

ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Tollgate Primary School
Tollgate Lane
Bury St Edmunds
IP32 6DG**

Plan Owner / Author:	Mrs C Bates
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1	Mr G Sadler	March 2017	Complete review of policy
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3	Mrs C Bates	Sept 2018	Complete review of policy

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1. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

Tollgate Primary School works in partnership with parents, the local community and the local authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality.

1a) To achieve our aims the school will:

- offer a safe and supportive environment that welcomes all children
- emphasise the importance of children attending school every day as an essential pre-requisite for achieving their individual potential
- make clear to teachers, children, parents/carers and governors the school's expectations about attendance
- establish clear and effective procedures enabling early intervention for falling levels of attendance and punctuality
- offer rewards and incentives for regular and improved attendance and punctuality
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance
- communicate to all relevant parties the legal position in relation to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised" and "unauthorised"
- stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance
- ensure our policy reflects the law, regulations and guidance produced by the Department for Children Families and Schools

1b) Why regular attendance is important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect not only their learning but also their relationships with their peers.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

1c) Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child.

Information and guidance about attendance procedures is shared with all parents/carers at the start of each new school year and with new parents/carers in the school's 'Attendance: Information for Parents and Carers' leaflet.

1d) We also promote attendance awareness in school through:

- PSHE ('Personal, Social and Health Education') lessons and assemblies
- articles and information included in school communications
- weekly award for the class with the best attendance and an attendance display (NIMO, Not In, Missing Out)
- termly rewards and certificates for pupils with 100% attendance

- annual rewards and celebration for 100% attendance throughout the year
- certificates for improved attendance throughout the year

2. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL AND STAFF

The attendance policy involves all school staff. Some members of school staff have particular roles to play within this. In this section we outline these roles.

2a) All staff

All staff should support and promote good attendance. They will work to provide an environment in which all of our children are eager to learn, feel that they are a valued member of the school and the community, and look forward to coming to school every day.

Staff should set a good example in their own attendance and punctuality.

2b) The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the running of the school; this includes attendance.

The Head will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

2c) Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will:

- ensure that attendance data is complete and accurate; analysed and interpreted correctly; and reported to the Headteacher who then reports to the Senior Leadership Team, parents and the governing body on a regular basis
- monitor and review the registers on a daily basis, ensure the data is recorded electronically and follow up on any unexplained absences by making a telephone call home where necessary or take any other action required
- keep a record of any action taken on the daily unexplained absence report
- ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and parents are kept informed by writing to parents/carers as a child's attendance falls below 95%
- follow procedures detailed in the 'Absence Escalation Ladder' (Appendix A) in situations where a child's attendance causes concern or continues to fall
- identify children who are regularly late for school
- deal with any absence discrepancy forms
- follow up late forms
- liaise with the Pastoral Co-Ordinator to put support in place to deal with issues of attendance and/or lateness

- ensure attendance records and absence reports are filed in a child's Pupil Education Record file

2d) Pastoral Co-Ordinator

The Pastoral Co-Ordinator will:

- arrange to meet parents/carers where there is an emerging pattern of a child's absence or punctuality
- discuss key issues concerning attendance and punctuality along with the possible solutions and support needed
- agree action plans with the parents and child to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit

2e) Classroom teachers

Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers twice a day.

Information obtained by the classroom teacher regarding the reason for an absence should be communicated to the Attendance Officer at the earliest opportunity to ensure accurate recording.

In cases where there is a discrepancy or doubt about an explanation received regarding a child's absence, teachers will record this on an 'absence discrepancy form' and send this to the Attendance Officer for further action.

2f) Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Tollgate Primary school utilises the services of an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor the schools attendance and to help parents to meet their legal responsibilities regarding school attendance. The EWO visits the school regularly to review our attendance levels and discuss persistently absent pupils.

The EWO may request a meeting in school with parents to discuss any issues. Where attendance does not improve after an initial meeting, the case may be formally referred to the Education Attendance Service by the EWO.

3. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

3a) Registration

By law all schools must mark the attendance register twice daily: once at the start of the day and once at the start of the afternoon session. Classroom teachers mark the registers using prescribed marks. Children are expected to arrive at school on time every day. Missing the start of the day means missed learning opportunities.

Calling of registers

- registers will be called promptly at 9:00am and 1:00pm
- registers will be closed at 9:05am and 1:05pm

'Late' marks in the register

- If a child arrives after 9:00am but before 9:05am he/she will be marked as late for the morning session
- If a child arrives after 1:00pm but before 1:05pm he/she will be marked as late for the afternoon session

'Absent' marks in the register

- If a child arrives after 9:05am he/she will be marked as absent for the whole morning session
- If a child arrives after 1:05pm he/she will be marked absent for the whole afternoon session

3b) Late arrival procedures

Children arriving late should come into school through the main school reception and complete a late signing in slip (appendix b). The time of arrival and the specific reason for lateness should be given on the slip. This will then be followed up by the Pastoral Co-Ordinator.

3c) Persistent Lateness

Where there is repeated unexpected or unexplained you may be fined or referred to the EWO.

4. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING SCHOOL

Where children are absent with good reason e.g. because of exclusion or long-term illness, a member of staff will arrange for appropriate work to be sent home for the child, and will ensure it is marked on a regular basis.

When children who have been absent for an extended period of time return, they will be welcomed back to school and a re-integration programme agreed. This applies irrespective of the reason for the absence, and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

5. UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABSENCE: AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why the school will always ask parents/carers for specific information about the reason for every absence.

5a) Authorised Absence

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 only the school can authorise absence. Parents are not able to authorise absence.

An absence is classified as 'authorised' when:

- The school is satisfied a child is away from school for a legitimate reason; and
- school has received notification from a parent or carer

The school can record a child's absence as authorised when he/she is unable to attend school for **the following reasons:**

- exclusion
- a religious observance
- participation in an approved public performance
- the pupil lives more than three miles away and no suitable transport arrangements have been made
- the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, s/he has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months.

5b) Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. These include:

- any unexplained absence
- oversleeping
- persistent non-specific illness e.g. feeling poorly/unwell
- unexceptional situations like shopping trips, birthdays or 'duvet days'
- holidays in term time without prior permission
- medical or dental appointments without evidence
- children who arrive at school after 9:05am or 1:05pm i.e. after the register has closed
- a parent or sibling's illness

5c) Approved educational activity

Where a child is engaged in approved educational activities that are taking place away from the school premises, the school will check his/her attendance at that off-site location as normal. This will allow the school to make the appropriate entries in the register as normal.

5d) Children missing in education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school the Headteacher must be informed in writing.

Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place for that child has been offered and accepted.

Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the Local Authority Attendance Service.

Local Authority guidance will be followed when a child is missing in education.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CARERS

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child receives an appropriate education. 'Parents and carers' are defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child.

A parent means :

- 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.

6a) Tollgate Primary School expects parents/carers to:

- ensure their children attend school regularly and avoid unjustified absence from school
- understand that the school cannot automatically agree to any requests for absence
- make routine doctors and dentist appointments outside school hours; where this is not possible, provide the school with the appropriate medical evidence

6b) Informing the school of absences

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify school by 9:00 am on **each day** of any absence unless otherwise agreed with the Attendance Officer. Parents/carers can either phone the school to leave a message on the absence line, speak to a member of staff or notify the school using the ParentMail app. Both the absence line and the ParentMail app are available 24/7. The message or email should state the name of the absent child, their class, who is phoning and the **specific** reason for their absence. This may be followed up with a telephone call from the Pastoral Co-Ordinator
- provide a reason for absence on a daily basis. If this is not received the absence will not be authorised
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations
- contact school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Tollgate Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns

Welfare checks will be carried out by the Headteacher at the home address if no telephone call is received.

