

[Type text]



Central Lancaster High School
A Visual and Performing Arts College
Inspiring Success

**ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING
POLICY**

Policy reviewed – June 2013

To be reviewed – June 2015

Written by M. Aldren

SLT i/c C. Bonney



[Type text]

CENTRAL LANCASTER HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The shared vision of Central Lancaster High School is to empower students to harness their own creativity, to recognize the worth in group and community projects and to work successfully in partnership with others to raise aspiration and fulfil potential.

We are a community, working together to achieve the best for our students, inspiring success, because we have pride in what we do and a deep rooted belief in young people.

SCHOOL ETHOS

This is a school where young people matter, which provides excellent teaching and learning. The school ethos is clearly visible; a warm, friendly yet purposeful environment with excellent relationships. The educational philosophy is known by all. The size of the school allows us to get to know our students well and therefore make the best of each individual's talents, providing the right challenges to achieve all our pupils' potential.

We believe in providing our students with quality. We aim together to create the best learning environment for our students and place an emphasis on teaching and learning in all we do. Student progress relies on attendance and social confidence. The school recognizes actively the Every Child Matters agenda and strives to provide a better diet of education for all pupils through 'personalised learning' strategies and curriculum relevance and access.

The school will encourage attendance and punctuality for all students, by offering an environment in which students feel valued and part of the school community. 'Pupil Voice' is given real status through the School Council organization and canvassing opinion through annual questionnaires. Parents are encouraged to participate and have an equal voice in school practice through parent governors, surveys of opinion and Full Service Extended School activity.

[Type text]

AIMS

Together we will:

- ✓ Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- ✓ Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- ✓ Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- ✓ Further improve the daily experience of school life for all students.
- ✓ Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance levels, including statutory targets.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and in particular:

Behaviour for Learning policy; Home-School Partnership; student planner; school prospectus; staff handbook.

The Home-School Partnership Agreement (Student Planner; Prospectus) states clearly that:

We expect pupils to attend regularly and be punctual.

We expect parents to ensure regular attendance and punctuality.

In order for the policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to pupils the importance of the education being provided. This means assuring that all staff arrive on time to registration, form periods and lessons and are well prepared.

[Type text]

RIGHTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy provides a procedural framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for pupils and parents, staff and governors. It provides guidance on registration, authorised and unauthorised absence, leave-taking, referral routes and potential sanctions, re-integration and systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality, as well as strategies employed to deal with absence.

The Home-School Partnership Agreement states clearly basic expectations for school, student and parent. Students are encouraged wherever possible to take responsibility for their own actions.

In terms of attendance this is reinforced through the school planner in which clear guidance and target-setting is logged.

In education law a parent is anyone who has regular care of a young person. Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly, punctually and stays in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents/carers may be prosecuted under the Education Act 1996 if their child does not attend school regularly and punctually.

Parents should:

- ✓ Ensure pupils attend regularly and punctually
- ✓ Contact school on first day of absence
- ✓ Provide a signed letter/note of explanation in the student planner
- ✓ Ensure contact details are correct
- ✓ Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible, in particular during testing/examination periods.
- ✓ Contact school where there is concern over attendance
- ✓ Attend meetings if concerns are identified
- ✓ Support the school in any intervention/action plans
- ✓ Keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum

Pupils should:

- ✓ Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school to facilitate punctual attendance
- ✓ Attend regularly and register punctually
- ✓ Adhere to appropriate systems for late registration
- ✓ Engage in school support to improve
- ✓ Abide by sanctions if needed

Students have a right to educational provision and support whatever they are facing socially and/or externally. Adolescence brings a host of very difficult issues in addition to normal family life. The Pupil Inclusion Centre or PIC allows us to offer a safe haven in times of need, whilst providing some continuity with the curriculum, thus making return to full schooling easier to access.

