

ATTENDANCE SERVICE

GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2018 - 2019

DOCUMENT NOTES

This document provides information and guidance to all schools in relation to;

- **Definition of “Parent”**
- **Persistent Absence (PA) Thresholds**
- **Religious Observance**
- **Attendance Concern Referral**
 - Persistent Absence (PA) – 10% or more absence rate
- **Enforcement Referrals**
 - Warning of Penalty Notices
 - Issue of Penalty Notice
- **CME/Pupil Tracking**
 - CME Referral Form (see further guidance in relation to CME attached separately)
- **Deletions from the school roll (Off Roll)**
- **Contact details**

Definition of Parent

The definition of "Parent" for the purpose of this document and the referral forms is;

Under *section 576* of the *Education Act 1996* (EA 1996), a "parent" in relation to a *child* or *young person* is defined as:

- The natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not.
- Anyone who although not a natural parent has parental responsibility for a child.
- Any person, who although not a natural parent, has care of a child.

Persistent Absence Definition

From 2015/16 a pupil enrolment is identified as persistent absentee if they **miss 10% or more of their possible sessions.**

Whole school PA calculation (compulsory school aged pupils)

$$\text{Persistent Absence rate} = \frac{\text{Number of enrolments classed as persistent absentees}}{\text{Number of enrolments}} \times 100$$

History of Persistent Absence Methodology

Description of persistent absence measure	Academic years
10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions)	2015/16 onwards
Around 15% or more of sessions missed (based on a standard threshold)	2010/11 to 2014/15
Around 20% or more of sessions missed (based on a standard threshold)	2005/06 to 2009/10

Further Information

Further information on absence statistics can be found on;

www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-statistics-guide

Last updated: March 2018

Religious Observance

The DfE guidance (*School Attendance Nov 2016*) on religious observance states that;

Code R : Religious Observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance.

The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance

Important note;

Leave for: Dawoodi Bohra Islamic Community and Ashara

Following careful consideration of legal representations and subsequent clarification regarding Ashara, Slough Borough Council has agreed to authorise absence requests for Ashara in accordance with the Department for Education guidance.

It is the understanding of SBC that requests for this specific observance cover a nine day period and the whole period should be authorised as religious observance.

Parents requesting leave for their child should do so in accordance with the schools policy.

It is recommended best practice that Schools provide written responses to all leave of absence requests.

SBC understands that this may cause some concern for schools that are affected by such requests however schools are encouraged to follow this guidance to avoid any potential further legal challenges.

Enforcement Referrals – Warnings and Fines Proforma

Purpose and when to use

- This form is to be used to submit a request for the Local Authority to start immediate enforcement by issuing either a “warning of fine” or a Penalty Notice (instant fine) to parent/s of a statutory aged child related to unauthorised absence.
- The aim of using warnings and fines is for the purpose of improving a child’s attendance to a satisfactory level.

Thresholds

- **Warning of fine**
 - 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any 12 week period – absences do not have to be consecutive but must be recorded in the register as unauthorised (codes include “O”, “U” and “G”)
 - Warnings of fine provide the parent with a specified 3 school week period in which there can be no further unauthorised absence. If there are any unauthorised sessions within this warning period then a fine is automatically issued (unless there are exceptional circumstances).
- **Issue of instant fine (for unauthorised holidays)**
 - 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence which must be recorded in the register as code “G”
 - Instant fines do not provide the parent with any warning period

Decision making

Once thresholds have been reached, the general rule to assist the decision making process for schools when deciding if a warning/fine should be issued is;

- Only issue a warning if your school is prepared for the parent/s to be fined
- Only issue a fine if your school is prepared for the parent/s to be prosecuted (if they do not pay the fine)

Once you have decided to start enforcement then the Headteacher **must** sign the Proforma for the LA to start enforcement action.

Which parent/s should be included on the form?

- Your school records may show the details of both parents with both having PR, however, it may not always be appropriate to include both parents on the proforma, if for example, only one parent is actively involved with getting the child to school on a daily basis

- The parent/s whose details you enter onto the form will be the parent/s that we issue a warning/fine to and could therefore ultimately be prosecuted if the attendance continues to be a concern

What is school required to do?

