

Atam Academy

Primary & Secondary Attendance and Absence Policy



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1. Statement of intent

ATAM Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school and be on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the *Headteacher*, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Rewarding regular attendance

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Ensure that pupils are safe; having parent/carer contact when they are absent, so the school know (to the best of their knowledge) where the pupil is when absent.
- Monitor trends and patterns of absence of individual vulnerable pupils
- Support pupils and their parents/carers in establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer to improve each pupil's academic outcomes
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities

2. Legal framework

2.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2020) 'Improving school attendance'

2.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Advisory Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

3.2 The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Staff; including teachers, support staff and volunteers
- following this attendance policy and ensuring pupils do so also
- ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time education

3.3 Teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:

- Modelling good attendance behaviour
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated
- Secondary teachers will take a register at the start of each session they teach or are covering
- Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session

3.4 Staff responsible for attendance will:

Inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home
No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school
- Have an authorised medical note
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning
- Have been permanently excluded

3.5 The school will ensure that absence procedures are understood by pupils, parents and carers through weekly newsletters and ParentMail messages.

3.6 Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number
- Updating the school if their details change
- Taking responsibility for the attendance of their children during term-time
- Promoting good attendance and ensuring their children attend school every day

3.7 Pupils are responsible for:

- Their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year
- Their punctuality to lessons

4 Definitions

The school defines an “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

The school defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Arrival at school after 9.15am when the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays etc
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

The school defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason

5 Training of staff

- 5.1 The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

- Teachers and support staff will receive training on Atam Academy's attendance policy as part of their new starter induction
- Teachers and support staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed
- Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development

Pupils expectations:

- To attend school every day on time
To agree to strive for 100% attendance throughout the year (we accept that some absence may be unavoidable due to illness)

Attend lessons punctually

- Report any absence immediately to the relevant member of staff

6 Pupils at risk of persistent absence

6.1. The Senior Leader overseeing attendance will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem
by:

- Sending letters to parents
- Having a weekly tutor review
- Engaging with LA attendance teams
- Using fixed penalty notices
- Creating attendance clinics

6.2. The Local Advisory Board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

6.3. Teaching staff will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- Meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.

- Work with the child, family and attendance team to establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support
- Lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups

7 Vulnerable Pupils:

7.1 Pupils potentially at greater risk of harm who require a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences.

7.2 The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups such as:

- Children in need (CIN)
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils who speak English as a second language
- Pupils with SEND

8. Absence procedures:

8.1 Parents are required to contact the school by 9.00am on the first day of any absence and every further day of absence, until the child returns to school.

8.2 Parents are required to send a note on the first day their child returns with a signed explanation (this can also be done through Parentmail and email) as to why they were absent. This must be done even if we have already received a phone call.

8.3 Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

8.4 A phone call and text message will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

8.5 The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system

8.6 In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Officer.

8.7 The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

8.8 If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Lead will be informed and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents and Education Welfare Officer.

8.9 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

9 Parental involvement

9.1 The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.

9.2 The school will communicate openly and honestly with pupils and their families about their expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

9.3 The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. if a pupil has a social worker.

9.4 Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect
- Actively support the work of the school
- Call on staff for help when they need it
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support

10 Attendance register

10.1 The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

10.2 The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

/ = Present in the morning
\ = Present in the afternoon
L = Late arrival before the register has closed
C = Authorised absence
E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
H = Authorised holiday
I = Illness
M = Medical or dental appointments
R = Religious observance
B = Off-site education activity
G = Unauthorised holiday
O = Unauthorised absence
U = Arrived after registration closed
N = Reason not yet provided
X = Not required to be in school
T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
V = Educational visit or trip
P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
D = Duel registered – at another educational establishment
Y = Exceptional circumstances
Z = Pupil not on admission register

10.3 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

10.4 All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

10.5 Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

11 Attendance Officer

11.1 If pupils are persistently absent, they will be referred to the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Lead who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

11.2 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

11.3 The Pastoral Lead and Attendance Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence.

11.4 The Attendance Officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

12 Lateness

Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

12.1. The school day starts 8.15am for secondary and 8.30am for primary pupils. Pupils should be in their classrooms at this time.

12.2. Registers are marked by 8.25am in secondary and 8:40am in primary. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Registers will be closed by 9.15am

12.3. After lunch, registers are marked. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by the end of their year groups allocated lunchtime.

13 Truancy

13.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

13.2. All pupils are expected to be in their classes every day, on time.

13.3 The teacher will record the attendance electronically.

13.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.

13.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting.

13.6. If truancy is suspected, the Pastoral Lead will be notified and they will contact the child's parents in order to inform them that their child is suspected of truanting. They will discuss with the parent the possible reasons behind the child not attending school.

13.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

14 Missing children

14.1 Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Executive Headteacher.

