

Attendance Policy

This policy is applicable to: South Hunsley School and Sixth Form College

Intended audience: Parents, Students, Staff

Important: This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the school website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online. Name and Title of Author:	Julie Wickenden, Assistant Headteacher
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Attendance Policy

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Aims

South Hunsley School is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at South Hunsley School, it is vital that they maintain excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all students and we actively promote good attendance and discourage unjustified absence - this ethos prepares students for the disciplines of working life and maximises learning opportunities.

- We will ensure that all students access full-time education which meets their needs and allows them to reach their potential.
- We emphasise that it is the responsibility of everyone in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- We strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- We work with students and their families to ensure every student has good attendance and punctuality.

What you can expect from South Hunsley School

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where student absence is cause for concern.
- We will support students to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support students returning to school after prolonged absence.

What South Hunsley School Expects from Students

- To attend regularly and on time.
- To be punctual to all lessons.
- To ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the Attendance Office (School Reception) if they are not able to register
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the appropriate place (as determined by each individual school).

What South Hunsley School Expects from Parents/Carers

- To ensure that their child attends the school, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the school for any other reason than illness or authorised explanation
- To avoid arranging term time holidays
- To immediately inform the School Attendance Office if their child is unable to attend (by 8.30 where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the school on each day of absence.

Elements of the Policy

Local Governing Body

The Governing Body is required by law to ensure that the registers are kept accurately. They are also required to publish annually a report to parents which includes the school's attendance figures.

The School will improve attendance by:

- ensuring all registers are completed accurately
- fostering good relationship with parents and carers
- fostering good relationships with the Education Welfare Service and relevant external agencies.
- only removing students from the school roll when s/he has legally left
- encouraging students to attend through the provision of work which is appropriate to their needs
- identifying patterns of non-attendance and those students who have an irregular pattern of attendance for intervention and support by the EWO / Youth and Family Service
- liaising with parents/carers to support improved individual attendance targets – any student under 92 % will be monitored, anyone under 90% will trigger EWO intervention
- providing a clear statement of attendance on the student's reports
- providing clear guidance to parents/carers regarding holidays in term time
- holding regular multi –agency meetings to discuss students causing concern
- ensuring that parents/carers know the necessity of providing suitable and detailed communication, e.g. a note, email or phone call, to explain absence either by letter or in the Student Planner
- informing the Governing Body of the level of attendance as part of each KPI Report.
- providing information for the prosecution of parents whose children do not attend school and who do not have a substantive reason
- monitoring through the Inclusion Panel- Data analysis, students who are looked after children, Pupil Premium and other vulnerable groups including SEND
- monitoring Persistent Absence (PA) figures

Registration Procedures

The Tutor – must complete the morning register accurately and save within the first 10 minutes (remembering that the register is a legal document). If students arrive late to registration then the tutor must re-open the register and mark with an “L” and enter how many minutes late and save again. They must follow-up absences with the student, by reminding the student that a note is required explaining the absence. Absence notes should be sent direct to the Attendance Office.

When marking a register any discrepancies in attendance need reporting to the Attendance Officers immediately.

Assemblies – all registers for assemblies must be taken either electronically or by paper. The Attendance Officers will input the paper register for you if required. This will help with our aim of ensuring all AM Tutor Registers have been completed on the system and in the event of an emergency a child can be correctly located.

Subject Staff – must complete the class register for each and every period including double and triple lessons, please remember period 4 is the equivalent of afternoon registration. Students arriving late should be marked with an ‘L’ and enter how many minutes late. If a student has an explanatory note mark the register with an appropriate code. Lesson registration is a vital element in tracking post-registration truancy and records will be used by the EWO in communications with parents and as evidence in legal proceedings.

Educational Visits and Sports Fixtures – Paper registers must be taken prior to departure and a copy sent to Attendance Officer. Students will be given their marks for lessons in that session.

College Courses – Paper registers should be taken by link member of staff and returned to the Attendance Officer.

Signing Out – Any KS3/4 student who leaves the school premises during the day should go to the LLC Reception where s/he will be given an ‘Authorised Absence Pass’ which gives permission for the

student to be off the site. Parental/official verification for the reason for leaving the site will be sought/looked at before pass is given. The Authorised Absence Pass must be shown if a student is challenged outside the school by the police or Education Welfare Service.

House Leader, Heads of House and the Post 16 Pastoral Support Officer – will check attendance on a weekly basis ensuring that:

- a) absence/e-mails/notes are being provided and phone calls are logged (in conjunction with Tutors and Attendance Officers)
- b) codes/explanations for absence are being inputted by the attendance officer
- c) any patterns of absence are identified and investigated
- d) poor attenders/students with problems in school likely to affect their attendance are identified for intervention
- e) reasons for non- attendance are investigated with students, parents/carers/EWO where there are concerns and the appropriate action taken – monitoring will begin initially by form tutor and further 'investigation' will be done by Attendance Officer, then Head of House and finally EWO
- f) if a student is likely to be absent for a known period of time to arrange for work to be sent home
- g) if a student's absence is supported by a hospital consultant or a specialist medical team a referral to Home Tuition Service will be completed
- h) if a student is returning after a long absence from school, the possibility of a phased return should be considered.

