



# Attendance, Punctuality and Late Collection of Children Policy

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Trust Board</b>
<b>Approved on:</b>	<b>3.7.19</b>
<b>Next review date:</b>	<b>July 2022</b>
<b>Updated/Reviewed on:</b>	

## **Aims**

Our Academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to attendance by:

- Working in partnership with parents/ carers and Education Welfare to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Improving attendance to a minimum of 96% and reduce unauthorised and persistent absence.
- Ensuring all staff, governors and parents/ carers understand procedures regarding attendance.
- Improving punctuality at the beginning and end of school day.
- Encouraging parents/ carers to take responsibility for their child's attendance
- Providing Early Intervention to address patterns of absence

We will also challenge and support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending school. Our Academies are fully committed to this goal and are working to improve their levels of attendance year on year, because we believe that for children to be able to make the best possible progress and engage with our exciting and challenging learning opportunities, they need to be attending daily. This ethos is embedded throughout our School Improvement Plan.

## **Parents and Carers**

It is the legal duty of parents/carers to ensure their child's daily attendance in education and they may be prosecuted if they fail in this duty. Parental responsibility also extends to ensuring that children are punctual, dressed appropriately and are prepared and ready to learn.

If a child is unable to attend school, parents/carers should notify the Academy as soon as is reasonably practicable each day of absence, by telephone or message. (see Appendix B) The office is staffed from 8.45am but can take messages earlier. If no contact has been made with the Academy regarding a child's absence, then the Home School Link Worker telephones home to clarify the reason for absence. If we do not receive a satisfactory explanation on the day of the absence, or are unable to make contact with parents/ carers, this will be marked as unauthorised and no amendments will be made. It is vital that parents/ carers inform the academy office in writing of any change or details, in particular, contact telephone numbers. Parents/Carers will be informed of the Academy's policy on attendance and punctuality when their child starts at our Academy's and are reminded through newsletters. [This policy will be available on our Academy's website.](#) Our Home School Link Worker, SLT and the Academy office monitor absences and send out letters to inform parents/carers of low attendance. If this does not improve parents/carers are invited in to the Academy for a more formal meeting.

## **Pupils**

Pupils will be made aware of the importance of regular attendance. They will be encouraged through a range of incentives that are both class based and whole school. The Academy celebrates weekly, half- termly and annual attendance via a range of events. All children who achieve 98% attendance for the academic year will receive a special reward. At parents' evenings we ensure parents are given their child's attendance data. A half- termly attendance newsletter is also issued. Throughout the year, additional incentives may be introduced at the discretion of the Academy Principal in order to address Attendance or Punctuality concerns.

## **Governors**

Attendance is monitored at Trustee level and the Executive Principal will report termly to Trustees on attendance matters.

## **Academy Staff**

Academy staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example and high expectations. A rigorous attendance policy is in place for all staff. All staff will challenge parents/ carers when there are concerns for a child's attendance or punctuality.

## **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works for the Local Authority and has a statutory duty with regard to attendance.

### **Punctuality - Start of the Academy Day (Please refer to Appendix C)**

Punctuality will be monitored as closely as attendance. Children who arrive after the start of the day and before the official close of the register will be marked as late. Parents/ Carers are required to sign their child in at the electronic screen in reception, with a reason for their late arrival. Children who arrive after the registers have closed will be marked as unauthorised absence. In cases of persistent lateness (3 times or more) the academy will work with parents/carers to improve the situation. If there is no improvement, your child may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Punctuality – End of the Academy Day (Please refer to Appendix D)**

All parents/carers should be onsite ready to collect their children at the end of the Academy day. See Academy websites for specific times.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the academic year for whatever reason (attendance falls below 90%). Absence at this level is a statutory concern and is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's full support and co-operation to tackle this. Any child who is persistently absent or near that level, has their attendance tracked and monitored on a daily basis by our Home School Link Worker and Academy Principal and may also involve our Education Welfare Officer.

