

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Summer 2019

For Schools within our Collaboration:



At the schools within our collaboration, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. All staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, and as such, the schools within our collaboration are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils including protection against radicalisation. We therefore aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. Our core purpose, values and ethos is embodied in our mission that everyone takes:

P= personal
R= responsibility
I = in
D= delivering
E= excellence

Frequency of Review: Annually (or more frequently in line with LA recommendations)

Reviewed and Approved by: The Combined Committee of the Governing Body

Date: July 2019

Date of Next Review: July 2020

Reviewers: Elle Fearn, Alan Hughes and Tony Bettridge

Signed: ----- (Chair of Governing Body) Date: -----

Our aim is to provide the best possible education for our pupils in a positive and encouraging atmosphere and to ensure that all of our pupils have an equal chance to make good use of this.

For our aim to be achieved we need all pupils to attend school regularly and punctually and we endeavour to maximise attendance rates and secure higher levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take a greater advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

If allowed to remain unchecked, absence and lateness can significantly impact on pupil progress and attainment, as well as detrimentally affecting them socially and emotionally.

Our partnerships with parents and outside agencies play a vital role in ensuring that a good level of attendance is maintained.

In order to achieve our overall aim our specific aims for attendance are to: -

- Develop supportive and positive strategies to encourage good attendance and reduce all absences.
- Develop supportive and positive strategies to encourage good punctuality.
- Offer rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality.
- Raise pupil, parent and staff awareness of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality on a half-termly basis.
- Use ScholarPack effectively to show trends of individuals, classes, year groups and whole school, where appropriate.
- Work in partnership with the local authority with any families needing targeted support services where measures taken by the school have not met with our expectations for improvement.
- Ensure that our procedures around the attendance process are clear, concise and rigorously applied
- Set targets for attendance annually with particular regard to the reduction of unauthorised and authorised absences and persistent absence.
- Strive for the best possible rates of attendance with an overall school figure of 97% or above (less than 6 days absence across the whole year on average).
- Improve and maintain the overall attendance percentage of individual pupils to be 97% or above (less than 6 days absence across the whole year).

Procedures for identifying and recording absences.

1. We monitor all pupil's attendance on a daily basis through the taking of registers where all staff members record pupil attendance/absence including any reasons given for absence
2. All staff members have the responsibility to record and pass on any significant information/knowledge regarding attendance to office staff, the Attendance Lead and the Senior Leadership Team.
3. Registers are regularly reviewed by our Office, Attendance Lead and other senior staff to check for consistency in approaches by staff and ensure any concerns with attendance of individuals are identified and addressed.

Procedures for dealing with absences

There are separate sections below this dealing the Medical appointments and Holidays.

Please note that whilst the below and the Appendix describe our general procedure, should we have any concerns about the safety / welfare of the pupil or the reason given for the absence we may undertake a home visit earlier than shown.

Please see our flow diagram in Appendix A for a graphical representation of our procedures.

1. On the **first day** of an absence and for each subsequent day parents/carers are to inform school of the absence, including the reason by phone, email or text.

2. Should parents/carers not make contact, the school will try to make contact with the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for absence, check that everything is ok and to see if any support is needed?
3. If the school cannot make contact, the reason for the absence will be recorded as 'N' - (No reason given).
4. If the pupil hasn't returned by **day 3 or 6 sessions**, an attendance letter (Appendix C) will be sent home with a request for contact letter (Appendix D) also going to those parents/carers we haven't been able to get in touch with.
 - a. The Attendance letter will also state that they will be placed within a 6-week monitoring period. The attendance lead will attempt to make contact with the family by arranging a meeting to ascertain the reasons for absence (should we not be able to ascertain the reasons for absence then we may at any point within the monitoring period make a referral to Children Missing in Education) and identify any possible support school can provide. Support could be in the form of regular meetings, completion of an Early Help assessment form (EHAF) or referral to agencies. The family will continue to be monitored. An additional 2 days or 4 sessions within the monitoring period could result in a referral being made to the Early Help Unit if the family/carers fail to make the necessary improvements or seek the support highlighted within the letter. The monitoring period could be extended to 12 weeks to ensure progress is sustained. This will be regularly reviewed and recorded.
5. **Day 4** we will continue to try keep in touch with parents/carers.
6. **Day 5** we will continue to keep in touch with parents/carers, however if we haven't been able to get in touch with parents/carers we will additionally perform a home visit to check that everything is ok, if no one is in we will leave a calling card asking for contact from the parents/carers. Should any safeguarding concerns be raised we will follow the guidance of the appropriate agencies.
7. **Day 6** we will continue to try to keep in touch with parents/carers. At this point we may also issue a warning notice regarding the possibility of a fine should there be a further 7 sessions unauthorised absence.
8. **Day 7** we will continue to keep in touch with parents/carers, however if we haven't been able to get in touch with parents/carers we will additionally perform a 2nd home visit to check that everything is ok, if no one is in we will leave a calling card asking for contact from the parents/carers. Should any safeguarding concerns be raised we will follow the guidance of the appropriate agencies.
9. **Day 8** we will continue to try to keep in touch with parents/carers.
10. **Day 9** we will continue to keep in touch with parents/carers, however if we haven't been able to get in touch with parents/carers we will additionally perform a 2nd home visit to check that everything is ok, if no one is in we will leave a calling card asking for contact from the parents/carers. Should any safeguarding concerns be raised we will follow the guidance of the appropriate agencies.
11. **Day 10** we will continue to try and keep in touch with parents/carers and the attendance lead will produce a detailed report for SLT who will then decide on the next steps for each individual case.
12. For persistent absenteeism, the Attendance lead and SLT may take the decision to invite families to an Attendance Panel meeting run by the school. This could result in a bespoke support package provided by school, referral being made to the Early Help Unit or legal proceedings.
13. All cases will be assessed on an individual basis to determine next steps.
14. If at the end of the absence no reason for the absence has been given 'N' will remain for 7 days after the end of the absence or until a response is provided. If no response is provided, the code will be changed to 'O' (unauthorised).
15. **Please also note** that at this stage should there have been an additional 7 sessions unauthorised since the warning notice at Day 6 then we may also request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice.

