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Ethos Academy Trust

# Attendance Policy

**October 2023**



Nurturing inclusive learning communities



1	Summary	Attendance Policy			
2	Responsible person	Nikki Wood			
3	Accountable ELT member	Hannah Lord			
4	Applies to	All Staff			
5	Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy	Alison Black (Trustee)			
6	Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable)	Hannah Lord			
7	Equality impact analysis completed	Policy Screened	Y/N	Template completed	Y/N
8	Ratifying committee(s) and date of final approval	Kirklees APRC 23/10/23			
9	Version	1.2			
10	Available on	Every	Y/N	Trust Website Academy Website Staff Portal	Y/N Y/N Y/N
11	Related documents (if applicable)	Click or tap			
12	Disseminated to	All Staff			
13	Date of implementation (when shared)	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2023			
14	Date of next formal review	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024			
15	Consulted with Recognised Trade Unions	NA			
16	Adopted by Ethos Academy Trust following consultation	NA			

Date	Version	Action	Summary of changes
5.7.22	1.1	Rewrite of the attendance policy	Policy re-written to ensure compliance and best practice in line with DfE Working Together to improve school attendance.
5.2.23	1.2	Amend registration times	Amend registration times and remove Vicky Wood as attendance officer.
October 23	1.3	Policy Review	No changes

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## 1. Introduction

At Reach Academy, we understand how important school attendance is and how this relates to pupils achieving well. Pupils who attend school regularly benefit from fulfilling relationships with peers and staff, better academic outcomes and a vastly improved school experience which promotes successful transition onto their next stage of education.

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to improve school attendance, improve punctuality and, as a result, raise levels of achievement. This policy is written with regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010; and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

This policy has also been written in conjunction with 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (DfE, May 2022) guidance which applies from September 2022.

Further guidance can also be found at:

<https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-attendance-and-absence/>

## 2. School Attendance, Absence and the Law

At Reach Academy, we strive for all pupils to achieve full attendance throughout their placement with us. We do this first by:

- Creating a warm and welcoming environment based upon nurture principals;
- Ensuring that pupils feel safe;
- Developing positive relationships between parent/carers, staff and pupils;
- Making education enjoyable, interesting and appropriate to every child's needs;
- Encouraging, praising and rewarding success.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an appropriate, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by an alternative education offer.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that Reach Academy is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend, being given

permission for an absence in advance from the school or when attending their mainstream school (if applicable).

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. We recognise the strong link between attendance and safeguarding, and always consider any safeguarding needs or concerns alongside any attendance issues.

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Reach Academy has a foundation for securing good attendance; an environment calm, orderly, safe, and supportive where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with our efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It requires the support of all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, as well as the board of trustees, the local authority, and other local partners.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Our Responsibilities as an Academy Trust**

All schools are required to record details of pupils' attendance and absence. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If a child is absent, it is required that parents/carers inform the academy of the reason for the absence.

Reach Academy will record the absence under a particular category pre-set by the Department of Education (DfE). This data is then available to the attendance and pupil support service for each pupil. The DfE also receive annual data for each academy.

Every member of staff within Ethos Academy Trust has a responsibility to promote and support attendance. The Senior leader responsible for attendance is Nikki Wood who has responsibility for overseeing attendance of all pupils on a day-to-day basis and managing all levels of absence.

#### **The Senior Leadership Teams will:**

- Continually monitor whole school and individual attendance;
- Implement policies and strategies to support and improve attendance;
- Regularly produce data to analyse attendance information and ensure procedures are in place to

- address issues;
- Implement a robust absence system that ensures all concerns are identified and addressed in a timely manner;
- Report to pupils and parents/carers regularly;
- Implement reward systems that motivate pupils to attend well;
- Support colleagues with systems that are accessible and ensure positive outcomes;
- Give attendance a high profile throughout the school;
- Ensure registers are accurately marked and absences appropriately coded;
- Report regularly to the CEO and Trustees.

