

## Attendance Policy for School & College

### Policy Control Page

<b>Responsible Person</b>	AP School & AP College
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The Deaf Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. We do all that we can, to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible. It is our policy to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. We will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our students.

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## Statement of Intent

We want our students to thrive in our Academy every day. We build strong and enduring relationships because we believe this is the foundation students need to fully engage in our community, to feel a sense of belonging and succeed.

Every student has a right to access education, and everyone is responsible for supporting and promoting excellent school/college attendance and punctuality. The Deaf Academy is committed to providing the highest quality of education to our students and we recognise the clear link between attendance and the attainment of our students.

The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable the Deaf Academy to provide a consistent practice, that actively encourages and supports the highest possible levels of attendance for all our students. The Deaf Academy takes a whole Academy approach to maintaining regular attendance and to achieve this, all members of our community have an important contribution to make. It is vital that we work in partnership to ensure that any in-school/college or out-of-school/college barriers are removed at the earliest opportunity. This is achieved through early and meaningful support.

We support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and in addition, promote and support punctuality when attending lessons. We adhere to the same commitment with young people up to the age of 25.

We are committed to taking positive action in line with the Equality Act (2010) regarding the needs of people with protected characteristics. These are age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership. We make reasonable adjustments to avoid anyone with a protected characteristic being placed at a disadvantage. Our relentless approach to ensuring our students attend school/college and receive the education that they deserve, and are entitled to, is central to our academy values.

This policy is supported by policies relating to child protection and safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour, , equality, special educational needs. It is our duty to strive for a goal of 100% attendance for all students so that they can take full advantage of the opportunities offered. It is vital that students at school/college, are on time, every day the school/college is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Therefore, this policy has been created to help support the school/college in effectively managing absences so that our students (your children/young people) can make the most of the educational and life opportunities available to them.

In summary, the Deaf Academy aims to meet its obligations relating to school/college attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence by effectively removing the barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Minimising the disruption caused by late arrivals or non-attendance to the quality of the education and provisions for all students.

## Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all school leaders, staff, parents, and students.

1.1 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'teachers' include all paid staff responsible for the supervision of students.

1.2 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'students' include all learners in our school/college.

1.3 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'school' refers to all education settings, regardless of type.

1.4 For the purposes of this policy and the procedures, we refer to Section 576 of the Education Act which defines the 'parent' of a student or young person as:

- Both of their natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although they are not the natural parent, has parental responsibility for the student or young person, as defined in the Children Act (1989).
- Any person who, although not the natural parent, has the care of the student or young person i.e., a person with whom the student lives with, irrespective of their relationship to the student.

## 2. Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act (1996)
- The Education Act (2002)
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2010)
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2011)
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)
- Working together to improve School attendance (6 May 2022)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 All children aged 5 - 16 years must receive suitable education. (Section 7, *Education Act (1996)*). A student of compulsory school age who is registered at a school must, by law, attend regularly.
- 3.2 By law, parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that students of compulsory school age attend regularly. (Section 576, Education Act (1996)).
- 3.3 The Local Authority (LA) must offer educational provision for all children of school age.
- 3.4 By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed or has been notified that the student will attend the school.
- 3.5 Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- 3.6 By law, all schools must keep an admissions' register, the contents of which includes all students, their personal details, (including at least two telephone numbers for different safe adults, to ensure that we can always contact someone in the event of an emergency), the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and details of the school last attended.
- 3.7 Students will be removed from roll only when they complete their education stage, transfer to another school, move out of the area, or emigrate or following a parental request for elective home education. We follow statutory guidance for removing students from roll and notifying the local authority. Further information can be found in Appendix 6.
- 3.8 There is a clear link between attainment and attendance. Under **section 444 (1)** of the **Education Act 1996** (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance; this is done to ensure that all students can benefit from their legal right to receive an education.
- 3.9 The Deaf Academy will communicate attendance concerns to the students/young person's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual School Head, if the student is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual School Head, where relevant.
- 3.10 We have a roles and responsibilities framework outlined in Appendix 3 to complement this policy. This defines agreed roles and responsibilities for parents, students, and staff. This includes the new responsibility for our School Attendance Champion who is Head of School/ Head of College.

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1 A student is classed as absent if they arrive after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason.
- 4.2 An authorised absence is when approval has been given in advance for a student of compulsory school age (up to the age of 19) to be absent for a specific (legal) purpose, or we have accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence from a parent or carer. Students who are over the age of compulsory schooling and up to the age of 26 years old are expected to adhere to the same guidelines. This may include:
- An absence for illness for which we have granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments may be granted leave where every attempt has been made to arrange outside of school/college hours, has been unsuccessful and so cannot be avoided, or where the appointment is a genuine emergency.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which we have granted leave. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents or student belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
  - An absence due to a change/ exceptional circumstances. Please see appendix 8
- 4.3 An unauthorised absence is defined as one where we are not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Reasons may include:
- Parents keeping children/young person from attending unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Missing sessions before or during the school/college day
  - Absences which have never been properly explained.
  - Arrival after the register has closed.
  - Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed or meet the exceptional circumstances.
  - Leaving our school/college without authorisation during the day
- 4.4 Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each Students possible sessions). 2 sessions per day. Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.
- 4.5 Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each student possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.
- 4.6 Persistent lateness is defined as students who have five or more late marks recorded in a single half-term.

## 5. Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

- 5.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of students may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.
- 5.2 We monitor attendance against statutory targets.