Procedures for dealing with lateness

1. All pupil's punctuality is monitored on a daily basis.
2. Pupils will be recorded as late 'L' by office staff on ScholarPack if they arrive at school between 8:50am-9:20am.
3. Pupils accumulating 6 late sessions will be issued with a lateness highlight letter (Appendix B) stating that they will be placed within a 6-week monitoring period.
4. Children arriving after the times detailed above will be marked as Late after Register Closes a 'U'.
5. Children arriving late must enter school through the reception area and be signed in by either school staff or late desk students.
6. Pupils accumulating 6 late sessions after the register closes 'U' will be issued with an attendance highlight letter (Appendix C) stating that they will be placed within a 6 week monitoring period. During this period, families are invited to an Attendance Panel meeting run by the school. This could result in a bespoke support package provided by school. An additional 4 sessions of lateness or absence could result in a request to the Local Authority for a penalty notice to be issued and/or referral being made to the Early Help Unit if the family/carers fail to make the necessary improvements or seek the support offered within the letter. The monitoring period could be extended to 12 weeks to ensure progress is sustained. This will be regularly reviewed and recorded.
7. Individual circumstances will be discussed and allowances may be made for families that have children allocated by admissions (Local Authority) to other primary/junior schools.

Removal from education/term time holidays

There is no legal right for parents to take their children out of school in term time.

Parents must communicate their intentions to take their child on holiday by completing a 'Removal from Education Form' available from the school office. If the school decides not to agree to the holiday a 'Holiday Not Agreed Letter' (Appendix E) will be sent home.

Absences where parents have removed their children from education for the purpose of a holiday for 7 sessions or more (3.5 days within a six week block, these can be as a block or spread across the six week window) will be referred to the Local Authority for a penalty notice / prosecution.

The Attendance Officer or Senior Leadership Team will complete the Local Authority Penalty Notice Proforma and submit this, along with an Attendance Report within 10 days following the absence and a letter confirming this action will be sent to parents/carers (Appendix F).

If a 'Removal from Education Form' has not been completed, school staff will fully investigate long term absences; this will include conducting home visits to families that have taken or we believe to have taken an unauthorised holiday without completing a 'Removal from Education Form'. These will be coded as (G) 'Unauthorised Holiday' and a 'removal from Education for the purpose of a holiday' letter sent home (Appendix F). We will also follow the above procedure for any holiday at or exceeding the 7 sessions (3.5 days within a six week block, these can be as a block or spread across the six week window).

Should parents take their holiday outside of term-time and then not return in time for the children to start back at school the same processes will be followed, if Parents contact school to say that they will be late back they will be reminded that the school's policy on Holidays.

Parents can appeal this decision if they have evidence to disprove it.

Role of the Early Help Unit Services

Referrals are made to the Early Help Unit where it is deemed necessary for their intervention. A standard referral form is filled in by the designated member of staff and the appropriate follow up made. The allocated worker will then report back on the outcomes of any action. A penalty notice / prosecution could be issued by the Local Authority.

Medical absences

Approved and appropriate medical appointments will be authorised for the amount of time needed to get to and from the appointment and the time needed for the appointment only.

Where there are consistently sporadic or longer term medical absences, parents (and pupils) will be asked to meet the Attendance Lead to discuss these issues and school will provide a support package where this is appropriate.

However, in some circumstances, medical proof may be sought or referrals to school health may be made to support the student's wellbeing and ability to attend school. In extenuating circumstances, the recording of authorised absences will be discussed with parents.

Role of teaching staff

It is the responsibility of all school staff to challenge attendance and punctuality based upon the information obtained from all sources and positively encourage attendance. This will be assessed on an individual basis.

If any member of staff has concerns about a child's attendance and/or punctuality, they must communicate this with the Attendance Lead and a member of Senior Leadership Team. This is to be reported in the form of an email and done in a timely manner.

Staff will be reminded annually about the importance of recording attendance information on ScholarPack and new staff will be fully inducted to use the system effectively for recording absence. Appropriate training and support for staff is provided where necessary.