**All staff will:**

- Work to provide an environment that is welcoming and promotes good attendance;
- Ensure relationships with pupils are positive and individual needs are identified and addressed;
- Work with parents/carers to build positive, transparent relationships;
- Contact parents/carers regularly in the case of any absence and to recognise sustained and improved attendance;
- Ensure attendance is recorded including reasons behind any absences;
- Work with the data to address any reoccurring issues or patterns (such as the same day absence every week);
- Liaise with colleagues and be aware of any related issues;
- Promote a culture of mutual respect and ensure pupils are valued every day;
- Work closely with colleagues to communicate any issues that may impact attendance;
- Liaise with parents/carers and related professionals to address any issues affecting attendance;
- Ensure support plans are in place that make clear the roles and responsibilities of school/parent/carer and other professionals (including the mainstream school);
- Reward good and improved attendance in a fair and equitable way ensuring parents / carers are informed.

**Parents/Carers will:**

- Inform school of any circumstances that may impact on attendance;
- Attend regular review meetings and meet with staff on request;
- Arrange any leave of absence, including holidays, out of term time;
- Engage with external professionals with the aim of supporting attendance;
- Actively promote good attendance by encouraging and supporting your child to attend;
- Make medical or other appointments out of school time unless unavoidable;
- Work with staff to implement agreed strategies and actively promote good attendance.

**Pupils will:**

- Attend school punctually and regularly;
- Adhere to the Academy rules;
- Share any concerns with staff and allow staff to support their needs;
- Hand in any letters of absence or requests for known absence to their class teacher (including pre-arranged medical appointments).

## Registration procedures

At Reach Academy, our school day starts at 8.45am and the school day finishes at 2.30pm. Pupils are welcomed into the school each day by staff members on duty at the pupil entrance (usually members of the Senior Leadership Team). Pupils are also greeted warmly by staff and staff check in with each pupil on arrival. Registers close at 9.40am and re-open at 12.30 - 1pm. Group leads mark attendance at the start of both sessions.

As part of our nurturing approach, we provide a daily healthy breakfast for all pupils as we recognise the importance of this to ensure that the day starts positively and pupils can then focus and learn. If the pupil is late then an important part of the day is missed and this can then lead to an unsettled day. It is important that we work together to ensure pupils arrive on time and ready to learn.

## 4. The Importance of Good Attendance

At Reach Academy, we have high expectations for our pupils and, as such, the expected attendance standard is 95%. Anything less than this is a concern and we take all appropriate measures to ensure we are addressing any barriers to attendance. We will always work with a pupil, their families and any appropriate external agencies to find solutions and promote the benefits of good attendance rather than implementing a punitive response.

Impact of Lost Learning		
0-2 days absent	99-100% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance rewards achieved</li> <li>High level of engagement with learning opportunities</li> <li>Individual needs identified and appropriate support put in place</li> <li>Positive relationships developed with peers and staff</li> <li>Transition to long-term setting able to be fully supported leading to successful transition</li> </ul>
4-7.5 days absent	96-98% attendance	
9.5-17 days absent	93-95% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupil at risk of not achieving their full potential</li> <li>Risk of pupil's needs not being fully identified and supported</li> <li>Some positive relationships developed with key staff and peers</li> <li>Attendance awards achieved for improving attendance</li> <li>Transition to long-term setting able to be supported leading to successful transition</li> </ul>
19-25 days absent	90-92% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High risk of underachievement</li> <li>High risk of pupil's needs not being identified and supported</li> <li>Transition to long term provision likely to be difficult to plan which could impact on the success of the transition period</li> <li>Behaviour meetings needed to support improvements</li> </ul>
27 days absent	Under 89% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extreme risk of underachievement</li> <li>Extreme risk of pupil's needs not being identified and</li> </ul>

		<p>supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition to long term provision extremely difficult to plan which could impact on the success of the transition period</li> <li>• Behaviour contract needed to support improvements</li> </ul>
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We aim to ensure that all pupils recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality for the next stage of their education as it is a vital life skill. To ensure all pupils are successful in their long-term provision, we recognise and share with pupils how important good attendance is and how it helps staff to fully understand a pupil's needs and strategies that work well to support these needs. These can then be fully shared with their next provision to support a successful transition.

## 5. Concerns about Attendance

Senior Leaders within Reach Academy and within the Trust regularly use attendance data to monitor individual, group and whole school attendance. If there are concerns because a pupil not attending on a regular basis, staff will contact parents and carers and conduct home visits to find ways to improve attendance. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, then it will be recorded as a persistent absence.

### Persistent and Severe Absence

The Government identifies persistent absence as any pupil who has attendance of less than 90%. Reach Academy recognises this figure and aspires to set this standard for all its pupils. Personalised attendance targets may be adjusted dependent on the needs of the individual pupil. Reach Academy will put into place all reasonable measures to secure and sustain improved attendance.