Attendance Officers – have responsibility for:

- a) ensuring registers are being completed and informing SLT link at appropriate stages (where there are persistent concerns)
- b) clearing and entering absence notes, (ensuring correct codes are used) absence emails and phone calls re absence
- c) collating leave of absence /holidays forms for SLT
- d) updating and maintaining students' personal data/contact details
- e) making necessary amendments to SIMS data
- f) providing daily absence reports to HOH
- g) actioning first day calling as directed by SLT
- h) providing attendance data to Heads of House (weekly)
- i) providing data for governing Body (termly KPI)
- j) providing data for the LEA and DFE returns
- k) providing data to Senior Leadership Team (weekly)
- l) reporting any hardware difficulties to ICT Systems Managers
- m) providing punctuality data for Head of House (weekly)
- n) providing 100% attendance certificates (termly)

Education Welfare Officer – is responsible for:

- a) monitoring attendance levels of all students
- b) meeting on a regular basis with Head of House and Senior Leadership Link to discuss students with under 90% attendance, including reporting to Inclusion Panel on persistent absence patterns and Pupil Premium attendance
- c) feeding back to staff information as appropriate
- d) liaising with parents/carers to identify any problems which may be affecting attendance and offer support if appropriate to parents/carers/students
- e) supporting students with difficulties in school
- f) making home visits if appropriate to meet with parents/carers
- g) informing parents/carers of legal responsibility for regular attendance and possible sanctions – via standardised letters where attendance has become a concern, penalty fines and prosecution
- h) following up with the EWO's line manager where a decision is made to take action against parents/carers for the non-attendance of a student

- i) monitoring attendance and implement Fast Track Procedure if appropriate
- j) adopting a multi-agency working practice to ensure support for parents/carers/students
- k) attending child protection conferences/core group meetings under the direction of Social Services or SLT.
- l) taking part in truancy sweeps under direction of the police or SLT

Education Welfare Officer will use a wide range of strategies to monitor and improve attendance of all students, for example:

1. Parenting Contracts
2. Penalties
3. Fast Track Procedures
4. Prosecution
5. Education Supervision Orders

Parents/carers – have a legal responsibility

“All parents/carers who have children of compulsory school age, are responsible in law for ensuring that their children receive an efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs which they have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Section 7 Education Act 1996.

This responsibility includes:

- a) ensuring that their children attend punctually, regularly and stay in school
- b) ensuring a good attitude to learning and support the Home-school Agreement
- c) working in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of the child
- d) in exceptional circumstances as stated below, requesting leave of absence for holidays during term time via a Holiday Form, well in advance of the requested dates

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the School has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence.

Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the school can do this.

Parents/carers should contact the School Attendance Office (by telephone or email) on the morning of absence (preferably before 8.30 am), giving a reason and an expected date of return. Wherever possible, students should attempt to arrange non-school activities outside of their course timetable.

The following is a list of reasons for absence which would be authorised:

- A medical appointment
- A family bereavement and/ or attendance at a funeral
- A religious observance
- A visit to a University / College, either to attend an open day or for an interview
- A careers interview
- An appointment with a Youth & Family Support Service personal advisor/CAMHS/MIND counsellor
- A work experience placement (although preferably arranged for during weekends or holidays)
- Moving house (1 day only)
- A job interview (Sixth Form only)
- Driving test (Sixth Form only)

For each of the above, evidence will be required e.g. an appointment card or letter.

Term Time Holidays (School Unauthorised Absence)

New legislation came into effect on 1 September 2013 which means there is no longer a provision in law for the Headteachers to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday other than in a very limited set of exceptional circumstances outlined here:

- 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 the 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 a person close to the family
- 4) To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Head of School must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first term of any academic year (applies to all students)
- 2) Year 9 options time (for students in Year 9)
- 3) At any time during Years 10 and 11 (for all students in these year groups)
- 4) At any further times as specified by the school
- 5) Students whose attendance is classified as persistent absence

Persistent Absence

A student will be defined as a Persistent Absentee when they have been absent from school for 10% or more. The Department of Education reduced this threshold from September 2015 from 15% previously. Persistent Absence is a serious problem for students, leaving students at a considerable disadvantage. Students who fall below 92% threshold will be monitored and supported to improve their attendance. Students whose attendance falls below 90% PA threshold will be supported by Education Welfare Officer and their attendance will be reviewed by Assistant Head for Inclusion. Where appropriate Attendance Action Plans will be drawn up by the Education Welfare Officer in consultation with parents/carers and relevant external agencies, such as CAMHS.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent.