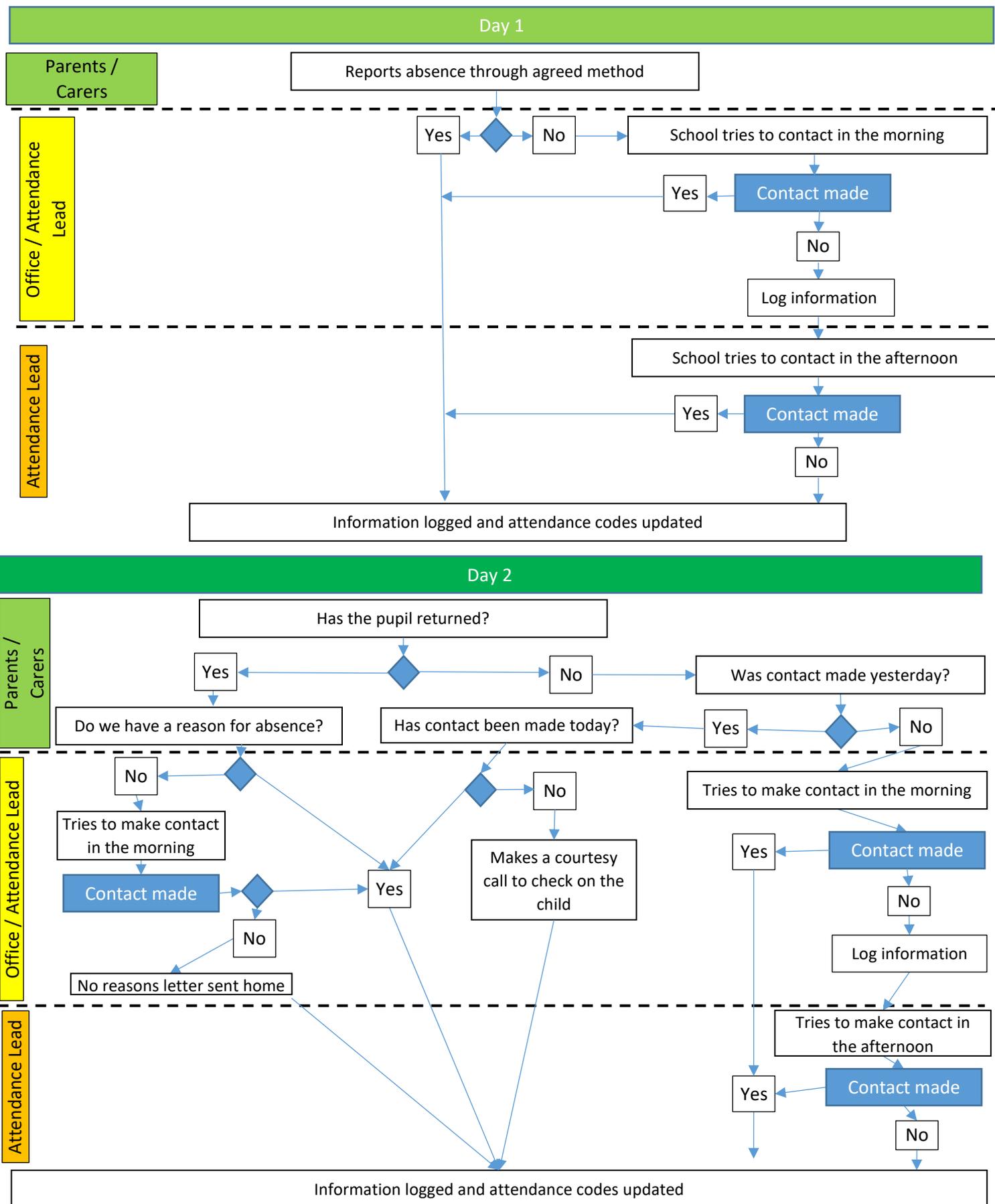
Rewards and Incentives

We have a positive approach to improving individual and whole school attendance through a wide range of rewards and incentives. These are regularly reviewed and adapted, responding to our children's interests and views in an attempt to maintain enthusiasm and engagement across school.

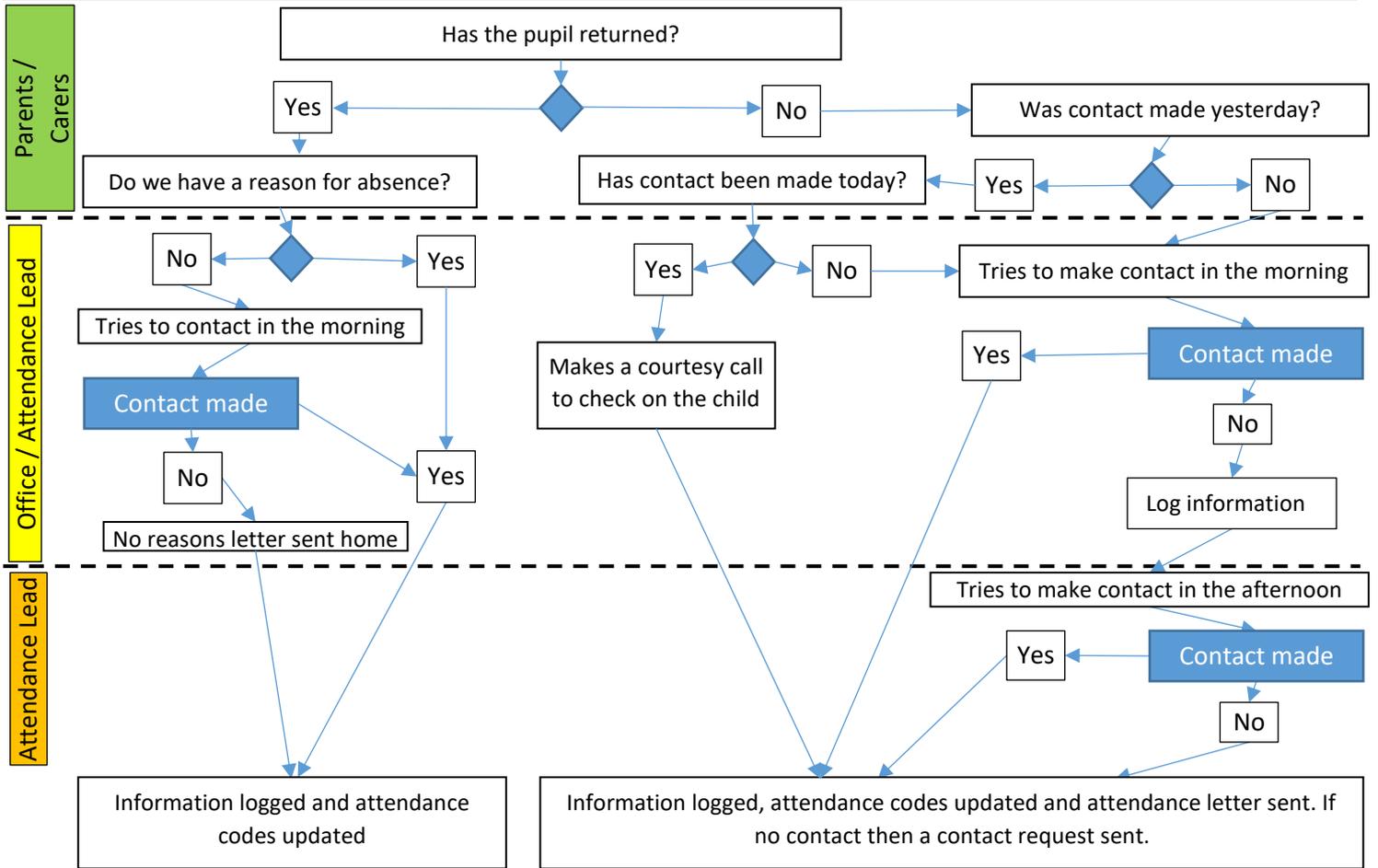
Please have a look at our website and newsletters for the latest rewards and incentives