14.2 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Pastoral Lead or member of SLT on duty immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Pastoral Lead or member of SLT
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- The Pastoral Lead or member of SLT will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located
- The Pastoral Lead or member of SLT will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred

- Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Primary Behaviour Policy
- Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses 7.6-7.8 of this policy
- A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome

15 Term-time leave

School Attendance and the Law

15.1 **There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.** In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

15.2 It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Examples of exceptional circumstances considered by the school would be a bereavement, serious illness etc. Only the Headteacher or their designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school.

15.3 **We will not consider applications for leave during term time:**

- At any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible
- During assessment and test periods in the school’s calendar affecting your child
- When a pupil’s attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year

Leave during lunch times

15.4. In exceptional circumstances, parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Executive Headteacher – it is at the Executive Headteacher’s discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

15.5 **Parents** will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Executive Headteacher.

- a. The Executive Headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent in to the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child’s behaviour when not on the school premises.

- b. The Executive Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.
- c. Our lunch time hours are staggered for different Key Stages between 11:00am - 1:30pm. Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.
- d. Parents will be required to meet their child at the main reception area when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the main reception area.
- e. A member of staff will be available at the main reception area before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.
- f. If a pupil is expected to be leaving the school premises, they are required to do so – pupils will go home as soon as they leave the site and will not loiter outside the premises.
- g. If a pupil expected to leave no longer has reason to do so, e.g. a medical appointment is cancelled, they will inform a member of staff at the school office immediately.
- h. Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises where they have a lunch time detention – parents will be informed promptly if this is the case and suitable arrangements will be implemented, e.g. access to a school lunch.
- i. Pupils may also not be permitted to leave the school premises where they have displayed poor behaviour at any time – parents will be informed promptly if this is the case and suitable arrangements will be implemented, e.g. access to a school lunch.
- j. The Executive Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where a pupil displays poor conduct of behaviour when off the premises, or where there are attendance concerns.
- k. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Executive Headteacher’s decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision.
- l. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Executive Headteacher.
- m. Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

16 Religious observances

16.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.

16.2. Parents will inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

17 Appointments

17.1 As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

17.2. Where it is not possible to book appointments outside of school hours, parents are asked to provide evidence of the appointment to the school office. This can be an appointment card or letter, email or text message.

17.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the main reception area by a parent.

17.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

18 Young carers

18.1. The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

18.2. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

19 Exceptional circumstances

19.1. When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.

19.2. Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months

19.3. The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

20 Rewarding good attendance

20.1. The school acknowledges outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- Termly 100% attendance certificates assembly termly
- Termly rewards for 100% attendance
- Termly attendance certificates for the most improved attendance.
- Staff can also nominate pupils who may have less than 100% but more than 95% when they recognise that a single unavoidable event (s) such as a medical appointment(s) has reduced attendance.

20.2. Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Postcards home
- Rewards raffle
- Class Charts points

21 Monitoring and review

21.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

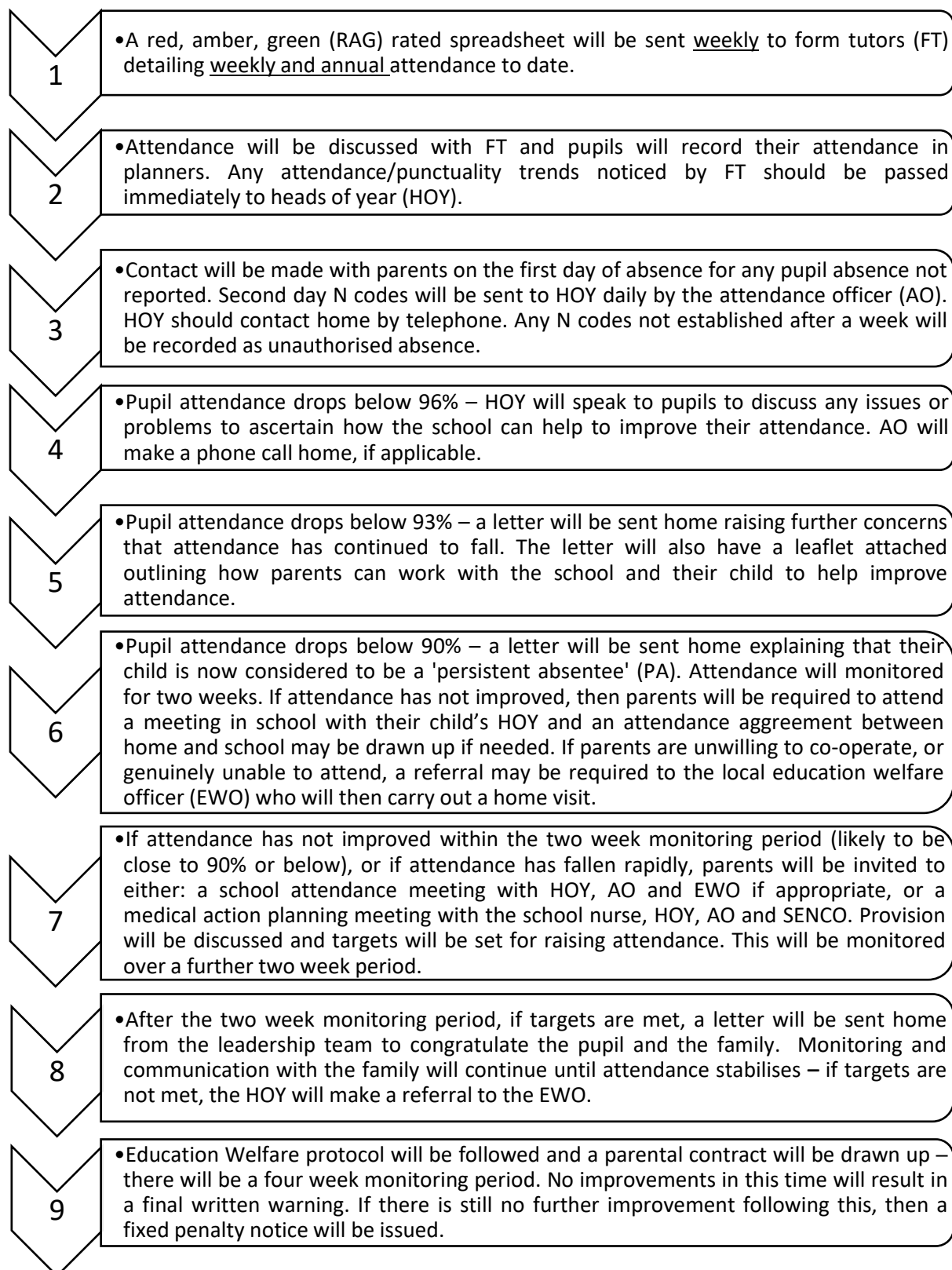
21.2. Atam Academy aspires to achieve whole school attendance of 97% and above .

