



St Nicholas Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

This policy is based on the model attendance policy written by Attendance and Behaviour Service January 2014 and updated to reflect current guidance from the NAHT.

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Statement of Intent

St Nicholas Church of England (Controlled) Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at St Nicholas Church of England (Controlled) Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.35 and 8.45 am. All pupils that arrive late must report, (with their parent in KS1) to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The pupil secretary notifies the Headteacher of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Pupil Secretary to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence

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- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed termly of their child's attendance details

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance – pupil secretary to investigate and notify Headteacher of concerns
- 90 - 95% attendance - monitored through attendance meetings, school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Below 90% - consider Attendance Service or Penalty Notice referral where the absences have not been authorised and referral criteria are met.

Please refer to Appendix 11 for guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral.

Children Missing Education

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Lateness

At St Nicholas Church of England (Controlled) Primary School the register is taken at 8:45 am and 1:15 pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9am and 1:30pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (if in post) and/or School Liaison Officer. Frequent lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

- 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence including arrival after the registers have closed in a term may lead to a referral to the Attendance Service (AS) for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter

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- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Head Teacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances".

The following reasons are examples of absence that will **not** be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays
- Sporting events except where the child is a participant

Attendance and Lateness

The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

'Five Steps'

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils and FLO visits as appropriate (when in post).
2. Discussion with SLO to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness, allocation of FLO support.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff

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4. Initiate Early Help & Preventative Services
5. Referral to Attendance Service

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When referring to the SLO, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence in a term (Autumn/Spring/Summer) the school will consider the following:

School Liaison Officer Actions

This may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.**
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

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Leave of Absence/Holiday

Since September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the ability of the Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional Circumstances - Family holidays, for whatever reason, cannot be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause e.g., a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

Parents can request absence from school up to 10 school days in advance for exceptional circumstances, these would include:

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.
3. The death or terminal illness of an immediate family member.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of an immediate family member.

(The immediate family is a defined group of relations, used in rules or laws to determine which members of a person's family are affected by those rules. It normally includes a person's parents, spouses, siblings and children. It can contain others connected by birth, adoption, marriage, civil partnership, or cohabitation, such as grandparents, grandchildren, siblings-in-law, half-siblings, adopted children and step-parents/step-children, and cohabiting partners)

The evidence you will need to provide depends entirely on what type of leave from school you are applying for. The evidence you will be required to provide will be specifically asked for by the school. If you are unable to provide evidence then the request will be refused.

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We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent without speaking to the school first to obtain prior approval. Please also be aware that the Headteacher cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.

Whilst emergency situations are often difficult, parents/carers are still required to contact the school at the earliest possible opportunity and submit a written request for exceptional term time leave. The request must include a specific leave period including a return date.

Requests for holidays in term time will not be authorised.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Leave

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.
- Attendance Service receives a request to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of 10 or more school sessions (5 days)
- Attendance Service issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
- If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

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Associated resources to refer to in the formulation of this policy:

- The Education Act 1996: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1725/contents/made>
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/contents/made>
- The Education Act 2002: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3181/contents/made>
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1954/made>
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/contents>
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/38/contents>
- The Education Act 2005: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents>
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/1869/contents/made>
- Magistrates' Courts (Parenting Orders) (Amendment) Rules 2007: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/2222/made>
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/1867/contents/made>
- The Education and Skills Act 2008: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/contents>
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1046/contents/made>
- Copy of Attorney General's Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors can be found at: <http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/index.html>
- Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/powers/pace-codes/>

Other ministerial advice and guidance

- Revised statutory guidance of local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/Integratedworking/Page1/STATUTORY-LA-GUIDE>
- Power to Innovate: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/a0014624/power-to-innovate>

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Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)

Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)

Appendix 3 Absence Letter

Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter

Appendix 5 Penalty Notice information

Appendix 6 Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)

Appendix 7 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral

Appendix 8 Traveller Absence Letter

Appendix 9 Traveller Absence (CME)

Appendix 10 School Based Intervention Flow Chart

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Appendix 1

Dear,

It has come to my attention that has been late on 1 day/s this week.

The school day starts at 8:35 and children are expected to be ready to learn by 8:45. If your child arrives between 8:45 and 9am they will receive a late mark, after 9am they will be marked as unauthorised for the morning session.

Please ensure arrives at school on time.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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Appendix 2

Dear,

It has been brought to my attention that _____ has arrived at school after the registers have closed on 1 day/s this week.

The school day starts at 8:35 and children should be ready to learn by 8:45. If a child arrives after the registers close at 9am then they will receive an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session.

Please ensure that _____ arrives at school on time.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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Appendix 3

Dear,

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days she was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve their attendance. I will be monitoring attendance and will be taking further action if it does not improve. If we can help in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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Appendix 4

Dear,

Re:

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. attendance at school is currently «Number» % which means he/she has missed «Number» sessions. or «Number» days. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card.) If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for «Date» at «Time». It is important that you and attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

«Name»

«Name»

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me on «Telephone number» so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Attendance Service.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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Appendix 5

Dear Parent/Carer

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

In February 2005, **Kent Local Authority (LA)** introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.

As you can see from the above we take this opportunity to remind parents (in a non-threatening way) the expectations placed upon schools from now on. Please therefore continue to read the letter and we appreciate your support in this initiative.