### **Absences (Please refer to Appendix A)**

Every half day absence has to be classified by the academy as authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions missed for genuine reasons such as:

- Illness (where we have sent the child home, or suitable evidence has been provided e.g. prescription or antibiotics)
- Medical appointments where a hospital appointment card/letter has been provided
- Authorised leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Birth of a sibling
- Death of a close relative
- Religious observance

ALL AUTHORISED ABSENCES REQUIRE PROOF.

Unauthorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions missed where no explanation for a child's absence has been received

- Evidence of Medical appointments has not been provided
- Illness/appointments of a parent/carer prevents a child attending
- Parent/carer thought that the academy was closed
- Head lice is being treated
- Holidays are taken

All absence notes, records or telephone messages will be retained and kept in the academy office. All reasons for absence are recorded in the Daily Absence book. If a child arrives after 9.35 am, this will affect their attendance, as this is classed as a missed session not a late.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence and fining**

An amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removes references to family holiday to make it clear that Academy Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there

are **exceptional circumstances**. This amendment came into effect on 1 September 2013. In line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct we have taken the decision to fine parents for taking children out of school during term time for a holiday. In cases where parents do not complete a Leave of Absence request, but there are indicators that a holiday has been taken, our academies may still follow the same process as outlined below.

Any request for Leave of Absence must be made on the Leave of Absence Request Form, which is available from the academy office or on our websites and must be made at least **4 weeks prior** to your requested dates. All requests must be accompanied by evidence to support the exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application and the reason(s) for the decision.

Academy staff will provide the relevant documentation to the Education Welfare Service who will then issue the Fixed Penalty Notice on behalf of our academy. All fines will be approved at the discretion of the Academy Principal.

If a child does not attend school for a period of four weeks, the school, after consultation with the Education Welfare Team may remove the pupil from roll, in line with the following regulation: *The Admissions Register*:

## **EDUCATION (PUPIL REGISTRATION) REGULATIONS 2006 No. 8**

### **Section 9 sub section 1e- Deletions from Register (see also below)**

The following is prescribed grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age **SHALL** be deleted from the admission register:

*“In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence..... in accordance with Regulation 8 (3), that the pupil failed to attend school within the ten days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted and the proprietor is not satisfied that a pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any other avoidable cause.”*

As a multi- cultural academy, we recognise the importance of the observation of religious festivals and therefore, will authorise 1 day’s absence for religious observance.

## **MANAGEMENT**

We will follow the process for addressing absences as outlined in the flowchart (Appendix A). For Nursery children for whom we fund the extra 15 hours. Parents will be required to sign a contract to agree that if attendance drops below 96% and no improvement is made, the academy may withdraw the funding. Medical evidence will be considered and these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Academy Principal. (See Nursery flowchart, Appendix AA)