- 5.3 Student-level absence data is collected regularly at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average.
- 5.4 Specific measures are taken to monitor attendance. These processes are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the effective safeguarding of all students through specific tailored interventions. Data on attendance is collected and analysed weekly and student attendance is discussed fortnightly within the safeguarding and welfare meeting. Key analysis is made of:
- Patterns of absence
  - Patterns of lateness
  - Patterns of medical appointments
  - Correct and consistent use of absence codes
  - Trends in reasons for absence, for example, use of the C code, leave of absence and exclusions.
  - Trends in particular groups of children for example, students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).
- 5.5 Attendance data informs action planning and supports the identification of key priorities in our school/college development plan and future revisions of this policy. The attendance data will be reported by the head of school/college and all other relevant staff, to facilitate discussions with students and families. Data will also be used by the academy to monitor the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

## **6. Reviewing this Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
- As a result of any other significant change or event.
- If the policy is determined not to be effective.

## Appendix 1

### 1. Key Personnel

<i>Contact Details</i>		
Assistant Principal/ Head of School Head of College	Email	<i>Reception@thedeafacademy.ac.uk</i>
	Telephone	<i>01395 203130</i>
<i>Education Administration Staff</i>		
	Email	<i>Reception@thedeafacademy.ac.uk</i>
	Telephone	<i>01395 203130</i>
<i>Chair of Governors</i>		
	Email	<i>Reception@thedeafacademy.ac.uk</i>
	Telephone	<i>01395 203130</i>

## Appendix 2 - Maintaining an Attendance Register

2.1 **In School** the attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the start of the pm session. **In College/Post 19** the attendance register will be taken at the start of EVERY lesson. It will mark whether each student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstance.

2.2 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name of the person making the amendment.

2.3 The Academy doors are open from: 8.45am. Students may enter the Academy building from 8.55am. The Academy Day starts at 9.00am. All students should be in their classroom at this time. (Upper school students are allowed through at 8.50am independently, then middle school students are 8.55am, semi formal students are collected by their classroom staff between 8.50am and 9,00am)

2.4 The first (morning) registration session starts at 9.00am. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their designated classroom by 9.15am. The register closes at 9.15am. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that the student is on site, (U) but will count as an absent mark.

2.5 Students arriving late should report to the main Academy reception and sign in.

2.6 The second (afternoon) registration session start at 1.30pm (School) and 2pm (College).

- 2.7 If a school student needs to leave the Academy during the day, they must sign out at the main reception, with a parent/carer, if in school) once authorisation has been given from a member of the Leadership Team. Students in college must gain permission from their tutor or Leadership Team and also sign out in reception. Tutors must inform reception that authorisation has been given.
- 2.8 Students educated off-site are monitored daily for their attendance at the off-site/alternative provision. Staff work closely with the staff at the off-site provision, the students, and their parents to support the student to maintain good attendance.

### **3. Recording Attendance**

- 3.1 The national absence and attendance codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the Census. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence. See Appendix 4 for the DfE attendance codes.
- 3.2 There should be no pre-population of codes and individual school tracking systems which monitor the whereabouts of students educated off-site, must be robust and quality assured regularly.
- 3.3 Where students are dual registered, are on voluntary service or are taking part in other approved educational activities, the register will be updated following regular discussion and information sharing with the other establishment.
- 3.4 The Academy Education Administration team will check the missing register report throughout the day and report any registers that have not been completed. If students cannot be found/accounted for then staff will refer to the absence flowchart, Appendix 9. If a student is deemed “missing” then staff will refer to the Academy Missing Persons Policy.

### **4. Reporting Absence**

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the parent to inform us of a student absence and to inform us of any changes to contact details.
- 4.2 Parents are expected to inform us of their student’s absence before 8.50am on **each** day of absence providing the reason for absence and when their child/young person will be returning to school/college. We will contact parents and/or other listed emergency contacts where no contact has been made. Where required, we may conduct reasonable enquiries with friends or neighbours and will carry out welfare home visits as necessary. If no contact is made, we may request a welfare check from the police. See Appendix 9

### **5. Reasons for Absence**

#### **5.1 Appointments**

- 5.1.1 As far as possible, medical, and dental appointments should be made outside of the school/college day. Where this is not possible, parents are invited to provide medical evidence of the appointment.

5.1.2 Students must attend before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the student's record. Should a student arrive late following an appointment, they should report to Reception and be signed back in. All students over 16 must sign themselves in and out of the academy.

5.1.3 Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with an M code.

## **5.2 Religious Observance**

5.2.1 Parents must inform us, in advance, if absences are required for days of religious observance. We will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

5.2.2 Absences for religious observance will be recorded with the R code.

## **5.3 Illness**

5.3.1 In order to make informed decisions about their student's fitness for attending parents are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance 'Is My Child Too Ill for School?'. Any authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the of the Head of School/College or member of staff delegated to carry out this task.

5.3.2 In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of an INSET day or Bank Holiday), parents may be asked to provide additional medical evidence before authorising the absence, however this will only be requested if there is any genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In this instance, if medical evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

5.3.3 Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may ask for parents, if possible, to provide medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis. Parents will be asked of this by letter. Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as medical evidence when attendance is a serious concern. For the purpose of this policy, 'serious concern' may be defined as: repeated unexplained/unauthorised absences or 3 x separate illnesses within a half term where no medical condition or underlying health issues have been identified.

5.3.4 Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:

- Medical card with one appointment entered with the student's name and surgery stamp included, signed by the receptionist.
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital consultant
- Evidence of consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP.
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes / call log
- Letters detailing hospital appointments Doctor or GP 'sick notes' are not required, and we do not expect parents to request these from their GPs.

