



# Balerno High School

## Attendance Policy

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### 1. Purpose

This procedure sits alongside a number of related procedures which all promote a positive ethos of inclusion. It provides a clear and consistent framework for all staff to promote attendance and manage absence in line with 'Getting it Right for every Child' and 'Included Engaged and Involved – part 1: a positive approach to the promotion and management of attendance in Scottish schools'(2019).

We recognise the strong link between school attendance and a positive and inclusive ethos where every child knows they belong. This procedure must be implemented within the context of a positive and supportive culture.

### 2. Policy Aims

Our attendance policy and procedures aim to:

- maintain and improve the attendance of all pupils
- make certain that engagement and attendance is a priority for pupils, parents and school staff to ensure that all pupils are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors
- create consistency in dealing with issues of attendance and absence
- ensure that all stakeholders understand their role in promoting attendance and managing absence
- ensure the accurate recording of pupils' attendance and absence in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.

### 3. Context

This procedure sits within and is informed by the Communities and Families Included, Engaged and Involved in Edinburgh Policy. It is implemented within the context of our local approach to Getting it Right for Every Child and our recognition that strong partnership working with parents and children is crucial in achieving positive outcomes.

Please note the following impacts of low attendance percentages:

%	School Days Missed	Outlook for child*	
100%	0 Days	Excellent	Gives child the best chance of success
95%	9 days of absence/1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory	
90%	19 days of absence/4 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor	Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress.
85%	27 days of absence/5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Very Poor	Referral to Educational Welfare Service. Serious implications on learning and progress.
80%	36 days of absence/7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable	
75%	45 days of absence/9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable	

\* Please note that, where absence is unavoidable due to illness, the above definitions with regard to outlook are not applicable.

### 4. Responsibilities

#### 4.1 School responsibilities

- Attendance and absence is recorded in each subject during the course of the school day. This includes any latecoming. School to monitor absence "hotspots" effectively.
- Discrepancies and anomalies during the course of the school day will be followed up immediately to ensure pupils are safe and well. Additional system will be in place to monitor our most vulnerable pupils.
- Parents are contacted as soon as an absence is noted to help ensure that immediate action can be taken to find any pupils 'missing' from school. If attempts to contact the parent are unsuccessful then emergency contacts will be used.
- Pupil Support Leaders will contact home regarding any long-term absence, patterns of absence, persistent latecoming or other related concerns.
- Pupil Support Leaders, with the support of the DHT Support, will be aware of early signs of concern which may lead to absenteeism and consider means of preventative support.

- All staff will develop positive relationships with pupils and families to ensure difficulties are discussed and resolved.
- Support reintegration into learning from absence.
- Send regular and positive communications of the expectations on attendance to parents and carers.
- Refer any pupil whose attendance is regularly between 85-93% to the ASL Home-School Link team to support and act as a link between home and school.
- Refer any pupil whose attendance is below 85% to the Education Welfare Service. The collaborative working of a range of services and agencies at an early stage is vital.

#### **4.2 Parent/ carer responsibilities**

- The responsibility for a child's education rests with their parent. Once a child/young person is enrolled at an authority school the law states that the child must attend school unless permission has been given by the authority to withdraw the child / young person from school.
- Inform the school if their child will be absent and provide current emergency contact information.
- Communicate and liaise with the school regarding any absence.
- Formally request (in writing) for an extended authorised absence.

#### **4.3 Pupils' responsibilities**

- Pupils are required to attend regularly and on time.

#### **4.4 Education Welfare responsibilities**

- The Welfare Officer reports to and attends Attendance Committees and meetings with the Children's Panel.
- The Welfare Officer has a key role in linking between home and school to assist in re-engaging the child and parent/carers with school.
- Where appropriate, the Welfare Officer will make a home visit.

### **4. Managing and Recording Attendance – Supported by Admin Team**

Procedure:

Period-by-period texts to go out to all parents/carers alerting them to their child not being in class. First by 9.30am at the latest (information from staff by 9.20am), then period-by-period.