- **Warning of fine**
 - Ensure the thresholds (above) have been met
 - Complete the proforma including parents full names
 - Inform the LA at the time of referral if they are aware of any circumstances with the child/family that has contributed to the absence i.e. bullying, medical / health conditions (including information on any evidence provided to school) or family issues
 - Include details of what, if any, interventions the school has already taken to address concerns i.e. telephone call, meetings held with parent, home visits
 - Monitor the child's attendance carefully throughout the warning period
 - School will not routinely authorise any further absences without supporting evidence and that parent/s will be advised of this fact and that this referral has been made to the Attendance Service
 - Inform the LA of any changes in register codes or pupils circumstances since the initial referral
- **Instant fine (PN)**
 - Ensure the thresholds (above) have been met
 - Complete the proforma including parents full names
 - Attach a copy of the "leave of request" form submitted by the parent
 - Referrals must be made for instant fines within 4 weeks of the child's return to school following the absence period. Referrals submitted after this time reduces the possibility of progressing through the enforcement process due to legal requirements and may not be accepted by the LA

What will the LA do once a referral is received?

- **Warning of fine**
 - Check the form is completed as required and review all supporting information
 - Action the referral within 10 days of receipt
 - Issue the "warning of fine letter" to the parent stating the 3 week (15 school days) warning period
 - An email will be sent to the schools email address via egress informing them of the warning period dates
 - Respond to parent queries in relation to the warning letter (there may be occasions that we need to refer back to school but in general terms we will keep all queries at LA level where possible)
 - Review the child's attendance at the end of the warning period and;
 - proceed to the issue of a fine if further unauthorised absences have occurred – where possible we will use the B2B data for

this action without the need to clarify the position with schools
OR

- Close the referral with no further action if attendance has improved or absences during the warning period have been authorised by the school

- **Issue of fine**
 - Check the form is completed as required and review all supporting information
 - Action the referral within 10 days of receipt
 - Issue the fine to the parent/s
 - An email will be sent to the schools email address via egress informing them of the issue of the fine
 - Respond to parent queries in relation to the fine (there may be occasions that we need to refer back to school but in general terms we will keep all queries at LA level where possible)
 - Monitor the enforcement process and payment of fine/s
 - If payment is made no further action will be taken at this stage (parent has discharged their liability for this offence) – schools should contact the LA if attendance becomes a concern again via a new referral
 - If no payment is made the LA will, along with legal services, consider prosecuting the parents under The Education Act 1996 (*see notes below on prosecution*)

Form Completion

- All sections of the form must be completed in full
- Parent/Carer details must include the “Full name” - both the first name and the surname
- School should check and confirm ;
 - the address of the child – a verbal address check with the pupil is beneficial and reduces complications in the enforcement process further down the line (45 fines were withdrawn in the last academic year due to incorrect names and addresses)
 - the parent included on the proforma is actively involved with the child’s schooling on a daily basis
- Please ensure that you attach a copy of the registration certificate to the referral form
- Completed forms should be submitted by secure email as a word document, along with a copy of the registration certificate and sent to attendance@slough.gov.uk

Number of Fines That Can Be Issued

- SBC’s protocol states that parent/s will only be issued with **one fine per academic year**. If attendance continues to be a concern following this, alternative enforcement can be taken i.e. Panels/prosecution

Prosecution

- If parent/s do not pay the fine prosecution will be considered.
- It is important for schools to know that although fines have not been paid, it is not always appropriate for prosecution to take place as various factors need to be considered at this stage which includes child's overall attendance, improvements made throughout the enforcement process, social care/other agency involvement and if such prosecution is "in the public's interest"
- The decision regarding prosecution ultimately lies with Slough Borough Council's legal services
- School will be notified by email via Egress of cases proceeding to court for prosecution
- When a case does go to court it is important for schools to know that if a parent pleads "not guilty" in court, the case is automatically listed for "Trial". At this stage the Headteacher (or designated person) may be called as a witness and subject to cross examination from the parents, their legal representative and the court