- 5.3.5 In some cases, a student may be absent for long term due to an illness or injury. We will liaise with families to ensure children/young people return to school/college quickly and that there are no safeguarding concerns. On occasions where this is not possible, and the section 19 threshold is met, we will make a referral to the Local Authority Medical Panel which provides educational opportunities for students who are unable to attend their regular school.

#### **5.4 Traveller Students Travelling for Occupational Purposes**

- 5.4.1 Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes covers Roma, English and Welsh Travellers, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Circus workers, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers), Showman and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with us, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

The aim for the attendance of Traveller students, in common with all other students, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act (1944), Section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child/young person accrues 200 attendances (i.e., 200 half days) in a year. It is important to note that this is only relevant when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child/young person is regularly attending school/college when that trade/business permits following a request from parents (and the minimum 200 session criteria is met).

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller students is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their child/young person is receiving a suitable education when not at school/college.

It is parent's responsibility to:

- Ensure that your child's ethnicity has been registered with the school. You can ask the school to correct this or update it.
- Ensure you tell your child's school ahead of time. 2 weeks' notice is useful.
- Your child person should attend as much school as possible.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is accessing at least 100 days (200 sessions) of school in any 12-month period.
- To have regular contact with their child's school whilst travelling. Once a week is suggested.
- To support their child to complete the work set by schools whilst travelling.
- If staying in a new area for a week or more, the parent/guardian can register their child for a temporary place at any school – called 'dual registration'.

It is the school's responsibility to:

- Allow Traveller students to travel with their parents for work purposes.
- Create work packs for their students to complete when away.
- Arrange times for at least a weekly 'check in' with the family. This can be through a call or email.
- Contact the Local Authority if they have concerns.

- Mark student's work and provide valuable feedback.
- Ensure missed opportunities such as parents evening, vaccinations and careers advice are supported on the student's return.

#### 5.4.2 Students with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students should be the same as they are for any other student.

School will:

- We work with parents to improve attendance, being mindful of the barriers Deaf students with SEND face, make reasonable adjustments, and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. It is also expected that parents will engage with the support offered both internally and with external partners to ensure our children/young people have all the support they need to thrive.
- Encourage positive conversations so that a good support plan can be put in place including making reasonable adjustments.
- Consider possible explanations for absence including Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). **See page 24 for further information.**
- Work with parents to consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority, social workers, or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Ensure relevant referrals are made for students who are too ill to attend school, which may include medical panel (under section 19) and or medical agency support such as NDCAMHS.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers this may include considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place and consider whether a time-limited, closely monitored and reviewed, phased return to school/college would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school/college attendance.
- Where necessary Placement Plans will be updated with guidance to support a student's attendance if persistent absence is due to medical reasons or reasons relating to their SEND. This will be carried out with parents, Education leadership team and the school nurse.

## 6 Requesting Leave in Term Time

- 6.1 Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Head of school/college, within the boundaries set by the Education (Student Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). "Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional." Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted.

6.2 The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are: 'rare; significant; unavoidable and short'. Holidays during term time will not usually be considered as exceptional circumstances. The following guiding principles apply:

- Term-times are for education. This is the priority. **Children and families have 175 days off a year including weekends and school holidays**. We will rightly prioritise attendance.
- The decision to authorise a student's absence is wholly at the Head of School/College discretion based on their assessment and merits of each individual request.
- If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'. It is acceptable for the Headteacher to take a student's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
- We will take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if this prevents them from being able to take family holidays during scheduled holiday time.
- We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special needs and/or disabilities in accordance with their stated needs and provision on their EHCP.

6.3 Family emergencies need careful consideration before decisions about attendance are made. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the student to miss education for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school/college with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The school/college routine can offer a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. Relevant members of staff will work with parents to decide what is in the best interest of the student.

## 7 Persistent and Severe Absence

7.1 Students with 90% or less attendance is classified as Persistent Absence (PA). PA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

7.2 Students with 50% or less attendance is classified as Severe Absence (SA). SA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

7.3 All PA students will have bespoke action plans to try to improve their attendance to above 97%. This will be monitored by the admin team. Students who are PA will be discussed as a potential concern at fortnightly safeguarding team meetings, attended by both Head of School and college, who will also provide support, so that the impact of SEND needs are clearly understood and appropriate, and supportive actions are taken.

7.4 The school's strategy for tackling persistent absence, can be found in Appendix 7.

## 8 Following Up Absence and Taking Statutory Action

8.1 We will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason. Any students who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than one week will be referred to Head of School/College and Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

8.2 Unexplained absences will be followed up on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and the school/college will identify whether the absence is

approved or not. The academy will identify the correct code to use and will input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained. This will take no longer than 5 working days after the session.

- 8.3 In the case where the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the school/college and no reason has been issued for the student's absence, the academy will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the student, following procedures for children missing in education as outlined in the document from the Department of Education.
- 8.4 Where it is appropriate, a member of staff may carry out a 'Return to School Interview' to discuss the absence and to offer any support. Following three separate periods of absence the interview will be carried out by a senior member of staff such as Head of School/College.
- 8.5 It may occasionally be necessary to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised for a particular student unless medical evidence is provided. This decision can only be made by (Head of School/ College) in consultation with (DSL) and where relevant, the Therapies Manager.
- 8.6 It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send children to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their student, where the student is of compulsory school age. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal and Chief Executive, in line with the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:
- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
  - Singular incidences of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
  - Where an excluded student is seen in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- 8.7 If your child has unauthorised absences we can make a request to Devon County Council (through the Attendance Improvement Service) to instigate legal action. If you have parental responsibility\*, this could mean receiving any of the following:

#### **A school absence penalty notice**

Should a school absence penalty notice be issued, one notice will be issued to each parent or carer for each child involved.