[Type text]

School staff should:

- ✓ Provide a welcoming atmosphere for all students
- ✓ Provide a safe learning environment
- ✓ Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- ✓ Provide a sympathetic response to any of the pupils' concerns
- ✓ Promote good attendance and a positive attitude towards attendance
- ✓ Recognize their responsibility in contributing to this whole-school policy
- ✓ Participate fully in policy delivery and undertake training as necessary regarding school systems
- ✓ Be aware of the attendance of students in their care
- ✓ Act promptly on any associated concerns

Governors should:

- ✓ Ensure the policy is adopted and reviewed as stated
- ✓ Consider attendance on a regular basis through the Learning and Standards Committee, agreeing and requesting updates on the annual Action Plan
- ✓ Support staff delivery of policy, through attendance panels, etc.
- ✓ Set and evaluate statutory attendance targets for the school

ATTENDANCE STAFF

The Headteacher will hold the ultimate responsibility for the policy's delivery and will report regularly to governors. The day-to-day management will be organized through the Assistant Headteacher i/c attendance, who will line-manage the Pupil Progress Leaders (PPLs) and chair calendared meetings in the six week cycle. See Appendix 1 for delegation of responsibility.

The School Attendance Officer (SAO) will facilitate the work of the PPLs and their tutor teams. They will oversee the operation of SIMS system and the provision/collation of attendance data. They will report to the Senior Leadership Team on attendance matters via the Assistant Head.

Please refer to job description for SAO, PPL and Form Tutor (FT) for full duties. A flowchart is provided to show incremental steps and staff roles through the procedural framework. See flowchart of delegation and responsibility for pupil registration.

[Type text]

SELF-EVALUATION

MONITORING AND ANALYSIS

The school operates electronic registers which facilitate register analysis. The SAO produces print outs for PPLs every week and every half term. This facilitates identification of absence patterns and broken weeks so that action can be taken. PPLs highlight areas of concern and pass to FTs to investigate. Updated information is circulated to both PPLs and SAO.

The school operates internal truancy sweeps and works with the police to aid external sweeps.

Attendance is reported to parents at three points in the year through the assessment practice, unless there is a need to provide more regular feedback. Primary liaison and induction practice ensures early identification of previous attendance problems and establishes school expectations and parental contact through the personal interviews held in the summer term with FTs.

Analysis is undertaken across codes of absence, as well as on an individual, form and year basis. PPLs report every half term to SLT i/c attendance on progress and concerns within the year group.

TARGET-SETTING

Whole-school targets are set for each term and then reviewed in conjunction with strategies employed. Formal external reporting of targets takes place under the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) on a termly basis. These figures are compared from one year to the next to inform staff of key points in the year and to reflect attendance trends.

The school sets statutory targets on whole-school attendance and unauthorised absence every year with the School Improvement Partner (SIP).

PPLs use 'traffic lights' system to identify success and areas for improvement across the year group each term and as a result set individual targets with students where issues arise.

ACTION PLANNING

The SAO will produce an annual action plan to improve attendance and punctuality on the basis on target success and practical need.

[Type text]

REGISTRATION

All staff, not just FTs, should be familiar with the up to date codes for registration as outlined in 'Guidance for Schools on Registration and Attendance' issued by the Lancashire Education Welfare Service (EWS) in January 2005. These are reproduced in the annual Staff Handbook, which will reflect appropriate additions and amendment.

Registers must be marked at each session accurately and consistently in accordance with these agreed codes. FTs should consult their PPL where they are unsure.

If a student is to leave the premises during the school session, permission must first be granted by the FT following parental request or permission to do so. In this case the student must inform the SAO and sign out of school at Reception and then sign back in again on return to school.

Where information is received through Reception, the SAO and PPL/FT will be informed and the SAO will amend the attendance code as appropriate.

Registration codes will be checked regularly by the SAO to ensure missing marks are addressed and errors corrected via PPL and FT. The SAO will check for consistent use of attendance symbols and that reasons for authorizing absence are acceptable. See Appendix 2 for 'Flowchart of initial intervention'.