Ethos Academy Trust defines severe absence as those pupils attending school for less than 50% of the time. The data, targeted actions and impact measures linked to severe absence are reported into governance on a termly basis.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated and the appropriate educational support have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is possible to constitute neglect. Should this be the case, Reach Academy will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

## 6. Procedures to Improve Attendance

Reach Academy staff will work with parents/carers and external professionals from the first day of absence to ensure that any underlying issues are addressed in a timely manner with the relevant services. Working together with parents/carers and other professionals is essential to ensure good attendance and only when this working relationship is effective can we manage any issues.

We implement a five-stage programme to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality.



## 7. Attendance Monitoring Programme

Stage		Actions
Stage 1	<b>Informal monitoring; Absence Response</b>	<p>Staff will follow the Absence Response flowchart (appendix 1). This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phone calls home to ascertain reasons for absence, identify barriers that can be easily removed;</li> <li>Home visit(s) by a staff member. Ways forward to improve attendance will be discussed and agreed;</li> <li>Refer to SLT Attendance Lead if appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>If further intervention is required because there has been no improvement in attendance or if a pupil's absence is 10% or more, the next stage will be implemented:</p>
Stage 2	<b>Senior Inclusion Worker meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with parents/carers and the pupil to set targets and agree a contract to improve attendance.</li> <li>The improvement contract will be put into action and monitored.</li> <li>This will be reviewed after an agreed period of time and successful outcomes will be measured and recorded.</li> </ul> <p>If further intervention is required because there has been no or limited improvement in attendance the next stage will be implemented:</p>
Stage 3	<b>Senior Leader for Attendance meeting:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with parents/carers and the pupil to review the attendance contract;</li> <li>The amended contract will be put into action and monitored;</li> <li>This will be reviewed after an agreed period of time and successful outcomes will be measured and recorded.</li> </ul> <p>If further intervention is required because there has been no or limited improvement in attendance the next stage will be implemented:</p>
Stage 4	<b>Head Teacher and Senior Leader for Attendance meeting:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head Teacher and Senior Leader will meet with the parents/carers and the pupil to review the attendance contract and next steps.</li> <li>This meeting will be a discussion on how prosecution for non-attendance can be avoided.</li> <li>The reviewed contract will be put into action and monitored.</li> <li>This will be reviewed after an agreed period of time and successful outcomes will be measured and recorded.</li> </ul> <p>If further intervention is required because there has been no or little improvement in attendance:</p>
Stage 5	<b>Legal enforcement</b>	<p>Penalty Notices will be considered when a parent has failed in their duty as defined in section 7 of The Education Act 1996 to ensure the</p>

		<p>regular school attendance of their child. Evidence should be available to demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student has had more than 10% unauthorised absence within a continuous 6-week period;</li> <li>• Support has been offered by the Academy;</li> <li>• All reasonable attempts have been made to engage the parent and to provide opportunities for the parent to address the poor attendance;</li> <li>• Parenting or similar contracts have been offered which were clear in the expectations of the parent and of the support that would be offered;</li> <li>• DfE guidance on the use of parenting contracts has been followed;</li> <li>• Parents have been made aware of the legal sanctions available including the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued;</li> <li>• The pursuit of an Education Supervision Order or a Parenting Order may not be appropriate to bring about improvement in the student's attendance.</li> </ul> <p>Failure to adhere to the contract may result in legal action being considered. If legal action is approved by the Kirklees Legal Intervention Panel, the matter is heard in Magistrates' Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record. Additionally, other community orders may be attached.</p> <p>Prosecution will be authorised by the Head Teacher if appropriate evidence supports this.</p>
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## Dual registered Pupils

If a pupil is dual registered, an absence will be discussed with the mainstream school and siblings' schools will be contacted. A multi-agency meeting may take place and any concerns will be passed to the relevant services. If there are sufficient concerns and a pupil is not seen or a parent/carer cannot confirm their whereabouts a 101 call will be made to inform the police.

If the non-attendance continues, we will remain in communication with parents/carers and mainstream schools. In a small number of cases if there are no unmet needs that staff can work to address, we would discuss with all stakeholders whether our academies are the correct provision to meet need. For some young people the placement may not be successful and in cases where pupils are dual-registered, the referring mainstream school would consider alternatives. All related agencies would be consulted and a joint decision would be made in the pupil's best interest.