#### **A magistrate summons**

This could lead to a criminal record, a fine of up to £2,500 or a term of imprisonment for up to three months or both.

#### **Education Supervision Order (ESO)**

The Children Act 1989 allows the local education authority to apply to the Family Proceedings Court for an ESO for any child of compulsory school age, whom it is felt, is not being properly educated. The intention behind the ESO is to support parents in fulfilling their legal responsibilities.

The ESO is only suitable where the child and the parents or carers are willing to co-operate with the process. If the application for an order is successful the ESO will last for one year but may be extended for up to three years. A supervising officer will be appointed by the Court. The role of the supervisor is to work with the child and family to ensure that an appropriate education is received.

\*The Education Act 1996 defines a parent as: 'all natural parents, whether married or not and any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility or who has care of the child'.

If you receive a school absence penalty notice, and depending on when the unauthorised absence occurred, you will have the following options.

If the unauthorised absence occurred prior to 19 August 2024:

- Option 1: Within 21 calendar days of receipt of the penalty notice, pay £60.
- Option 2: Between 22 and 28 calendar days after receipt of the penalty notice, pay £120.
- Option 3: Do not pay the penalty notice. In such cases, you will be automatically summoned to appear in court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

If the unauthorised absence occurred after 19 August 2024 and you have received a first penalty notice:

- Option 1: Within 21 calendar days of receipt of the penalty notice, pay £80.
- Option 2: Between 22 and 28 calendar days after receipt of the penalty notice, pay £160.
- Option 3: Do not pay the penalty notice. In such cases, you will be automatically summoned to appear in court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

If the unauthorised absence occurred after 19 August 2024 and you have received a second penalty notice:

- Option 1: Within 28 calendar days of receipt of the penalty notice, pay £160.
- Option 2: Do not pay the penalty notice. In such cases, you will be automatically summoned to appear in court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

If you pay options 1 or 2, this discharges any and all liability on your behalf concerning the non-attendance of your child, for the period quoted in the penalty notice. This means that it will not result in you having to attend court and you will not have a criminal conviction recorded against you.

However, if you are unable to pay the penalty notice or you feel that one of the statutory defences applies, you can choose the option that will give you the opportunity to explain your situation to the court.

If you either plead guilty or you are found guilty, the courts have a wide range of sentencing options, which could include a maximum fine of £2,500, or three months imprisonment or both.

The only statutory defences to an offence under the Section 444 Education Act 1996 are that:

- your child was absent for medical reasons or there was another unavoidable cause
- the local authority failed to provide transport when required to do so
- the absences were due to family religious observance
- you had prior permission from the school, for example, a term-time holiday that was authorised, in advance, by the school

## **9 Children Missing from Education (CME)**

- 9.1 We have due regard to our statutory duty to safeguard students who are CME. We follow the Local Authority's processes for reporting students missing from education. [The DfE guide can be found here.](#)
- 9.2 If a student fails to return following a period of absence, investigations will be made by staff to their whereabouts. If our investigations fail to contact the parents/student, the case will be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Team within 20 days.

## **10 Attendance Causing Concern**

- 10.1 Specific measures to monitor attendance are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the safeguarding of all students through specific and tailored interventions.
- 10.2 The Deaf Academy records and collects attendance data using our MIS (Management Information System). We recognise that there are particular groups who nationally, and within our local setting, are more vulnerable and susceptible to lower attendance patterns such as children who are defined as Pupil Premium, and students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. We work with families to overcome any specific barriers that children may be facing regardless of these needs to ensure that students access all their education.
- 10.3 Staff present attendance data in student termly reports to parents/ carers.
- 10.4 Where attendance is deemed to be a concern, we talk to students and parents. From this, there may be one of three Early Help outcomes:
- Initiate simple reasonable adjustments.
  - Develop a school focused plan with the student and their parent as appropriate.
  - Initiate a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA)
- 10.5 If the conversation with the student indicates a serious safeguarding concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures as set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **11 Supporting the Attendance of Every Student**

- 11.1 We use a variety of strategies to encourage attendance:
- Building strong and enduring relationships with our students so they feel a sense of belonging in our school community.
  - Verbal/signed encouragement and praise.
  - Create safe spaces for students to thrive.
  - Create opportunities for dialogue with families about attendance, ensuring that we work in partnership with parents.
  - Use different methods to encourage attendance; for instance, explaining the links between attendance and outcomes.
  - Raise the profile of attendance with families, particularly when students start at the setting.
  - Teach and model a love of learning, helping families to see the value of the education that is offered to them.
  - Be aware of the complexity of different contexts and the pressures that families might experience, which may in turn contribute to poor attendance;

for instance, in areas where many parents perform seasonal work and are unable to take holidays over the summer break.

- 11.2 We recognise that not all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable, are able to achieve 100% attendance through no fault of their own. We recognise improvements in attendance and contextualised good attendance for individual students.
- 11.3 Each student is supported and encouraged to achieve their individual highest possible attendance.