Penalty Notices may be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post directly to the home of a parent after a warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This may include students caught on truancy sweeps, excessive or unauthorised family holidays and persistent late arrival after the close of registration.

If a parent's/carer's request is declined and they still take their child out of school each parent within the household may be issued with a £60 penalty notice for each child you have taken out of school. If a penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days it will increase to £120. If after 42 days it remains unpaid the parent will be summonsed to appear before Magistrates to explain why their child has unauthorised school absences and they may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

Parental Guidance on new legislation

We advise that parents/carers do not plan for their child to be absent without contacting the school first to obtain prior approval. Head teachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance. A penalty notice may be issued for any unauthorised absence due to holidays.

If a parent believes at any stage that their child's absence from school may leave them liable for prosecution or a penalty notice, it is important for the parent/carer to take action without delay to secure their regular attendance. Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if parents/carers have any questions about this, or need any help to achieve an improvement, they are encouraged to contact the school to discuss any issues.

Sixth Form Students

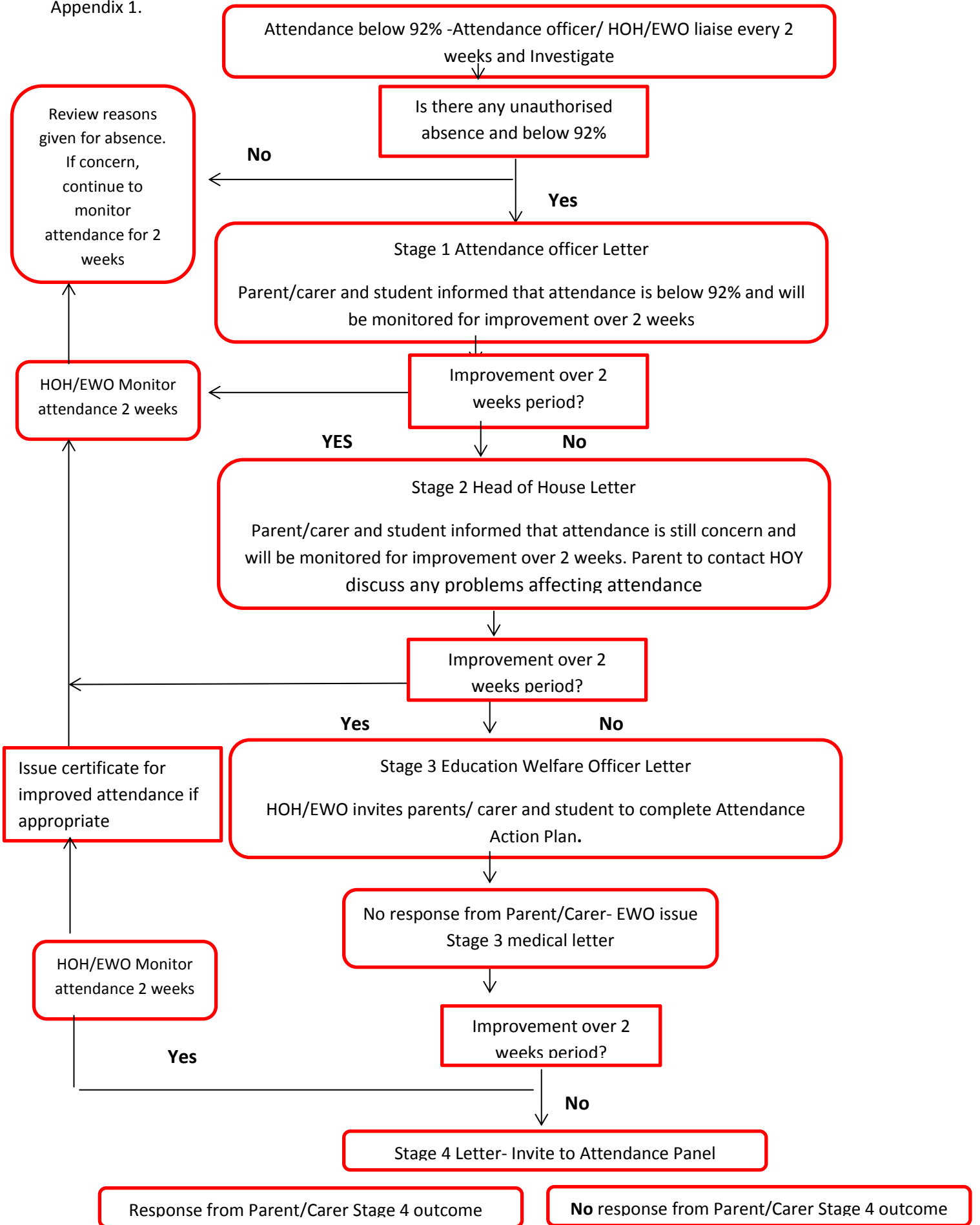
Sixth Form Student and parents are expected to abide by Post- 16 Learning Agreement with regards to all attendance issues (See appendix 2 – stages of Sixth Form Attendance Monitoring).