The decision to authorize absence will be made following guidance set out under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 which states that acceptable reasons for absence are:

- a) the child was absent with leave,
- b) the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; requests for appropriate medical notification may be requested by the school to verify absences if they become repeated or prolonged.
- c) absence was on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parent belongs;
- d) that the school is not within statutory walking distance and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the local education authority.

[Type text]

Leaders of student visits, rehearsals, etc. must provide clear information to both Reception and the SAO and PPLs concerned. The SAO/FT will record the appropriate code.

Where a student is unwell and unable to remain in school, the school office or SAO will contact the parent to arrange for the student to be collected. The SAO will inform the FT and will ensure there is follow-up contact and the correct code registered. Where there is an accident the same will apply following employment of all emergency procedures and school health and safety guidelines. Staff must be vigilant where a student has made direct contact via a mobile phone and ensure that the matter is correctly reported/recorded according to school policy.

Some students are dual registered. This may be because of a trial 'Managed Transfer' or a college placement offering alternative KS4 provision. Where this is the case the SAO will contact the other institution at the end of each full week to keep accurate records. At the end of each half term a registration record is requested to compare the overview. Where this occurs in reverse then information is provided in return.

PUNCTUALITY

Students should be on the school site by 8.40am as stated in the student planner, when a bell is sounded to alert them to move to form rooms. A second bell denotes the official start of the registration period. The registration periods are 8.45am to 8.55am for the morning session and 1.30pm to 1.35pm for the afternoon session. On Thursdays the afternoon session is different to accommodate TRAIL; on this day registration is 1.25pm to 1.30pm.

Formal close of registration as far as the student is concerned is the end of the registration period. FTs will reinforce this regularly and promote the importance of punctuality. The SAO will monitor lateness and will raise the level of sanction/support where lateness becomes a regular concern. The SAO will use the code of 'L' until the official close of registration which is half an hour after the end of the registration period. Thereafter 'U', and therefore 'unauthorised', is used. This encourages students to make an effort to get in for the next lesson rather than waiting for the next session. Where a student is unavoidably late and attends for more than half the session, recognition of this attendance is important. Formal close of registration is therefore 9.30am and 2.15pm.

In special circumstances, where for example, a student is the only carer, special consideration is granted to take account of the situation and support the student.

All students are required to sign in with the SAO if late outside of the registration period. The SAO lists all lates for the week and passes information to PPLs and SLT i/c attendance. Subsequent detentions are issued appropriately by PPLs/SAO.

[Type text]

The pupil entrance is locked at 8.55am to encourage prompt arrival at school. After this time students can only gain access through the main front entrance and Reception, where they must proceed to sign in the late register and then visit the SAO to explain their reason for being late to school.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

FTs are encouraged to offer understanding and support in an attempt to access truthful reasons for absence. Where problems arise students may initially be given the benefit of any doubt, but where absence becomes repeated or more regular, greater investigation is required.

Unauthorised absence is any absence from school, for which the reason offered is deemed unacceptable by staff. In this case parents will be contacted. All parents of students with unauthorised absence will receive a print-out of their child's attendance with a formal note explaining the seriousness and implications of this sort of absence.

FIRST DAY CALL SYSTEM

The school operates a First Day Call system, whereby the parent of an absent student is contacted the same day by instant text or telephone. Where there are known problems or the student will miss an exam or similar, this should take place after registration in the morning session. Where contact cannot be made, the SAO will try again the following day. If no response can be gained a home visit may be undertaken by the SAO.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents/students are encouraged to make appointments of any kind outside of school hours wherever possible. The school is sympathetic to the difficulties in always managing this, but stipulates that where this is not possible the student should return to school without delay afterwards to avoid missing the whole session. Missing a subsequent session without good reason will be recorded as unauthorised.