### **Vulnerable Pupils:**

Office and Duty Head will be alerted to any TBC for a pupil who is on the Vulnerable Pupil list.

If parent states pupil is in school but we know they are not in class, we will ask them to contact pupil for clarification, followed by a duty call to check key areas of school such as corridors, Hub, toilets, Print Room, etc. We will then check with parent again. If still no contact with pupil, we will make parents/ carers aware. If we have any concerns, parents will be advised to contact 101. For pupils who a Risk Management Plan and/ or there are safety concerns, school will contact police.

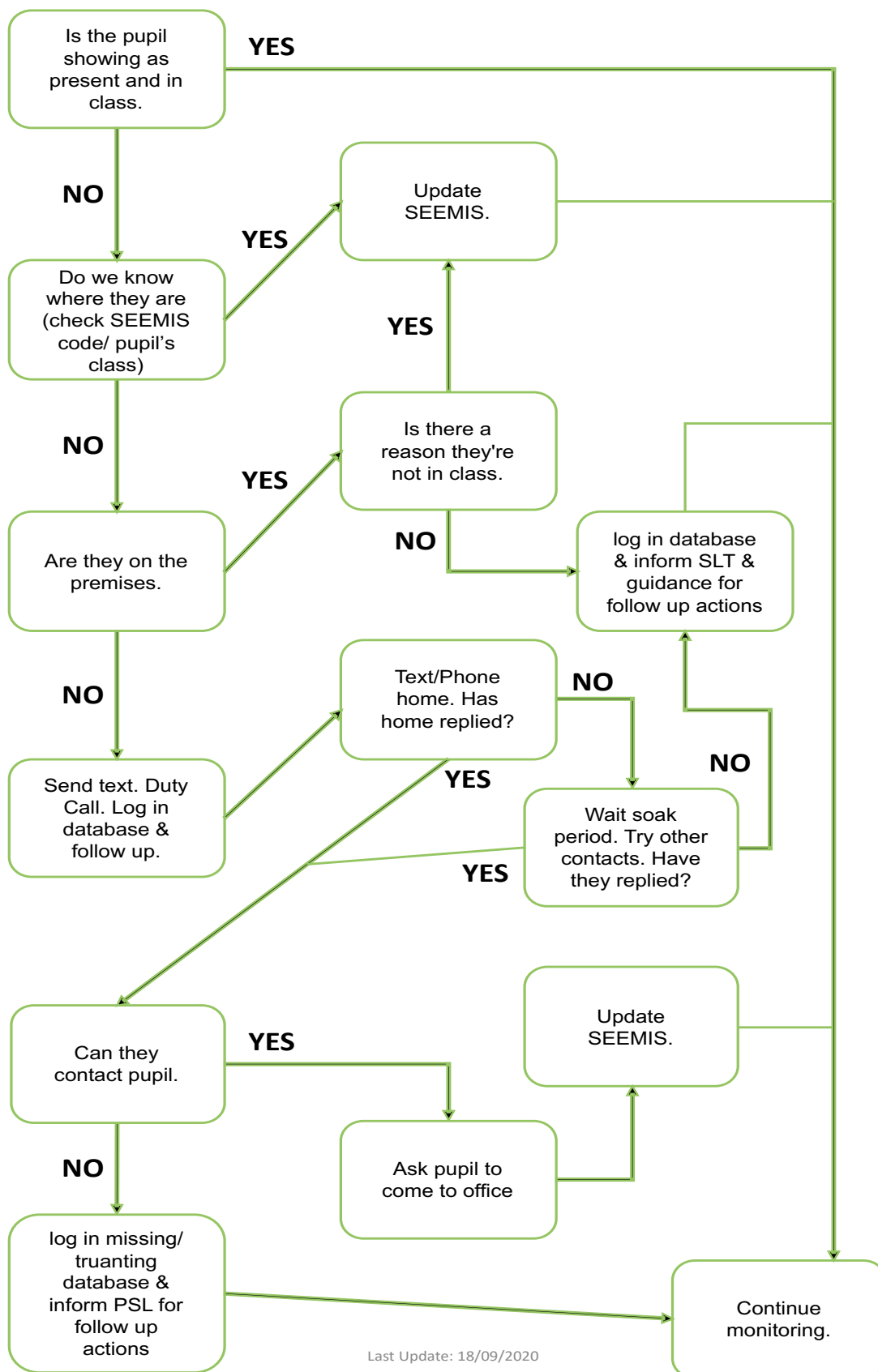
Where parents/ carers do not respond to text message, we will follow up by moving to emergency contacts on file.

