



# BHES

## *“Attendance Policy and Procedures”*

Note: in this policy reference to governing body or governors refers to the management committee and its members.

Where contextually appropriate for school read service.

Date adopted: [Click here to enter a date](#)

## HISTORY OF POLICY CHANGES

Date	Page	Details of Change
March 2022	Front	Removal of the Meriton Remains inline with BCC model policy Reviewed by BCC attendance team

## Contents

Part 1 Policy: .....	4
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Aims.....	4
3. Safeguarding and Attendance.....	6
4. Legislation and Guidance .....	6
Part 2 What the Law Says and Our School Procedures: .....	7
1. Contents of Attendance Register .....	7
2. Present at School (and Lateness) .....	7
3. Authorised Absence .....	7
3.1 Illness.....	7
3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments .....	8
3.3 Religious Observance .....	8
3.4 Traveller Absence.....	9
3.5 Exclusions .....	9
4. First Day of Absence Response .....	9
5. Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ .....	10
6. Unauthorised Absence.....	10
7. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance) ...	11
8. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave) .....	11
9. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions.....	12
10. Children Missing Education (CME).....	12
11. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence.....	12
12. Roles and Responsibilities .....	12
13. Policy Monitoring Arrangements.....	13
14. Links with other policies .....	13
Appendix 1: Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes .....	15
Appendix 2: Contact Plan 1:1.....	17
Appendix 3: Contact Plan classes.....	18
Appendix 4: Outreach/virtual recording of attendance .....	19
Appendix 5: Self Harm procedure.....	20
Appendix 5: CPOMS attendance categories .....	21

## **Part 1 Policy:**

### **1. Introduction**

It is the aim of Bristol Hospital Education Service that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason.

BHES's remit is to educate students who are too ill to attend their on-roll school. Where students are able to attend their on-roll school they should do so and a student returning to their on roll school is always considered the best outcome in all cases. BHES provision is planned in consultation with health professionals and is regularly reviewed and adjusted to fit with a student's current health condition. A student's attendance at BHES is measured as a proportion of their individual planned provision. On Roll schools maintain their responsibilities with regards to attendance and safeguarding for their students during any periods of BHES provision.

### **2. Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by promoting good attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by BHES; and acting early to address patterns of absence.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents<sup>1</sup> must follow to report their child absent from school.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits. If the child is unable to attend the school/lesson for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory<sup>2</sup> school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to attend every timetabled lesson, unless they are really not well enough to. We believe that children who attend lessons regularly are more likely to feel settled in, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy education, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending lessons on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”, therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil’s attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will make the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support or who is prevented from attending lessons, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents [‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015’](#) and [‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013’](#) – or ask the school for printed copies.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards education. To this end, we strive to make our service a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in our service
- Raise our pupils’ awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff
- Work in partnership with parents
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality

---

<sup>2</sup> A child becomes of ‘compulsory school age’ on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

### **3. Safeguarding and Attendance**

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2018 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the service cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

### **4. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the 2018 [school attendance guidance](#), from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

The DfE's guidance on the [school census](#) explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **Part 2 What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:**

**PLEASE NOTE SIMS IS ONLY USED TO RECORD CLASSES ATTENDANCE**

**SEE APPENDIX 1: FOR PROCEDURE FOR 1:1 STUDENTS.**

### **1. Contents of Attendance Register**

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the service must record whether each pupil is (See appendix for recording of 1:1 students' attendance):

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### **2. Present at School (and Lateness)**

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Appropriate staff will investigate reasons for persistent lateness and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

### **3. Authorised Absence**

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:**

#### **3.1 Illness**

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the service's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the service has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The service follows the 2018 DfE School Attendance Guidance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the service may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. (See DfE 2018 School Attendance guidance document)

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances the service may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a health professional, or the service may seek parental permission to contact the pupil healthcare worker.

If the service is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the service will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the service by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the service each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the service.

### **Pupils taken ill during the school day**

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of staff. No pupil will be allowed to leave the site without parental confirmation.

### **3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents should try to make appointments outside of service hours wherever possible. Where appointments during this time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the service will need an explanation as to why this is.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment.

### **3.3 Religious Observance**

Our service acknowledges the multi-faith nature of our community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the service will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively

set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the service will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### **3.4 Traveller Absence**

The service will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The service will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the service know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

### **3.5 Exclusions**

If the service decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as Exclusion. The service will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion must be agreed by the headteacher.