6c) Holidays

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Holidays should be taken outside of term time.

Any application for leave of absence must be made in advance using a 'request for leave of absence form' which is available from the school office.

Tollgate Primary School will consider every application individual although it is school policy **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

Tollgate Primary School will ONLY consider authorising holidays during term time for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during the normal school holidays
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- parents who are subject to strict and non-negotiable holiday rotas, and robust evidence for this is provided

Leave of absence in term-time will not be authorised:

- during the first term, that is when a child is just starting at school, as it is very important for them to settle into their new class
- during an assessment/test period
- when a child's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence

When parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation the issue of a penalty notice will be considered.

6d) Extended Leave of Absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Tollgate Primary School will take account of the following:

- that a visit to family overseas can have a very different significance from a normal 'holiday'
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- that parents/carers may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school; although parents will be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip

If extended leave of absence is granted, schoolwork for the child will be set during this period.

Tollgate School will provide support and guidance to families to help improve attendance. Families are expected to cooperate. Families who do not work with us may be subject to penalties.

7. INFORMATION REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES

Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school can have an effect on a child's attainment levels. It can also disrupt school routines and the learning of others.

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue penalty notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the penalty notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child. However, if they payment is not received within 21 days the cost is increased.

If you do not pay the penalty in full within 28 days of the issue, the county council is required to start legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. This may lead to a fine up to £1000.

Before a penalty notice is issued, a child must have had a minimum of 4 school days (8 sessions) lost to unauthorised absence.

In cases of unauthorised holidays, and where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given, parents/carers will be informed of the intention to issue a penalty notice. However, this means that in some cases, penalty notices may be issued without a warning.

ABSENCE ESCALATION LADDER

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously.

However, each case is different and Tollgate School acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from deteriorating. It is essential that parents/carers keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

Teachers will closely monitor pupils attendance and discuss this with parents before it reaches a level of concern and having an impact on their learning.

If a child's attendance falls below 95%

The school measures attendance throughout the school year. If a child's non attendance as recorded in the attendance registers falls below 95%, the school will take the following action:

- send a letter home (Letter 1, appendix A1) to the parents/carers raising the concern. This will be followed up by the Pastoral Co-Ordinator with a telephone call.
- continue to monitor the child's attendance until it reaches the required level so as not to cause concern

If a child's attendance falls below 90%

If a child's attendance as recorded in the school's attendance registers falls below 90%, the government classify it as 'persistent absence'. If that happens, the school will take the following action:

- send a letter home to parents/carers (Letter 2, appendix A2)
- invite parents/carers to a meeting with our Pastoral Co-Ordinator to:
- discuss any underlying problems, and
- work together to seek solutions that improve attendance
- agree an attendance action plan with both the parent/carer and the child
- set targets to improve attendance which will continue to be monitored over a specified time period
- only authorise further absences if appropriate evidence is provided

The Education Welfare Officer may be in contact with you to discuss any issues regarding attendance or punctuality.

Bury St Edmunds All-Through Trust - Tollgate Campus

Tollgate Lane Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP32 6DG

Telephone (01284) 752742 Fax (01284) 777197

Website burytrust.org/tollgate

Email admin@tollgateschool.org

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Bates

Inspire, Create and Discover Together



<Name>

<Address>

Date

Dear

On a regular basis, the school is required to review attendance records for the children. In our recent review, it was noted that <child's name>'s attendance is below 95% for the academic year.

This is now a problem and we notify parents when this happens. We are sure that you will appreciate that regular and punctual school attendance is closely linked with your child's progress.

We fully understand that life does not always run smoothly and children are sometimes ill. We are grateful to you for telling us about such absences and explaining the reasons why they have happened. However, we want to work with you to ensure your child's attendance at school improves. Mrs Winn, our pastoral co-ordinator will be in touch with you during the next few days to follow up this letter and discuss any issues and support with you.