21.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.

This policy is reviewed every three years by the Executive Headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is 26/01/2024.

- a. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

Appendix 1 - Secondary Flow Diagram



Appendix 2 Actions for pupil absent from school

We must always remember that children present in school are safe children. If a child is absent this *can be* a safeguarding concern. We have a duty of care and we are required to know where children are if they are absent from school and the reason for absence. Parents are required to inform the school of any absence, the reason for absence and must contact the school every day of absence.

When a pupil is absent from school and we have *not* received any contact from parents/carer with a reason for absence the following route will be followed.

Day	Action
1	<p>Text 1 message sent by 9-00 a.m. re absence to ALL absentees</p> <p>Phone calls home in order of priority (CP, CIN, LAC, PP, PA pupils, SEND) made from 9-15 a.m. Calls made by AO, pastoral team or DSL if appropriate.</p> <p>Priority home visits identified by pastoral team and completed by 11-30am. Visiting card left if no answer.</p> <p>Marks:</p> <p>Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in SIMs.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Where no reason is yet established the mark will remain as an N</p> <p>If no reason has been established by 2-30 p.m. Text 2 (safeguarding focus) is sent and a pupil is identified as a priority home visit if absent the following day.</p> <p>If there are safeguarding concerns about the child or family Children’s Social Care will be contacted. The police will be contacted and asked to complete a welfare visit if appropriate.</p> <p>Home visits and concerns will be logged on CPOMS</p>
2	<p>If the pupil is absent for a second day and no contact has been received Text 3 is sent by 9-00 a.m. This text highlights the school’s concerns re safeguarding and their duty of care.</p> <p>Home visit is completed by 11-30 a.m.</p> <p>If there are NO immediate safeguarding concerns and no one is home the second contact on SIMs will be used to try and establish where the pupil is.</p> <p>If there are safeguarding concerns Children’s Social Care will be contacted again or the police will be asked to complete a welfare visit.</p>

	<p>Marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in SIMs. • Where no reason is yet established the mark will remain as an N <p>If no reason has been established by 2-30 p.m. Text 4 (safeguarding focus) is sent</p> <p>This text informs the parent/carers that the police or Children’s Social Care will be contacted</p> <p>Home visits and concerns will be logged on CPOMS</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>If the pupil is absent for a third consecutive day and no contact has been received to give reason for the absence Text 4 is sent again.</p> <p>Home visit is completed by 11-30 a.m.</p> <p>Contact is made with Children’s Social Care for advice and guidance.</p> <p>Marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in SIMs. • Where no reason is yet established the mark will be changed to an O – an unauthorised absence <p>Home visits and concerns will be logged on CPOMS</p>

If the parent provides a reason we do not believe is truthful or a pattern of condoned absence emerges then the DSL will contact the parents/carers and request that a medical evidence letter is signed. This agrees that all future absences will require medical evidence or will be logged as unauthorised by the school.

If we believe the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday, then we will inform the Education Welfare Service. They may prosecute or issue you with a penalty notice for failing to ensure your child attends school in accordance with this policy.