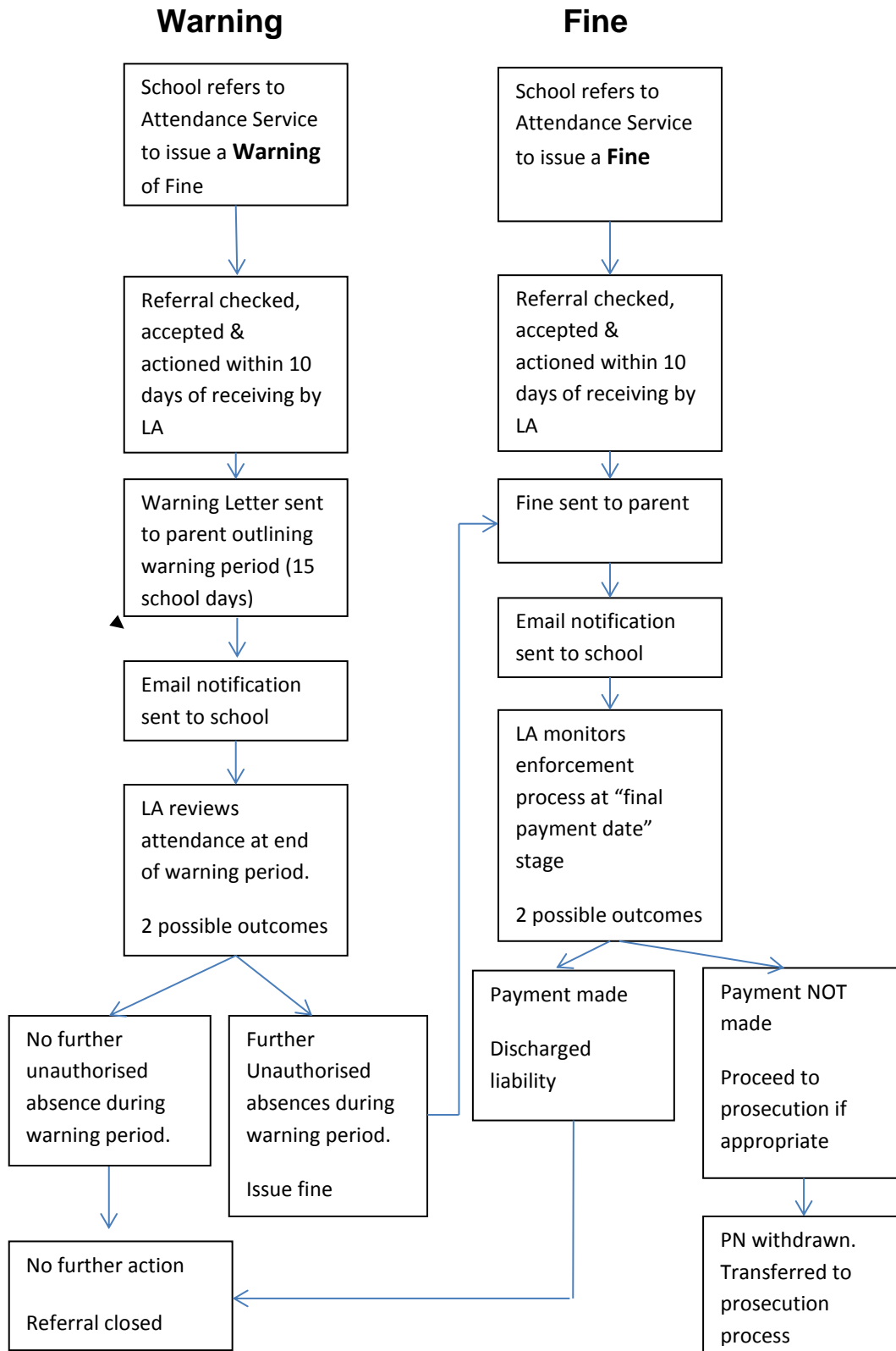
Withdrawal of fines

- There are occasions when schools request a fine to be withdrawn and the following needs to be considered;

Within protocol there are only 4 official reasons that the LA can withdraw a fine once it has been issued which are;

- PN has been issued outside of the terms of the local code of conduct
 - it ought not to have been issued or issued to the person named as the recipient
 - PN contains material errors
 - where after the expiry of 28 days the penalty notice is unpaid and the LA has not started legal proceedings or wishes to take such action under section 444
- It is not possible for fines to be withdrawn outside of the above reasons
 - The Headteacher must give the instruction to withdraw a fine including the reason for withdrawal – requests from School Attendance Officers to withdraw a fine will **NOT** be accepted without the Headteacher's approval.

Attendance Service Warning and Fine Issue – Flow Diagram



PENALTY NOTICE PROFORMA

Request for SBC to issue a Fine (Penalty Notice) or Warning of fine

SCHOOLS – It is mandatory to complete the form completely and accurately. Failure to do so will result in the form being returned.