## **COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS**

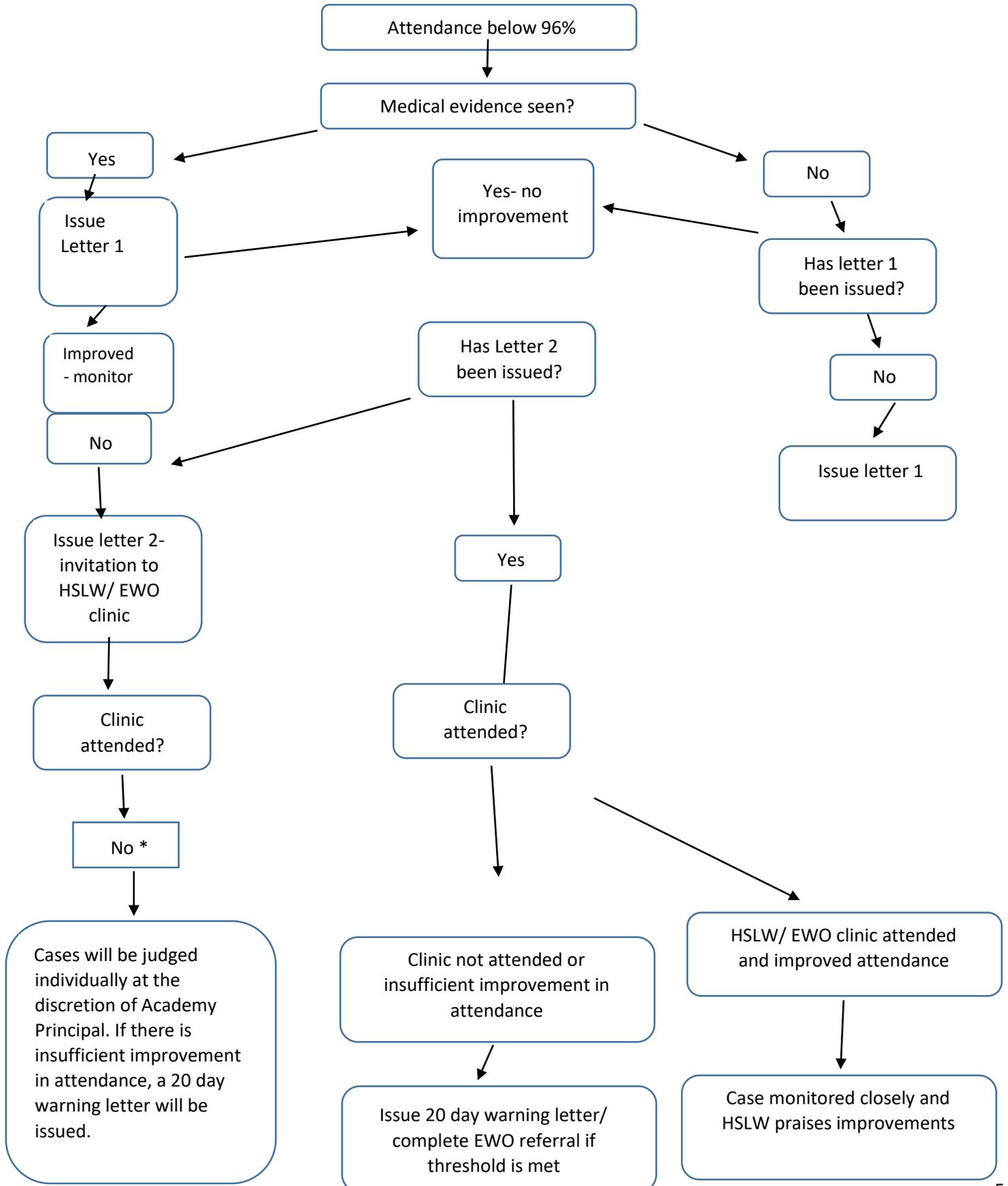
Upon entry to our Academy, all parents will provide **at least 2 contact names and numbers** in the event of an emergency. **Parents are responsible for ensuring our records are updated in the event of any change of circumstance, including change of phone number or address.** Parents will also create a password that is required upon collection if somebody staff do not know is collecting. We require written authorisation in the communication diary, that an adult other than parents is collecting, this person will need to provide the correct password in order for staff to dismiss the child.

All our pupils should be collected by someone aged 18 or over, however, if parents wish for an older sibling to collect who is not yet 18, we require written permission in our academy office. Parents are advised that once dismissed, the **welfare and safety** of the child is **their responsibility**. If the academy has any safeguarding concerns regarding the collection arrangements, we will follow our robust procedures set out in our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, and reserve the right to withdraw sibling collection at any time following these concerns.

