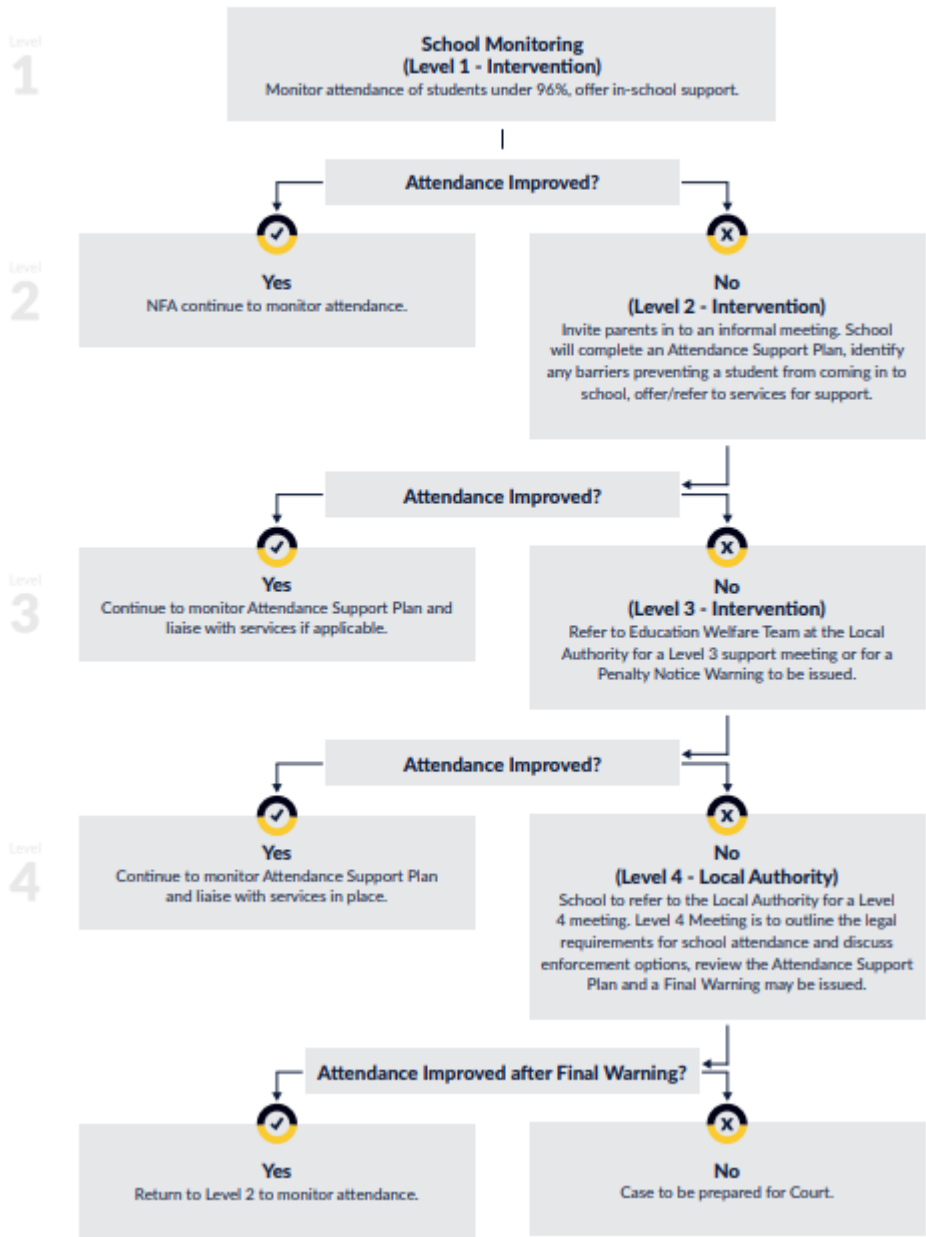
Other school policies that should be considered:

- Behaviour Management
- Children in Care
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school
- Mental Health
- Safeguarding

- School exclusion
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

Appendix Three:

HARTON ACADEMY ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART





Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance



With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after **19th August 2024**.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.


Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.

- Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court, can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.
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Appendix Five:

Attendance Codes (Working together to improve school attendance Feb 24)

Attending Codes

- Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session Code
- Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed
- Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code W: Attending work experience
- Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity
- Code D: Dual registered at another school

Absence Codes – Leave Of Absence

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Absence – Other Authorised Reasons

- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
- Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absence – Unauthorised

- Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N: Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative Codes

- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

Appendix Six: Children 'missing from education'

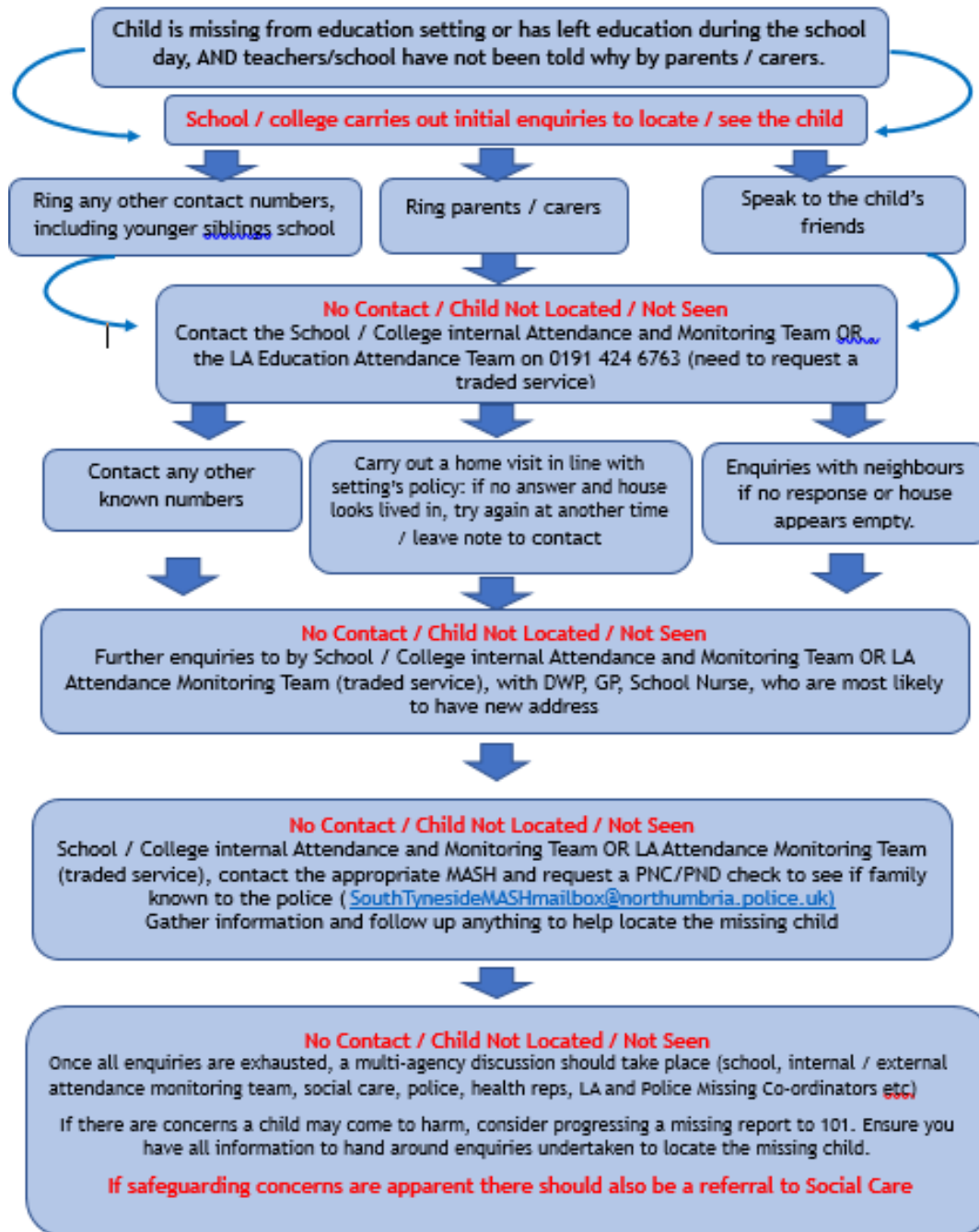
The term "missing from education" now applies if a child:

- Has left school without permission during the school day and their whereabouts is unknown, or they have not attended school as expected by their parent/carer and their whereabouts is unknown.

In these cases, the school will take steps to identify the reasons for the absence. This will include trying to contact parents or carers and making a home visit if necessary. Parents or carers may be invited into school to discuss the absence.

The local authority has in place a response system to manage missing children. It is called the Missing Child Protocol. If staff consider the child to be at risk, or if the situation cannot be clarified before the end of the school day, the Missing Child Protocol will be completed and appropriate agencies informed (see appendix five).

The police may be contacted to conduct a welfare check if necessary. This will be conducted using the right care, right person policy ([Right Person, Right Care Policy - Northumbria Police](#)).



**All attendance procedures are carried out in accordance with DfE guidelines (August, 2024), 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. The Academy's School Attendance Champion is Mr G Varley (Deputy Headteacher - Pastoral).*