School Name:			
Pupil Details:	Year group:	Date of Birth:	Ethnicity:
Name			
Address			
Parent/Carer details (1):	Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, other – please specify		
Name (must include first name and surname in full of parent/carer)			
Address (<i>if different to above-by completing this parents' details you are confirming that, aside from PR, the parent is actively involved in the child's school attendance</i>)			
Telephone numbers: Home			
Mobile			
Parent/Carer details (2):	Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, other – please specify		
Name (must include first name in full of parent/carer)			
Address (<i>if different to above-by completing this parents details you are confirming that, aside from PR, the parent is actively involved in the child's school attendance</i>)			
Telephone numbers: Home			
Mobile			
PLEASE SELECT <u>ONE</u> and attach a copy of the attendance certificate in both cases:			
PN WARNING REQUEST		<input type="checkbox"/>	
10 unauthorised sessions of absence over a 12 week period. Provide details of any relevant information and interventions taken by school if applicable			
PN (FINE) REQUEST		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dates of absence:			
10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence, code G. Please attach copy of "leave of absence" request completed by parent/s			
Declaration: I confirm that the details contained on this form are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.			
Signed (Headteacher):		Please print name:	
Completed by (school attendance):		Please print name:	
Date:			
LA Office Use;			
Signed (Attendance/CME Officer at SBC):		Please print name:	
Date:			

Attendance Referral - Persistent Absence (PA) Guidance

Purpose and when to use

- To be used to refer children to the LA when the child has reached the “persistent absence” level set by the DfE (10% or more of their possible sessions missed)
- Schools have concerns about the child’s overall attendance rate but school does not deem it appropriate to initiate immediate enforcement action – warnings and fines - at the current stage
- The school have tried to improve attendance through their own interventions and now require an escalation to the LA for support
- A lower level intervention from the LA will be used initially i.e. telephone calls, letters, meetings
- The pupil will remain on the school roll
- If the lower level LA intervention does not improve attendance to a satisfactory level the LA will recommend that enforcement action is started

Thresholds

- The child needs to have missed 10% or more of their possible sessions during the current academic year
- The absences can be a mix of authorised and unauthorised absence however at least 10 sessions must be unauthorised (in any 12 week period) to enable the LA to potentially take enforcement action further down the line
- School must have carried out their own interventions prior to referral to the LA

What are schools required to do?

- Ensure the thresholds have been met
- Complete all sections of the PA attendance referral form (below) and, along with a copy of the latest registration certificate, submit to attendance@slough.gov.uk
- Include details of what interventions the school has already taken to address concerns i.e. telephone call, meetings held with parent, home visits
- Provide as much known information as possible to the Attendance Team i.e. reasons given for absence, any bullying claims, medical conditions
- School will not routinely authorise any further absences without supporting evidence and that parent/s will be advised of this fact and that this referral has been made to the Attendance Service

What will the LA do once a referral is received?

- Check the form is completed as required
- Write to the parent outlining attendance concerns and expectations to improve attendance **within 10 days** of receiving the referral
- Review attendance at the end of 6 week period
- Decide on next steps dependant on information that has been obtained throughout the referral process. This may be a meeting with the parent or a recommendation to school that a) enforcement action is now initiated or b) referral to be made by school to alternative agency i.e. FIRST.

Note: The LA may need to come back to the school for further information throughout this process.