The service will notify the parent of the exclusion. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the HOPE Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the service will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

## **4. First Day of Absence Response**

See Appendix 2: Contact plan 1:1

See Appendix 3: Contact plan classes

## 5. Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school’s discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school’s Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

## 6. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a service is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from lessons without the permission of the service. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the services decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping
- Birthdays

- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the service)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

## **7. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)**

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our service or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending the service.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

## **8. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)**

We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a service, we understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will arrange a meeting with the parents and student to discuss a way forward in the first instance. See Contact Plan for following process.

## **9. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions**

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends lessons on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent, but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

## **10. Children Missing Education (CME)**

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow [Bristol City Council's Children Missing Education guidance](#), and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: [childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk)

## **11. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence**

See Appendix 2 & 3 – Contact plans

## **12. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The On Roll School**

As with Safeguarding, attendance responsibility remains with the on roll school. See Appendices 1 & 2 for further details of our involvement with on roll schools.

### **The Management Committee**

The Management Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the service, and for monitoring service-level absence data and reporting it to the management committee.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

## **Assistant Head with Responsibility for Attendance**

Will:

- Inform on roll schools of poor/concerning attendance and work with them to ensure student reengagement.
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT student engagement meetings.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

As above

## **13. Policy Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Assistant Head with responsibility for attendance or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the management committee.

## **14. Links with other policies**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Self-Harm Policy

## **Guidance Documents:**

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions-3>

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2>

School Attendance (DfE September 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School census 2017 to 2018 (DfE May 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las>

School Exclusion (DfE September 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Children Missing Education Guidance (Bristol City Council January 2018)

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme>

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Bristol City Council September 2018)

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare>

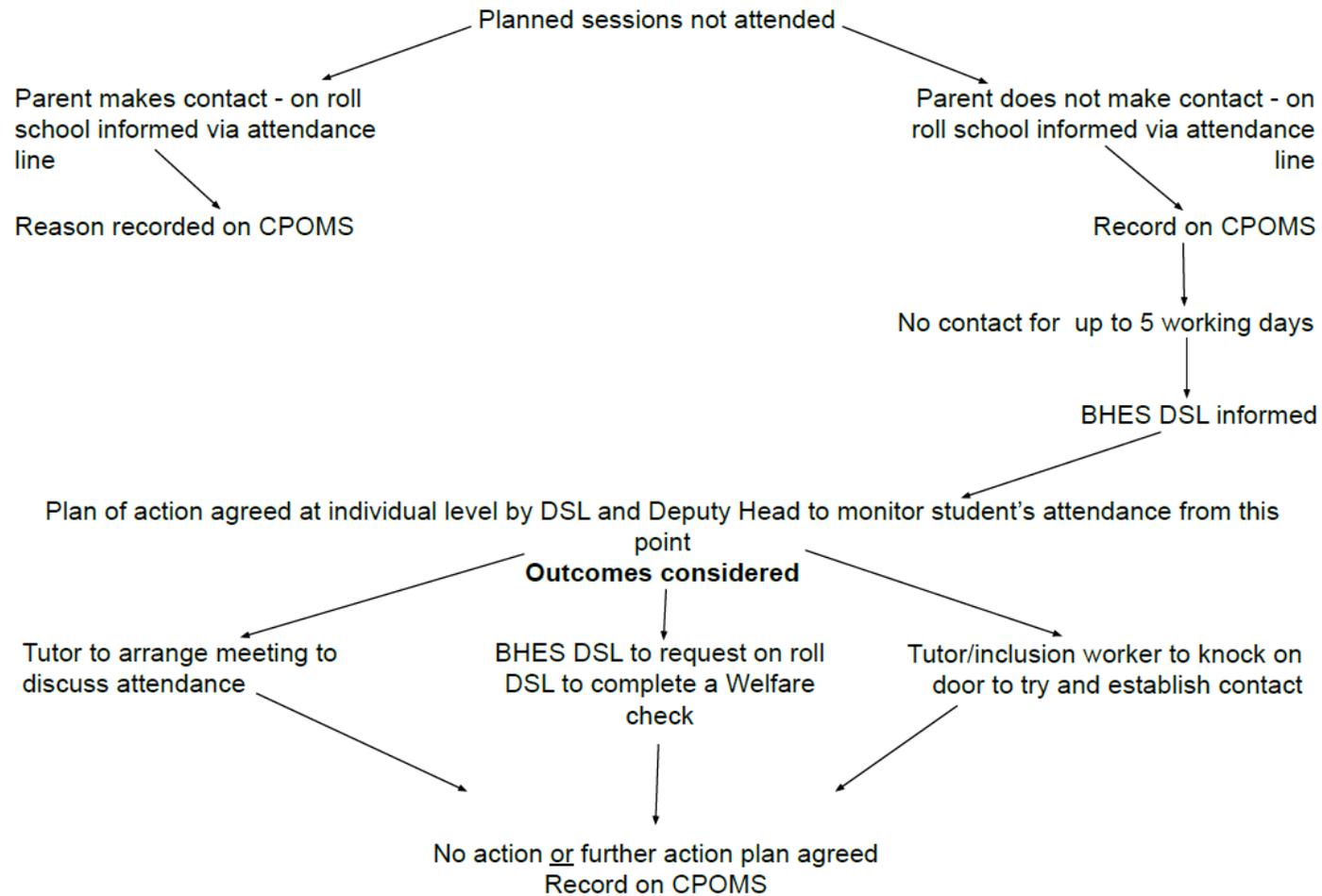
## Appendix 1: Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school; or a pupil is detained in custody for less than four months.	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