Staff need to be clear about the difference between the codes of 'M' and 'I'. There should supporting letters/notes to explain.

[Type text]

LEAVE IN TERM TIME

Taking a pupil out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and the school expect parents to help us by not taking their children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made at least two weeks in advance, by the parent, who must complete a leave of absence request form which is returned to the SAO. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher.

Leave in term time will not be agreed by the school at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

In considering the request the school will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:

When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. GCSE or any other public examinations. It is the policy of the school not to authorise leave of absence during examination periods.

The policy of the school is not to authorise any leave of absence for Year 11 pupils as this can have an adverse effect on their attainment.

- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 95% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic years.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice issued by the Local authority.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Readmission cannot be guaranteed.

[Type text]

The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013).

ADMISSIONS

The Headteacher is directly responsible for all admissions. The Local Authority is responsible as the admissions authority for community schools and the transfer protocol is adhered to in liaison with the Pupil Access Team and the other school concerned. Most will begin at the start of the next term unless otherwise agreed due to 'new to area' or relocation transport difficulties. All are provided with the LCC leaflet 'Thinking about changing schools?'

Students joining the school from other schools, including local and managed transfers, will only be admitted on the understanding that they have been attending their previous school up to the time of transfer. Where there are exceptional circumstances, a clear commitment to attend school regularly and punctually will be made by both student and parent.

The School Project Leader responsible for Primary Liaison will gather evidence on Y6 students due to join the school each September and early monitoring will be put in place with the Y7 PPL, including raising attendance as a key issue with parents at the personal interview in May preceding admission where information handover allows.

REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL ROLL

The Headteacher is directly responsible for all exclusions and roll removal.

The school will only remove students from roll in accordance with the criteria set out in Regulation 9 of The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended in 1997 and 2001).

Wherever possible the school will follow guidance and await knowledge of the new school before removing from roll in cases other than permanent exclusion. Where there are unusual circumstances the school will involve the Pupil Access Team (PAT), the Children Missing Education team (CME) and other support agencies to safeguard pupil welfare.

Where a student has been granted leave, which is further extended or it is reported that the student has moved area, then their place at the school would be reviewed.

[Type text]

Where a student is to be removed from the school roll, the Headteacher will inform the School Attendance Officer, who will complete the Common Transfer Form under the S2S system, once a pupil has been traced elsewhere.

Where this is a straightforward local transfer, there will be direct consultation with parents and the other school concerned in accordance with the PAT and the local agreement.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every third year or before depending on the introduction of new strategies and external DfE or Local Authority driven initiatives. The procedural framework will be reviewed annually.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The Headteacher's Commendation certificates are rewarded for overall performance including regular and punctual attendance at school. There is an annual prize draw for such students.

100% Attendance Certificates are awarded termly in year assemblies. 100% certificates for the whole year are presented at the annual Achievement Assembly.

Attendance is reinforced through year and key stage assemblies and form tutor time every week. There is a tutor group competition with class a trophy and individual rewards for 100% attendance. This is reinforced by updates on the year notice boards.

When a student maintains 100% attendance across a half term they are rewarded by a non-uniform day. Similarly, when a form tutor group achieves 100% attendance in one week, they too are rewarded with a non-uniform day. This recognizes the importance of attendance.

Truancy is punished by students having to catch up the time lost in detention after school. This may also involve isolation from mainstream activities.

When a student is late twice in a week or 45 or more minutes late on one occasion, they will receive an after-school detention. When a student is persistently late they will receive a break-time/lunch-time detention, as appropriate, on the day of their late arrival.

[Type text]

Students are informed that:

95%+ is an excellent attendance figure: This figure is what employers and colleges look for in references.

90%+ is a satisfactory attendance figure, but improvement is expected.

Below 90% is a cause for concern. Form Tutors and Pupil Progress Leaders will monitor such attendance and ensure parents are made aware.