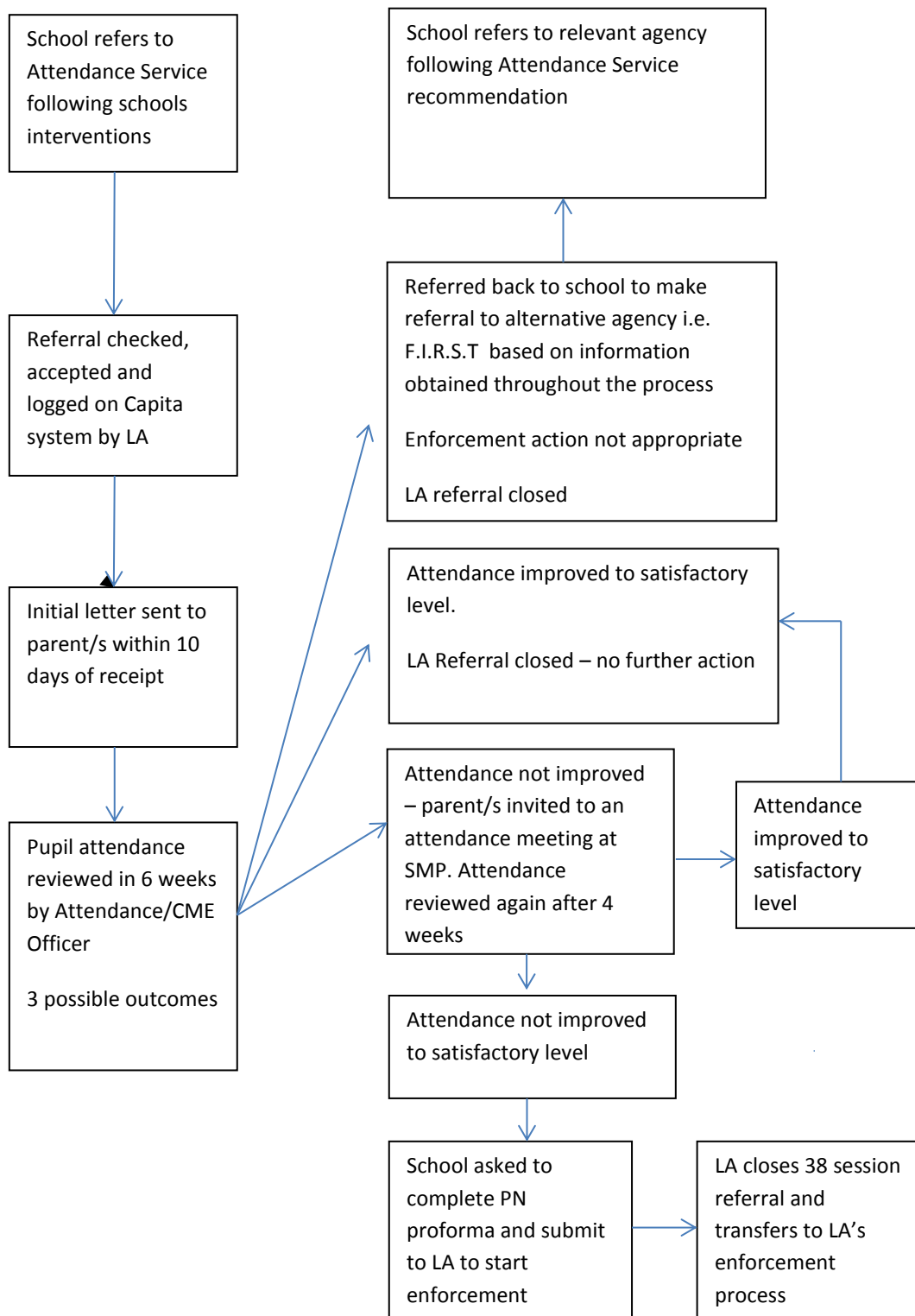
Which parent/s should be included on the form?

- Only include the parent/s you know the child lives with and plays an active part in getting the child into school. This will be the same parent/s that enforcement action is taken against further down the line
- Your school records may show the details of both parents with both having PR, however it may not always be appropriate to include both parents on the referral form
- If you are aware that the 2 parents live separately and the child for example, only sees parent B on weekends, you should consider if it is appropriate for enforcement action to be taken against parent B when it is evident they are not part of the child's day to day schooling matters (i.e. getting the child into school)

Submit the referral form

- All sections of the form must be completed in full
- Parent/Carer details must include the "Full name" - both the first name and the surname
- Please ensure that you attach a copy of the registration certificate to the referral form
- Completed forms should be submitted by email as a word document and sent to attendance@slough.gov.uk
- Contact the Attendance Service if you have any queries in relation to this referral;
 - Telephone: 01753 787670
 - Email: attendance@slough.gov.uk

Attendance Service Persistent Absence (PA) Referral – Flow Diagram



Attendance Service Persistent Absence (PA) Referral Form

This referral requires the pupil to have missed at least 10% of their possible sessions – this must include at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in any 12 week period.

SCHOOL Contact Name / Phone.....

Pupil Details	Parent/Carer Details
NAME (FULL).....	Parent/Carer 1
M/F..... DOB:	NAME (FULL).....
Address.....	Address (if different from pupil)
..... Post Code..... Post Code.....
Ethnicity.....	Contact Details : Tel numbers/email address:
Year Group..... Tutor Group.....
Is the pupil a Child Looked After (CLA) ? Yes/No.....	Parent/Carer 2
Is the pupil eligible for FSM? Yes/No.....	NAME (FULL).....
Does the pupil have an EHC Plan? Yes/No.....	Address (if different from pupil)
Has a MARF been completed? Yes/No..... Post Code.....
Other relevant information	Contact Details : Tel numbers/email address:.....
.....
Known previous enforcement action (i.e. warnings/fines/prosecution).....	If parents live separately do both parents have an active involvement with the child's education? Yes/No/Other info.....
.....
Current attendance rate:	Any other relevant parental information? Yes/No.....
Number of sessions absent:
Please attach Attendance Certificate	

Reasons for absence– schools to provide as much detail as possible, this could include a print out of reasons from SIMS

Record of school action before referral to Attendance Service
 Details of contact- (for example) Telephone calls, letters, school meeting etc. (N.B. Please attach copies of each)

Action	Date

Other agencies involved: e.g. Social Care, Police, Youth Justice, FIRST or any other relevant information:

I confirm that the school will not routinely authorise any further absences without justifiable evidence and that parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of this fact and that this referral has been made to the Attendance Service once the parent has been notified.