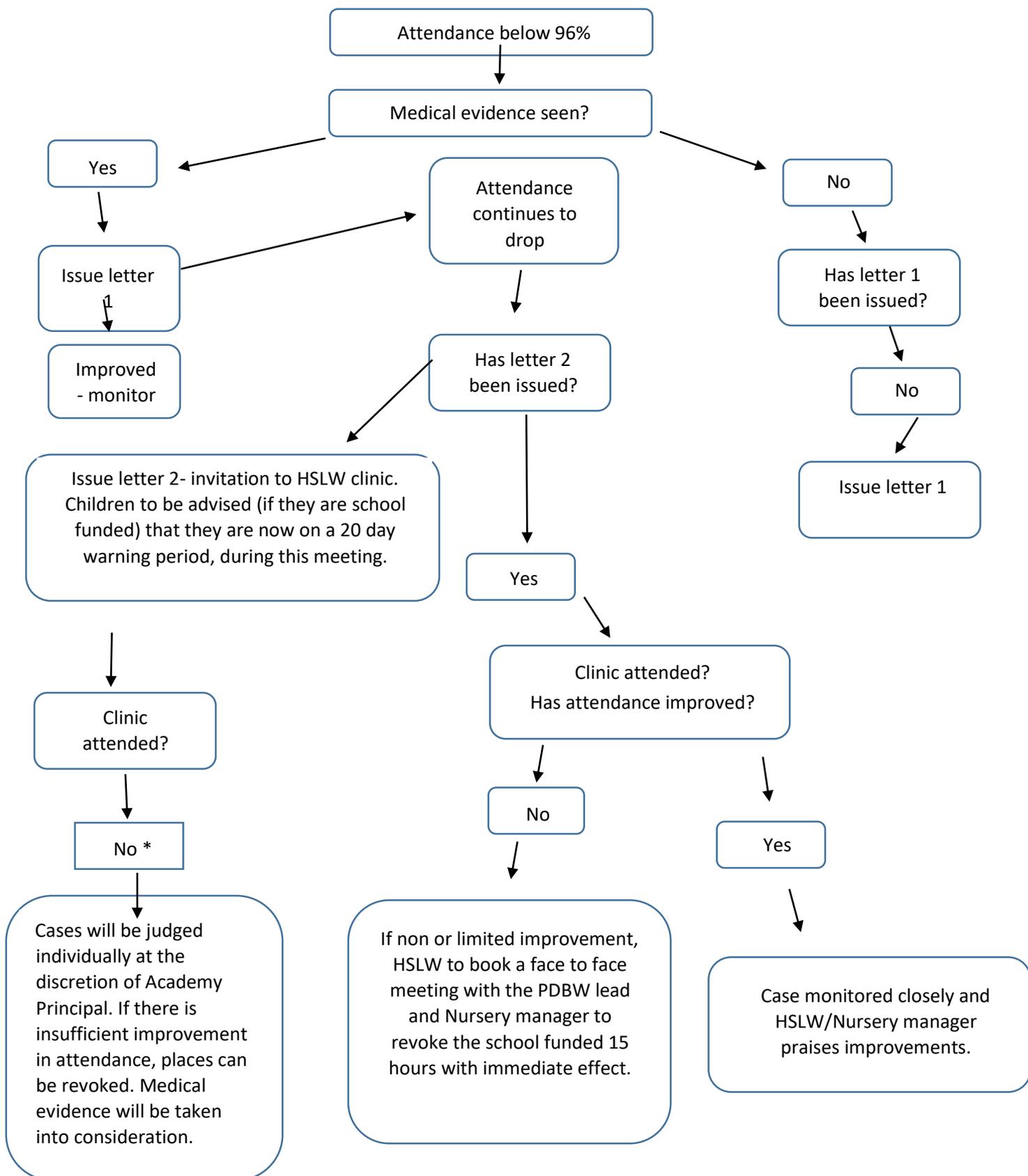
## APPENDIX A - Monitoring and management of attendance

\* HSLW will attempt to rearrange in the first instance. If the second appointment is missed, continue to the next stage