Admin Support will generate custom reports on a Friday for the following week to allow PSLs/ House Heads to follow up.

Support DHT will run weekly analysis of percentage of school roll achieving under 85% attendance, and cross reference with House meetings that all pupils between 85-94% and below 85% have been picked up by PSL/ House Head/ EWO where appropriate.

Teachers to update their own lates with Reception and record lates between 8.40-9.30.

If pupil is TBC all day with no contact made, PSLs will follow up with contact home.



Last Update: 18/09/2020

## **6. Authorised Absences**

In some exceptional circumstances parents can request other authorised absences from school.

These include:

- Parental work placement abroad
- Cultural or heritage trip
- Return to country of origin, eg. to care for relative, bereavement, family wedding
- Religious Observance
- Arranged absence in relation to children in Gypsy/Traveller families

Parents should make these requests in writing to the school.

The school can authorise requests for a maximum of 10 school days. Requests for longer than 10 school days must be authorised by the identified manager at the centre.

It is important that the school and subsequently the centre consider any unreasonable risk the request might pose to the child. These include;

- Already poor attendance
- Context of Child Protection or compulsory supervision – discuss with Social Work
- Risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and/ or Forced Marriage

## **7. Children Missing from Education**

The Education Welfare Service should be informed of all absences that appear to be for no satisfactory reason. It is the duty of the Education Welfare Service to assist in tracing the pupil. It is helpful to notify the Education Welfare Service at the earliest opportunity in these circumstances.

In this situation consideration should be made as to whether the absence constitutes a wellbeing concern that should also be raised with social care direct. If the child is known to social work they should always be alerted to any unexplained absence.

The Education Welfare Service will support schools to investigate unexplained absences. This is likely to include;

- making contact with those named in Emergency contact details held in the school
- enquiries with known friends or family
- enquiries with neighbours
- where appropriate enquiries with social work and housing

## 8. Promoting Positive Attendance/ Improving Attendance

Balerno High School will seek to embed an early intervention strategy to promote school attendance for all pupils to ensure they are included, engaged and involved. The entire Support Team and DHTs will commit to the following (but not limited to) as part of this strategy:

- Promoting positive family involvement
  - Phone/ email conversations
  - Attendance at YPPMs/ Home-School Meetings
  - Signposting via Support section of school website
  -
- Pastoral Support
  - PSE Curriculum
  - Pupil check-ins
  - Person-Centred Plans for all pupils referred to Home-School Link and/ or EWS
  - Access to Hub
  - Class Packs
  -
- Health and Well-being
  - Access to counselling
  - Multi-agency support
  - Hub referrals
  - Mental Health First-Aiders
  -
- Behaviour Approaches
  - Restorative conversations
  - Equity Profiles
  - Case Conferences
  -
- Reward Systems
  - Attainment Awards
  - Hot Chocolate Nominations and Winners
  - Attendance Certificates
  -
- Curricular Flexibility
  - Flexible Timetables
  - Alternative Timetables
  - Hub Time
  -
- Links with FE and Other Organisations
  - Interventions List
  - SCP
  - Supported SCP
  - ASL Referrals
  -
- Buddying and Mentoring
  - Peer Buddy System
  - Mentoring