## 8. Pupils on Part-Time Timetables

At Reach Academy, all teaching and non-teaching staff have responsibility for the care of pupils who are struggling to access learning. We recognise however, that at certain stages in a child or young person's school life they may struggle to access the typical provision offered as a result of their Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Even when the curriculum is reasonably adapted in line with best teaching and learning practice and the young person is appropriately supported within our usual systems, there are occasions when a pupil may still struggle to access full time education. In these instances, the Head Teacher may consider that a personalised timetable is an appropriate means of supporting the young person up until the point when they are better able to access full time education.

Examples of when this is appropriate may include:

- At transition points – into or between settings;
- When the child or young person has repeated or prolonged episodes of crisis when in school;
- When a risk assessment shows that their behaviour poses a significant health and safety risk to themselves, other pupils or staff which cannot be reasonably managed within the usual day;
- When their behaviour causes repeated and significant disruption to the education of other pupils.

If the Head Teacher considers a personalised timetable is appropriate, a clear plan for this should be completed in line with Kirklees guidelines. This plan and the reasons for it, will be communicated to parents and carers along with the arrangements for its regular review. The aim of a personalised timetable will always be to support the young person so that they can return to full time education as soon as possible. The duration will however, depend on the needs of the individual but will remain in place for the shortest time necessary.

Reach Academy will inform Kirklees Education Safeguarding Service when using reduced timetables for pupils and follow the Kirklees reduced timetable guidance.

## 9. Children missing in education (CME)

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at a school (for example, at home or in alternative provision). Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) later in life. All pupils at risk of CME are reported to the Local Authority in line with relevant guidance within agreed timescales. There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education. It is vital that local authorities make judgements on a case-by-case basis. This may include children from the following vulnerable groups below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children of new migrant families

- Children of Gypsy, Roma Traveller Families

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Effective intervention should be at the earliest opportunity in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

At Reach Academy, we appreciate that the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that all children and young people of compulsory school age receive suitable and appropriate education. School will support the Local Authority in ensuring that this duty is carried out effectively. There are specific duties in respect of Children Missing Education (CME) and there are strict guidelines in respect of both the definition of CME and the legalities of deleting a pupil from a school roll. We understand that it is essential that the DSL contact the Kirklees Education Safeguarding Service and complete a CME referral to inform them where any pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive days without a reason being provided for the absence. In line with Kirklees' Education Safeguarding Service CME guidance for schools (September 2020) and Department for Education Children Missing in Education Guidance, Reach Academy will make reasonable enquiries to locate the child in line with the Centre's duty under section 10 of the Children's Act 2004.

Reasonable enquiries to find the child include:

- Checking with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with
- Checking with the pupil's friends, siblings, and known relative
- Checking with other professionals who may be involved or have had contact with the pupil or family
- Making telephone calls to any numbers held/identified including emergency contacts
- Sending a letter to the last known address
- Carrying out home visits at different times to check who is at the home address and other known addresses and check with neighbours and known friends
- Asking for the address the family is moving to
- Requesting copies of flight information if appropriate

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive and each case will be considered on its individual merits ensuring all the facts of the case have been taken into account. Additional enquiries to those above may be necessary. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, Reach Academy will make a referral to Children's Social Care and Police in accordance with the West Yorkshire Police Truancy policy (if appropriate).

Kirklees Children Missing Education (CME) team can be contacted via the email below:

[ESS.CME@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:ESS.CME@kirklees.gov.uk)