## 12 Ethnic Minority Students

- 12.1 Student registration regulations states that absence should only be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application. It is important to note that Head of School/College can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.
- 12.2 The following might be considered as exceptional circumstance for ethnic minority students:
- Religious festivals: the school should authorise any absence where the parent/carer's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival.  
For example: There are two key festivals in Islam, Eid-ul-Fitr (celebration that takes place at the end of Ramadan, the period of fasting) and Eid-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice). The dates of these key events are set according to the Islamic calendar. Muslim families usually need to take one or two days to celebrate these important festivals. Absences may be recorded as R.
  - Religious rites e.g. Bar Mitzvah, Holy Communion. The Headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence individually to determine the number of days approved.
  - Close family wedding if dates cannot be during school holidays.
  - Illness or death of an immediate family member; the head of School/College should consider time needed for the length of journey when child needs to travel abroad.
  - Child, parent/carer requires medical treatment overseas or elsewhere in the UK due to language barrier or requiring specialist treatment elsewhere.
  - Length of journey from abroad; the Head of school/college will consider length of journey or limited regional flights.
  - Cultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year or Diwali. Cultural celebrations give children a feeling of belonging and make them feel part of their culture. This sense of identity is like a natural buoy for a child's emotional health.
  - Children attending their annual exam in their home country. There are exams which are compulsory in some EU countries. They are normally during holidays but can occasionally be requested during term time.
  - Child, parent/ carer's visa has been revoked and they need to return to their birth country whilst pursuing the renewal of a visa.
  - Students may wish to develop/deepen their connection with the Deaf community/Deaf culture by attending a specific Deaf led event.

## Appendix 3 – Framework of Responsibilities

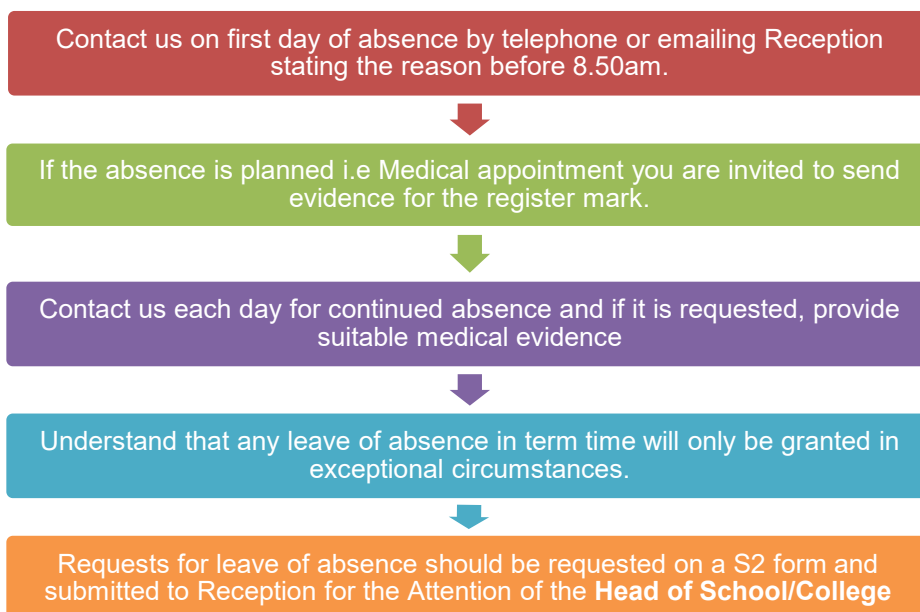
The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the academy, parents and the child, therefore, The Deaf Academy expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting attendance at school/college.

To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

### **Parents/Carers**

- Ensure students attend regularly and punctually.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school/college attendance at home.
- Do everything you can to prevent unnecessary school/college absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Work with the school/college and your child/young person to address any in-school/college barriers to attendance and support their learning by taking an interest in what they have been doing at school/college.
- Enforce a regular routine at home and in residential care, in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that your child/young persons are used to consistency and the school/college day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that your child receives the same message at home and in halls of residence as they do at school/college about the importance of attendance.
- Provide the school/college with more than one emergency contact for your child/young person.
- Provide proof of medical appointments that can only be attended during the school/college day, where possible.
- Make early contact with us when you become aware of problems with your child/young person attending school/college.
- Attend meetings if concerns are identified.
- Participate in Early Help Meetings if required.
- Support attendance contracts where appropriate.
- Support us in actioning agreed interventions and any action plans put in place.

**Please follow this process if your child is going to be absent from the academy:**



## Students

- Attend school/college every day and every timetabled lesson punctually.
- Acknowledge positive behaviours needed both inside and outside of our school/college.
- Adhere to our systems for late registration.
- Adhere to attendance contracts if they are in place.
- Aim for the highest possible attendance.
- Discuss concerns about your attendance or punctuality with a trusted adult in our school/college, especially if you are experiencing difficulties at school, at home or in residential care which may impact on your attendance and/or learning.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for your class. Lesson times will be made clear through your school/college timetable.

## Support Staff

- Understand that promoting student attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education.
- Assist in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school/college.
- Build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents.
- Challenge parents when no reason has been provided for an absence.
- Complete return to school/college interviews with students when required.
- Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Participate in training in relation to attendance.

## Teachers

- Understand that promoting student attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education.
- Ensure attendance has a high profile within the class.
- Consider whether a student known, or not yet identified, SEN could be impacting on attendance and whether provision and/or further reasonable adjustments should be made.
- **In School** take registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. **In College** take registers every lesson including when the lesson is also the legal registration session
- Build a culture of challenge when addressing absences with parents. Treat all students and parents with dignity and model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school/college.
- Challenge parents when they do not provide a reason for absence.
- Communicate with parents positively. Teachers should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing. Teachers should challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like (this is outlined in more detail in figure 1 below).
- Complete return to school/college meeting with students when required.
- Escalate concerns as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Analyse and report attendance figures for each student to parents regularly.
- Discuss attendance with parents at every opportunity.
- Participate in training relating to attendance as appropriate.

