BUGLAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Be the Best We Can

Attendance Policy

Members of staff responsible:	**Alison Kennerley/Gaynor Lynch**
Date approved:	**Spring 2026**
Date to be reviewed:	**Spring 2027**

Buglawton Primary School believes that, to ensure our pupils gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly and on time every day that the school is open, unless their absence is unavoidable. We encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality so that each and every pupil has the opportunity to "be the best we can".

This policy aims to make clear what is expected of parents and pupils and to assure parents of our willingness to work positively with them if problems arise. The policy demonstrates our commitment to improve school attendance and punctuality.

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance and education does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Our Senior Attendance Champion is Alison Kennerley Headteacher.

The following information shows the impact of reduced attendance on education during a school year:

Annual Attendance	Equivalent Days Lost	Equivalent Weeks Lost	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9.5	2	50
90%	19	3.8	100
85%	28.5	5.7	150
80%	38	7.6	200

As a school, we aim to:

- Maintain a whole school attendance rate of a minimum of 96%.
- Raise and maintain awareness to 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 and parents/carers so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Maintain our attendance registers in accordance with Local Authority (LA) policy.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Target the attendance monitoring of identified, vulnerable children.
- Reward children for 100% attendance through termly certificates and annual trophies. Efforts are also made to recognise pupils whose attendance has improved or has been as good as it possibly could be.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

What school expects from parents:

- To make sure that their children attend school and are on time.
- To telephone the absence line (01260 633080) or email the school office, admin@buglawton.cheshire.sch.uk **on each day of absence by 9:00am** (even if they were absent the day before) with the reason for absence and when you think the child will return.
- Reply promptly to any request or enquiry concerning an absence. Staff may carry out spot check home visits.
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.

Actions school will take:

- If the school has not received notification from the parent regarding an absence, the school office will contact the parent by email or telephone by 9:30am to find out the reason for absence. This ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe.
- If the parent does not answer and does not provide a reasonable explanation for the absence, the school may do a home visit. Attendance will be marked as unauthorised until proved otherwise.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our newsletters and in our Charter for Schools.
- Acknowledge and reward both good and improved attendance, celebrating them as a whole school and individual classes.
- Let parents know if school has concerns regarding their child's attendance. If the school continues to have concerns, we will make a referral to the LA's Attendance and Children Out of School Team (ACOOS) for advice/action.

Medical Absence

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. If the school has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred, they will contact the parents to discuss it further and to find out whether their GP or other health professional has been contacted.

If the authenticity of the absence is in question or the pupil has a prolonged absence, parents may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a note from a medical professional or a copy of any prescribed medication. If the school does not receive medical evidence, the absences will be unauthorised.

For pupils with a mental health issue affecting attendance, we will follow the DFE guidance Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

For more information on medical absence –
Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible, we require proof of a medical appointment prior to authorising the absence and an M code will be used on the register to record when the child has attended the appointment.

Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school, morning or afternoon, for a legitimate reason, eg. illness or medical appointments, and the school has received notification from a parent or carer **before 9:00am.**

Unauthorised Absence

The Education Act 1996 states that "If a child of compulsory school age is a registered pupil at a school and fails to attend regularly, his parent is guilty of an offence". Furthermore, the 2013 amendment to the Act, stated that "leave of absence shall not be granted by schools unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'". The school must adhere to this amendment and will not authorise any absence, unless it is deemed, by the Headteacher, to be exceptional. For clarity, the following reasons for absence will NOT be authorised:

- No explanation has been given for the absence
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation for absence
- School refusal
- Parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- Pupils who arrive to school after the close of the register
- Because the parent/carer or the person who normally brings the child to school is ill
- Waiting at home for a delivery
- Going shopping or for a haircut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child's or any other family member's birthday
- Sleeping in for any reason
- Treating headlice
- Inadequate school uniform
- Problems with transport
- Holidays taken during term time that have not been authorised by the Headteacher

When considering absence from school, it should be noted that there are 190 school days per year, leaving 175 non-school days (including weekends) for activities such as holidays, visiting family, friends, appointments, etc.

Our admin staff and Headteacher regularly monitor every pupil's attendance. Where there appears to be a particular problem with attendance, the following procedures are applied.

- A letter is sent to parents informing them of a decline in school attendance and the need for this to improve due to the impact on their child's education and social development.
- If no improvement is seen, parents and pupils, where appropriate, will be invited into a meeting with the school to discuss the concerns and to offer support around any possible barriers or problems at home or at school which may be contributing to low attendance. Referrals to wider support services may be offered where appropriate. The discussion held will be documented by the school and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
- If school attendance does not improve, the school may follow the state LA's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for pupils with persistent absence.