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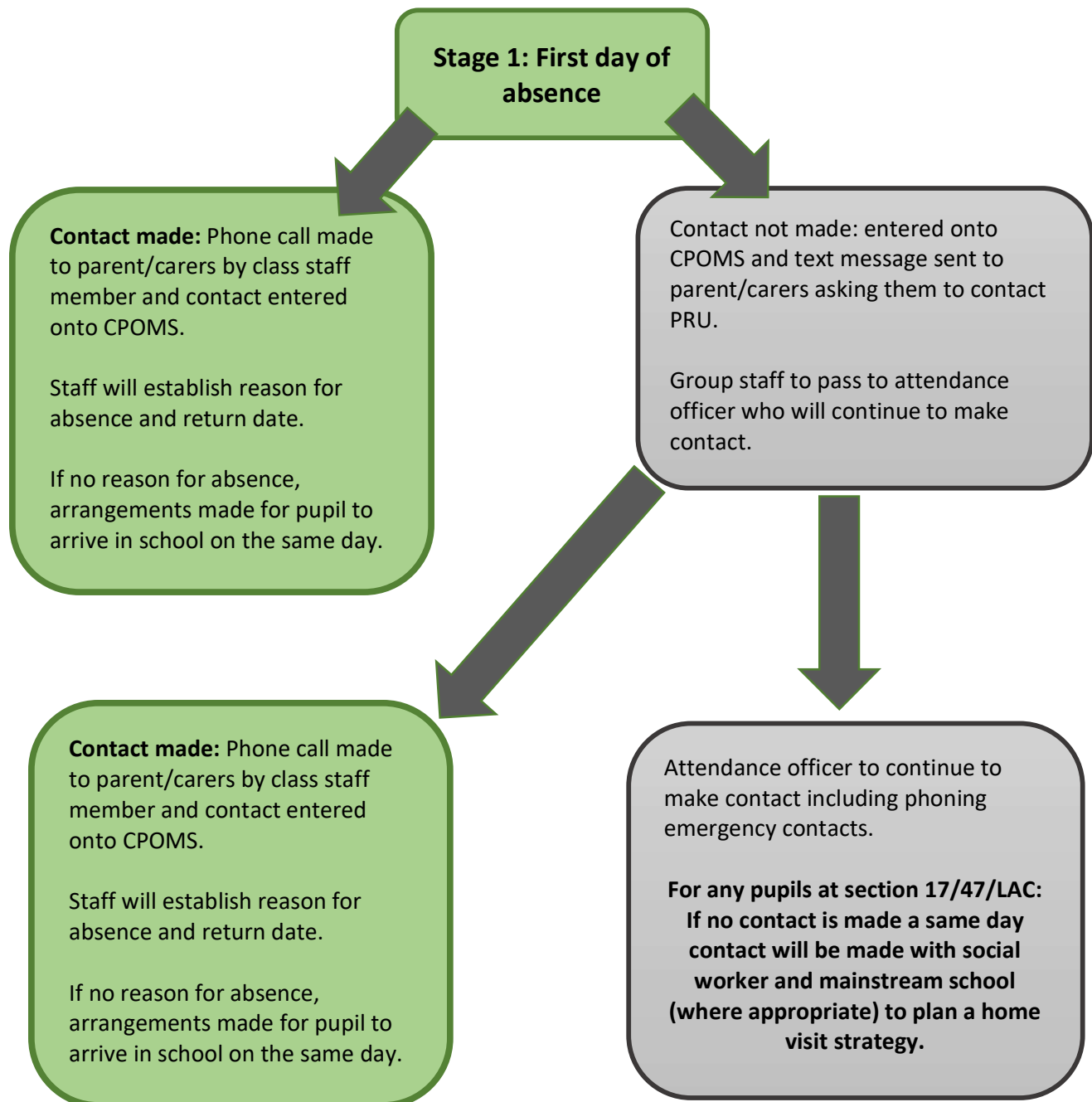
## 10. Attendance Rewards