Mrs Winn will be happy to work with you and support you in any way she can to help improve <child's name>'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Claire Bates
Headteacher

Bury St Edmunds All-Through Trust - Tollgate Campus

Tollgate Lane Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP32 6DG

Telephone (01284) 752742 Fax (01284) 777197

Website burytrust.org/tollgate

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Bates

Email admin@tollgateschool.org

Inspire, Create and Discover Together



<Name>
<Address>

<Date>

Dear <insert name(s)>

Further to our earlier letter of <date> about <child's name> attendance at school, our records now show that <child's name> has had only <%> attendance this academic year so far. At this point in the school year this means that <child's name> has missed <number> days of school. The amount of time away from school is significant as it not only falls below the 95% threshold, but now also falls into the below 90% threshold. Therefore, <child's name> will now be classified as having 'Persistent Absence'. This means closer monitoring, more regular reviews and we are required to take steps to encourage an improvement in attendance. We have attached the attendance report for you to check.

Our Pastoral Co-ordinator will be contacting you again. Please expect a call from her to discuss the situation in the near future. Mrs Winn will ask you to come into school for a meeting with her. The purpose of this will be to explore the reasons why <child's name> absences have increased further.

When attendance drops to this level we are required to obtain medical evidence for any further illnesses. This could be in the form of a note from the doctor, an appointment slip from the surgery with <child's name> name, date and time of appointment on it or a copy of a prescription or the label on the prescription. Without medical proof we will be unable to authorise any further absences. Unauthorised absence may result in a fine or a referral to the EWO.

Unless we are able to work together effectively to help raise <child's name> attendance <his/her> education will continue to suffer, which I am sure you will agree is not what any of us would want.