Appendix A – Attendance process flow diagram

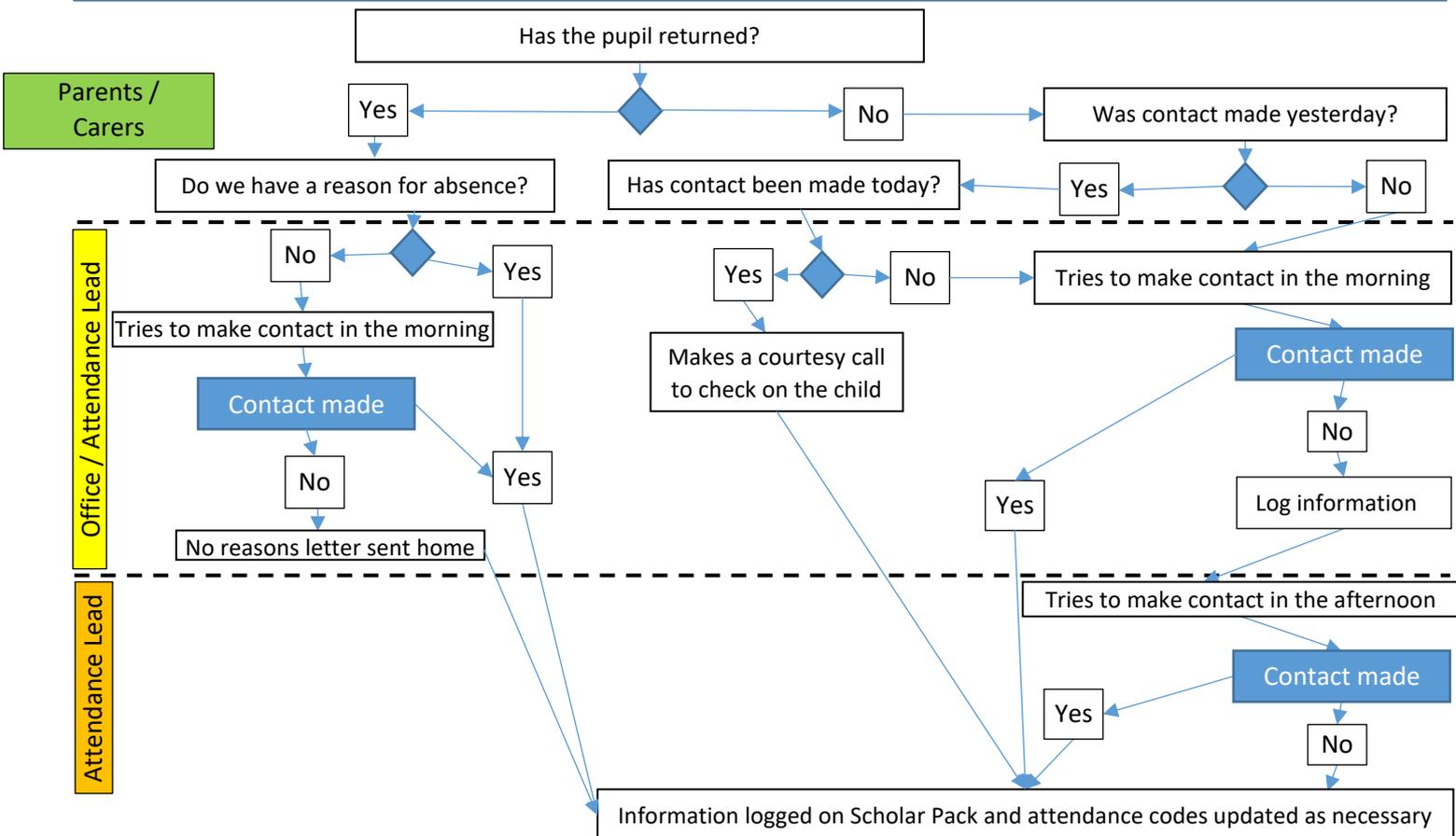
“Please remember that should we have any concerns about the safety / welfare of the pupil or the reason given for the absence we may undertake a home visit earlier than described in this diagram”