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

Penalty Notices are issued **per parent per child**.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

At «School name» School we consider attendance and these legal powers very important, this is why we are bringing it to your attention.

Please ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23 PENALTY NOTICE FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE £60 PENALTY IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS £120 PENALTY IF PAID AFTER 21 DAYS BUT WITHIN 28 DAYS
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Appendix 6

Dear

Request for leave during Term-Time

I received your request to take _____ out of school for a family holiday for the dates between _____ and _____ a total of _____ school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I have considered your request and I am writing to confirm that the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take _____ out of school on the requested dates I will make a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent of each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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Appendix 7

Dear,

On I wrote informing you that I would not be authorising family holiday and explained what would happen if you still chose to go ahead.

As you have taken the family holiday as requested I have no choice but to request a penalty notice which will be issued by the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent of each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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Appendix 8

Dear

Traveller Absence

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times has been absent from school. Since «Date», has missed «Number» half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «Number»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Attendance Service if attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

If attendance does not improve and a referral is made to the Attendance Service, you could be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court unless you can prove that:

- the child has no fixed abode
- because of the nature of your trade or business (work) you have to travel from place to place and your child has attended school as often as possible
- your child has attended for at least 200 sessions in the past 12 months (for children aged 6 years and over)

If you would like to speak to me about attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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Appendix 9

Dear

Traveller Absence

Thank you for contacting me to say that _____ will be absent from school from «Date» as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise _____ absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will refer _____ to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education.

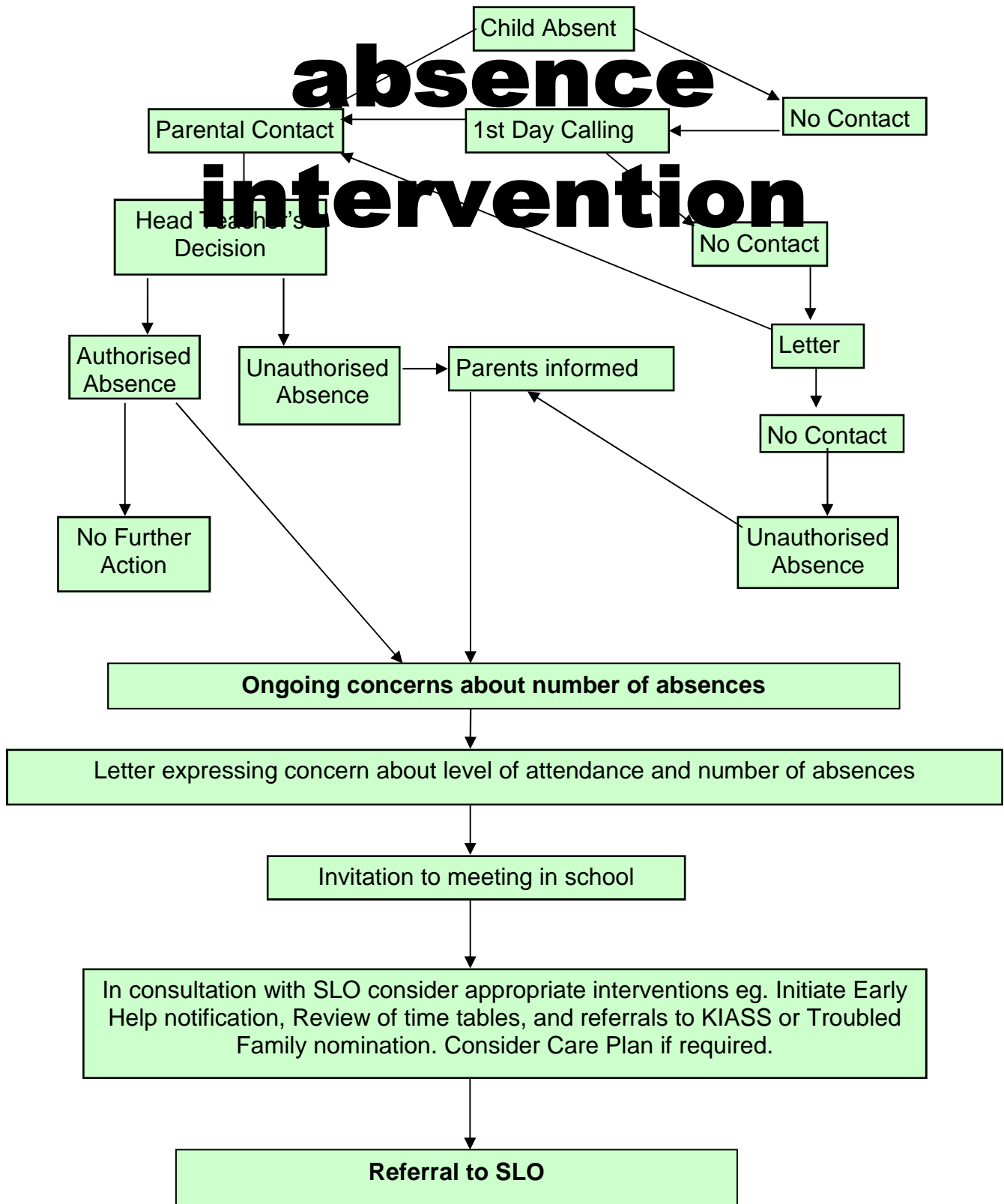
After 20 days absence, the Local Authority will give me permission to take name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Dale
Headteacher

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School based absence intervention



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