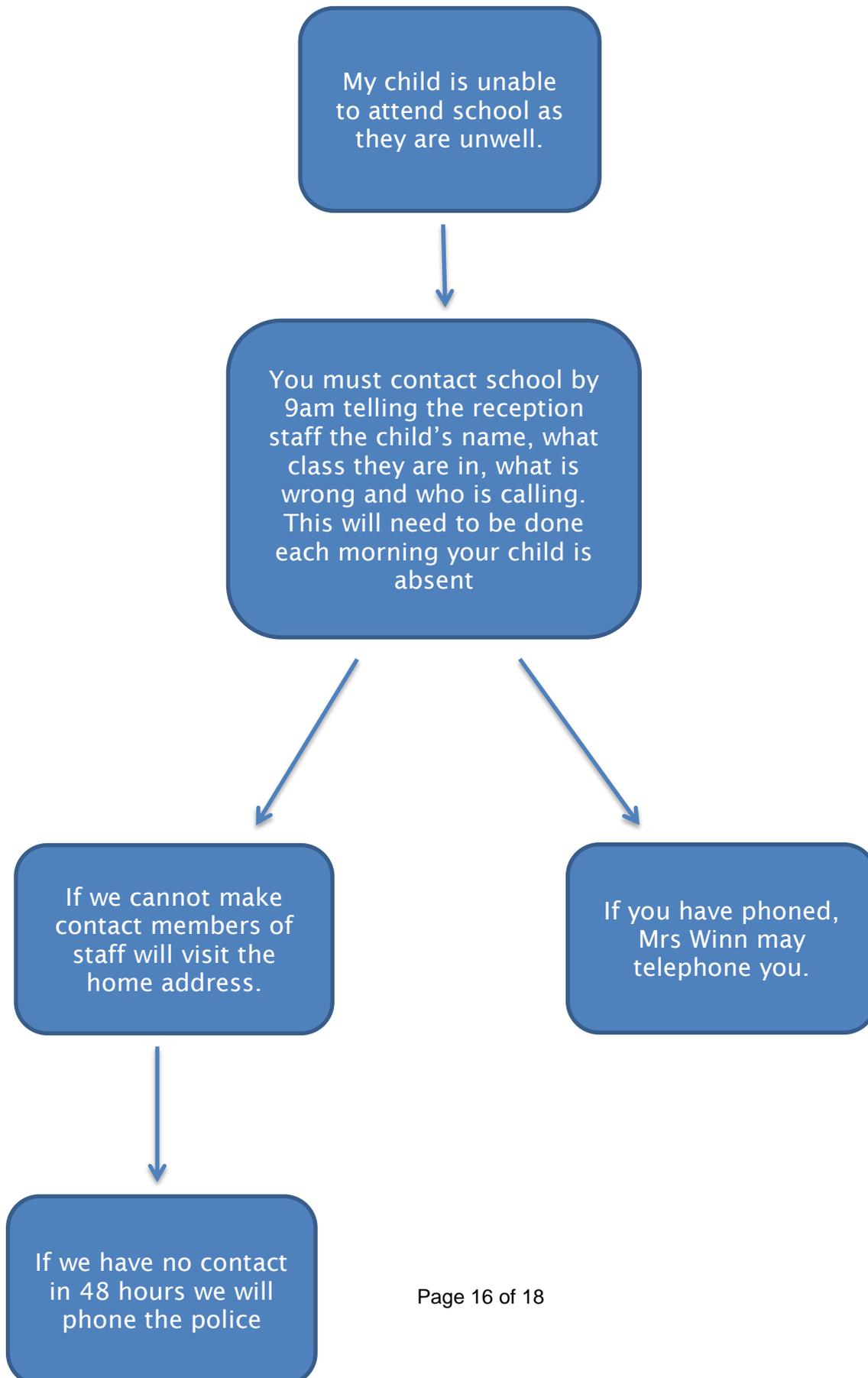
Yours sincerely

Mrs Claire Bates
Headteacher

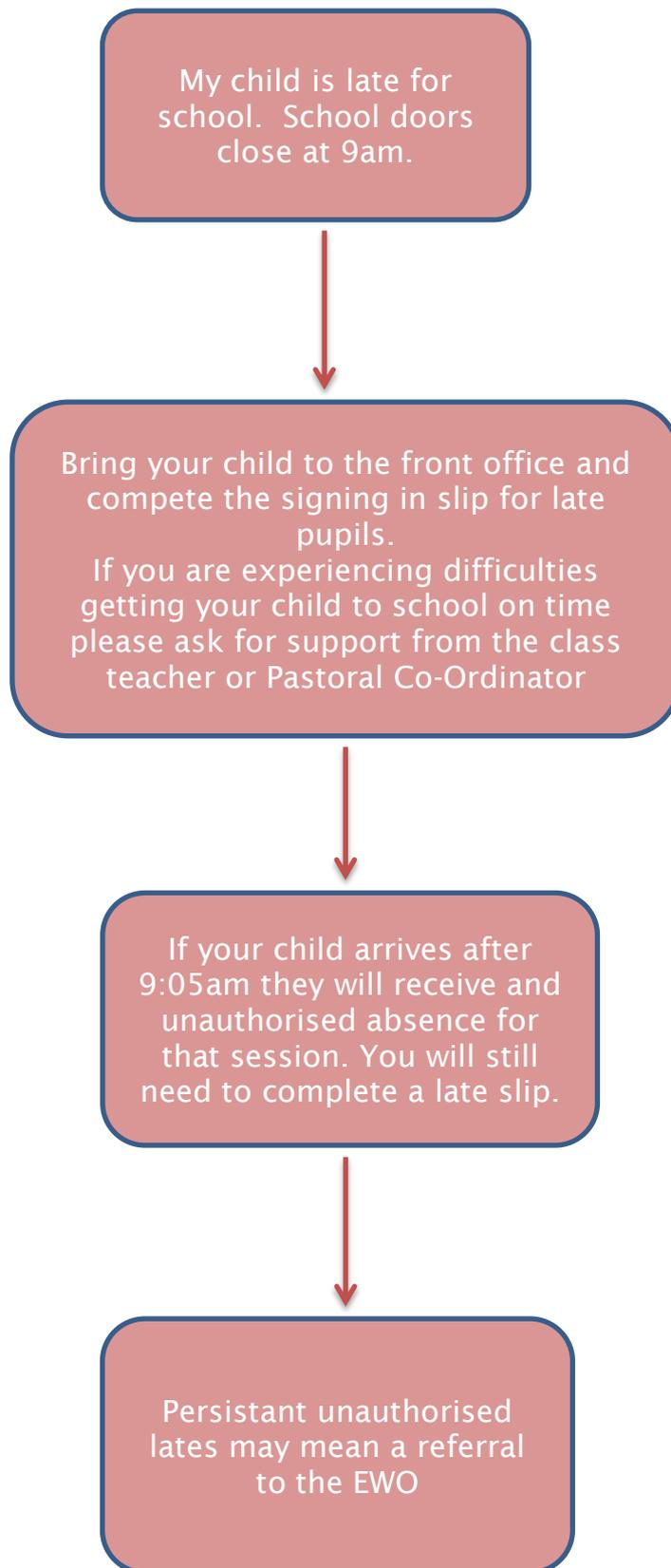
Signing in sheet for arriving after 9:05am