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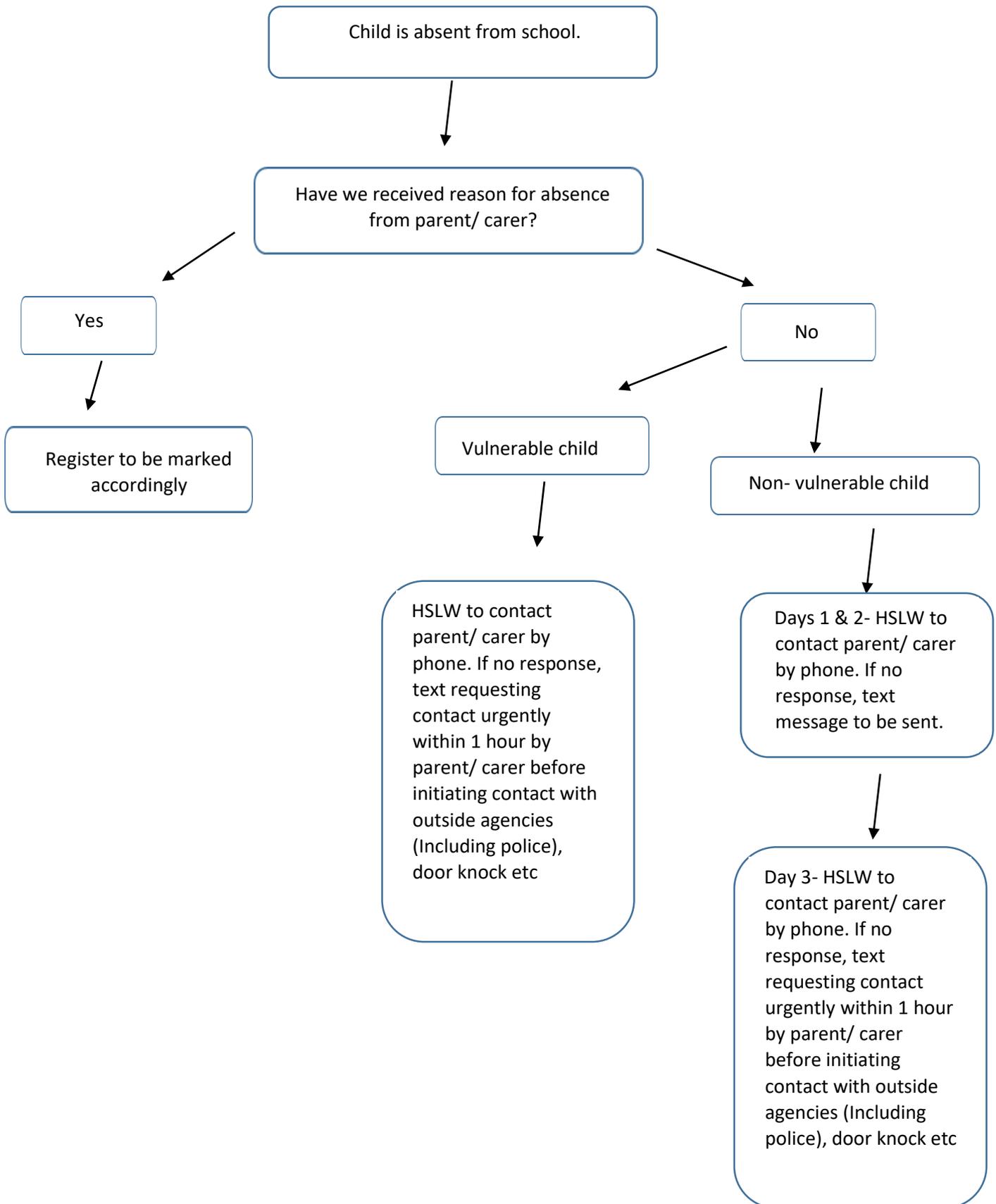
**APPENDIX AA Nursery attendance flowchart**