Where a student or family need support with attendance, the best placed person in the school will support the family, this may or may not be the child's class teacher or college tutor. This person should remain consistent, and the school/college will draw on positive relationships to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the student or family is experiencing.

## Education Administration Staff

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Offer support and guidance on attendance where needed.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data and ensure these are sent regularly to class teachers.
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Provide regular attendance reports to school/college staff and report concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader and Governor responsible for attendance.
- Monitor students with attendance below 95% with regular communication with both the student and their parents, holding attendance meetings where required and agreeing individual action plans.
- Inform Welfare Team when home visits are required.
- Adhere to the Attendance Flowchart
- Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy

- Work with Attendance Improvement Officer to tackle persistent absence.
- Advise the Principal and Chief Executive and Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance when to issue fixed penalty notices.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- Take a lead in promoting student attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education.
- Ensure attendance has a high profile across the academy.
- Work on proactively on building strong relationships with families.
- Build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents.
- Attend welfare home visits where required.
- Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Liaise with Head of School/College, DSL, welfare team, inclusion Officer, as appropriate to discuss attendance concerns for individual students.
- Participate in appropriate training in relation to attendance.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and ensure that adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring our academy conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance e.g., deletion from school roll is adhered to for example.

### **Head of School and College**

- Take a lead in promoting student attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children/young people say about the barriers to accessing education.
- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented consistently across the school.
- Ensure attendance has a high profile across the school in all communications.
- Monitor school level absence data with the School Attendance Champion and report data to the Local Governing Board.
- Support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students.
- Agree with the Attendance Lead when to issue fixed penalty notices.
- Decide whether to grant leave during term time for exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure attendance training is provided to staff annually.

### **Governors**

- Recognise the importance of school/college attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Review the implementation of the school/college Attendance Policy
- Ensure the school fulfil their statutory duties.
- Ensure the importance of school attendance is promoted across policies and procedures.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance.

- Discuss attendance with the Head of School/College and review progress towards these at Board meetings.
- Regularly monitor attendance figures through data analysis at Board meetings. Ask questions about attendance trends and be curious about what is being done to challenge and prevent persistent poor absence.

**Figure 1:**

**There are 190 school days each year, this means that there are 175 non-school days a year.**

<b>Attendance %</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Days absent</b>	<b>Description</b>
100%	Perfect Attendance	0	This is the best chance of success for your child
97%	Good Attendance	5	
95%	Improvement Required	9	Less chance of your child succeeding as it is harder for them to make progress
92%	Concern (Persistent Absence*)	19	
<b>90%</b>	<b>Serious Concern **</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Serious Concern</b> <b>Missing this much education is not fair on your child and will result in legal action</b>

\*Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each student's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

\*\* Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each student's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

#### **Appendix 4 – Attendance Codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance

### ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity
C	Authorised absence – exceptional circumstances only	Authorised absence
C2	Part time timetable (Annex R submitted)	Authorised Absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
G	Family holiday (holiday may NOT be authorised under any circumstances)	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental apts)	Authorised Absence
J1	Interview	Authorised Absence
K	Attending an educational provision <b>arranged by the Local Authority</b>	Approved Educational Activity
L	Late before register closes (9:30am)	Present
M	Medical or Dental apts	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Authorised absence
Q	Transport not arranged by the LA	Not a Possible Attendance
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after register closes @9:30am)	Unauthorised absence

V	Educational Visit	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Untimetabled session for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not Counted in Possible Attendances
Y1	LA provided transport not available	Not a Possible Attendance
Y2	Student not able to attend due to widespread travel disruption	Not a Possible Attendance
Y3-5	Unplanned school closure (check guidance for correct code)	Not a Possible Attendance
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not a Possible Attendance

#### KEY

Present
Authorised Absence
Unauthorised Absence
Approved Educational Activity
Not Counted in Possible Attendances

### Appendix 5 – Creating a Positive Attendance Culture

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school/college, parents, and the child, therefore, The Deaf Academy expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting attendance at the academy.

To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Our academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to school/college attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

For a positive attendance culture to be fully embedded across our academy, it needs to be a holistic approach and not seen in isolation.

**Appendix 6 – Removing a child from the school/college roll** (it is vital that you are always professionally curious when following these processes).

### **Best practice processes**

#### **Elective Home Education (EHE):**

The Statutory Notification and the EHE form, together with the Safeguarding form must be submitted on the day of receiving the de-registration letter from the parent with a copy of the letter. The student should be taken off roll from the day the school/college receives the letter or in cases where the parent is giving advance notice of the date requested. Do not backdate it to an earlier date than receipt of the letter even if the parent requests this. The school/college should confirm that the student has been registered with the LA as EHE to ensure that they have assumed responsibility for the student. Do not just assume that because the school/college has submitted the paperwork it has all gone through.

**Student Moves Out of Area:** unreasonable distance to travel. Submit the Statutory Notification as soon as the school/college finds this out. Continue to track destination and liaise with LA admissions team. They will advise the school/college when a student may be removed from roll if it has been established that the student/family have left the last known address and their new location is known. They may allow the school/college to backdate the leaving date if they or the school/college receives confirmation of the student starting at another school/college or within the care of a different LA. The school/college must have written confirmation from the LA to backdate the leaving date. If the school/college does not receive this and the school/college has no other confirmation of where the student is the school/college must keep them on roll for 20 days.