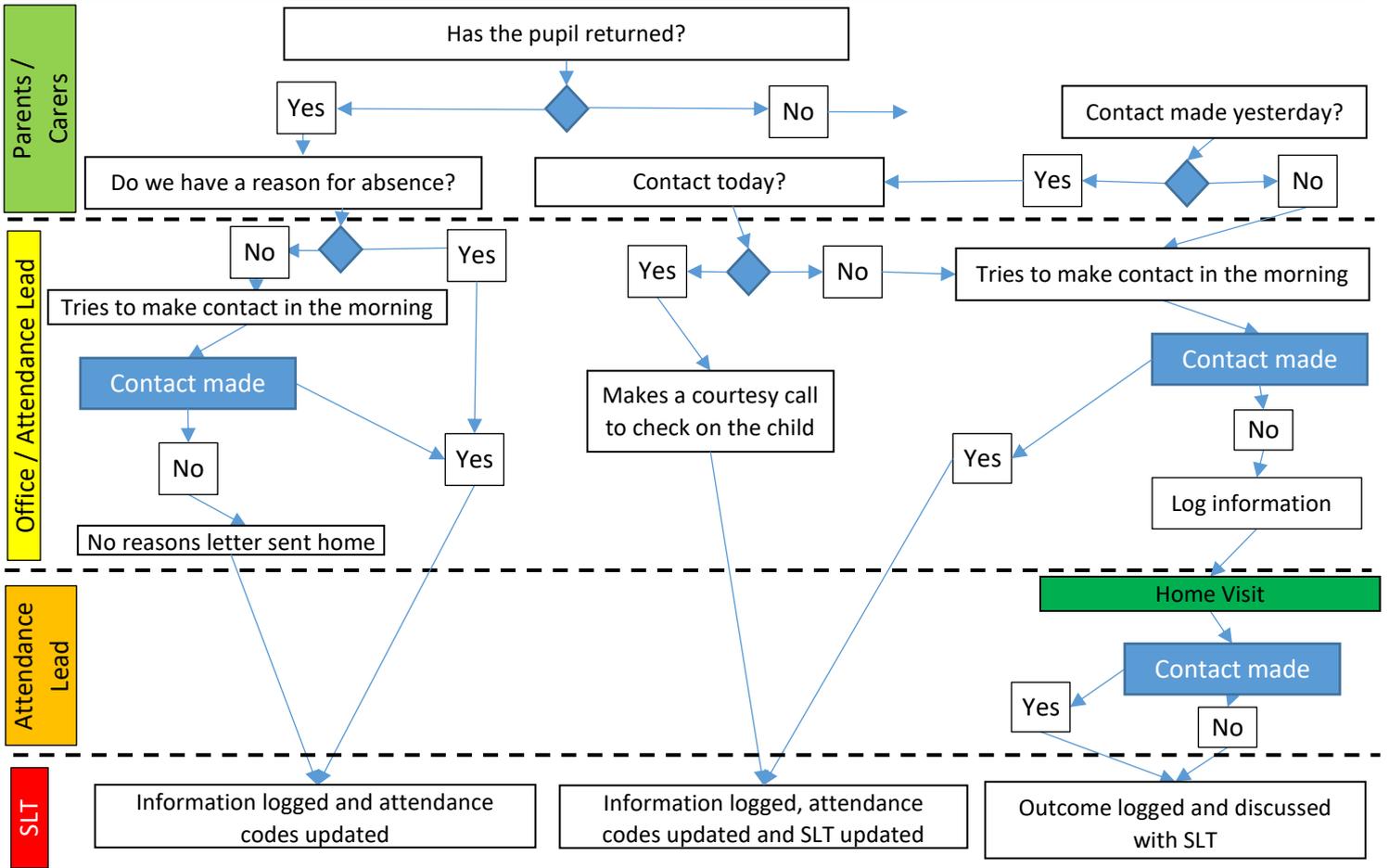
Day 3



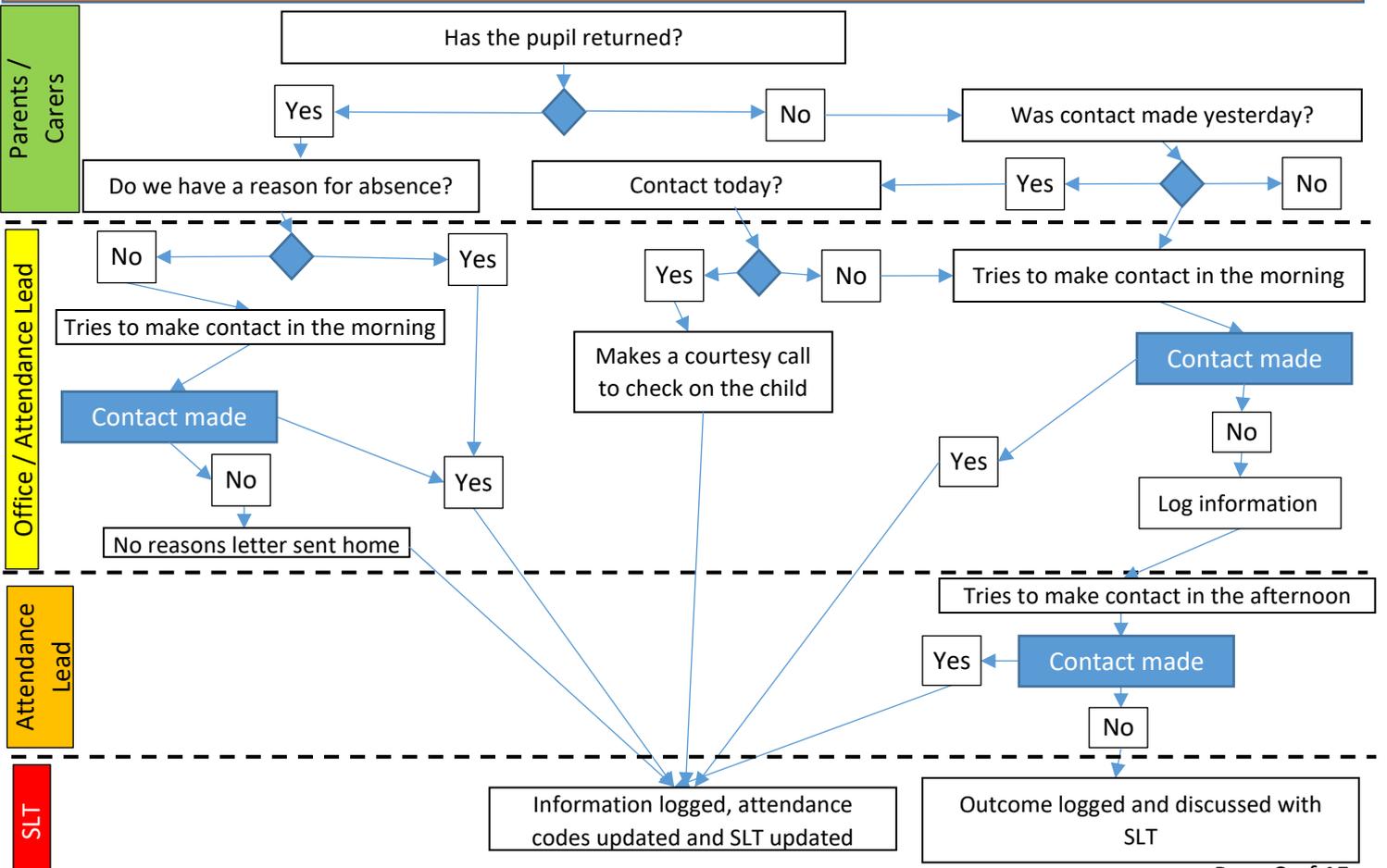
Day 4



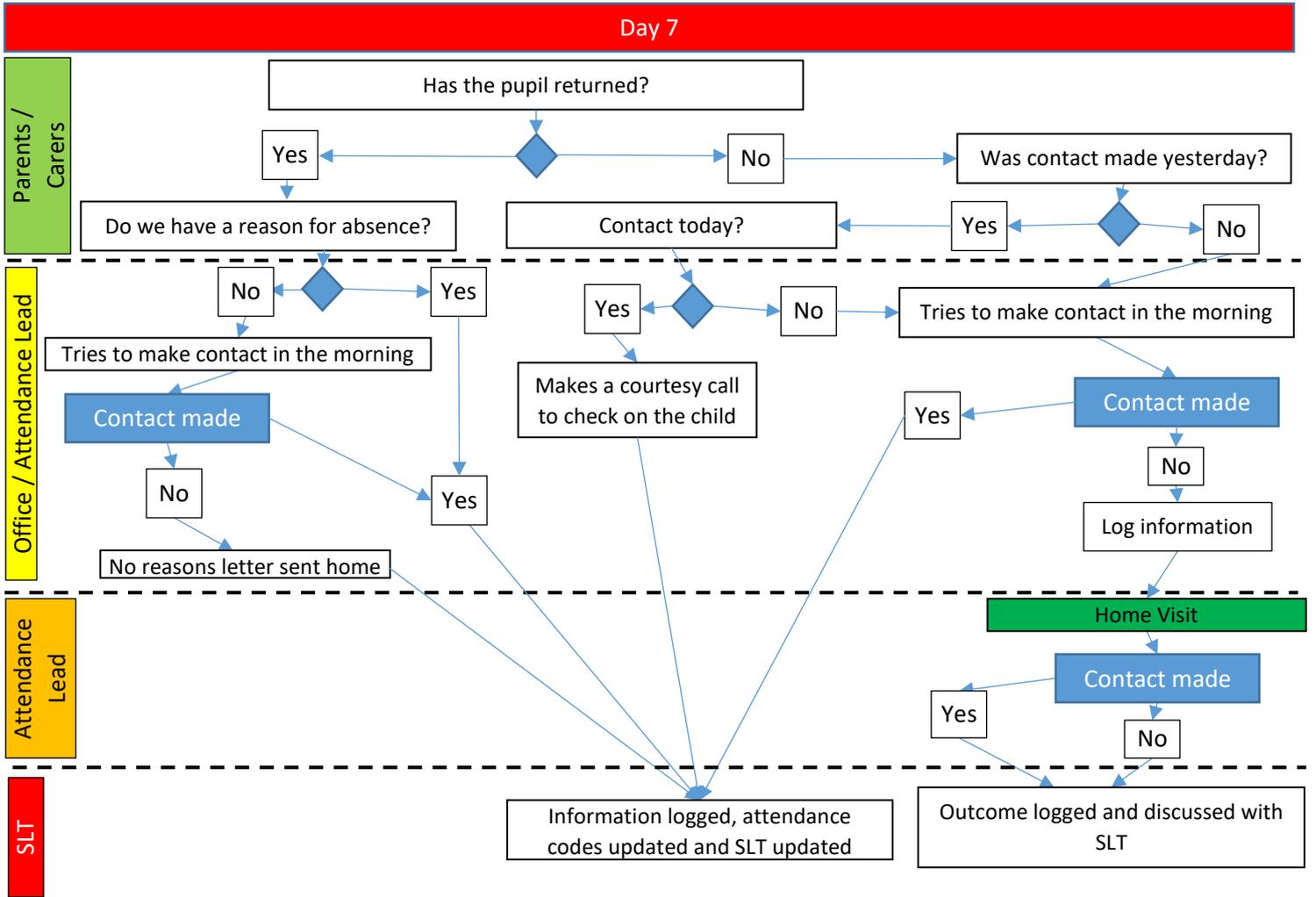
Day 5



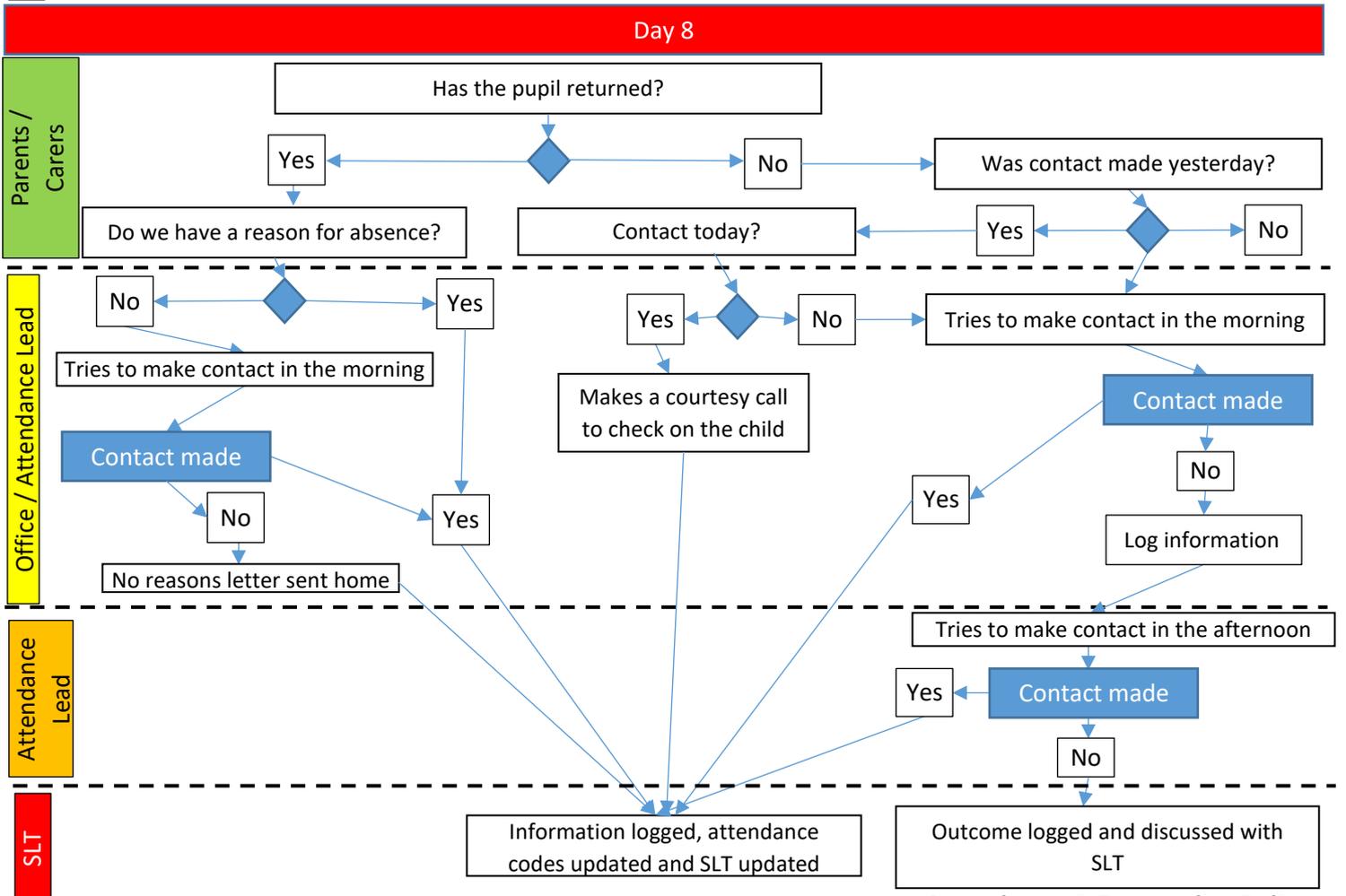
Day 6



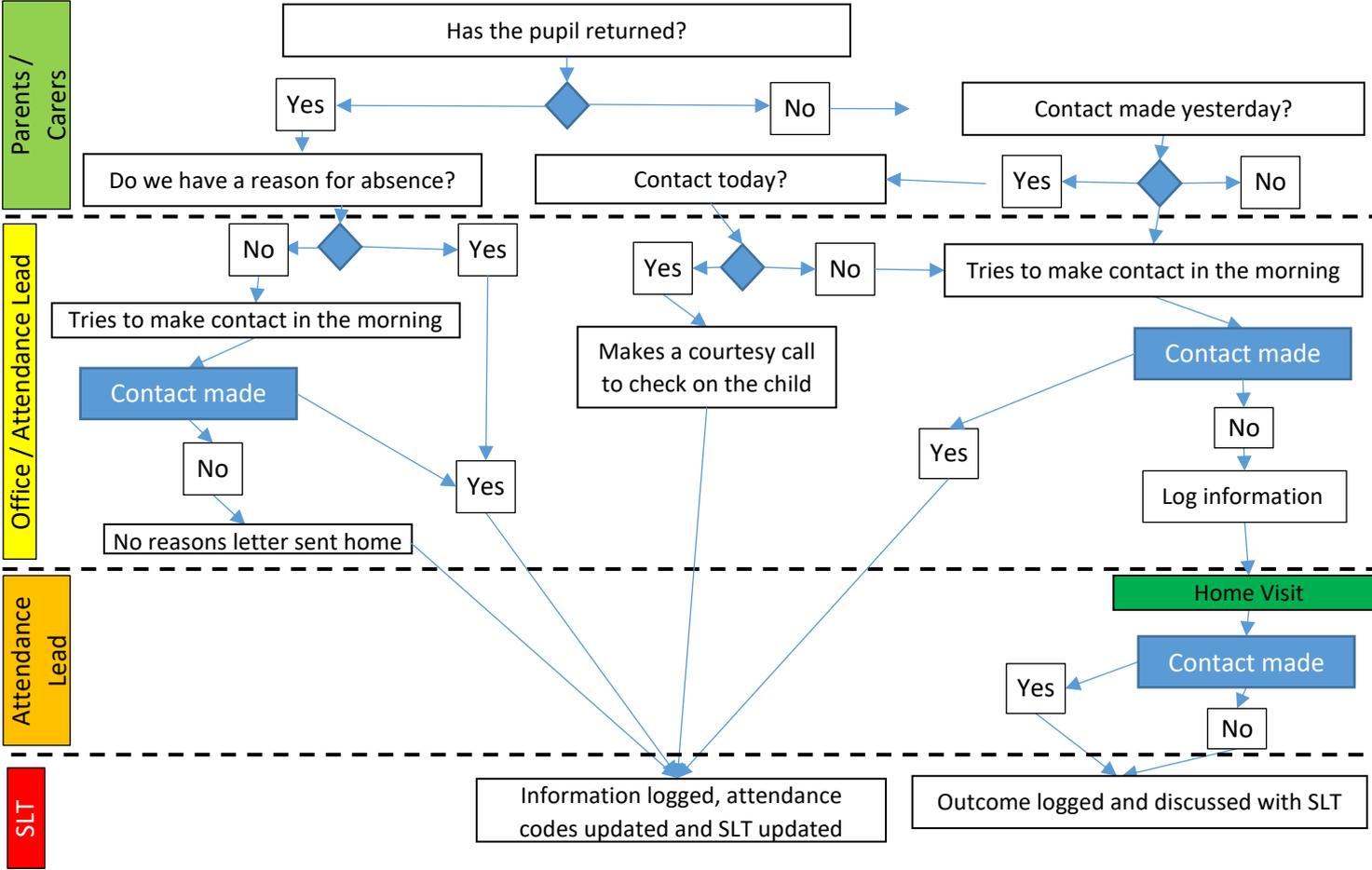
Day 7



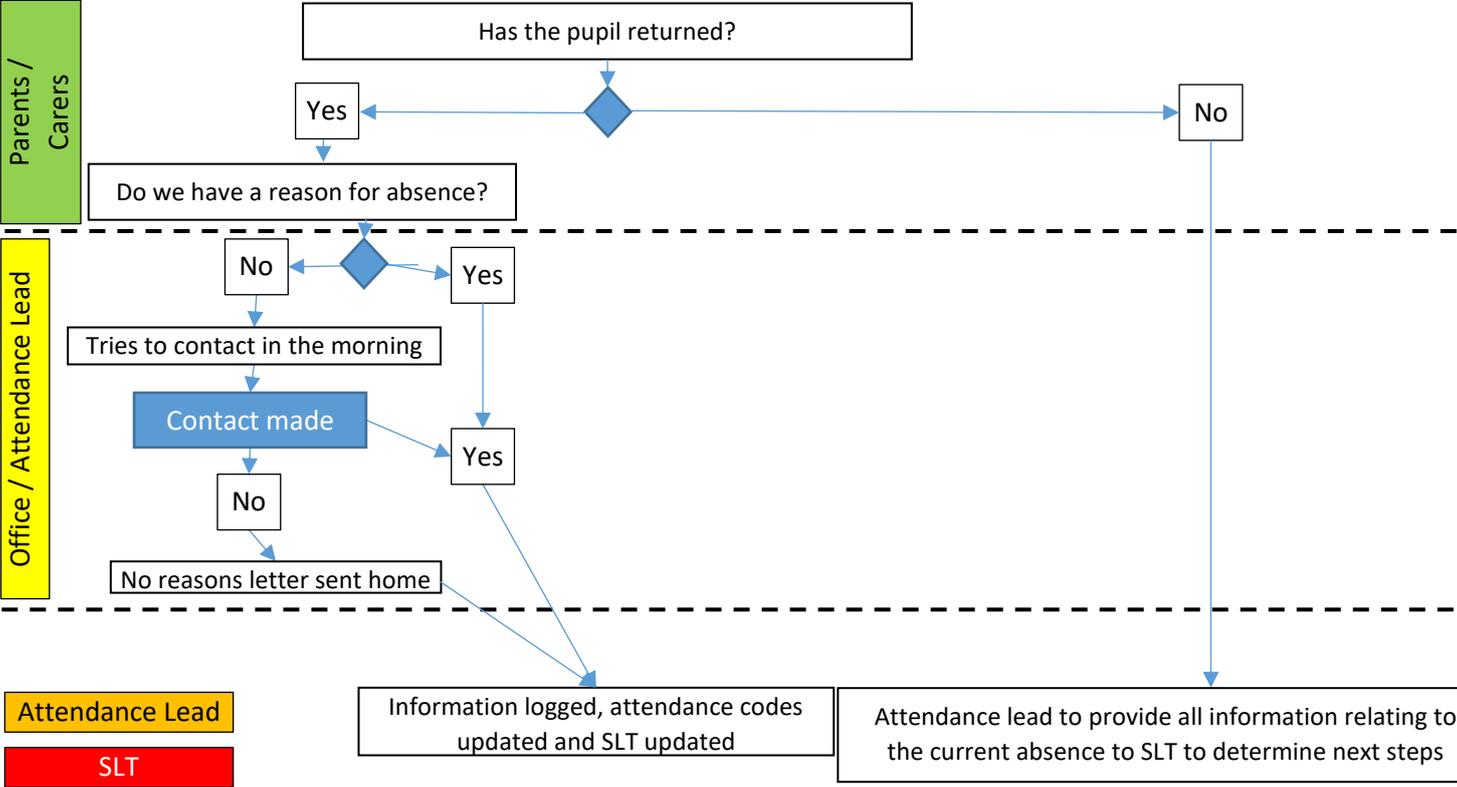
Day 8



Day 9



Day 10



Appendix B – Lates letter

[[address]]

[[date]]

Dear [[addressee]],

The Department for Education and Ofsted monitor attendance and punctuality as part of their judgments about a school as poor attendance is detrimental for both the child's own learning, and also to that of the whole class. This has been identified as a key issue for schools to address robustly. In making their judgments they include all absences including sickness and holidays in their statistics for schools.

We are working far more closely with the Local Authority to stringently monitor this issue and procedures have now been tightened up significantly.

During recent monitoring [[firstname]] has been late to school on [[number of times late]] occasions, missing [[number of minutes late]] minutes of their education over this last term. It is important that you ensure [[firstname]] attends school on time every day.

Over the next 6 weeks, levels of absence and punctuality for [[firstname]] will be monitored closely. During this time, staff will support you in improving [[firstname]]'s punctuality. This monitoring period can be extended to 12 weeks however, if it is felt that [[firstname]]'s attendance and punctuality has not improved to an acceptable level, a referral to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice/Prosecution may be made. We know that together we can avoid this situation and improve attendance. Please make an appointment with [[staff name]] (Attendance Lead) to discuss any support you require.