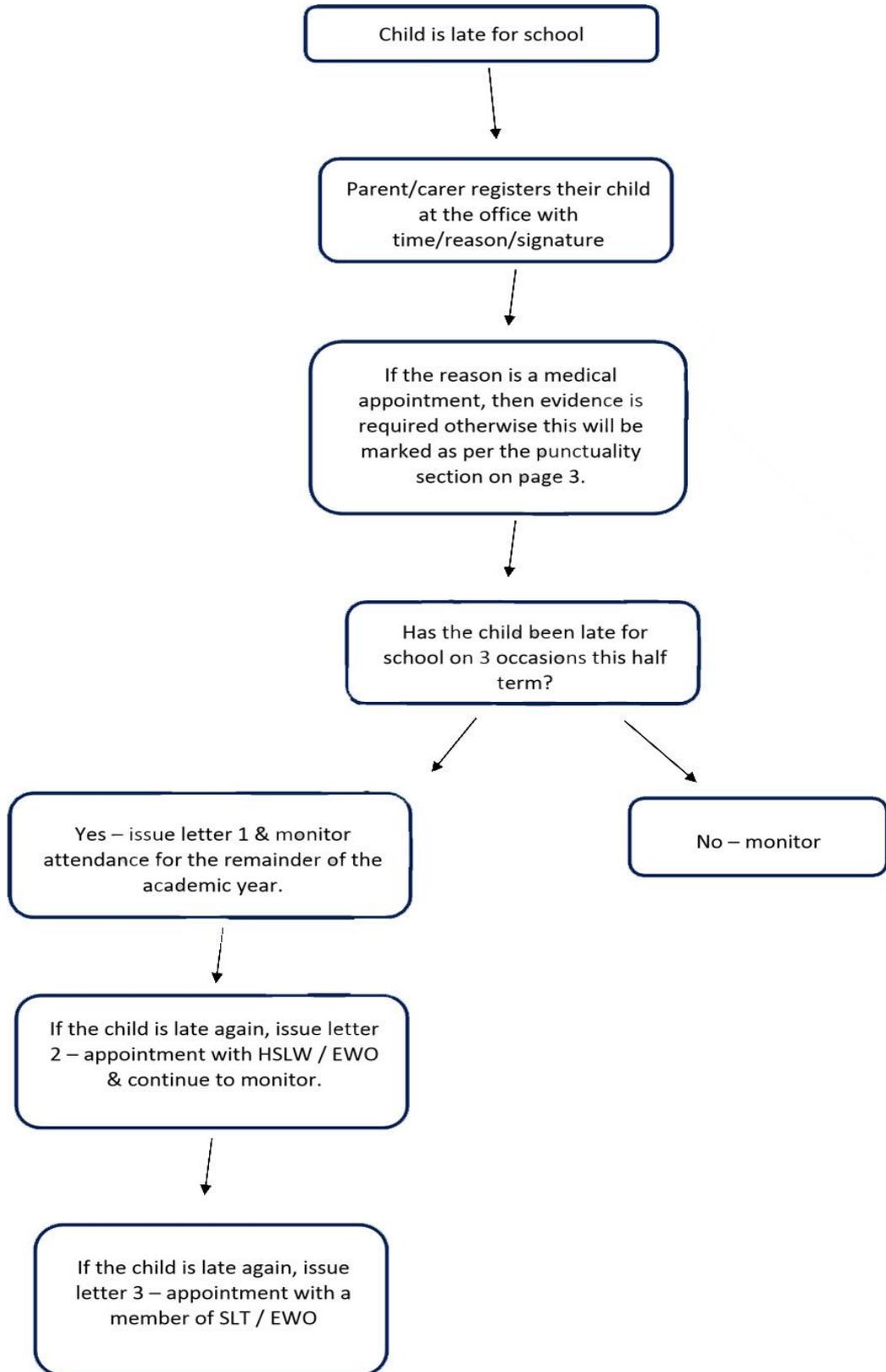
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**NB: All Nursery parents/carers need to sign the Nursery contract as part of the Academy Induction Process**

## APPENDIX B: Monitoring and management of Absence

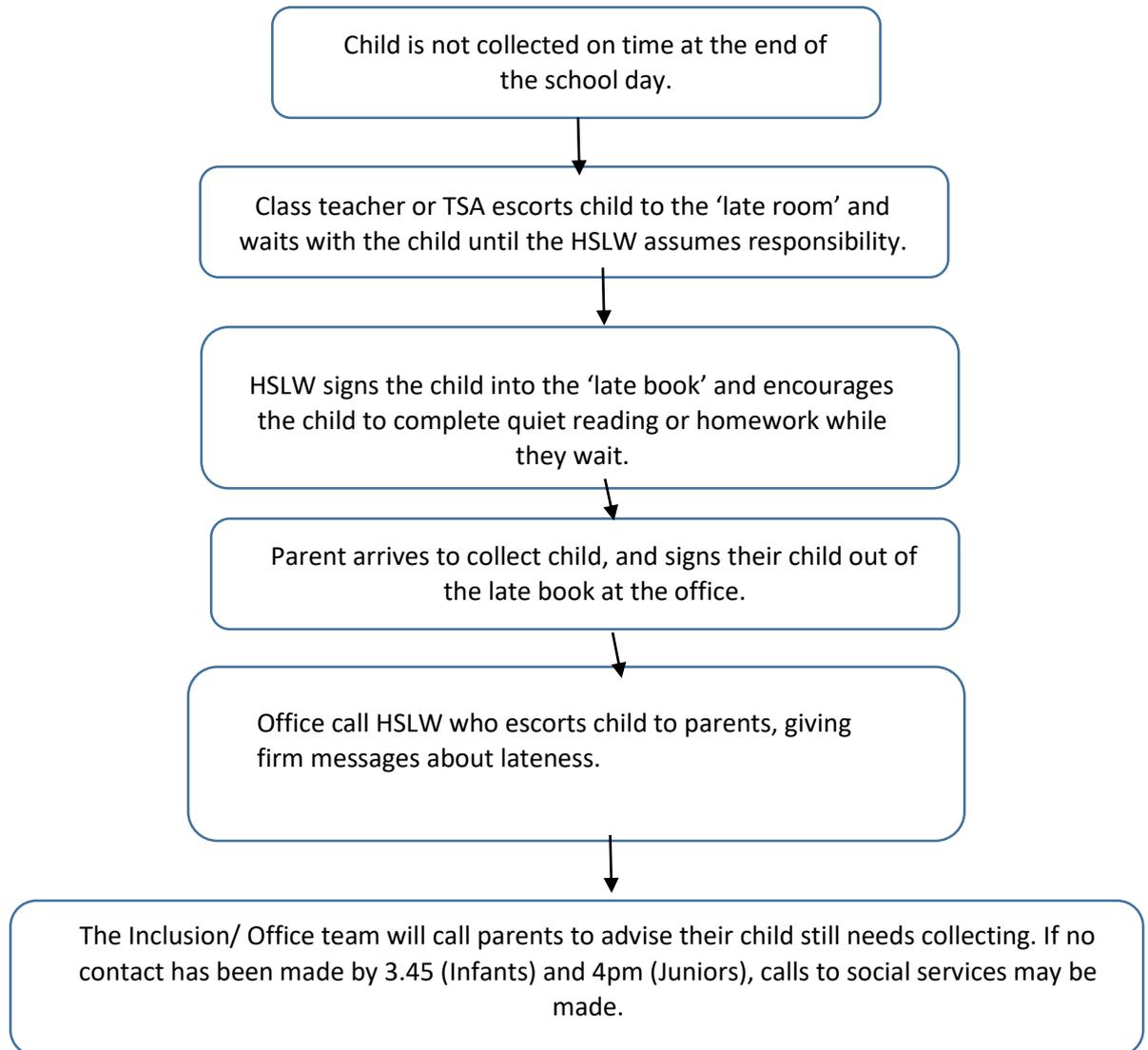


**APPENDIX C: Monitoring and management of Punctuality at the start of the day.**



***If a child remains uncollected by 3.45pm, and no contact has been made with parents, Inclusion team to make a referral to Social Care and/ or the Police.***

## **APPENDIX D Monitoring and management of punctuality at the end of the day.**



### **Legal sanctions**

Where no improvements are made, despite efforts made by Academy staff to work with parents/ carers, we will work closely with our EWO and fines will be issued for the unauthorised absence of pupils from the academy, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Academy Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.