Child's Name:		Carer's Name and relationship:	
Class:	Date:	Time:	
Reason for being late:			
Signed:			

Absence Flowchart



Punctuality flowchart





Not In Miss Out

We are keen to continue to improve the attendance record at Tollgate Primary.

NIMO stands for 'Not In Miss Out' and the children are taught that everyday counts.

The weekly NIMO award is given to the class with the best attendance that week.

Each half term a prize is given to the class with the highest attendance.

Attendance Facts

Under 8 sessions missed	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity
Up to 20 sessions missed	At least 2 weeks of learning missed	Your child will have to spend time catching up with work
40 sessions missed	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child will be at risk of underachieving and will need extra support from you to catch up with work
50 sessions missed	At least 5 1/2 weeks of learning missed	Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.
OVER 50 sessions missed	At least 7 1/2 weeks of learning missed.	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

If your child's no attendance falls to 10 session you will receive a letter and a follow up call from Mrs Winn. Pastoral Co-ordinator.

School Attendance Matters

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect not only their learning but also their relationships with peers.

Thank you for all your support and communication regarding attendance matters. Keeping us informed about your child and any absences they may have helps us fulfill our duty of care, ensure that all children are safe and they are in school and learning as much as possible.

If you'd like to discuss your child's attendance please ask to speak to Mrs. Kelly Winn, Pastoral Support Coordinator, Tollgate Primary.

01284 752742



Attendance facts for Parents



Working together

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child.

What time do I need to be at school?

- The doors open at 8:45am.
- Register is called promptly at 9am.

What do I do if its after 9am?

You must take your child to the main office and complete a late slip

What do I do if my child is unwell?

You need to contact the school by 9am. each day your child is absent. You can call, email or verbally tell a member of staff.

Contact details

Phone number: 01284 752742

Email: tollgate@burytrust.org

I'm finding it difficult getting my child to school.

If you experience any difficulties regarding your child's attendance please come in and see Mrs Winn. (Pastoral Support Co-ordinator), the class teacher or one of the office staff so that we can work together to find a solution or arrange suitable support.

My child has an appointment.

Routine doctors and dental appointments should be made outside of the school day wherever possible.

Top Tips

To help children and carers make going to school easier

- Help them to get their school bag packed a the night before.
- Make sure that their uniform is ready, especially after the weekend or holidays.
- Get them to bed at a sensible time so they have a good nights sleep.
- Set the alarm clock early enough to allow plenty of time to get ready properly.
- Make sure they have a good breakfast.
- Set off to school early enough so they wont be late; punctuality is important.
- Check to make sure they have everything—any letters that need returning, PE kit, homework, reading book, playtime snack for children in year 3 and 4.
- Talk to the teacher if you have any concern about your child's work.
- Take an interest in your child's school day; ask them questions