We look forward to working with you to improve this and thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Attendance Lead

Appendix C – Attendance alert letter

Dear [[addressee]],

The Department for Education and Ofsted monitor attendance and punctuality as part of their judgments about a school as poor attendance is detrimental for both the child's own learning, and also to that of the whole class. This has been identified as a key issue for schools to address robustly. In making their judgments they include all absences including sickness and holidays in their statistics for schools.

We are working far more closely with the Local Authority to stringently monitor this issue and procedures have now been tightened up significantly.

During recent monitoring [[firstname]] has been absent from school (for number of days & dates), over this last term which makes [[his_her]] overall attendance rate [[percent]]. It is important that you ensure [[firstname]] attends school every day.

Over the next 6 weeks, levels of absence for [[firstname]] will be monitored closely. During this time, staff will support you in improving [[firstname]]'s attendance. This monitoring period can be extended to 12 weeks however, if it is felt that [[firstname]]'s attendance has not improved to an acceptable level, a referral to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice/Prosecution may be made. We know that together we can avoid this situation and improve attendance. Please make an appointment with [[staff name]] (Attendance Lead) to discuss any support you require.

We look forward to working with you to improve this and thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Appendix D – request for contact letter

Dear parents/carers

According to our records [[firstname]] has been absent for the periods shown below and we have not received a reason.

We are legally required to record reasons for absence from school.

Will you please enter the reasons for [[firstname]]'s absence next to the dates on the slip below and return to school by **[date]**.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

[[form]] – [[firstname]] [[surname]]

Dates and sessions of absence (s)

[[listofdates]]

Reason (s)

Please note that if you don't provide a reason then we have to record this as unauthorized.

Would you like support for your child's/children's attendance? YES / NO

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Appendix E – Holiday not agreed letter

[[address]]

[[date]]

Request for Leave for a Holiday during Term Time: Pupil Name

After carefully considering your request for a holiday during term time, we are unable to authorise this absence.

As you may be aware, there has been altered national and school policy around absences due to holidays being taken in term time and we are no longer able to authorise these.

Therefore, if you still choose to take your child out of school for the purpose of a holiday the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the register and this will be reported to the Local Authority.

You need to be aware that a significant number of unauthorised absences can lead to legal action being taken by the Local Authority. An unauthorised leave of absence of more than 3 days/6 sessions (over a 6 week rolling period) may lead to you being issued with a penalty notice fine which if paid within 21 days is £60 or within 28 days is £120.

It is important to note the actual fine is £120. It is reduced to £60 for payment within 21 days and not doubled as some people may believe to be the case.

Where a fine remains unpaid the matter may be enforced at the Magistrates Court. The maximum fine for this offence is £1000 per parent, per child.

The local Authority will not issue more than two penalty notices per calendar year to any person taking more than two periods of unauthorised absence. Where further absences occur or where the local authority deem it appropriate, enforcement may be dealt with directly by the court.

We would be grateful if you could please support your child's education by ensuring you avoid taking future family holidays in term time. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

Appendix F- removal from Education for the purpose of a holiday

[[date]]

Dear

Re: Removal from Education for the purpose of a holiday.

[[firstname]] [[surname]] ([[dob]])

We are writing to inform you that, as we believe that [[firstname]] was recently removed from Education for the purpose of a holiday on **the following dates** _____, a referral will now be made to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice/Prosecution. This is in line with our Attendance Policy, which was shared with parents last July and again in September.

The Attendance Certificate demonstrating the Unauthorised Holiday (G) is attached for your reference.

You will receive information from the Local Authority regarding how you can appeal this decision.

Kind Regards

Head of School