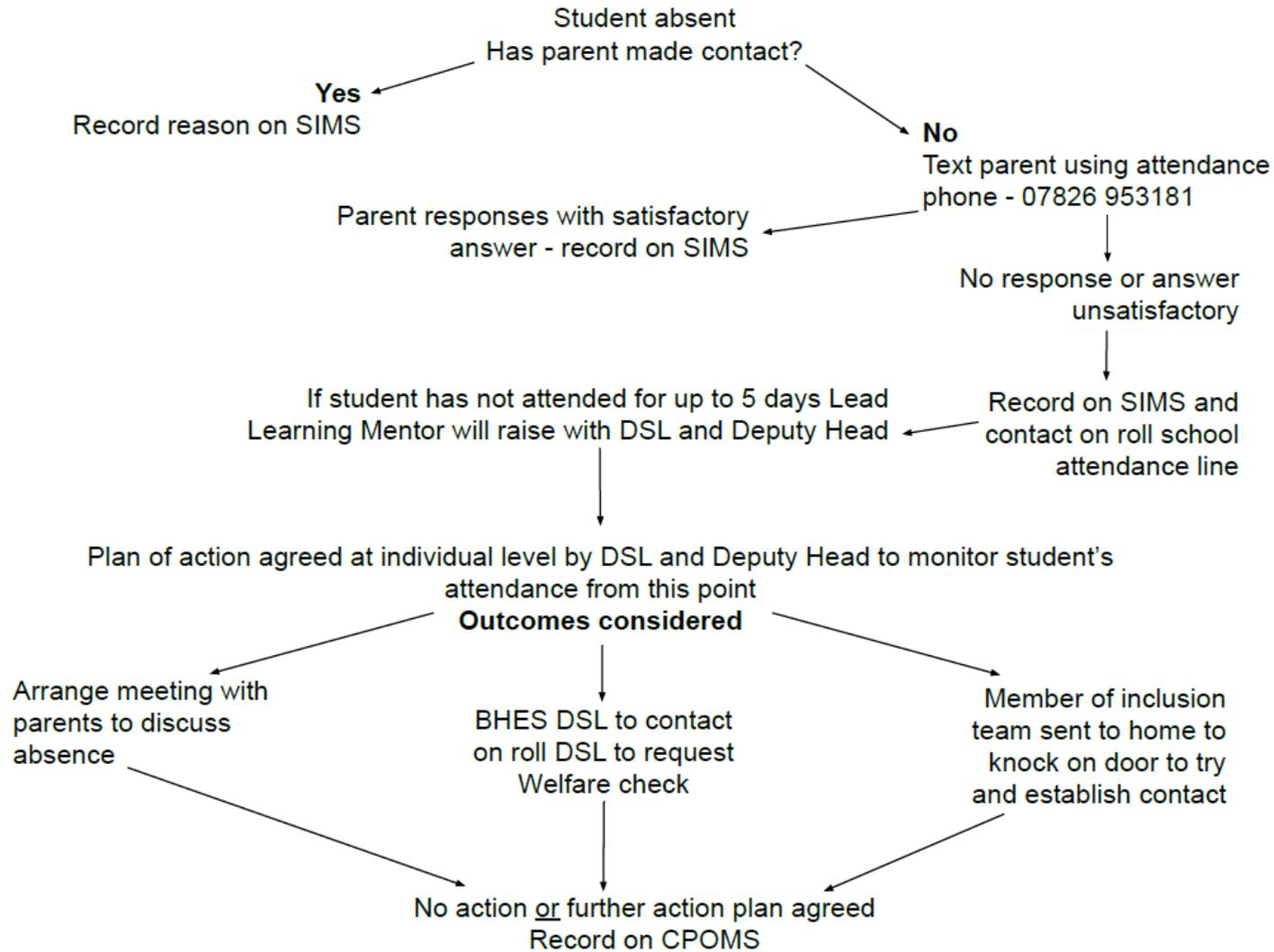
## Appendix 2: Contact Plan 1:1

### 1:1 Attendance - Contact Plan



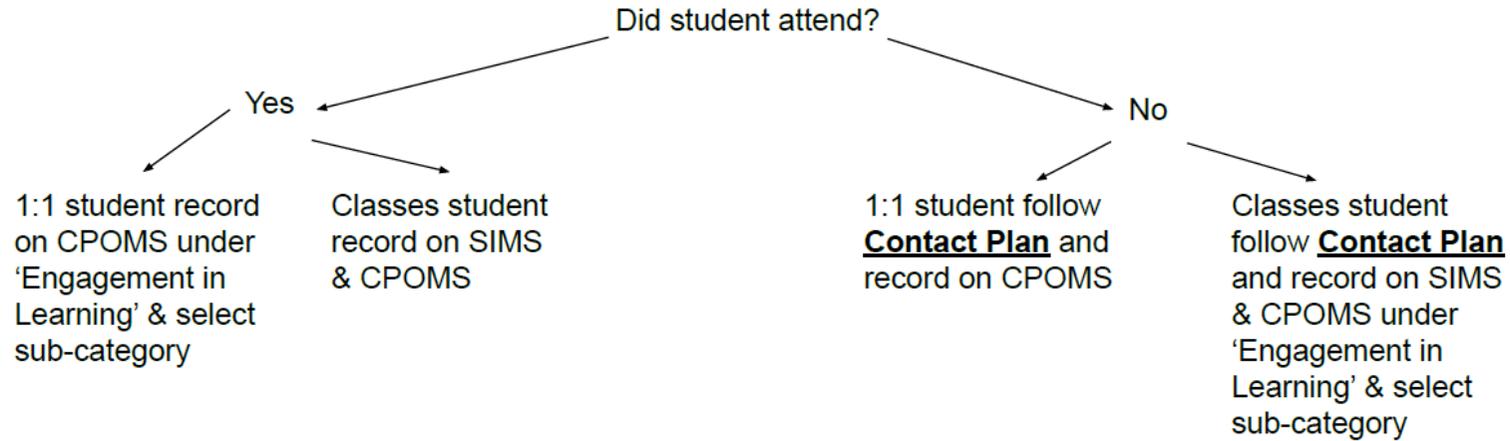
### Appendix 3: Contact Plan classes

## Classes Attendance - Contact Plan



## Appendix 4: Outreach/virtual recording of attendance

### Outreach/Virtual recording of attendance



### Recording on SIMS

- Log in
- Focus - Attendance - Edit Marks
- Enter mark (right click to see codes)
- Enter comment (right click) if necessary
- Add C's to all sessions student is not required to attend

**Note:** If you are unclear as to if a student is 1:1 or Classes this information is on CPOMS

## Appendix 5: Self Harm procedure



### BHES Procedure for Onsite Deliberate Self-Harm

(developed in consultation with Bristol CAHMS)

- **ZERO TOLERANCE TO TALK**  
It is not appropriate or healthy to talk about self-harm or suicide to other students in school please find an adult if you need to talk if you need support.
- **IF YOU SELF-HARM AT BHES**  
You must have one day at home reflection time if you deliberately self-harm at BHES. You will be told you have a 'day of reflection' due to the self-harm.