The school ethos and Behaviour for Learning policy are based on reward and encouragement to improve. When a student has shown real effort to improve there will be recognition of this. Students raising their attendance by 5% from one half term to the next, excluding additional leave, will receive prize draw inclusion every term. PPLs may also provide additional rewards such as funding disco tickets or crediting the student's canteen account.

Pastoral staff are made aware of 'vulnerable' students and special consideration is made wherever possible to support students in continuing to access their education. When a student faces long-term absence through admittance to hospital, serious illness or operation, then additional support and rewards will be available, accessed through the PPL.

TRAIL

Small group mentoring is undertaken regularly through TRAIL sessions on Thursdays. Every student has a TRAIL session every sixth week and therefore one every half term approximately. Attendance and punctuality are a key focus of these meetings and associated targets from these discussions are recorded in the Student Planner. The SAO/PPL provides half termly attendance figures for FTs.

LETTERS OF CONCERN/PRAISE

There is a series of school-based letters to parents, which express increasing concern. When there is no contact possible or no response, the EWO will be involved. When absence persists then parents will be requested to attend an Attendance Panel meeting. Their purpose, use and time are clear through the flowchart of response.

Letters of praise are also sent to students and parents where considerable progress has been made.

HOME VISITS

When there is a concern over pupil attendance the SAO may perform a home visit. This is to ascertain reason for absence, investigate any possible underlying issues preventing the pupil from attending and to place appropriate levels of support available to the school.

[Type text]

ATTENDANCE PANELS

The school holds an Attendance Panel for any student with sustained unauthorised absence in an attempt to stimulate improved attendance.

The panel will normally include the Assistant Headteacher, i/c Attendance, the SAO, the PPL and where possible a governor. These will be formal minuted meetings with clear reference to the procedural framework and potential outcomes where improvement is not achieved. When these involve a child with SEN then the SENCo may also form part of the panel.

PARENTING CONTRACTS

This is strategy that the school may pursue with the guidance of the local authority. This may occur when a parent has received regular correspondence with regard to their child's absence from school, has gone through the range of procedures and has either attended an Attendance Panel without any improvement, or did not attend as requested. A Parenting Contract will specify the required terms of improvement over a set period of time. Where there remains no or little improvement, the school is likely to move to Fixed Penalty Notice.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The school reserves the right to request the Local Authority to pursue legal action which includes the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence in accordance with the local Code of Conduct. This will only be considered when other strategies have been tried and documented, but have clearly failed, or when persistent requests for extended periods of leave have been denied and the parent has chosen to take the pupil out of school without authorization.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued for any of the reasons identified in the Code. They would usually be as a consequence of failed strategies, such as a Parenting Contract, and would be recommended by a subsequent Attendance Panel.

[Type text]

STUDENT RE-INTEGRATION

The rigour of the school day can be a culture shock following an extended period of absence for whatever reason (medical, exclusion, social, truancy, extended leave). Students need to re-adjust body clocks and re-acclimatize to school-based study so in order to facilitate return to school and aid the student's future success, re-integration is offered.

Students are offered a range of re-integration programmes to overcome absence-related issues. There are programmes of social and emotional support through the Learning Support Centre (LSC). Where there is a difficulty in one (or more) curriculum areas, which has resulted in internal truancy or wider absence, then respite is achieved through the LSC on a fixed-term basis, which allows time to discuss and resolve associated issues.