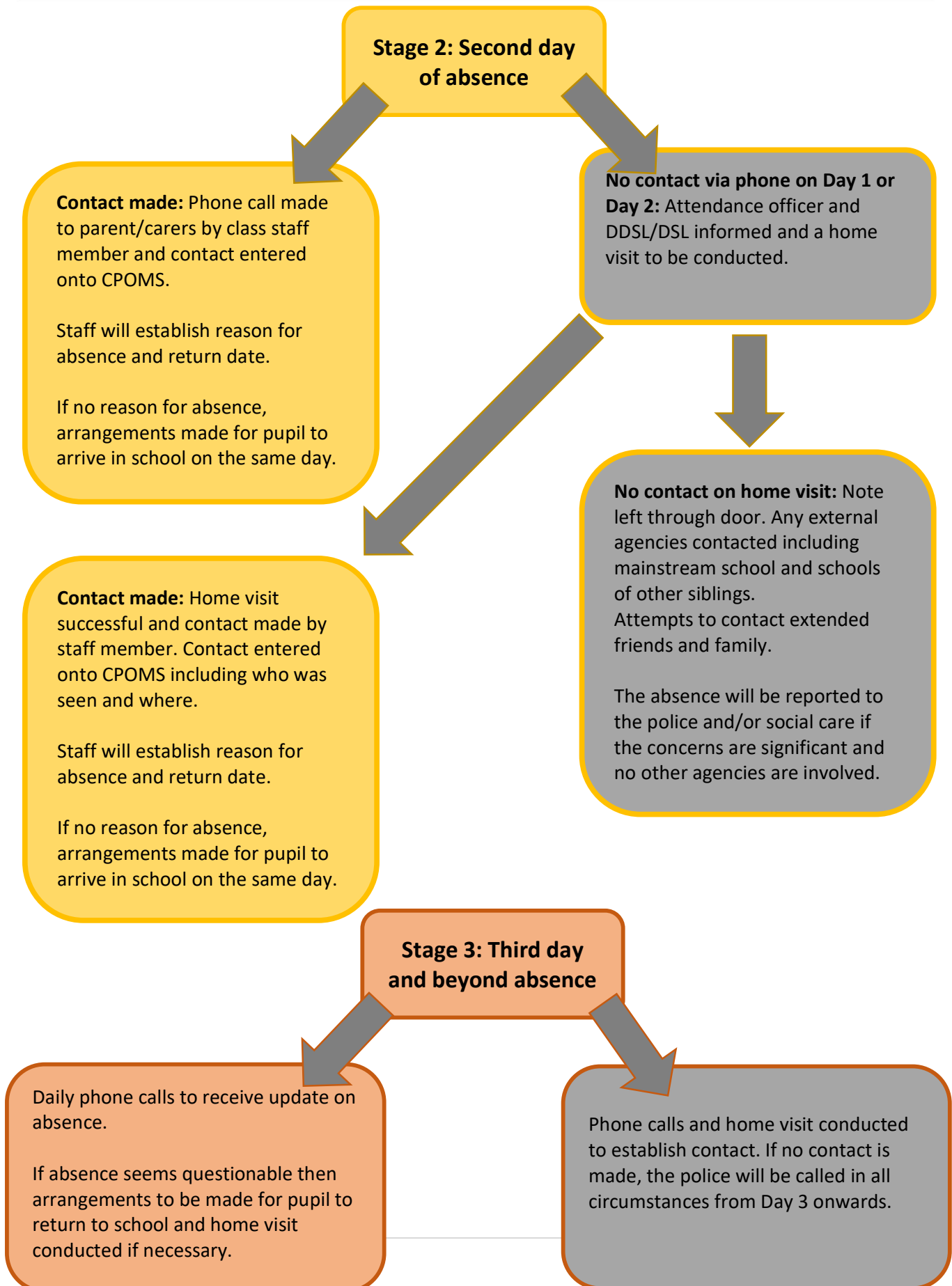
At Reach Academy we understand how important it is that pupils attend and are punctual every day. We work to ensure that our pupils understand this also and that they attend school because they are aware of the benefits to them.

Our reward system is in place to further motivate pupils and to demonstrate the benefits of school attendance. The rewards available could include:

- Regular postcards and phone calls home to ensure parents/carers are kept informed;
- Weekly and half termly reward assemblies. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate success as a whole school;
- Promoting competition by comparing the attendance of the groups and rewarding the winning group;
- Termly reward trips/activities that the pupils have identified as of value to them and will motivate them to keep attending;
- Invite parents/carers to celebrate success in school on a termly basis;
- Considering personalised motivational strategies that will work for individuals.

## Appendix 1 – Absence Response Process for Reach Academy





## Appendix 2 – Attendance Improvement Contract

The purpose of the Pupil Attendance Contract is to identify the reason(s) for a pupil's low attendance, document the previous steps taken by the school, and agree the plans necessary to improve the pupil's future attendance. Review dates are a maximum of 4 weeks.

<b>Pupil Name</b>		<b>Parent/Carer Name</b>	
<b>Stage (2,3,4)</b>		<b>Date of Plan</b>	
<b>Current Attendance %</b>			
<b>Current barriers/reasons for attendance</b>			
<b>Action Plan</b>			
<b>Action needed</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Attendance Target</b>		<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>Staff sign</b>		<b>Pupil sign</b>	
<b>Parent sign</b>		<b>Head Teacher sign</b>	