SIGNED **PRINT NAME** **DATE**

POSITION.....

LA only: Date received by AS..... Approved referral (Officers name and date).....

CME / Pupil Tracking Referrals

Purpose

- To enable schools and the LA to carry out their statutory obligations in accordance with the DfE's *Children Missing Education Guidance (November 2016)*

Important Information

Who are children missing education (CME)?

- These are children of compulsory school age (5 – 16) who are:
 - Not on a school roll
 - Not being educated other than at school

CME/Tracking Referral V Attendance Referral

- If a child on roll stops attending school but they still, as far as is known, reside at their existing address this should be referred to the LA as an Attendance (PA or enforcement) Referral
- If a child on roll stops attending school and there is reason to believe the family have, for example, moved out of area this should be referred as CME/Pupil Tracking Referral

What is School required to do?

- All schools and academies are required to inform the LA of every pupil they are about to delete from roll and the reason for doing so (using the 15 reasons explained in the CME guidance)
- All schools and academies are required to notify the LA within 5 days of adding a pupil to the admissions register – this relates only to in-year starters and is not required for standard transitions into reception and year 7
- Complete the referral form accurately and completely and submit to pupiltracking@slough.gov.uk
- Contact the Attendance Team 15 days after the referral was submitted to obtain updated information on the referral if required. The Attendance Service will respond to all requests to provide an update on the referral

What will the LA do once a referral is received?

- Check the form is completed as required
- An automated email will be sent to the school confirming that the referral has been received
- Log and action the referral and start all statutory tracking checks
- Contact the school if, for any reason, it is established throughout the tracking process that the child should NOT be deleted from the school roll
- Provide an update on the referral to schools if they request one (15 days after submitting)

Form Completion

Parts of the Form;

- Part A -** refers to the child and parent/carer details and actions the school has taken to locate the child prior to referring to the LA
- Part B -** refers to the reason the pupil will be deleted from the roll and the date that this will take effect in line with the DfE Guidance. The reasons have been printed on the form so schools just need to tick the relevant one
- Part C -** refers to School to School Transfers. This section has been added to assist schools in cases where less information is required as we know where the child has gone to
- Part D-** refers to New Starters. Schools only need to fill in minimal detail as other information will be filtered through to the LA via B2B data

Schools complete sections;

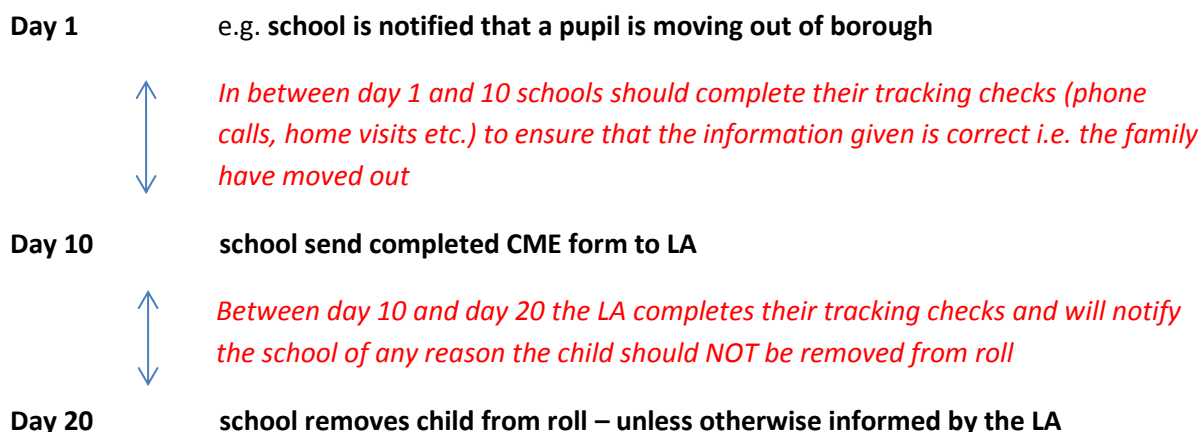
- Parts A & B - for CME/Pupil Tracking Referrals
- Part C only - for School to School transfers
- Part D only - for New In-Year starters

Pupil Removed from School Roll

- A proposed “off roll date” should be entered onto the form within Part B
- Statutory guidance requires a pupil to be absent for at least **20 consecutive school days** before deleting a pupil from roll – the deletion takes place on day **21 or later**
- Of these 20 days, at least 10 days notice must be given to the LA **prior** to the stated off roll date to enable statutory checks to be carried out