School Leaver Year 11 & 13

Year 11 & 13 Leavers official school leaving date will be the date of their last examination. Year 11 students are expected to register and attend school during the examination period to access subject specialist support. Revision support is provided within school for every student during the examinations. Year 13 Students are not expected to register during exam period.

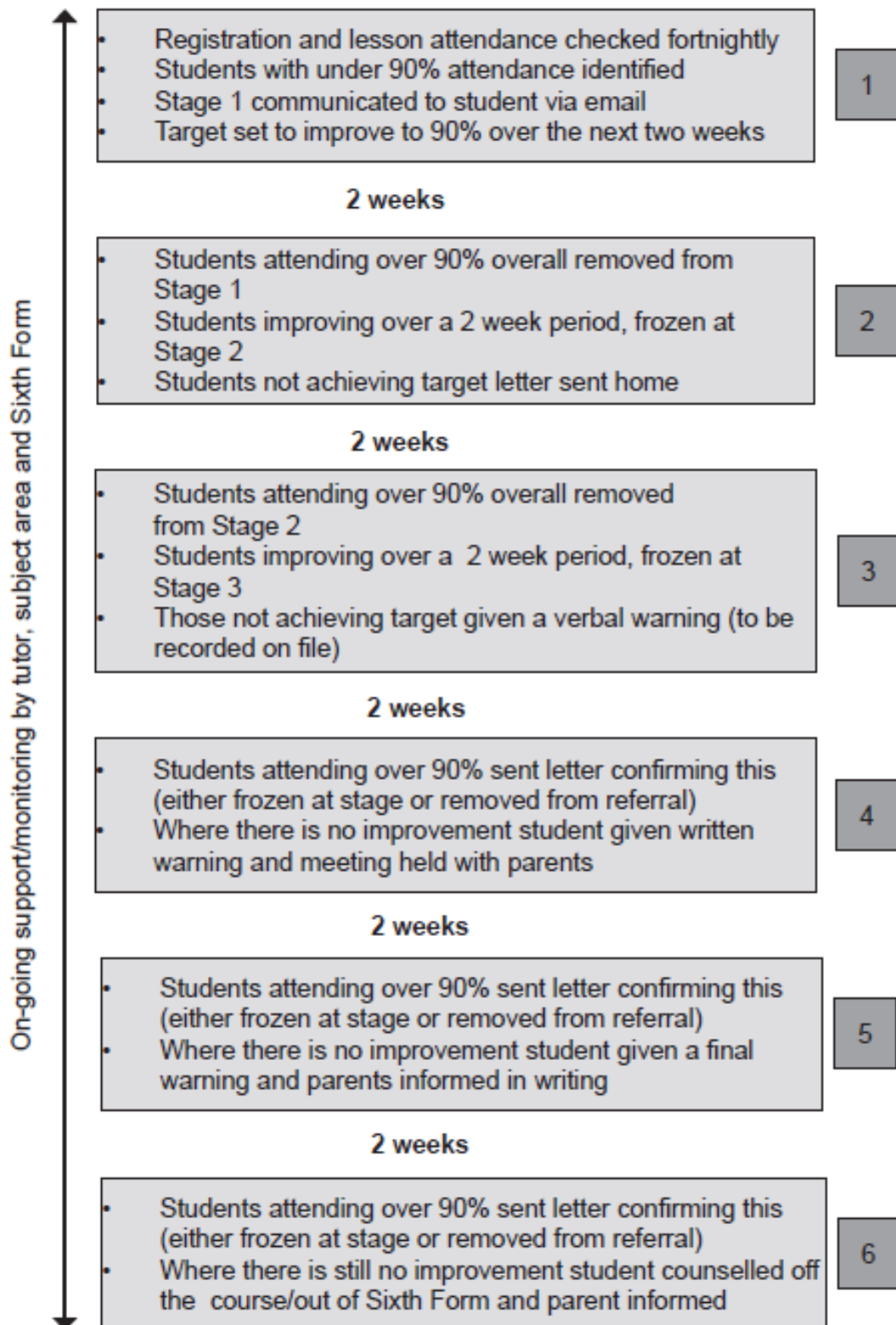
The Secretary of State may by order determine the day in any calendar year which is to be the school leaving date for that year.

Appendix 1.





Stages of Sixth Form Attendance Monitoring



NB If a Cause for Concern is raised for a student who has already been placed on the referral route in the same term, the referral route will start at the stage where the student was removed