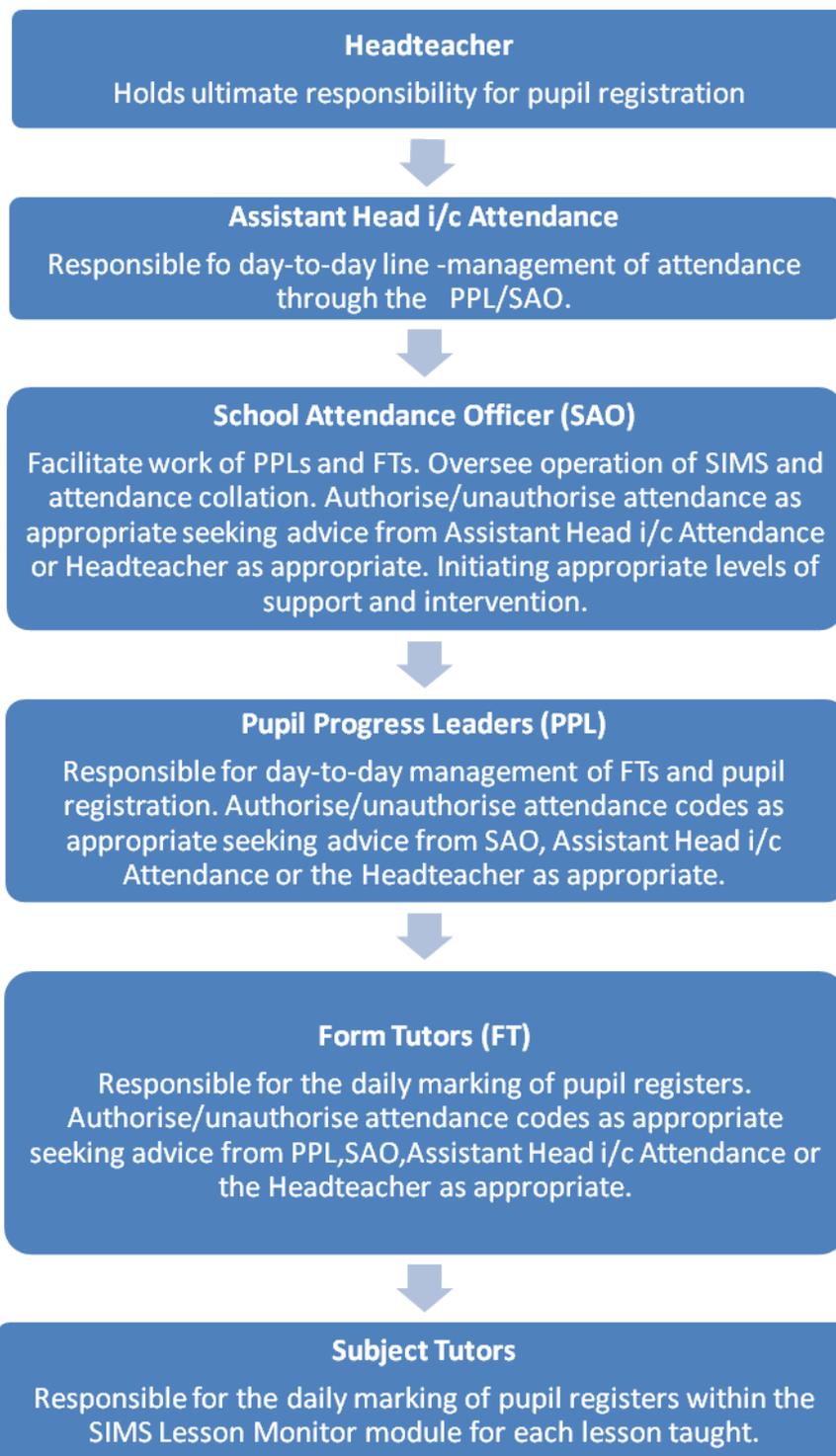
Support services and external agencies are involved as appropriate and the SENCo, EWO, School Nurse and Educational Psychologist are regularly consulted in planning the most effective approach to re-integration.

LESSON REGISTRATION

Every lesson the teacher takes an electronic register, when possible, within the first 10 minutes of the lesson commencing. This has the double impact of providing a regular check throughout the day, but also a constant reminder to students that attendance is important and regularly checked.

Appendix 1

Flowchart of delegation and responsibility for pupil registration.



Appendix 2

Flowchart of initial intervention