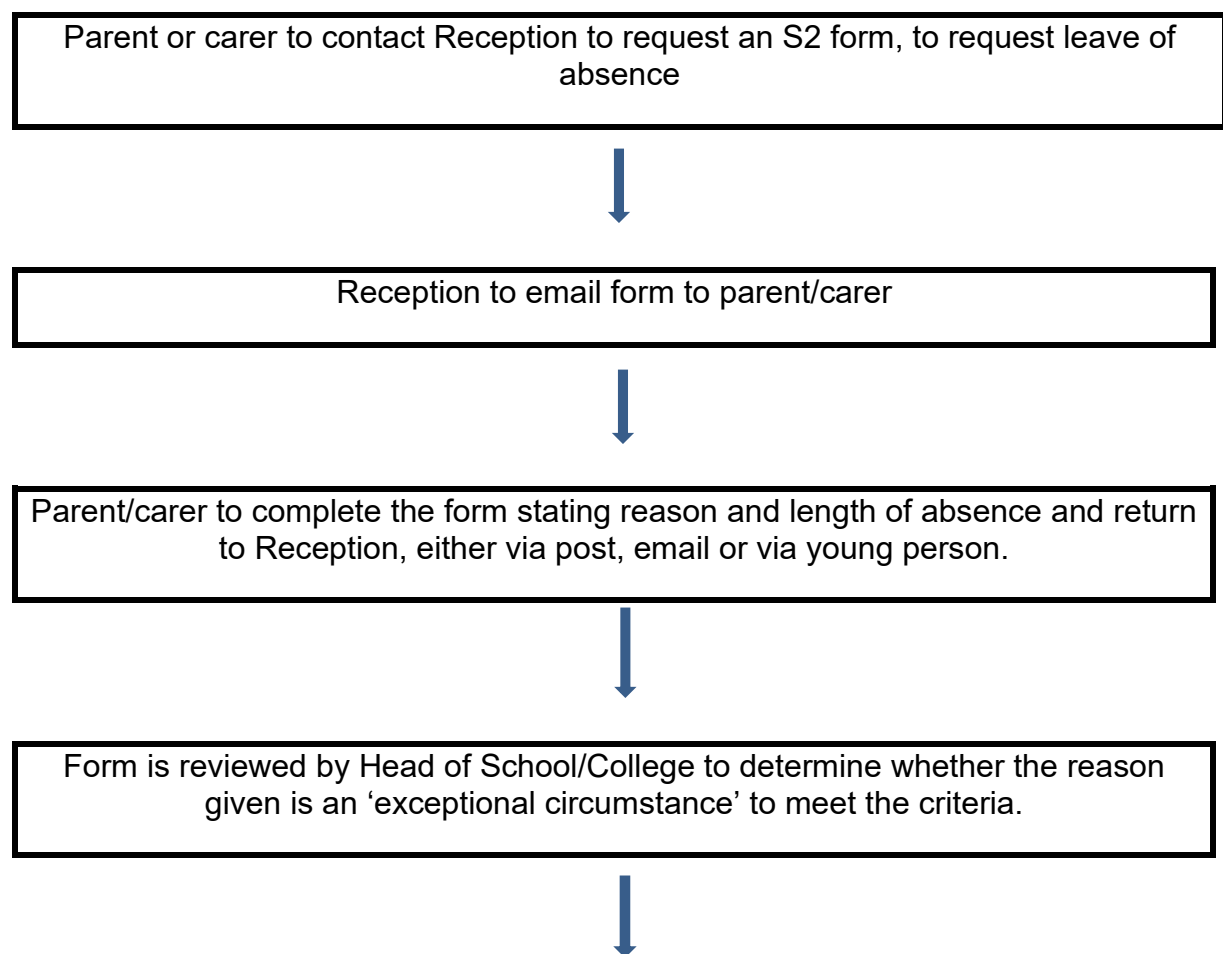
**Student Emigrates:** The school/college must follow the procedure above for moving out of area but also need to have ascertained from the parent the forwarding address, details of destination school/college and moving date.

**Student Transfers to a New School:** Confirm the student's start date at the new school/college and that the student has started there. The school/college can take the student off roll from the confirmed start date or the last school/college day if it precedes it e.g., a Friday and they started on a Monday. If the start date is the first day of a school/college term the school can back date the leaving date for the school's student to the last day of the previous term. If the school/college must investigate in the new term to find out why the student is 'absent' keep them on roll until the school/college gets a confirmed start date at the new school/college. If there is a gap between the leaving date the school/college has been given by a parent and the start date for a student, the student should remain on the school's roll, marked absent, until the transfer school/college confirms the student has started there. If after ten days, the student has still not started, the school/college should submit a CME form. The school/college cannot remove a CME student from the school's roll for a further ten days from the initial notification or safeguarding referral (so 20 days in total from the first day of absence) unless the LA confirms where the student has gone.

### **Appendix 7 - Strategy for reducing persistent absence**

- Attendance is high profile within the school/college and is communicated termly to children and parents/carers
  - Teaching staff work with parents/carers and children to support them in overcoming barriers to attendance. This might include.
    - Changing activities
    - Use of social stories and visuals to support transition.
    - Use of buddy system to encourage participation
  - Individual incentives for students in discussion with parents/carers
    - Work with the therapies team
    - Work with outside agencies such as NDCAMHS / Connections etc
    - Giving students a key worker to talk to each morning before school starts
    - Adapting timetables
    - Online Tutoring (College only)
    - Change in work placement (College only)
  - Attendance of the whole Academy is reviewed weekly by the ~~attendance officer~~ attendance administrator and our Heads of School/College.
  - An initial letter is sent to parents/carers explaining that their child's attendance is causing the academy concern, and this will be closely monitored. The letter will ensure that all possible support has been offered.
  - For some young people, poor attendance could be indicative of additional needs including anxiety typically referred to as emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). [Anxiety based school avoidance \(ABSA\) – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/education-and-families/education-and-families-articles/anxiety-based-school-avoidance-absa).  
[The Academy have a working group which supports students and families with ABSA, using an individual action plan to identify concerns and triggers and agree on strategies and ways forward, ensuring student voice is heard and at the centre.](#)
- 
- If attendance continues to decline, a 2nd letter is issued, explaining that daily calls will be made.
  - Further decline in attendance will result in a meeting with the Head of School/College and commissioned welfare officer to look at proactive strategies to improve attendance. Future actions are outlined to parents/carers and children should this continue to decline.
  - The local authority is notified of any further decline for consideration of next steps, this may involve legal action.

**Appendix 8 Absence request flow map.**



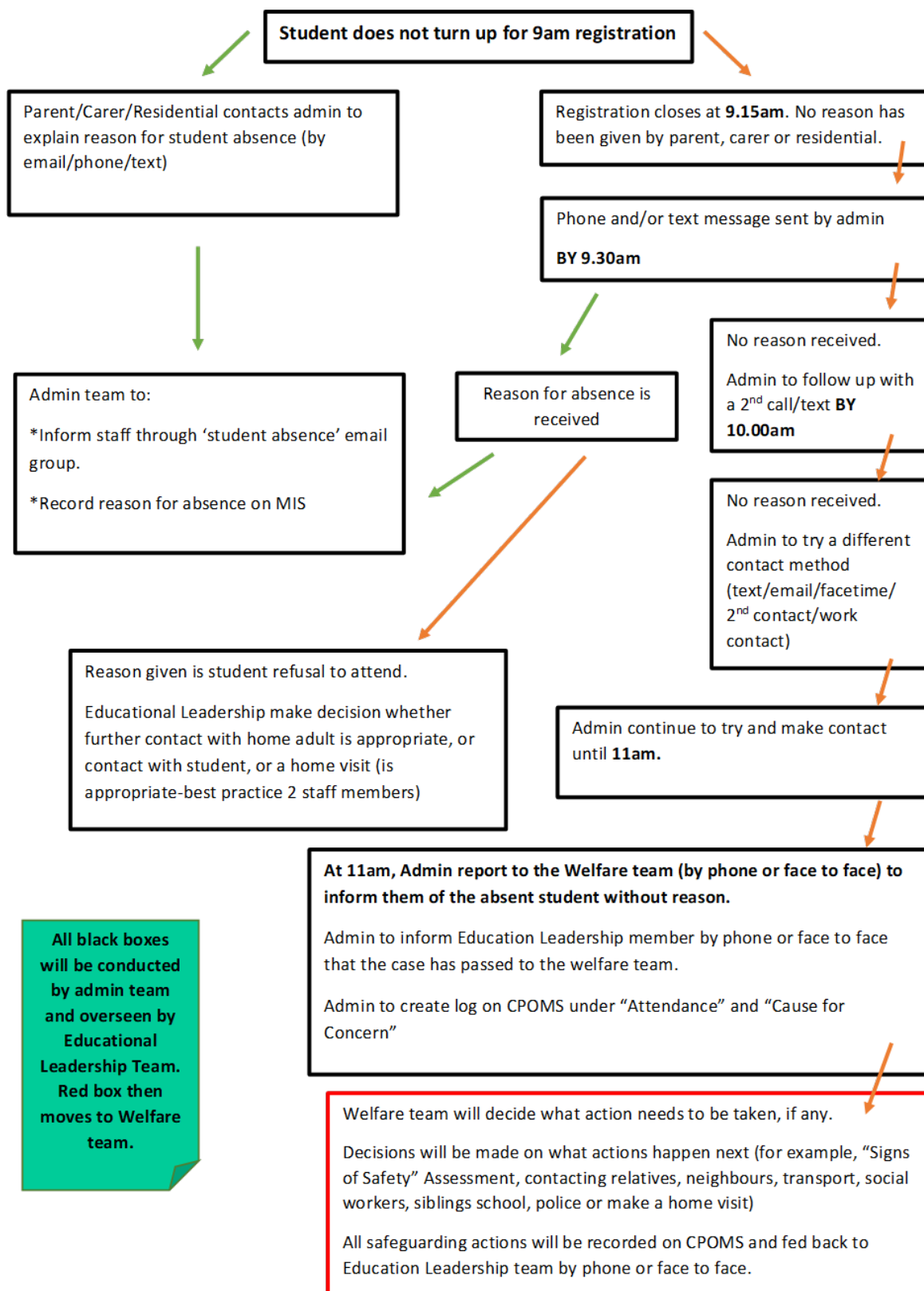
### **'Exceptional circumstances'**

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue or due to their disability.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Circumstances relating to specific SEND in EHCP



The absence is either authorised or non-authorised. The form is returned to Reception to save on Student Personal Records and the appropriate register marking populated into the Academy MIS (Management Information System).

**(Need to add in new flow map with no initials) Appendix 9 Absent Student flow Map**



All black boxes will be conducted by admin team and overseen by Educational Leadership Team. Red box then moves to Welfare team.

See full policy for further information: *Student Absence and Missing Persons Policy and Procedures*