- **VISIBLE SELF-HARM INJURIES/MARKS**  
If you come to BHES with healing self-harm injuries, they must be covered or dressed. If you have self-harm scars they must be covered at all times.
- **WHO WILL BE INFORMED?**  
Your parents/carers will be informed.  
It will also be considered if any agencies working with you need to know.
- **FIRST AID**  
You will be offered first aid.  
An ambulance will be called if necessary.

## Appendix 5: CPOMS attendance categories

### ▼ 1. Engagement in Learning (1:1 students)

- 1.1 Fully Engaged
- 1.2 Partial engagement
- 1.3 Not engaged
- 1.4 Not at home
- 1.5 Did not arrive
- 1.6 Cancellation - Illness
- 1.7 Cancellation - Medical appointment
- 1.8 Cancellation - Other
- 1.9 Cancellation - Staff

### ▼ 3. Welfare check

- Paperwork
- Request made to BHES
- Request made to on roll school DSL
- Successful
- Unsuccessful
- Update

### ▼ 7. Inclusion team

- 2020-21 individual student plans
- Activities
- Forest club
- Life skills
- Timetable
- Transitions (NOT POST 16)
- Travel training

### ▼ 8. Classes

- Did not attend lesson
- Did not engage
- Disruption during lesson
- Left lesson
- Other
- Partial lesson engagement
- Student update