The new National Framework introduces consistency in the use of Penalty Notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered. The framework increases the amount of the Penalty Notice and introduces a new national limit of 2 Penalty Notices within a 3-year rolling period to break cycles of repeat offending. In line with the guidance, Cheshire East will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate. However, Penalty Notices can be issued without a Notice to Improve in cases where support is not appropriate (such as leave of absence in term time) or when support has not been engaged with. Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the LA to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates.

Unauthorised Absence Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent by the LA on behalf of the school, this will stipulate the support that has already been implemented and the ongoing support that is available to the parent and child to improve school attendance. The Notice to Improve will also detail the expected improvements that must be made over a set time frame to prevent the

Penalty Notice being issued. Further information on the National Framework can be found within Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024. The National Framework comes into effect from 19th August 2024. Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. Buglawton Primary School will notify the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

Penalties for Unauthorised Absence from Autumn 2024 in a 3 year rolling period		
Timeline	**One Child**	**Two Children**
Paid within 21 days	£80 per parent as per the definition in the Education Act Section 576.	£80 per child = £160 per parent
After 21 days and before 28	£160 per parent	£160 per child = £320 per parent
After 28 days	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.
Second offence (within 3 years) for which non-payment would be referred to the Magistrates Court.		
To be paid within 28 days	£160 per parent.	£160 per child = £320 per parent
Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years) would not result in a Penalty Notice but may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444(1) Single Justice Procedure (SJP) of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.		

Requests for leave of absence

Leave of Absence (holidays) Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non-consecutive. In line with the National Framework, the LA retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.

Amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 make it clear that Headteachers should only grant a leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances to justify this.

If a parent wishes to request leave for their child for any reason, they must apply in advance and in writing using the leave of absence request form which can be requested from the school office. If a request for leave has not been received and we have reason to believe a pupil is on holiday, a home visit may be completed by the school and a letter will be sent to parents requesting medical evidence for the absence. If no medical evidence can be provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised, and a penalty notice request sent to the LA.

Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. The school will return the leave of absence form to the parent making the request, informing them if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

Please note – it is the responsibility of the parent to check the school's holiday timetable prior to booking any

holiday. If holiday dates are not published on the school website, clarification should be sought with the school before booking.

Punctuality

If a child is late for 5 minutes each day, they miss 3 days of school each year. If they are 15 minutes late each day, they miss 2 weeks each school year. If they are 30 minutes late each day, they miss 19 days each school year.

It is vital to a child's progress that they attend school as often as possible. When children arrive on time:

- Registration takes place quickly and smoothly
- The children are engaged in a classroom activity
- The day gets off to a good start for everyone
- Everyone hears the information given and is included in important explanations and discussions. This ensures that everyone knows what to do and what is expected from them
- The children have an opportunity to mix socially before learning begins

When children arrive late:

- It interrupts everyone's concentration
- It wastes valuable learning time for the whole class
- The teacher has to repeat information/instructions whilst others have to wait
- The late child is at an immediate disadvantage because they may have missed important teaching points, missed discussions where ideas are shared and will be generally unsettled
- Children are not ready to start their learning in the same way as their peers.

Registration procedures

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. Therefore, information about the cause of each absence is always required.

When completing the register, school follow the DFE Working together to improve school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use; Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Morning registration opens at 8:45am and closes at 9.05am. Classroom doors are all open at 8:35am to enable children to access their classrooms and settle for the day. If children arrive after 8:45am, parents must accompany their children to the school office to sign them in. Upon late arrival at the office, school staff will address their concerns with parents as and when necessary.

If a child arrives after the close of registers, their absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless school is absolutely satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the child being late.

Morning registration

The morning register is taken at 8.45am. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.05am are recorded as late – L.

Registration closes at 9.05am. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – U.

Afternoon registration

The afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 1.20pm are recorded as late – L.

Registration closes at 1.20pm. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late and this will be recorded as an

unauthorised absence – U.

Early collection of pupils will not be authorised without a valid reason that is sent in writing, in advance.

All children must be collected at 3.15pm (or 4.15pm if attending an extra-curricular club); our staff have a variety of commitments after school – running clubs, staff meetings and courses, and it should not be assumed that they are available to supervise children after this time. If a child is not collected by 3.30pm, they will be taken to the After School Club and parents will be charged accordingly.