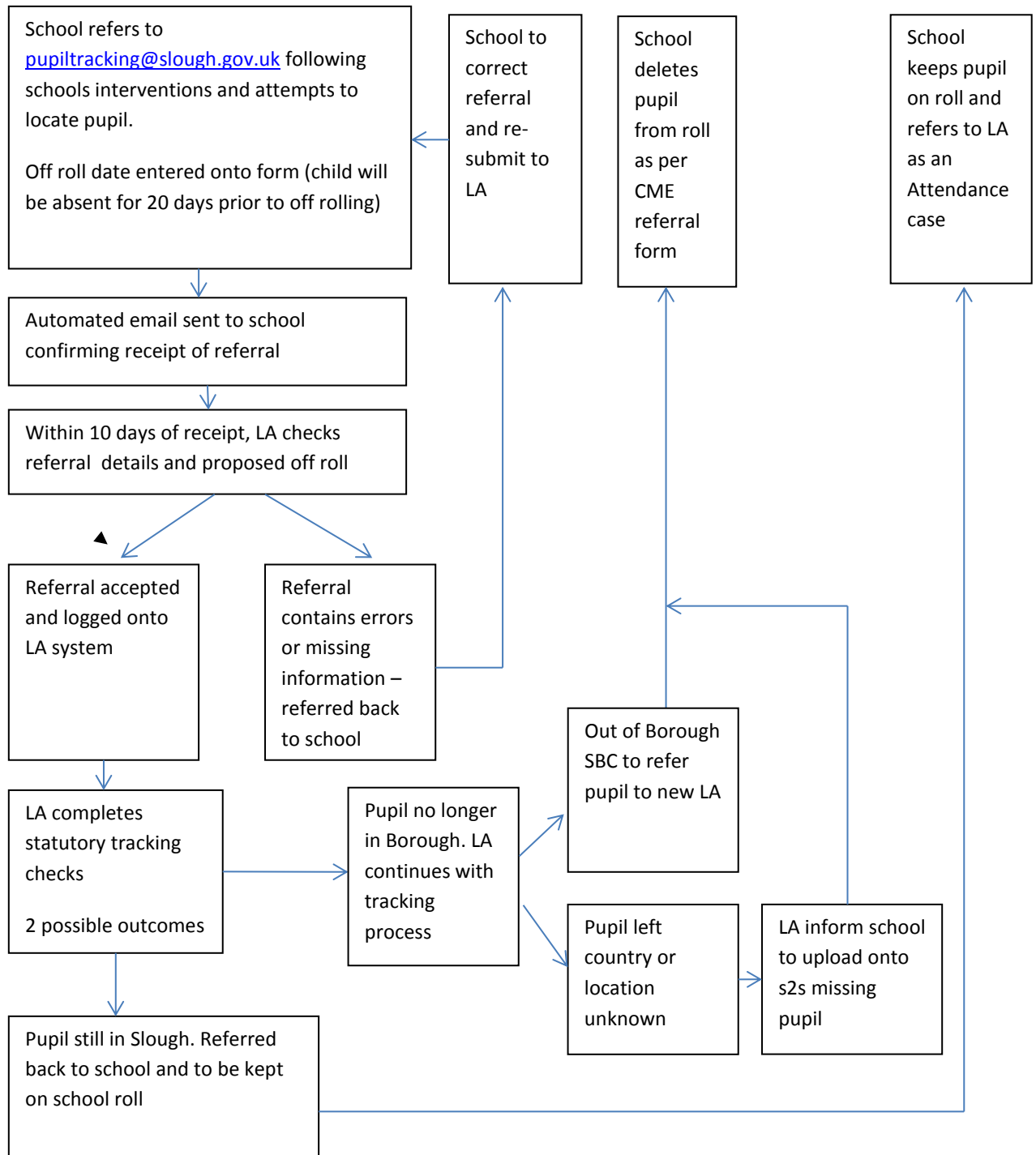
See section on “Deleting pupils from the school roll” within the Attendance Service Guidance Pack for further information

Best Practice Example for off rolling;



Note: The LA may need to come back to the school for further information throughout the tracking process

CME / Pupil Tracking Referral – Flow Diagram



Child Missing Education (CME) / School 2 School Referral Form

REFERRAL FROM (School Name/Local Authority).....

CONTACT NAME & NUMBER

<p>For CME / Pupil Tracking Referrals complete Parts A & B</p> <p>For School 2 School transfers complete Part C only</p> <p>For new starters complete Part D only</p> <p>For non school attendance matters in cases where the whereabouts of the child is known (i.e. still at their home address) this form should NOT be completed -please refer using Attendance PA Referral or Enforcement Referral – please contact the Attendance Service on 01753 787670 for guidance</p>

PART A CME / Tracking

Pupil Details			
Child's Full Name		Gender	
Current Address		Date of Birth	
New Address (moving to)		Date Moved	
Date of Last Attendance		Ethnicity	
Known Siblings in Other Schools	<p>Name/s:</p> <p>School Name/s:</p>		
Is the pupil known to Children's Services? Yes/No		Name of Social Worker:	
Other relevant information (SEND, safeguarding concerns, poor attendance, parent non-engagement, communication)			

Parent/Carer Details			
Parent / Carer 1 Full Name:		Telephone Number	
Email Address			
Parent / Carer 2 Full Name:		Telephone Number	
Email Address			
Home Address (if different from pupil)			

Additional information
Please give details of any other relevant information that might help us locate this child or children

Schools please ensure these checks are completed before you send the referral.

School Action taken – please provide information on actions school has taken to locate this pupil i.e. home visit, letter sent to home address, spoken to neighbours/other family members + emergency contacts, other schools contacted where any siblings attend;

PART B Pupil Removed from School Roll

CME guidance 2016 states schools **must** inform LA of all pupils removed from their roll

Please tick relevant box

LA approved change of education provision due to SAO		Pupil failed to return following authorised leave of absence		Child is not statutory school age	
Pupil registered in another school		Pupil medically unfit to attend school		Pupil leaving independent school	
Pupil on dual roll has ceased to attend		Pupil continuously absent at least 20 days and cannot locate child		Permanent exclusion	
Pupil receiving Elective Home Education		Pupil given custodial sentence for 4 months or longer		Nursery child not continuing to Primary School	
Home school distance is unreasonable (left area)		Death of pupil		Pupil leaving boarding school, fees unpaid	

Date child will be removed from roll:
(Education Pupil Regulations states that the pupil must be absent for at least 20 consecutive days before deleting from roll (on day 21) – contact Attendance Team for further guidance)

Date CTF is uploaded to Missing Pupils on S2S:
 (Including those that have moved abroad)

PART C School to School Transfer

Schools can complete this section for any pupil moving from your school to another school. 10 days notice is not required to be given to the LA for school to school transfers as long as the new school start date has been confirmed.

Child Name:	DOB:
Address:	
Parents Name and contact number:	
New School:	Start Date:
Reason Taken off roll: Pupil registered in another school	Date taken off roll:

PART D New Starter (In-year)

New CME guidance September 2016 states schools must inform LA within 5 days of all pupils taken onto their roll.

Child's Full Name	DOB	Start date

Completed form to be emailed to pupiltracking@slough.gov.uk
 It is mandatory to complete the form accurately. Failure to do so will result in the form being returned.

Deleting Pupils from the School Roll

Guidance

The deletion of any pupil from a school register must be carried out in accordance with;

- ***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*** (amendment in 2016) and
- ***The CME Guidance 2016*** published by the DfE.

These guidance documents outline the duties on a school and the local authority.

Deletions Following 20 days of absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states the following in regards to the 20 days off roll;

That he (child) has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days

and

(i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause;

and

(iii) both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is

- Schools must have regard to the above guidance before removing any child from the school roll
- Deletions should take place on day 21 or later to ensure the child has been absent for at least 20 consecutive school days
- If schools are unsure if a pupil can be removed from roll please contact the Attendance Team for guidance prior to deleting from the roll

Contact Details

Access & Inclusion

Service Lead:

Tony Browne

Tony.browne@slough.gov.uk

Tele: 01753 875717

Attendance Team

Attendance Team Manager:

Jeannette Walker Tele: 01753 875256 Mobile: 07540 163558

Jeannette.walker@slough.gov.uk

Attendance/CME Officers:

Iram Basharat Tele: 01753 787670

Dee Kahlon Tele: 01753 787680

Farah Malik Tele: 01753 787663

Thandi Manjelo Tele: 01753 787669

Important Note: ALL attendance referrals and pupil tracking referrals should be sent to the following email addresses and NOT to the Officers individual email addresses;

Referrals for Attendance and CME

Attendance Service Main Line: 01753 787670

Attendance Service Email: attendance@slough.gov.uk

Pupil Tracking Main Line: 01753 787670

Pupil Tracking Email: pupiltracking@slough.gov.uk