Late procedures

Parents are requested to contact the school office if their child is going to be late and provide a reason for lateness.

If lateness is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Parents will receive a letter informing of the concern.
2. If no improvement, the school will contact parents to further discuss and offer support and advice to improve punctuality.
3. If still no improvement, parents and pupils will be invited to a meeting with the school to discuss the reasons for lateness and to offer support. Referrals to wider support services may be offered if needed. The discussion held will be documented by the school and an action plan to improve punctuality will be devised with parents and the pupil during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
4. If no improvement is seen after the meeting has taken place, the school may follow the LA's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, school will contact the parent and discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this time the parent still wishes to home educate their child, the school will inform the LA of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to home educate, parents are requested to contact state LA's Elective Home Education department.

Children Missing in Education

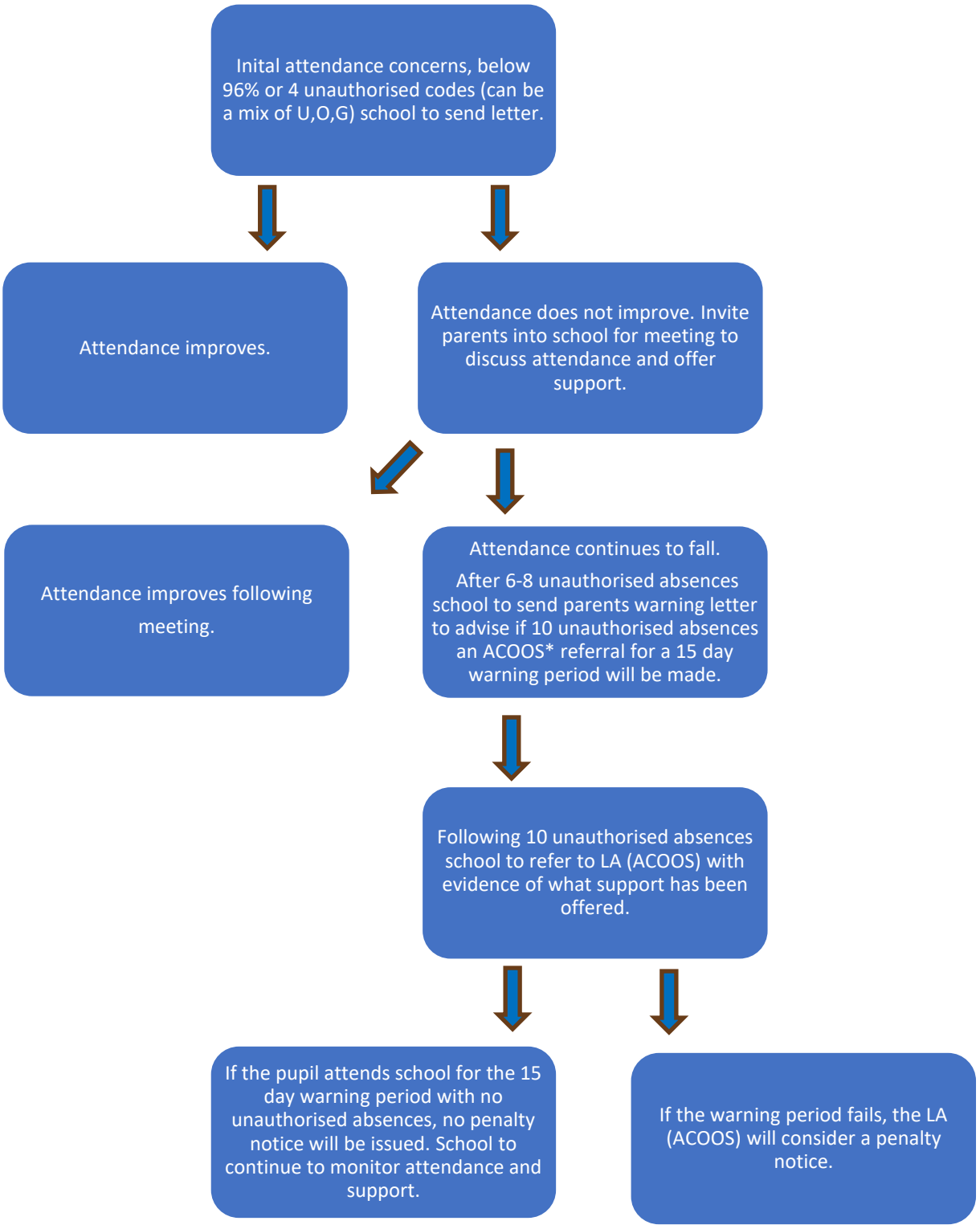
When pupils leave and we have not been given information regarding their new school, and we cannot contact parents/carers, then the child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the LA has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which may include liaising with Children's Services the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

To avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

Miss A Kennerley (Headteacher) **Mr G Hayes (Chair of Governors)**

Appendix 1

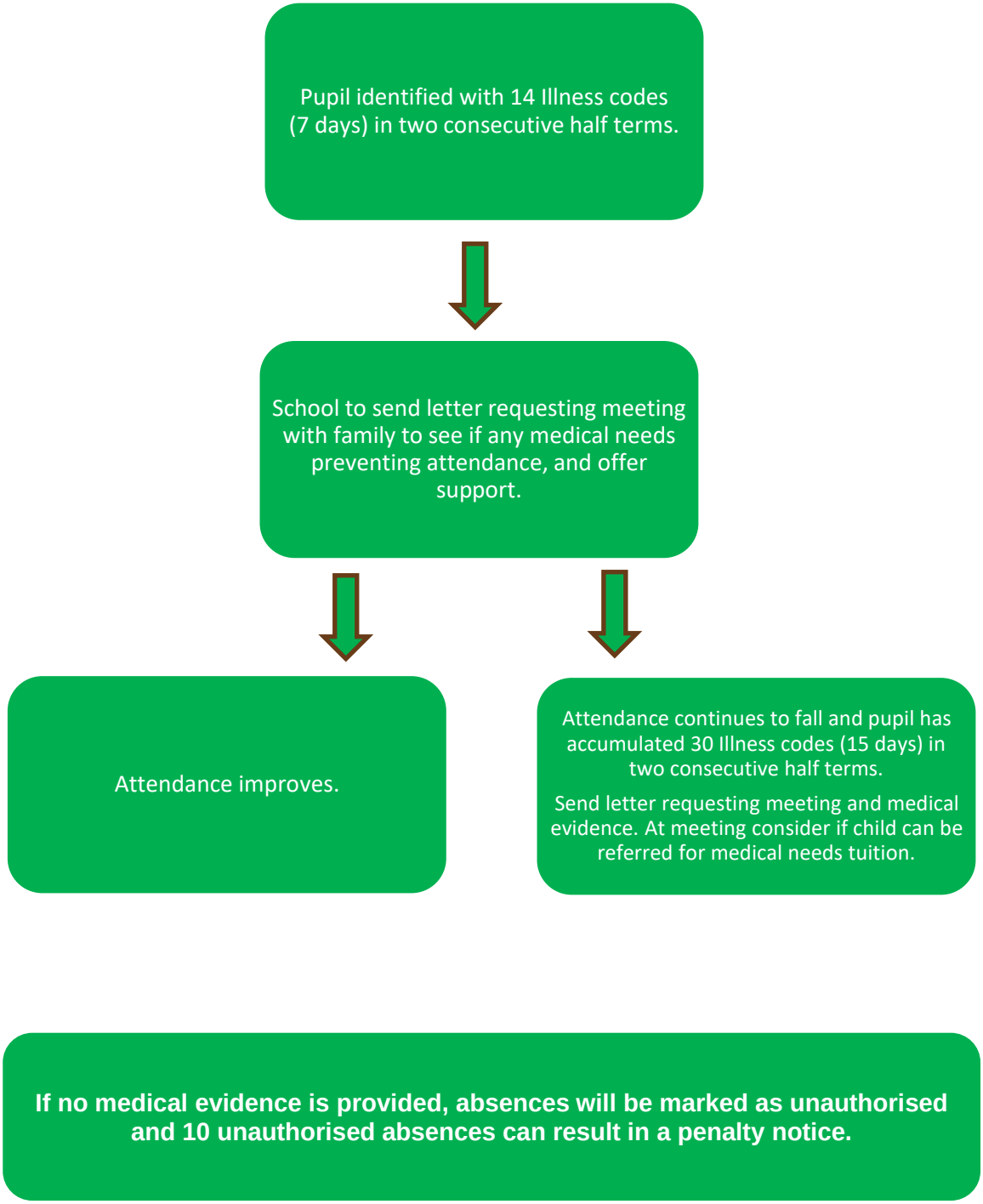
Attendance flow chart - irregular attendance



*ACOOS – Attendance and Children Out of School team

Appendix 2

Attendance flow chart - illness



If no medical evidence is provided, absences will be marked as unauthorised and 10 unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice.